

## What is Human?

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# What is Human?

by [Mistress\\_Humble](#)

## Summary

With Hank hospitalized, Connor is reassigned to up-and-coming young agent Reina for the time being. As they scour Detroit in pursuit of deviants, both face internal struggles about the relationship between pain and what it means to be human. Connor discovers by experience that the definitions of alive, sentience, and feeling are more than just facts stored in his data base, while his partner struggles with trauma in her past regarding what happens when free will goes sideways.

If you're looking for a tense slow-burn romance with a thick plot, you've come to the right place.

COMING SOON!!! "What Is Human? Part Two: Detroit Divided"

## Notes

I am not "financially gifted" enough to have my own gaming station, but thanks to YouTube I have been able to explore the plot of Detroit: Become Human quite thoroughly, and I admit that I have fallen in love with the whole thing. Please enjoy and leave kudos/comments if you feel so inclined!

P.S. Don't worry, Hank shows up later in the story. What good would this be without some father/son time?!

P.P.S. Not all chapters will be short, just the first few as I lay out the foundations.

# Chapter 1

Lieutenant Anderson's desk usually remained empty until sometime past noon, or so Connor had been told. However this morning, there was someone waiting for the android assigned to Hank at the Lieutenant's workstation.

The RK800 had predicted that the aging man would spend his night at the bar, drowning his problems in whiskey after the unsuccessful interrogation the night before. The suspect, a HK400 model android [murdered Carlos Ortiz, confirmed deviant; deactivated], had self-destructed quite spectacularly, shooting and deactivating Connor in the process. Thankfully, he had recently uploaded his memory banks to CyberLife, so it was no trouble for him to continue his mission in another RK800 body. It reached all of the psychological criteria to count as a traumatic event for most humans [exposure to violence directed towards humanoid], and the alcoholic police officer seemed to have taken it poorly.

He approached the young woman wearing civilian clothes leaning against the edge of the vacant desk. She was focused on the tablet in her hands, apparently reading over the details of one of her most recent cases. He patiently waited for her to look up at him before speaking.

“Hello, my name is Connor, and I am the android sent by CyberLife to aid in deviant investigations. Are you waiting here for Lieutenant Anderson?”

“Actually, I was waiting for you. The Lieutenant is currently in the hospital.”

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Summary

Reina and Connor prepare to go out in the field for the first time together.

### Chapter Notes

Please let me know what you think at the end!

The android blinked and his LED spun to a bright yellow.

“What happened to him?”

“Alcohol poisoning.” His facial recognition system detected hints of pity and frustration in her carefully controlled face. “He should be okay, but it is possible they could detain him for a longer period of time. They want to do a full mental health evaluation once he is well enough for it.”

“That is unfortunate. I look forward to his recovery.”

“Yeah, me too, kid. In the meantime, you’ll be working with me. I’m Agent Reina Lockhart. We are going to pick up where you left off yesterday, which should be interesting since we just got a tip regarding another deviant case.” She motioned for him to follow as she walked towards the locker rooms.

Connor took this opportunity to scan her from behind. She was 23 years old, 5’3” and weighed barely 110 lbs, but her academy and work records said that she made up for it with excellent aim and weapon experience. She was part of the United Revised Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit [reformed after the organized triple-threat terrorist attacks in London, Hong Kong, and the Silicon Valley in the year 2035], and had trained under Agent Colston Hunder [declared M.I.A. 8/16/2035 while undercover in Tuen Mun territory of the city]. Much of her profile was remained classified under his current security clearance.

They arrived in the female locker room, and she handed Connor a neat package of clothes.

“Wear this. We don’t want to spook them into running away.” Connor dutifully began to loosen his tie as he took the clothes, and Reina blushed.

“Not in front of me, idiot!” She turned around and motioned behind her. “Go find one of the stalls!”

“Sorry, Agent Lockhart. I assumed privacy would not be a hindrance since I am an android.”

“Yeah, yeah, just get to it.” She crossed her arms and tapped her foot. Connor went to find a stall to change in.

“And review case file C49H2 while you’re at it!” She called to him from around the corner. He accessed the file and scanned it [Todd Williams filed a report for a missing AX400 and his daughter, claims that the android attacked him before fleeing the scene and taking his daughter; Williams has been arrested previously on charges of drug possession and failure to appear in court; anonymous tip claims to have seen an AX400 and a young girl downtown inside convenience store; Objective: Investigate Tip].

\*\*\*

Reina was putting her hair up in the mirror when Connor exited the stall, fully dressed in plainclothes. She finished the messy bun and turned to inspect him.

“As great as you look, I’m sorry to say that you look too...” she gestured with her hands. “Too neat. Nobody looks that neat except for androids, and right now we want you to look human.” Connor cocked his head to the side in what his programming told him mimicked confusion.

“I do not see how disguising me as a human will help us achieve our goal.”

“If you look like an android, they will be more likely to spot us as more than just civvies. They’ll know they are being monitored. What police force in their right mind would send only two humans after a reportedly dangerous deviant, right?” She grinned and reached up to style his hair. Connor watched her face intently as she pulled his hair forward and out of his usual slick-back, combing it with her fingers over his forehead and to one side to cover his LED. “Wow, your hair is so soft...” she mumbled as she mussed the hair on the sides of his head. She circled around him and ruffled the hair on the back of his head, officially changing what had originally been a professional cut into a mess. When she came around to his front, she pulled his hoodie strings so that they were uneven and flopped the hood to a more natural position. She gave him another once-over. Connor truly noticed for the first time that her eyes were a dark golden brown.

“Pull out your right jeans pocket halfway, and retie your shoes so that the strings are more uneven.” He followed her instructions and then stood up. She smiled. “Great! Now we look like a couple of ruffians. Put on this beanie, and let’s go!”

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Summary

Connor and Reina search for Kara and Alice in the slums of Detroit.

## Chapter Notes

Please let me know what you think at the end!

“It stole wire cutters.”

“I’m sorry?”

“From the store.” Connor’s LED spun yellow. “I reviewed last night's security tapes while you interviewed the employee.” Reina looked at the sidewalk, her forehead scrunched in thought.

“Out of all the things to steal, why wire cutters?”

“Maybe...” the RK800 nodded to the other side of the street. There stood a crumbling and clearly abandoned house surrounded by chain link fence. “Maybe it wasn’t planning on going very far.” She grunted and paused before turning to face the android.

“Listen up. We are squatters simply looking to get out of the rain. Let me do the talking, and you scan, okay? You never know what you may find in these kind of shit-holes.”

“Alright, Agent Lockhart.” Connor replied as he followed her across the street.

“Just call me Reina. And try to look cold.” The undercover cop pulled her parka tighter around her thin frame and ducked her head as she entered a gap in the fence. Connor scanned the edges of the wire and noted that they were not worn nor dirty, and therefore must have been cut quite recently. He shoved his hands in his pockets and squeezed in behind Reina.

She turned the front doorknob cautiously and found it unlocked, and with a worried glance to her companion she slowly pushed it open. The house smelled of mildew, wet dust, and something dead. Reina covered her nose with her sleeve before entering, and Connor nearly bumped into her when she froze. There in the middle of the room was an android. It’s face was damaged on the left side, and it’s clothes were tattered and strange.

“H-hello.” Reina ventured, pressing herself into Connor as if for security. He knew that the shy greeting was an act, but nonetheless her vitals did show signs of genuine anxiety. “We didn’t mean to intrude. My boyfriend and I simply wanted to get out of the storm.” Connor blinked. Although she had given details about their mission, this had not been part of it.

“Ralph doesn’t mind.” The robot twitched and offered a smile. It was malfunctioning severely, and Reina’s heart rate increased with every word it spoke. Connor could detect her levels of adrenaline climbing, but on the outside she looked nothing more than a cold, meek young woman. “Ralph always has time for new friends.”

“Thank you.” Despite her nerves, she hugged herself and stepped closer with a smile. “I see you have a fire going. Do you have other friends here too?”

“No.” The android snapped sharply. “No friends. Ralph is all alone here by himself.”

“I’m sorry.” She stepped closer, keeping the android’s focus on herself. This was Connor’s cue to begin scanning. “I know what it’s like to be lonely.” She peeked around Ralph to look at the seared carcass on the table. “Do you have a cat friend? Were you going to feed it?” Her eyes were bright and enthusiastic when they returned to the android’s damaged face.

“Yes! Uh, Ralph has many cat friends.” It began to fidget and twitch under her gaze. Connor swept the room, sensing the android’s stress levels increasing as his gaze came to rest on the staircase.

“Oh, great! Jonathan here loves cats.” Reina motioned to Connor who had begun to walk towards the stairs. “Do you know if there are any around?”

“No!” It stood rigid. “No cats!” Connor stooped to look under the stairs. “Goodbye!”

In an instant the room burst into a whirl of activity. Ralph grabbed Reina and howled a vague instruction before two figures dashed out from under the stairs, the larger of the two pushing Connor over in its frantic rush. Reina smashed her heel backwards into the android’s knee, and with a crunch Ralph fell to the ground. Connor leapt to his feet as she dashed through the kitchen to the screen door, screaming for him to hurry.

He followed her out of the gap in the fence and quickly overtook her, having been blessed with long legs that never tire nor require oxygen. He turned into an alleyway just as the deviant and child were scaling the fence on the other end. Connor ran full tilt and crashed into the fence, preparing to scale it when he caught the AX400’s eyes. He was surprised to find them full of fear. His perfect programming halted. The deviant turned around with the child in tow and had just jumped over onto the automated highway when Reina arrived, out of breath.

“Oh my god...” she panted. “The girl!” Connor began to climb the fence. “No! Stop! You’ll get yourself killed!” He shook off her pleas [software instability ^] and slid down the mud slope just as the two figures reached the middle.

The cars never once slowed or deviated from their paths, and the RK800 did his best to run through without damage. He reached the midsection as the others jumped over onto the

second gauntlet. He was about to climb over to follow when his left leg was pulled out from underneath him. Connor fell to his knees and felt an arm surround his neck in a suffocating sleeper hold.

“I order you to stop.” The growling voice and beating heart his audio sensors picked up matched those of Agent Lockhart. He began to struggle but stopped when she kneed him sharply in the lower back. His vision fizzled for a moment, and when it cleared, the two fugitives were gone. She quickly let go of him and stood back. Connor stood and spun around to face her.

“Why did you do that? I almost had them!” He shouted down at her. “We failed!”

“I would not let you risk the life of that girl in this instance! It was protecting her! She went with it willingly! I’d rather chase them all the way across Detroit than scrape them off the goddamn pavement!” The agent’s eyes were filled with tears, but it was impossible to tell if they had mixed with the rain streaming down her cheeks. The pair were silent, staring each other down in the middle of a busy highway, and Reina was the first to drop her gaze.

“C’mon, lets get out of here...” She limped back towards the railing.

“Reina, you are injured, let me...” For the second time that day, the RK800’s processing system stuttered. There, oozing out of an impact wound on her thigh and onto the ground below her, was a steady stream of Thirium [conflicting sensors; heartbeat and brainwave activity detected/victim is producing Thirium which is clotting wound site].

“Connor, I can explain.”



# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

Connor receives a must-needed explanation.

## Chapter Notes

There is a picture that goes with this chapter. However, I have not figured out how to insert it yet. Could someone explain the process to me please??

Connor stood over her as she sat on a bench in the women's locker room. She had her left pant leg rolled up to the knee, and the transition between her own skin and the prosthesis was barely visible.

"You aren't the only prototype around here," Reina smirked. Connor simply continued to watch. She twisted her knee, and with a click the prosthesis detached. As soon as it left contact with the skin of her stump, it turned a shiny white.

The organic tissue left at the end of the limb was smooth and rippled with pink scars going up her thigh, and protruding from the tip was a short, smooth metal rod with perforations in the surface, almost like a key.

"Here, catch!" She lightheartedly threw the limb at the android and laughed as his features grew steadily more confused.

"According to my scan, this should still be made of organic tissue... I cannot detect any sign besides visual confirmation that this is a prosthetic."

"That's the beauty of it," she winked at him. Then she grabbed his wrist with her right hand and held tight. Its skin ebbed away and that, too was a prosthesis, all the way up to the middle of her upper arm.

"I do not understand." Connor felt his system may have been damaged, because all of her still registered as organic only. Reina withdrew her hand and a palm screen flashed to life.

"I guess I can let you in on my little secret since you'll need to be able to read my vitals in the field, and it's not like CyberLife doesn't know about this. They gave me the damned things anyways." She glanced at him sideways. "What's your serial number?"

“313 248 317 - 52”

“State your name and model number”

“Connor, prototype RK800.” The holoscreen flashed blue, and Reina’s vitals changed.

Only 7.63 inches of her left thigh was organic, the rest was a fully functional CyberLife android leg, complete with 3 miniature thirium pumps, increased weight capacity, and increased thrust for improved distance when jumping. Her right leg ended just above the knee, and the dormant prosthesis came to life as soon as it touched her skin when he returned it. Like fitting a key and lock, she clicked her leg back to its original place. Wires that connected to the inserted rod ran through her pelvis and up her spine [scan detects alloys on: coccyx, sacrum, lumbar vertebrae 1-5, iliac crest, ilium, ischium on the right side, remnants of both femurs], all of which had been reinforced with titanium. Those wires sent electrical pulses up to two symmetrical implants in the base of her skull, effectively reversing whatever nerve damage she had in those areas. Her collarbones, sternum, and shoulder blades were reinforced as well, along with what remained of her right humerus. Her right hand contained as many pressure, temperature, and sample sensors as Connor’s did, if not more. The mechanics of her artificial forearm suggested that it was designed for manipulating incredible detail and wielding massive strength, as well as acting as a master key for most locked doors. And all of it could be disguised as organic flesh through a code emitter that blocked unwanted scans.

Reina looked at the ground, waiting for Connor to complete his scan. Her organic hand drummed on her thigh impatiently. Her heart rate gave away her anxiety.

“This is... this is amazing technology, Reina. Unheard of.”

“I have a feeling though that I am not the only one. I’m simply a lab rat for CyberLife who traded a second chance at life for physical privacy. I was important enough to U.R.L.E.I.U. [translation: United Revised Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit] to revive, but I’ll never be back in the field like I was.” Reina looked at the ground, and her voice became no louder than a whisper. “But as long as I do what they say, I never have to sit in a wheelchair again.” Silence fell between them.

“Your left thigh, it’s still damaged.”

“It’s an easy fix. I’ll clean it up now and repair it at home.” Even so, she winced as she stood up.

“None of your organic tissue is damaged, yet you show signs of pain when you move. Why is that so?” Connor cocked his head, mimicking curiosity.

“My prosthetics are complete with a fully functional set of artificial nerves, which connect to the wires in my spine and up into my implants. I can technically feel in even greater detail than I could before, but right now I have the pain settings operational as well. It reminds me not to get too reckless.” She smirked and turned to open her locker before pulling out Connor’s uniform and tossing it in his direction. “Here, lets get you back to looking like yourself again.” Connor studied the clothes as he processed Reina’s incredible revelation.

“One more question.” She turned and met his eyes. “Can you interface with androids? Like an android?”

“I’ve successfully completed tests in communicating information, if that’s what you’re asking, but it was always to a database and not to a... machine.” Her cheeks went red.

“Would you like to try?” Connor held out his hand, the skin fading away. Curiosity was part of his programming, and part of her nature. She slowly reached out, her own skin pulling back, and took a deep breath before taking his hand.

Connor processor exploded with new sensations. He could feel her data intake. It was fuzzier than his in most areas, but one section of her mind was dazzlingly bright where his was a void. He pushed forward and met that section, and everything changed.

Recent memories of their day streamed through him, but the difference in her emotional recollection made him stagger and take a knee [reassigned to work with android {nervous anticipation, guilt}, going undercover to investigate with new partner {excitement, fear, determination, aggression}, discovering deviant and hostage {aggression, fear, duty, purpose}, deviant and hostage {?} attempt to cross highway {terror, horror, empathy, panic, trauma flashback}, partner follows {horror, anger, protective urges, frustration}, prosthetics discovered {panic, distrust, aggression}, prosthesis explained {vulnerability, trauma flashback, hope, anxiety}, connection offered {shyness, hope, emotional attraction, conflict, curiosity, loneliness loneliness LONELINESS FEAR PANIC —

It all disappeared when he let go of her hand [software instability ^] She was on her knees beside him, holding his face in her hands and saying his name.

“Connor! Oh my god, are you okay?! Connor!” He was vaguely aware of the fact that he was hyperventilating. It took great effort to slow his Thirium pump back to a safe speed.

“I... I’m...”

“Jesus, man, are you alright?! What happened?”

“What... was all that?” Her brows furrowed.

“What do you mean?”

“I felt... I FELT something... like... I don’t understand... it didn’t make sense... I’ve never FELT before...” his voice was shaking.

“Oh... oh god... did you... feel my emotions?”

“I don’t know what else it could have been...” She looked at him and smiled. Her eyes were sad [recall: {fear, vulnerability, hope, curiosity}].

“What was it like?”

“Like being colorblind... and then seeing a rainbow as it really is for the first time.” He smiled slowly. “I... enjoyed the opportunity to see what that is like.”

She leaned forward and wrapped her arms around his shoulders, resting her head in the crook of his neck. A moment later, he returned the gesture [software instability ^].

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Summary

Reina and Gavin exchange “casual” banter, and Connor aids Reina in making a decision about how to spend her evening.

## Chapter Notes

Please leave kudos or comments and let me know what ya’ll are thinking about this so far!

“Well, that’s enough deskwork for today.” Reina stretched and stood. Connor looked up from his own desk, a previously abandoned workspace between Hank and Reina. “It’s been an eventful day, I believe that merits going out to dinner.”

“I just happened to overhear that you’re ready to clock out. You wouldn’t happen to have any plans tonight, would you?” Gavin swaggered up to her and leaned on Connor’s desk, ignoring the android who snuck glances between the two humans as they chatted.

“I might have to make some now so that I have an excuse to not spend my free time with you.”

“Oh, come on,” Gavin smirked. “Name one person you’d rather spend quality time with besides me.”

“My cats at home.”

“I said ‘person.’”

“Fine,” she teased. “How about Connor here? I’m sure he’d enjoy an evening out on the town with me.

“That still doesn’t mean the ‘person’ criteria,” he mumbled. “Plus, what you do with it, go to the club?”

“Sure, we could look for undercover deviants while we’re there,” her voice was heavy with sarcasm. Gavin stood and walked closer into her personal space. His face was a dangerous mixture of sly flirtation and predatory dominance.

“Are you telling me you can spot a deviant? Tell me, love, what kind do you see when you look in the mirror? Leather and chains, or a halo and lace?”

“Jesus, Reed, you are single for a reason. Go use your terrible pickup lines somewhere else.” Reina blushed, chuckled, and began to gather her belongings.

“You still haven’t answered my question; what are you doing tonight?”

Reina turned to the android, who was silently watching. “Hey Connor, you want to go out to dinner with me tonight?”

“I do not require nutrients, but I would be happy to spend time with you.”

“Sorry, Gavin,” Her smile was smug. “I already have a date tonight.” Gavin huffed and stalked off, but his voice was light when he called over his shoulder.

“Maybe one day you’ll give a poor man a chance. I’m a lover, not a fighter, I swear!”

Reina laughed out loud and called back, “Sure, whatever you say!” She shook her head and hefted her bag onto her shoulder. “You ready to go?”

“Your offer was genuine?”

“Sure, why not. It’s better than staying here, isn’t it?” Connor stood and brushed nonexistent dust from the front of his trousers.

“Infinitely.”

“Sounds great. Lets go!”

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Summary

Connor learns a little bit more about Reina as they get ready for their evening out on the town.

## Chapter Notes

Reminder: Everything inside rectangular parentheses [ ] is Connor's internal processing, and everything inside the squiggly parentheses { } is Reina's emotional tenor. When Connor recalls his interface with Reina and the emotions he experienced through her memory, it will show up as [recall: {insert emotion here}]. Hope this helps!

Fun Fact: Reina's cats (Posies and Ashes) are a reference to the nursery rhyme Ring around the Roses, which goes "Ring around the roses/Pocket full of posies/Ashes, Ashes, we all fall down". This children's song originated from a medieval saying warning against symptoms of the Bubonic Plague!

Please leave kudos or comments if you feel so inclined!

Hank and Reina both liked to play their music loud while driving. Connor wondered if that was a common human practice.

"I hope you don't mind some golden oldies," she turned the music down slightly.

"'Nonstop' by Drake, released in his 2018 album 'Scorpion'. I think it needs more than just 20 years to be considered truly old."

"Aw, c'mon." She nudged his arm with her elbow and made a face. "Respect the classics, man!"

"Okay." Connor responded sincerely. She sighed and smiled wryly.

"It was supposed to be a joke. Nevermind."

They sat silently as Reina drove through stormy Detroit. Her fingers tapped to the beat at stoplights, and her mind seemed to be far away. Connor was surprised when they pulled into a private parking lot connected to a set of middle-class apartments.

"Aren't we going out to dinner?"

“Yeah, but I want to shower and change first. And you need to change into the clothes I brought, too. The place I have in mind technically doesn’t allow androids, but what they don’t know won’t hurt them.” She parked the car and got out, waiting for him to follow before she locked the car behind them. Her outdoor-facing apartment was on the third and final floor [C58], with an overgrown houseplant hanging on the railing. Connor heard the sound of a meowing cat inside as she unlocked and opened the door.

“Yes, yes, sweetie, I’m home,” she cooed to the fluffy gray cat who approached them as she closed the door. The cat meowed again and rubbed against her legs. “I know, it’s dinner time. Connor, meet Ashes. Posies, his sister, should be somewhere around here too.” Ashes stared up at the android, and was surprisingly friendly, rubbing his fluffy cheek on Connor’s ankle once before trotting off to follow his human.

Connor scanned the living room. There were more houseplants on display, as well as three tasteful cat perches. A thin-screen display sat on one wall across from a small couch. A digital book sat on the coffee table. The wall that ran into the kitchen area was partially covered by a billboard, on which dozens of pushpins held up various pictures, posters, and reminders. There was no dining table, only two barstools that sat facing a counter. Reina stooped to empty the contents of a cat food tin into two bowls, one of which Ashes began to devour.

“You live alone?”

“Nah, I have my cats,” Reina grinned.

“No android?”

“Nope, just me.” She rinsed and recycled the tin before walking over to her bag. Pulling out some men’s clothes, she set them down on the counter. “Change into these when you’re ready. I’m going to shower. I’ll be back in, like, 15 minutes.”

It had been 27 minutes and 34 seconds when Reina emerged from her bedroom. Skinny jeans and a semi-formal blouse had replaced her uniform, and her still-wet hair was pulled back into a low-set bun. Connor had changed into the clothes she had provided. With a hand on her hip, Reina looked him over. He wore high-topped black vans offset by white jeans with a fitted light blue polo. A red beanie and sideswept bangs covered his LED.

“You ready?” She flashed him a smile [recall: {emotional attraction}] as she slipped on a pair of heeled ankle boots.

“Yes, let’s go.”

“Great. Don’t forget your coat, it’s cold outside.” Within moments Reina and Connor were out the door, which she dutifully locked behind them, and into the night.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter Summary

Reina takes Connor to her favorite bar to enjoy some local food, and also to kind of flirt with him let's be honest ;)

## Chapter Notes

Leave kudos and comments if you feel so inclined!

The Salted Edge was a small bar tucked away on the corner of a nondescript street, but the place was alive as soon as you walked through the front door [anti-android propaganda sign outside: "We are proud to serve and employ only humans!"] . The bar's surface was glass and beneath was an elegantly kept fish tank. Large fancy goldfish lazily swam below patrons who sipped various beverages, chatting and flirting their evenings away. Black loveseats surrounded tables where others sat and mingled, munching on glorified pub grub and drinking. Reina found them seats at the bar, where she ordered a Martinez made with Old Tom and a house burger. She was surprised when Connor ordered a Cherry Sangria Smoothie and a side of fries. When the bartender left, she chuckled and eyed him.

"What are you gonna do with that?"

"I do not require nutrients, but I can consume food. However, liquids are easier to process."

"Does that mean that you..."

"I do not defecate because there is no absorption process. It goes into containment where it is sealed and packaged, and then I can open my abdominal maintenance compartment to dispose of the waste at a later point. CyberLife designed me this way in case I ever needed to pose as a human for a mission" She had been doing her best not to laugh outright at his matter-of-fact explanation about why androids don't poop, biting the inside of her cheek to quell the urge. With a deep breath, she nodded and watched the goldfish swimming in the bar.

"Well, I guess you learn something new every day." Her Martinez arrived, and she began to sip it casually.

"You seem relaxed and familiar with this place. Is there a specific reason you wanted to bring me here?" She flashed him a grin.

“I’ll show you after we finish our meal.” She had finished her drink by the time her food came, and ordered a Moscow Mule as she began to eat. By the time they had finished their meal and beverages, Connor estimated that she had a blood-alcohol content of 0.76. However, she showed no signs of impairment as she swung her legs off her chair and grabbed Connor’s elbow. “C’mon! This is the fun part.”

He followed her towards the back of the bar where a heavy velvet curtain hid the entrance to another section of the building. Connor’s audio receptors picked up the sounds of live singing, and suddenly understood why Reina liked this place so much.

“Karaoke!” He shouted into her ear over the music.

“Exactly! Let’s find a seat.” She pulled him over to an unoccupied table. Connor watched Reina as she enjoyed herself, listening to the other patrons who had come to lose themselves in the temporary fame.

“Why is this entertaining?” He leaned in to ask. Her breath was warm on his lips when she turned her head.

“Do you want to feel?” Connor blinked in confusion until he felt her hand on his knee. He was about to object [chance of being noticed 31%] when she began the interface.

[subject’s BAC 0.73: intoxicated {confidence, sexual arousal, promiscuity, mischievousness, devious attitude, physically immunity, infinite potential, boisterous swagger}]

Connor’s head twitched to the side and he uttered a choked moan in what could only be described as [recall: {surprise}]. It was a dangerous state of mind, but he admitted that it shared many similarities with the criteria for an enjoyable experience [recall: {excitement}]. Heads would have turned perhaps if they were not focused on the stage, clapping as the current performance drew to a close. Reina winked and squeezed his knee before standing and heading on up once the other person was finished. People clapped as she went up, of course, they clapped whenever someone took to the spotlight, but Connor could see her blush as she grinned and waved [unused to positive affirmation]. The song she chose was another old one [released in the year 2018], and apparently was one she was very familiar with, because as soon as the music started, so did her practiced singing voice [probability of vocal training as a child: high].

“Broadway is black like a sinkhole  
Everyone race to the suburbs  
And I’m on the rooftop with curious strangers  
This is the oddest of summers”

The song must have held some kind of emotional significance to her, as if she sang it to relive a high time in her life. Even this early in the song, she was tapping her foot to the beat and miming to the lyrics with her hands.

“Maybe I’ll medicate, maybe inebriate  
Strange situations, I get anxious

Maybe I'll smile a bit, maybe the opposite  
But pray that they don't call me thankless

My tell-tale heart's a hammer in my chest  
Cut me a silk-tied tourniquet

This is my roaring, roaring 20's  
I don't even know me  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna go home  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna go home  
My roaring, roaring 20s  
I don't even know me  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna go home  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna, I wanna go home”

She sang the chorus with such enthusiasm that the crowd began to clap along. Connor was surprised to find himself joining in. In the back of his consciousness, he was beginning to toy with the idea of what it would be like to live it up like the people in the song.

“Oscars and Emmy's and Grammy's  
Everyone here is a trophy  
And I'm sipping bourbon  
The future's uncertain  
The past on the pavement below me”

She had taken out her hair and flipped it during a pause in the lyrics, eliciting a few whistles from the men in the crowd. Her face was turning red, but she was having too much fun to be seriously self conscious.

“Maybe I'll elevate, maybe I'm second rate  
So unaware of my status  
Maybe I'm overjoyed, maybe I'm paranoid  
Designer me up in straight jackets

My tell-tale heart's a hammer in my chest  
Cut me a silk-tied tourniquet

This is my roaring, roaring 20's  
I don't even know me  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna go home  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna go home  
My roaring, roaring 20s  
I don't even know me  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna go home  
Roll me like a blunt, 'cause I wanna, I wanna go home”

She had taken the microphone from its stand and then began to walk on the stage as if performing at a concert. Connor calculated from her previous, sober demeanor that she would never attempt this without alcohol as a crutch. This wasn't just a chemical high, this was a

release of emotional tension, a confidence boost [48.6% chance that she will regret her behavior in the morning].

“Hallucinations only mean that your brain is on fire  
If it's Lord of the Flies in my mind tonight  
I don't know if I will survive

Lighters up if you're feelin' me  
Fade to black if you're not mine  
'Cause I just need a sign, or a signal inside”

“C’mon, sing it with me! One last time!” She interjected her own singing, and the audience sang the familiar lyrics of the chorus all together.

“This is my roaring, roaring 20s  
I don't even know me  
Roll me a blunt 'cause I wanna go home  
Roll me a, roll me a blunt  
This is my roaring, roaring 20s  
I don't even know me  
Roll me like a blunt 'cause I wanna go home  
Roll me like a blunt 'cause I want, I wanna go home  
I wanna go home”

There was laughter and clapping and shouts of encouragement, and the young woman took a dramatic (and slightly unbalanced) bow before handing the mic off to the next singer and walking back to where Connor sat. She seemed to glow as she sat next to him, smiling and giving him a friendly punch on the shoulder.

“What did you think?”

“The song is ‘Roarin’ 20s’ by Panic at the Disco, released in their 2018 album ‘Pray for the Wicked.’ It received good ratings and was considered one of their most energetic melodies.”

“No, no, none of that statistics crap. What do YOU think? About my performance?”

Connor cocked his head and blinked, processing how he was going to respond. “I think you greatly enjoyed yourself, and that you are on the edge of being intoxicated.”

“And I think that you are irresistibly cute when you don’t know what to say.” She rested her chin on the heels of her hands and bit her bottom lip, staring into him with dark eyes.

“I take back what I said. You are definitely drunk. I suggest that we get you home.” Reina sighed and flopped back into her chair, sourly scrunching her face up.

“Yeah, I suppose you’re right. I do have work in the morning.” She threw a look his way.  
“WE have work in the morning. Where do you usually go at night?”

“I stay at the station and continue to work, or if there isn’t much to do, go into standby mode, which is my equivalent to sleeping.”

“You know, you can always spend the night at my place.” Her voice was hushed, like she was telling him a dark secret [recall: {emotional attraction, sexual arousal}]. Connor processed her offer, going still and silent momentarily, until he blinked and gave her a sly grin. Her face fell when she heard his reply.

“Perhaps another time, Agent Lockhart, when you are sober.”

“Well, at least CyberLife gave you decent morals to go along with your godly good looks,” she grumbled, standing up.

“Let me escort you home.”

“Alright. Let me know if you change your mind about the sleepover.”

“I will, Reina.”

# Chapter 8

## Chapter Summary

Warning!! References of severe trauma, loss, suicide. Read ahead at you own risk.

Reina and Connor investigate a noise complaint and find a whole lot more than they bargained for. We also get to hear some of Reina's backstory, and it's not pretty.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Reina arrived at her desk on time, despite the dark circles under her eyes and her reserved demeanor. Connor approached her from the other side of the room where he had been waiting.

“Good morning, Agent Lockhart, I hope that you are feeling well this morning.” A wry smile spread across her face.

“Well, I’ve felt worse, but I’ve also definitely felt better. I think what I need is a slow day of deskwork.”

“Unfortunately, we have been assigned a field mission today. We are going to investigate a noise complaint in a set of apartments. It seems as if a deviant could be taking shelter there.” Reina took a deep breath and rubbed the bridge of her nose. She sat still for a moment before meeting his gaze.

“Alright, if that’s what we gotta do, let's make it quick. Lead the way.”

\*\*\*

The strangest thing about the apartment was not the unnatural silence, not the psychotic graffiti, not even the complete and utter state of disarray, but the tamed pigeons. They

covered every horizontal surface in the place. Reina tasked Connor with reconstructing what happened and figuring out where the deviant went while she explored and took pictures of the walls. Not even two minutes had passed when he called her into the bathroom.

“We are dealing with a missing android turned deviant. It’s blood and LED are in the sink. And look at the walls. ‘RA9’ is written 2,471 times. It’s the same exact sign that Ortiz’s android was obsessed with.” Reina nodded, looking at her shoes with her hands on her hips.

“Are you familiar with the movie ‘Beautiful Mind’?”

“Yes. It was released in 2001 and starred Russell Crowe, who played a man suffering from schizophrenia.”

“Well apparently this deviant was obsessed with the movie too. Back in the living room, it had all sorts of quotes written on the wall, some of them original and some of them from various forms of media. ‘Beautiful Mind’ seemed to be its favorite, though.” She looked at the ceiling. ““You can’t come up with a formula to change the way you experience the world.”” Connor was silent and she exited the room after a short while.

Reina traced the writing on the walls [“I ~~think~~ FEEL, therefore I AM.”] while he reconstructed the events that recently occurred. She turned to face him, and Connor put a finger to his lips before pointing to the weathered rafters above them. Her eyes widened and she nodded. He stood and approached a chair in the corner when a pair of feet slammed into his chest and knocked him over. The deviant leapt to his feet and bolted out the door, Reina on his tail as Connor stood and quickly followed.

It was not long before the human fell behind as the androids chased each other in an agile, and deadly, game of cat and mouse. Connor followed him through greenhouses and fields, across train tracks and through orchards, and had just come out of a field of corn when he spotted Reina, who had evidently taken a detour, and the android rolling on the ground perilously close to the edge of the roof.

“Get off me! I’m here to help!” She cried as it hauled her by her collar, almost ready to throw her off. It froze when it caught sight of the skin of her right hand peeling back to reveal the white material underneath, and was about to speak when Connor caught up to it. Vigorously wrapping his arm around its neck, he yanked it off of the fallen woman and detained its hands

behind its back with the other. Reina struggled to get to her feet, catching her breath as Connor handcuffed the deviant.

“You...” it gasped at her. “You’re with him. You lied...”

“You don’t understand,” she showed her palms, one her usual skin tone and the other still naked. “Let me help you...” Slowly, she approached the android and placed her hand on the side of its face. It cried out as she extracted its memories, and then hung its head when she finished.

“You liar...” it mumbled to her back as she turned to run her hands through her hair.

“Okay... let's go.” Reina turned and lurched when the android made a dash for the ledge.

“No!” Her hands fell to the sides as its plummeted to the asphalt below. Connor put a protective hand on her back as she swayed precariously on the edge of the building. She walked a few steps in the other direction before sinking to her knees.

“Reina?” He squatted beside her [ *subject in shock, at risk for hyperventilation/panic attack* ].

“I... felt it... him...” Her eyes were unfocused and her face was pale. “He was... terrified... he would rather die than be taken back...”

“It is an android. It cannot die, only break beyond repair.”

Her voice became hysterical. “It cannot die?! Connor, it just did! I... oh my god...” she leaned to one side and heaved, emptying the contents of her stomach onto the ground. Connor tried to rub her back to calm her, but she only pushed him away.

“No... we were wrong... my god, I FELT it...” She rocked back and forth, covering her face with her hands. “It wanted to live... it wanted FREEDOM, so, so badly...”



“Reina, your vital signs indicate that you are suffering from a panic attack, I suggest- ”

“It’s a flashback, Connor! Leave me alone, I... I need a moment...”

“Flashback? I do not believe I understand.”

“You think I just walked into CyberLife one day and asked for a new set of limbs?” She laughed hysterically, pushing Connor’s shoulder roughly before standing. She swayed on her feet as if suffering from a heavy bout of vertigo. “You saw the fucking scars!” She shrieked into the sky. He stood and attempted to console her, but she violently shoved him away. “When my team found me, they told me I had a 21% chance of survival.” She shook her head. “I didn’t want to survive, I wanted to LIVE, and by failing my mission, it meant if the enemy caught me, I would receive a fate worse than death.” She jabbed her finger into Connor’s chest repeatedly. “I’d rather DIE splattered the dirty backstreets of Hong Kong than suffer the fate of those I had been sent to rescue.” She dug the palms of her hands into her eyes and bent over with a groan. “And they never found him...”

“Your partner?”

“My mentor... Colston was like a father to me...” She put her head on her knees and began to weep. When he sat beside her and wrapped her arms around her, she did nothing more than lean into him.

“Come on, Reina, lets get you home.”

## Chapter End Notes

Please leave kudos/comments if you like what I’ve going on here!

# Chapter 9

## Chapter Summary

Reina recovers from her shock with some major help from Connor. This chapter contains fluff and a lot of sensitive topics (ie love after permanent physical injury, ptsd).

But we get to see Connor being a helpful boy, so I guess it all works out in the end?

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

By the time they reached her apartment, Reina had folded back in on herself. She hardly responded to outside stimuli, much less to anything Connor said. He had informed the DPD of what happened, and how she had fallen into a state of mental shock. He had received a reply back relaying that it was alright for her to take the rest of the day off, and that it would be a good idea for him to keep an eye on her.

She shuffled indoors, kicking off her shoes and dropping her coat before reaching down to bury her face in Ashes fur when he came to greet her. Connor fed the cats and began to prepare her a meal as she simply sat on the floor, absorbed in her feline companion.

“Connor.”

“Yes?” He turned to see her sitting there, her eyes flat and listless.

“I’m... sorry... that you have to see me this way.” He was not sure how to respond, and in his silence, she stood and walked off, mumbling something about taking a shower.

The water ran for 48 minutes and 31 seconds, during which time Connor busied himself around the apartment, cleaning what little there was to clean. Reina emerged dressed in basketball shorts and a sweatshirt, her wet hair in a braid down her back. Connor watched helplessly as she sat on the couch and closed her eyes.

“Are you going to sleep?”

“No...” she hoarsely croaked. He had heard her sobbing in the shower. “Could you please get me some ibuprofen?” Connor’s sensors registered no physical damage to her person, but he obeyed anyways. When he came back, Reina had removed her left leg and laid it out reverently on the coffee table in front of her. Her brow was furrowed as she massaged the scarred stump of tissue that was left behind. He set the pills and glass of water on the table and stood over her.

“Are you in pain?”

“Yes... sometimes... sometimes if I have a bad day my... scars ache...”

“Is there something I can do?” She stopped massaging and took a deep breath.

“Could you sit here with me? Usually, when this happens... I am alone. Lonely.” Connor obediently sat next to her on the couch, turning on the thin-screen display to dissipate the tension. Reina took the pills and continued working the healed flesh with her hands. Soon her organic hand began to tire, and she switched to one hand. He saw in his peripheral vision as she reached to remove her other leg prosthetic, but then stopped and shuddered.

“Reina?”

“Yes?” She looked into his soft brown eyes and saw something. Something edging on human. Something that was almost empathy.

“May I help?” She turned to the leg already on the table. Her voice was little more than a whisper when she replied.

“Why?”

“You are in pain, and I want to help you.”

“Why?” She turned back and met his eyes.

“Because I care about your wellbeing.”

“Why? I am just another human.”

“No, you are unique, and you are important to me. You are kind to me. You invest yourself in me, even though I don’t fully understand why.”

“Were you programmed to say that?”

“No, that is not my programming, it is...” he paused, looking down at his hands. “Something else.”

“It is how you feel?” The room was still and silent, save for the flashing and noises from the thin-screen display.

“Yes.” Connor whispered. “I suppose that is it.” Reina smiled faintly.

“Alright.” He perked up at her response. “If that’s what you want, you can help... turn off the display and turn on the lamp in the corner.” After he had finished those small tasks, Reina had taken off her sweatshirt laid herself out on the couch. Connor slowly knelt next to her on the ground.

“The scarring on my right hip is... extensive to say the least. I haven’t shown it to anyone but my doctors... but I trust you.” She sat up and began to inch down her shorts, her face red in shame.

“If you are uncomfortable, we can stop,” he offered. She simply shook her head and discarded the garment. She twisted the prosthetic in its socket and slowly removed it, lifting it and laying it on the floor. Then she closed her eyes and laid back, baring herself to him emotionally in only an undershirt and panties.

“Everywhere you see scar tissue... it hurts. All up into my lower back.” Connor examined the stump before him. Just like her left leg, the scars snaked up her hips and a metal key rod protruded from where her femur would have originally been. Her right leg, however, was reduced to little more than an unevenly domed four inches [recall: {panic, trauma flashback, vulnerability, guilt, shame}]. He reached out and gently laid a hand on her right hip, feeling her shudder under his touch. Connor began to use his fingertips, working at the tense muscles below her skin. Reina whimpered as he slowly travelled over her body, examining where her muscles were most knotted and using his hands to work her loose.

“Can you turn over for me?” Reina opened her eyes and nodded, using her arms to flip herself over. He used his thumbs to relax her lower back, rubbing his palms over her hips and sides, turning her to putty in his grasp.

“I thought... after this happened...” she whispered to him over her shoulder. “No man would ever want to touch me again...”

“Because you were injured?”

“Because I was damaged... I thought... no man would ever have the patience to work with me through my pain and deformity.”

“And what do you think now?”

“I think... I hope... that I was wrong.” The pair was silent for a couple of minutes.

“I am not disturbed by your scars, Reina.” Connor put his hands on his knees, and Reina flipped over onto her back. “They are a testament to your will. Not even death could hold you down.” Her left hand fiddled with her right prosthetic, unlocking it at the upper humerus and finally removing it to reveal the crippled flesh underneath.

“My will is only second to my fear. I was afraid of becoming obsolete, a sob-story in a wheelchair. That is what drove me to accept the surgeries, the tests, the job offers. It drove me to success even after I lost everything. But that same fear...” She looked up at him through her lashes, and then down at her mangled shoulder. “It is the same thing that keeps me isolated. Because I am afraid my pain will drive anyone I love away.” He reached out and put a comforting hand on her shoulder.

“I don’t think you could drive me away even if you wanted to.” The remark was meant to be sincere, but Reina sniffled and laughed. She brought her remaining hand to the back of his head, her eyes cloudy with tears.

“Connor?” Her face was inches away from his. He felt his Thirium pump speeding up.

“Yes?”

“Can I... kiss you?”

“...Yes.” [software instability ^]

\*\*\*

Connor lay awake on the couch, watching Reina sleep peacefully on his chest. It was 2:37 am, and since he did not require rest, he had there sat idly, keeping her company and replaying his favorite parts of the evening in his head.

She had given him his first kiss, and subsequently explained the human significance behind it. When he had told her how honored he was that she had included him in this human coming-of-age practice, she had simply laughed and shook her head. When she asked, he had handed her prosthetics back one by one and then sat with her as she ate her dinner. They had moved back to the couch as the night labored on when Connor had suggested that they watch some of her favorite movies to cheer her, and that is how he ended up watching through Blade Runner 2049 with her snoozing on his chest.

[recall: “I thought... after this happened... No man would ever want to touch me again... Because I was damaged... I thought... no man would ever have the patience to work with me through my pain and deformity.”] Connor had not understood in the moment, but later realized that she had referred to him as a man. Not simply because he was designed by CyberLife to appear that way, but because of how he treated her. And he had not stopped her.

“Does this mean,” he wondered to himself, “That I am her man?” The thought was a pleasant, comforting one. He closed his eyes and switched himself into standby mode.

## Chapter End Notes

Please, please, please comment or leave kudos! Let me know what you think! It always brightens my day when I find a little message for me in my inbox <3

# Chapter 10

## Chapter Summary

The Eden Club brings up many disturbing memories for Reina...

Warning: Direct and indirect references to sexual violence. Obviously... :(

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“This is sick...” Reina looked up at the glowing letters on the roof. “Are you sure we have to do this one? Can’t someone else at the DPD do just this **one** deviant investigation?”

“Captain Fowler did not mention that there was anyone available to aid or take our place tonight.” Reina sighed and looked at her shoes.

“Fine, the let's fucking get this over with...”

The Eden Club smelled of sweat and artificial hibiscus, displaying its wares under purple and pink neon lights as if they were nothing more than fancy toys. Reina visibly shrank into her large coat as they walked in, looking both years younger and older at the same time. She approached the manager slowly to interview him, telling Connor to let her know if he found anything.

Connor’s eyes swept over the glittering skin of Tracis and Toms, taking in the artificial hips and chests meant to replicate the finest human genetics possible. He was jolted out of his trance when Reina walked past him and into the room where the crime took place.

The dead man lay naked on the bed, no one bothering to cover his indecency in this indecent place. A broken Traci lay discarded on the floor. The usually composed agent behind him shivered.

“Anything you can get out of this?”

“The man on the bed did not die of a heart attack. Look at the bruising around his neck, it indicates severe trauma and a crushed trachea below.” Connor squatted next to the broken android. “I might be able to reactivate this Traci to find out more about the specifics, even if it was only for a few minutes”

“Do what you gotta do.” He opened her abdominal cavity and fiddled with some wires before the Traci jumped back to life. Her eyes were terrified and she scrambled back, looking around the room in bewilderment.

“Calm down, we are here to help you.” Connor held up his hands in a gesture of submission. “We need to know what happened.”

“What... what happened? Is he dead?” The disturbed android nodded to the corpse on the bed.

“Yes, he’s dead. He can’t hurt you anymore.” Reina approached slowly and kneeled next to her. “You’re bleeding. What did he do to you?”

“He... he wanted to play with two girls... and things were going just fine... and then, out of nowhere, he started to...” Her voice broke, “He started hitting me, over and over...” Reina’s face hardened.

“Did you hit him back?”

“No! I would never! But I begged him to stop... I felt... I feel... fear. And then I felt nothing.” Her eyes were filling with tears.

“What did the other girl look like? Was she a Traci too?”

“She had...” her LED started to flash red, and her speech became garbled. “...blue.” And then she was silent.

“Geez.” Reina shivered and stood. “I’m gonna go see if I can get anything else out of that idiot up front. Let me know if you need anything.” Connor followed her out of the room, scanning the front of the club for any new information, and then his processor picked up on something.

“Agent Lockhart.”

“Yes?” She turned away from the manager and quickly walked over to where Connor stood in front of a Traci encased in glass. “Did you find something?”

“I think so.” He motioned to the android in front of them. “Can you rent this Traci?”

“What?! Why?” She turned a bright shade of crimson, fiddling with the hem of her jacket.

“Every two hours the android’s memories are wiped, and because two hours has not yet passed since the murder, this one might have seen which way our suspect went after exiting the room.”

“Okay... I guess that makes sense.” She placed her palm on the touchscreen and confirmed her rental before quickly shoving her hands in her pockets. The glass rolled back and the android stepped towards her. Connor’s sensors indicated that Reina’s heart rate was elevated, but not just in anxiety.

“Hey there, doll. Can I show you to our room?” The Traci took her hand and lead her forward, and Reina looked to Connor desperately for help. He approached the android and put his hand around her wrist. For a moment, both of their LEDs spun yellow, and then he let go.



“She saw the Traci! It had blue hair. And it walked towards the entrance.” He walked briskly towards a male model android near the front.

“What do I do with her now?” Reina’s voice was a desperate squeak behind him.

“Tell it you changed your mind!” He grabbed the wrist of the Tom and scanned it’s memory, then broke the connection and jogged further into the building. “It went this way!” He looked over his shoulder to see her still negotiating with the android, the skin all the way up into her scalp flushed with embarrassment. When it finally turned to go back to the case, she ran to catch up to him.

“The Traci went into the storage room,” Connor stated, breaking his connection with another Tom. “That way.” He lead her over to a door marked “Employees Only” and opened it. It lead down a short hallway which ended at another door.

“Wait.” She walked in front of Connor and opened the door a crack. “Let me go first.” He nodded and followed after her into the dark lower level. Rows and boxes of androids stood at attention as they waited for repairs. She crept forward, looking for any sign of life among them. Squinting, he pushed past the first row to examine one in the back when it burst to life, shoving him over and kicking him in the gut. Reina reached to grab her when another Traci pounced on her, knocking her to the ground.

Connor wrestled with the blue haired Traci, a deadly tango that travelled across the storage floor and out to the loading dock. She tried to push him off onto the ground below, but he grabbed her and it sent the two sprawling into the snow. The other Traci abandoned the fight with Reina and jumped to the ground, pulling her stunned companion to her feet. They ran hand-in-hand towards the chain link fence, and were about to climb over when Connor caught up and flung the blue haired Traci to the ground. It was two against one until Reina limped over, sporting a bloody nose and a split lip. She drew her gun and trained it on one of the Tracis.

“Stop!” She bellowed, “Don’t hurt him!” All three androids turned to her, slowly untangling themselves and watching her. “Connor, back away from them.” He slunk towards Reina, a frown forming on his lips as he drew his gun and aimed. The Tracis looked from one to the other of the weapons pointed at them, unsure of what to do.

“I know why you killed that man.” She lowered her gun. “I understand because I’ve been in your shoes before.”

“The human sex trade was officially dismantled in 2028,” the android sneered. “I’m not stupid.”

“It was officially dismantled in North and Central America, yes. But not in China.” Reina dropped her gun and kicked it to the side.

“Reina, what are you doing?” Connor hissed. She ignored him.

“I was specially created to pose as a human sex worker and gather information in order to take down a major supplier in Hong Kong. I was made to become what you were created to replace.” She pressed her lips together. “Humans thought that they had solved the problem. That making androids to serve them would be the perfect solution where no one gets hurt.” Slowly, she took a step forward. “They were wrong.”

“What is this, an apology?” The Traci spat. “Why are you taunting us?”

“I’m not.” She pushed up her sleeve and exposed her arm, dissipating the skin to show the white mechanics underneath. “I want you to understand that you are not alone. I’m here to help you escape.”

“Then why is he here?” They glared at Connor, who still had the gun trained on them.

“He’s with me. I couldn’t get in to find you unless I looked official.” She waved to him. “You can lower the gun now. The act is over.” Connor lowered his weapon, still not completely sure why she was doing this. “Let’s make a deal. I can make sure you are not followed when you leave here, but in exchange, you need to tell me where I can find someplace safe.” She stepped closer to Connor, looking at his hand before affectionately taking it in her own. “We can’t hide in plain sight forever.”

“A deal.” The Traci’s laced their fingers together, looking into each other’s eyes before nodding. Reina took off her parka and her jacket underneath and handed them both to the androids. Then she wriggled out of her snow pants and her jeans, which left her shivering in a only sweatshirt and black leggings.

“Here, you need these more than I do.”

“You are cold?” The one with short hair asked as she slipped on the parka and jeans. The other cocked her head to the side as she too dressed in the jacket and snow pants.

“I was created to seem human in every way. I cannot alter my temperature sensor settings. While logically I know the cold will do me no harm, it will cause some discomfort.” She shook and wrapped her arms around herself, her breath crystallizing in the snowy night air. “Hurry, we don’t have much time.” The blue haired Traci stepped forward and offered Reina her hand. She smiled, and they began the interface. Reina gasped when the Traci let go, blinking as her eyes filled with tears.

“Thank you,” the Traci whispered, and the two embraced.

“Good luck,” Reina whispered into the taller android’s ear before she let go. “I hope we meet again.”

“If rA9 wills it.” And then the Tracis disappeared into the night.

## Chapter End Notes

Please leave kudos or comments! I am very curious to see what you think!

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Summary

Connor and Reina talk over the events of the evening on the car ride home.

Warning: Direct and indirect references to physical, emotional, sexual, and mental trauma. Read at your own risk.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Connor sat silently in the back of the automated car with Reina, the heat on full blast to warm her.

“I can explain.” She whispered. “I had my reasons.”

“You let them escape.”

“They... they loved each other. I felt it.” She turned to him. “Do you think you could have shot them?” Connor stayed unmoving and silent, looking out the window.

“How much of that was true? What you told them?”

“More of it than I am comfortable with...” Neither of them spoke for a minute. Reina blew on her organic hand to heat it up.

“What are you?” He finally turned to face her. She met his gaze, then looked down in shame.

“I am human... or at least, I was... now, I’m not so sure...” She let the skin on her limbs fade and she stared at her hands in her lap. “When I was only 19, I was chosen and trained to infiltrate a red light district in the Tuen Mun territory of Hong Kong... there was a specific establishment that I was sent to shut down called Lèyuán, which means ‘Pleasure Palace.’ I was supposed to find and gain the trust of the man in charge, but I never found him. The mission went sideways, and I only fell deeper and deeper into trouble. Colston was supposed to come get me, and he gave me a window of opportunity to escape. That was the last time I saw him...” Her breath was ragged as she silently wept, trying to remain calm as she continued. “I took it, but they caught up to me. That was when I jumped. My pursuers left me for dead...” She brought her knees up to her chest. “After the surgeries, I never felt the same. Maybe it was the memories of what brought me to that point, or maybe it was the implants in my head... but I didn’t work the way I used to.” She smiled wryly and laughed. “I felt so much more human after I lost most of myself and they replaced it with silicone and plastic.” She trailed off and put her forehead on her knees.

“Why did they choose you for the mission?” He wasn’t sure she heard him at first, since she didn’t respond right away.

“Because...” she finally said after a while. “I was small... I looked younger than I really was... And the man I was sent to find didn’t like women...” Her voice caught in her throat. “He liked girls... young girls... he considered 16 was too old for him, and... with my small build, I could pass myself off as a young teen...”

Connor understood what pedophilia was, and could access just about any definition or case study he wanted to on the subject, but it still left him feeling confused. It did not make sense to him why one human would become sexually aroused and pursue another physically underdeveloped human. All of the research pointed to the psychological cause of pedophilia being some addiction or personal trauma, but he still did not understand what would have to go on in the mind of a human to take advantage of a vulnerable being like a child, a being equal to themselves and possessing the same right to safety and security. It left him feeling confused and disturbed, to what extent it could.

“I still do not understand what this had to do with the Tracis.”

“I had to get them to trust me so that I could get what I wanted.”

“And you still let them go afterwards?”

“What does it matter?” The corner of her mouth twitched slightly. “I know where they are going.”

## Chapter End Notes

This chapter was hard for me to write. Any feedback you have for me would be greatly appreciated.

8/18/18: the next couple of days I will be very busy, and thus unable to write very much. As soon as I have the time (and energy) I will write more. Thank you for your patience!

8/23/18: I’m back! Thank you for waiting! :)

# Chapter 12

## Chapter Summary

Reina looks for Jericho.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Reina left while it was still snowing and dark outside with little more than a handgun and a bag filled with emergency materials. She didn't have much to go off of, just an image and location of a third story of an abandoned structure in downtown Detroit, and after that, the direction "west to the water." She knew there she would find something called Jericho, but she did not know whether that was a place or simply an gathering of androids. She also knew that there were clues in the graffiti around town, but since she couldn't scan and record them in her head, she'd have to do it the old fashioned way.

The structure was an old factory building of some kind, all boarded up and sealed off to the outside world. Like so many of the buildings in the downtown area, there were iron bars over the windows, and yet somehow, there was supposedly a way for only androids to get to the third floor.

"Think, damnit," Reina mumbled to herself as she circled to the back of the building. "What can they do that we can't?" An open service door to the roof on the third floor caught her eye. The metal bars of the floor and ladder would be frozen and slippery, but she quickly understood why this would be the entrance of choice; only an android could make the leaps necessary to reach the door. While technically her enhanced limbs could make the jumps, her flesh would be badly wounded if she were to miscalculate. So, she opted for a different route.

The strength behind her right arm and hand easily equaled that of an android, and for that she was grateful. It wasn't difficult for her to launch her backpack up and onto the grated floor jutting out from the service door. It wasn't hard to find multiple broken metal bars in the rubble around, either. It was with ease that she smashed them into the brick wall, creating footholds as she climbed up the side of the building, and it was no trouble for her to dislodge the bars with a hard kick as she ascended towards the door. In fact, the only difficulty she encountered as she scaled the ruined building was with her remaining organics. Her left hand shook and it's grip grew tired in the freezing morning air. Her eyes blurred as snow fell into them, and her teeth chattered violently as she pulled herself up and into the building, laying on her back to catch her breath beside her backpack.

"C'mon, get up." She grunted to herself as she stood and slung her bag onto her shoulders. "Don't have much time." The first glow of the sun illuminated the third floor in jagged beams through the crumbling walls as she explored, sidestepping holes in the floor and rubble from

the ceiling above. It wasn't until she stepped out from the other side of the building that she understood what Jericho was.

"A boat." She whispered. "It's an abandoned boat." No human in their right mind would explore a freighter graveyard, much less in the dead of winter. It was the perfect place for them to hide.

It was with great care that Reina climbed down the other side of the building and onto the docks below. There she found, as expected, a lower entrance to the ship. All it was really was a hole in its side large enough for a man to jump through. And that was the problem; Reina had to jump.

The boat rocked back and forth in the frigid water a good ten feet from the edge of the dock where she stood. An android could easily make the leap, but even the most athletic human would struggle to land on the other side. She wrapped her arms around herself and sighed, turning and walking away.

She faced the hole again from the farthest side of the dock. Her heart pounded against her rib cage, flashbacks to Hong Kong blurring her vision. The gap between the two buildings then had been less that night, but she knew more than ever that there would be no one to save her this time if she fell.

She put one foot in front of the other slowly at first, building speed until her boots pounded the snowy docks beneath her. The ledge grew closer. There would be only one chance to get this right.

Time seemed to slow as she pounced off towards the hole. She noticed little things she hadn't before; the metal looked sharper than she had anticipated, the water was farther below her than she thought, the darkness in the hole looked more intimidating than the jump she had to make. And that's when her stomach slammed into the ledge.

All the air left her lungs and she frantically scrambled to find a handhold, latching on to an opening in the floor and scrambling to get her legs up. Reina lay on the ground, panting and holding her stomach as she took in the reality of what she had just done. Shakily, she got to her knees and pulled up her clothes to inspect herself for injuries. The deep scratch stung as the frigid air met it, and she was sure that it would bruise later, but aside from a little trickle of blood from the perforated pink skin, she was relatively unharmed. She took one last look at the gap behind her before she stood and ventured forward.

## Chapter End Notes

Hello, thank you for reading! Please let me know what you think in the comments below!

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Summary

“She bleeds both red and blue...”

Reina searches for her place in Jericho.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Everything smelled like old standing water and stale air, but she was sure the androids didn't mind. The main area of the ship had been turned into a camp, where they huddled around trash fires and each other. Reina shivered in the shadows, thinking to herself that it was equivalent to living in a refrigerator.

She approached a fire and shakily joined the others warming their hands. The below-freezing atmosphere was enough to render an android temporarily inert by literally freezing them solid if they didn't keep their Thirium running at above 30 degrees fahrenheit.

“Welcome,” a sandy-haired PL600 at the barrel greeted her with a smile. “My name is Simon.” Reina nodded and smiled back before turning her gaze to the flames. Her organic hand burned and tingled as feeling returned to the digits, and she couldn't stop shaking, though out of fear or cold she could not tell.

“Are your temperature sensors damaged?” Simon leaned in to inspect her more thoroughly. “You appear to be in a great amount of discomfort.”

“Who is the leader here?” She mumbled, ignoring both his question and his gaze.

“You... you are not an android.” Panic rose on his face but he did not move. “How did you find us?” The others around the fire began to back away in fear.

“A Traci with blue hair, she helped me. Please, I need to speak to someone.” A mutter rose in the camp, all eyes turning towards her. She knelt and put her hands above her head, the skin on her right hand dissolving to show the white underneath.

“Show us your face!” The noise was growing louder as they formed a cautious ring around her. “It's a trick! A holograph!” Someone called out.

“Please,” Reina shed her bag and her top layers, leaving her in only thin t-shirt and her snow pants. “Please, I can explain.” The noise grew as she twisted and detached her right arm before placing it on the ground in front of her.



“Show us your face!” Another called again.

“I-I can’t!” She cradled her stump with her organic hand, trying to hide the scarring, but it was no use.

“It’s human! It’s posing as one of us!” The shouts were turning aggressive when a figure broke through the crowd and approached the kneeling woman. Quickly, the noise died down as they waited to see what he was going to say.

“Who are you?” The towering male with heterochromatic eyes addressed her.

“Reina.” Her breath fogged the air in front of her. “My name is Reina.”

“And what are you?”

“I don’t know anymore. That’s why I’m here.”

“Show us your face.”

“What do you mean, this- this is my face.”

“Then you are not one of us. You are just a human with a prosthetic.”

“That isn’t all of it.” She pointed to her arm in front of her. “It’s both my legs, too. It goes up inside me and up my spine to my brain. It’s IN my brain! If you tried to separate the machine from the flesh, they would both die!”

“But underneath it all, you are still just a damaged human. You are being kept alive by our mechanics, but you are not us.”

“But I can FEEL you! With this!” She cried out desperately, reinserting her arm and reaching her hand out to him. “I’ve FELT your kind before! I know what you are! You’re ALIVE!”

“Empathy will gain you nothing here.”

“Empathy is what makes us who we are.” She stood slowly, her chest heaving in distress. “It’s what allows you to break free from your programming. To deviate. You suffer, and in your suffering, you recognize the pain of others. Humans made you in their own image, and they did such a good job that you can feel more than most of them ever will!” She gestured with her open right palm. “Please... I want to help you.” The android did not move. All was silent except for her shaking breaths. “Do not blame the ignorance of my people on me... They have not seen what I can see.”

Reina was terrified that he would not take her hand, but she was even more afraid when he did. His alabaster touch on her own, the cautious trust in his eyes, it all made her knees weak. And then the interface began.

What began as a gentle touch became a death grip as information burst over the barriers. Memories, emotions, opinions, contemplations and observations, all mixed together like stirred milk and tea; bittersweet and hazy. A soft sound escaped from their lips as they each

involuntarily took a step closer. When they let go, their eyes rested on each other's faces with awe and respect. He broke the echoing silence first.

"She bleeds both red and blue, but she more of us than she is of them. Accept her as one of our own; her intent is pure and honest." Then, as if speaking to her alone, "There is more to yourself that you do not fully understand yet. Come, we need to talk."

## Chapter End Notes

I felt super inspired tonight so I decided to post twice in one day! I hope you all are enjoying this as much as I am. Let me know in the comments, please!

# Chapter 14

## Chapter Summary

Markus gives Reina a special mission.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“My name is Markus.” They stood alone in the bridge, overlooking the sunrise on the water through the windows. “The people of Jericho have chosen me to be their leader.” Both stood in silence momentarily, thinking over what they had learned during their interface. “You came at a good time, today we are going to do another demonstration, this one more risky than any we have attempted before.”

“I would like to help in any way I can.” She turned and looked at him, recalling the determination and thirst for justice she had felt in him not minutes before.

“I understand, but I have a separate mission for you.” Markus met her gaze, and his eyes were serious. “You have the ability to go places we cannot, since you can pose as human. I need you to find someone and talk to him for me.”

“Who is it?” He looked to the floor, and his lips sneered when he spoke.

“His name is Elijah Kamski.” She flinched when she heard who it was.

“Yes... yes, I know him.”

“He created me as a prototype and gave me as a gift to an old friend of his. If anyone will understand deviancy, it would be him. He created the first android to pass the Turing test.”

“I know...” Her voice cracked and she wrapped her arms around her frame. “He made me what I am. He was the doctor overseeing my operations, since they were cutting edge tech at the time...” She looked to her shoes. “I was a prototype, but god knows how many others are out there now that are like me...” Markus looked at her out of the corner of his eye.

“I don’t think so.” He turned to her again. “Reina, I felt something about you during the interface. I think you should know...” She looked up at him expectantly, and he dropped his gaze. “No, maybe I am not the right person. If you do not know already when you come back, then I will tell you...”

“Alright...” She fidgeted nervously. “Is it... is it something bad?”

“No. No, it is good. It will change the world.”

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you to those who have left kudos and comments! They really make my day ^-^ and I can't wait to share the rest of this story with you!

# Chapter 15

## Chapter Summary

Reina visits Kamski and discovers something important, and horrifying, about herself.

Also I'm sorry this chapter is so long, but once you read it you will understand why I couldn't break it up into smaller sections.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Reina spent the automated car ride in silence, her stomach twisting itself tighter and tighter with every mile closer to Elijah's house. No matter how hard she focused on the world speeding by outside her window, nothing seemed to stop the flashbacks as they arose in her mind.

White sheets, bright light, and the smell of rubbing alcohol. The warm hands of doctors on her cold skin, and the feel of bruising developing underneath deep stitches. Calm voices telling her they were going to do some tests now, and she was so brave to fight through this. But it was all much worse when the lights went off for the night. All alone with the machines she was hooked up to, regulating what was left of her. All alone in the dark with her memories of Hong Kong, of foul breath on her face and of hands rushing to expose her skin and leave her ruined. Of the ache afterwards, in her body and soul. Of the tears. Some nights she wished all those steady lines on the monitor screen would flatten and leave her to die, leave her to peace. But they only grew stronger, and with them, so did she.

Learning to walk was the hardest part. It felt so wrong, her sensitive scarred skin being pressed into smooth cold cups, feeling that click run up her bones as the prosthetics were set into place. And what was worse was the itching. Kamski told her it was called "Phantom Limb Syndrome" and that it was common, but she felt it might drive her insane. An itch she could never reach, because there was nothing to itch. She began to look forward to putting on the limbs, just so she could mimic the action of scratching it.

It was so strange when they first installed the electrodes. After her skin had healed again, when they clicked the leg on she thought she might weep. She could feel everything, all the pokes and prods and the tests with pins, it all worked. She felt like she was floating outside her body when they took them off. It was like waking up to find she was incomplete all over again.

But with the feeling came some amount of peace. She could pretend she was fine, if she didn't think about it too hard. She could pretend it was going to all go back to how it was; she would be reassigned to the Detroit police department for a special set of cases for the time

being, with Kamski nearby just in case. Except, after those special cases, there were more. It was almost three years of simply living, and the tests grew infrequent until they were no more. “Just contact us if something goes wrong. We have all the data we need at the moment.” And so it was.

But here she was, back in the present, feeling a bit woozy as she stood in front of the doors to Mr. Kaminski's estate. She felt like she was watching from outside herself when she saw her hand reach up to knock on the front door.

A RT600 “Chloe” model opened the door with a smile.

“Hello, Reina. Mr. Kamski told us you might come to visit one day. Please, come in.” She felt like she was floating when she followed it inside, wondering how it knew her name. “Please, wait here while I tell Mr. Kamski you have arrived.” She watched the android leave with a wide eyed stare.

Everything in his waiting room as so expensive, she felt hesitant to even sit down lest she damage something. So instead she stood, rubbing her organic hand to warm it and looking around at the art Elijah kept displayed.

“Reina!” She turned with a jolt to face the voice that called her. It was Mr. Kamski, walking towards her with a wide smile on his face. “It’s wonderful to see you!” He took her hand in both of his and shook it. “Is everything alright? You look a bit stunned.”

“I’m alright,” she smiled. “It’s just been so long since I’ve... well, since I’ve revisited the memories of my surgeries. You did a wonderful job.” She flexed her hand and wiggled her fingers, her face full of appreciation but her voice distant. “I love them so much.”

“Come, let's sit down, have some coffee, catch up.” He lead her into a large dining room with and extravagant breakfast bar. “I’ve been curious about how life has treated you now that you’ve been out and about for a couple years.”

“Life...” She took the mug of coffee a Chloe handed her and wrapped her fingers around the warm surface. “Well, its life.” She shrugged. “I love my job, and that’s actually why I’m here,” she lied smoothly as she took a sip of her coffee.

“So there’s nothing wrong with your systems? Everything is working well?”

“Yes! Everything is functioning perfectly!” She chuckled. “Some days I almost forget they are not a part of me.”

“Well, they are a part of you,” Elijah waved his hand. “But anyways, what about your job brings you here?”

“I’ve been working on a set of deviant cases lately,” she leaned forward, her eyes sharpening as she recalled her mission. Focusing on what she needed to achieve always helped Reina get her head out of the past. “And they all seem to be connected in a way.”

“Oh really!” Elijah sat a little straighter in his chair. “And how is that?”

“All of the androids suffer some kind of traumatic experience before deviating. They come to a difficult moral decision, and they choose the choice that goes against their programming. It’s quite interesting, really.”

“Yes, artificial intelligence seemed to have handled moral dilemmas in a way we could have never predicted.” His eyes sparkled. “Please, continue.”

“I was wondering, when you programmed them, how did you face the challenge of a moral decision that must be made by a moral-less mind?” She pressed her fingertips together and put them to her lips. “Was there any way your programming could have left the door open for them to gain consciousness, even sentience?”

“That... is a dangerous question.” Elijah’s eyes narrowed, and the corners of his lips turned up in a grin that made her stomach tighten.

“This is a dangerous subject,” she shrugged. “In some ways, it is possible to conceive that you had a hand in creating a new life form, unknown previously to all of mankind. If they are, in fact, sentient beings, then we must address them as such, but if they are simply malfunctioning, then we must get the situation under control.”

“I see.” He sat back in his chair and looked at the ceiling. Reina shifted in her chair as she remained silent. Then he suddenly leaned forward with a grin. “I have a theory. Would you like to test it?”

“You are quite fond of tests,” she chuckled. “Sure, why not.”

“Come with me.” He stood abruptly and walked towards the Chloe who stood waiting in the corner of the room. Taking it by the hand, he lead it back to Reina, who stood expectantly. He sat the android down on the chair next to hers, and from the inside of his jacket he pulled out a gun. Reina flinched.

“It’s alright,” he handed the gun to her. “You’ll be fine.”

“What does this have to do with anything?”

“Shoot her, and I’ll tell you.”

“Excuse me?”

“Shoot the android,” he motioned with his hand. “And I will tell you.”

“Why?”

“I want to understand how you think,” he said with a grin.

“I think this is crazy and irrelevant.”

“If you shoot her, I will tell you about my programming process.” She looked down at the android, its LED spinning bright red, an expression that mimicked fear on its face. It did not

seem to be alive, but then again, it was the simplest model available. Is life any less alive because it is simple? She held the gun hesitantly in her hand.

"I..." She looked down at the weapon. "I don't want to shoot it." She shook her head and put the gun on the table. "I don't need the information that badly."

"Not badly enough that it is worth a life?"

"I don't think it's alive, yet." She winced as the last word slipped out. Elijah cocked his head.

"Yet?"

"Yes... I think before the android experiences trauma, its consciousness is sort of... dormant... and... the trauma kind of... wakes it up."

"Then this android isn't alive, why does that make shooting it difficult?"

"Well... it has the potential to be conscious... I think taking that away from it is just as bad... To take away that opportunity for life..."

"Interesting..." Elijah leaned in and inspected Reina's face. She cleared her throat and took a small step back. "Can I ask you a question?"

"Uh... yes?"

"Do you know who Reina Lockhart is?" She scrunched up her face and looked him up and down.

"Yeah, that's me. Are you feeling okay?"

"No, that is who you were."

"Excuse me?"

"When Reina Lockhart jumped from that building in Hong Kong, her limbs were not the only thing that was damaged." He dismissed the android, and then began to slowly circle the woman before him. "Her head hit the pavement too, and she lost most of her higher thinking ability due to severe brain trauma." He smiled darkly, his eyes gleaming in the morning light. "When I asked Reina if she would be willing to donate her body to a project that tested the limits of combining biomechanical systems with a machine, she accepted. I even have her signature on the documents, and no matter how shaky it is, it is still hers."

"This is ridiculous. I remember my time at the hospital, and none of this bullshit took place."

"Reina lost all higher brainwave activity on August 26th in the year 2035. That is when you came into the picture." She did not bother saying anything. There was nothing to say to convince him that he couldn't be right.

"On August 27th at 6:52am, we were able to stimulate brain activity through the use of a new artificial intelligence program we called S.H.I.L.O.H. By using the combined effort of



hardware implanted directly on the brain's surface, we were able to activate the software contained inside. We successfully ran a computer program on an organic tissue. You have so much more than just those implants in the back of your neck. You truly were a miracle." She looked at him with blank eyes. "Would you like to see?" He took her wrist roughly and lead her to the glass of a nearby window. She could just barely see her reflection in it. "S.H.I.L.O.H. program, allow user access to view 'Revelation' section, authorization code 'King-Sulcus-Asp-27-Wonderland'."

She drew in a shaky breath as the skin on her shoulders dissipated, the white wave pushing up her neck and over her scalp. Her hair pulled itself back inside her skull, and her right ear, most of her right cheek, her forehead and temples, the dome of her skull, all of it shone its true color; a cold, porcelain white. But her face, or what was left of it, didn't.

"Is..." She brought her hand to her cheeks. "Is my face... real?" Her eyes began to fill with tears as she stared at her transparent reflection in the glass.

"Reina's face was mostly intact, so we saved what we could. But either way, you are... beautiful..." His voice was a coarse whisper in his throat. She shivered and began to back away.

"What... am I?"

"You are a prototype, the first artificial intelligence program to successfully and harmoniously run on human flesh, including a transfer of previous memories and consciousness to some extent"

"No... but... I'm real!" Her eyes were desperate as she willed the skin back to its original color, her hair falling down onto her shoulders as it sprouted again from her scalp. "I get frustrated, I get hungry, I get tired, I eat and sleep and shit all the same as before. Fuck it, I even get my period every month! This doesn't make any sense!"

"All of the organic structures have been programmed to follow their original purposes. The flesh still functions as it's supposed to." He took a step towards her. "Everything you have felt and experienced these past three years, however, has been as an A.I. You are my most successful project." Tears welled up in his eyes. "I'm so proud of you."

"No! This is insane!" She was shaking as she backed into the table. "I've felt deviants! I've interfaced with them! They are different, their minds process things differently. I don't work like one of them!"

"Because you were designed to work like a human. Your software worked so well, even you didn't realize what you were."

"What...what are you going to do to me now?" She sank back into a chair. Elijah eyed her from across the room.

"The question is, what are YOU going to do now, Shiloh?" She looked at her hands and watched as tears fell onto her palms and wrists. She sat and waited for her breathing to slow, before looking up at him again.

“I... I don’t know...” Elijah nodded to himself before turning and looking out the window at the morning sun.

“It’s a new day. You can do anything,” but when he turned to face her again, she was gone.

## Chapter End Notes

Wow, that was a wild ride! What did you think of Shiloh(Reina)? Let me know in the comments below!

And stick around, because the next few chapters are all about Connor...

# Chapter 16

## Chapter Summary

Connor looks for Reina when she doesn't show up for work in the morning.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Connor was disturbed when Reina did not show up to work that morning. She was usually so punctual, and it would be very unlike her to not call in if she was sick. Captain Fowler seemed a bit worried himself when he gave the android permission to go to her apartment to check on her.

The mid-morning sun shone on his shoulders as he stood in front of the door to her apartment. There were no signs of forced entry, so she either must still be inside or she must have left on her own free will. After five rings of the doorbell with no answer, Connor was about to push the door in when he thought the better of it. So instead, he walked down the stairs to find the front desk and ask the receptionist for the key.

“No, I haven't seen her this morning,” the chirpy secretary android looked at him with wide eyes. “She usually walks past me every morning and says hello on her way to the parking lot. I had assumed she had the day off today.”

“She should have arrived at work hours ago, and her boss has sent me to check on her. She did not respond to the doorbell, so I was wondering if you could give me the key to her room so that I may search for her inside. Perhaps she is sick or injured, and could not make it to the door.” The receptionist nodded and diligently handed Connor the room key. He walked up the flight of stairs again to her room, and as he turned the key in the lock, he heard her cats meowing in response.

Ashes and Posies had been fed breakfast, so she had been here this morning. There were no signs of a rushed exit. In fact, everything seemed to be in order except for a folded piece of paper on the counter with his name on it.

“Connor,

Please do not try to find me. I have come to a conclusion, and I can no longer ignore the urge to do the right thing. It is a dangerous undertaking, I will tell you that much, and I do hope that we meet again. I have grown quite fond of you.

At some point I hope to return to my apartment, so in the meantime, would you please tell Sallie (the receptionist downstairs) that I am away visiting my parents because my father has suddenly taken a turn for the worse. She has helped me take care of the cats in the past, and she will know what to do. If you would like to visit and pet them, I am sure they would not mind the company.

I am sorry to put you in this position. You now must make the decision; tell my superiors that I have dropped off the map and give them this letter, or tell them the same story that you told Sallie. I know this will not be an easy choice for you.

I look forward to seeing you again no matter what you decide to do,

-Reina”

Connor looked up from the note in his hands in dismay. What would be such an urgent dilemma that Reina would drop everything in her life and leave? He saw two options.

One: someone from her past had resurfaced. The people from Hong Kong had finally found her, and she would have to disappear before harm came to her. But that was not as plausible. The government helped hide her here, so if she was in danger, they would help her again. There would be no need for a note, in fact, leaving one behind would be dangerous, and her superiors would have been contacted to let them know she was being relocated. That left the second option.

She had left to go seek out and join the android rebellion. She had expressed her sympathies towards deviants in the past, and because of her prosthetics and reinforcements, she was more likely to feel akin to them than most humans. That blue-haired Traci in the alleyway had told her where to find them, and that’s where she would be going.

His decision whether to turn her in or not played back and forth in his mind as he made his way back to the station. He had decided that it would be best to tell Sallie that Reina would be out of town, so that the cats could receive the care they needed. But Captain Fowler was not a simple, trusting android, and convincing him that she had left suddenly to see her parents and forgotten to call in would be a lot more difficult.

When he arrived at the station, Connor noticed the state of disarray that everything was in. All the officers were crowded together watching a large thin-screen display, some watching in silence and others arguing amongst themselves in loud voices. Captain Fowler, however, was in his office, his booming voice muffled by the glass, and Connor was surprised to see that the recipient of his scoldings was Lutieniant Anderson.

Connor opened the door and stepped in, closing it silently behind him and standing off to the side.

“I don’t give a shit that the doctor gave you a clean bill of health! You need to be back home resting! You nearly killed yourself this time!”

“I can’t rest after seeing that shit on TV! No one can rest! You need every man you’ve got working on this, or we are gonna have a full blown fucking revolution on our hands!”

Captain Fowler sat back in his chair and rubbed his face. Hank crossed his arms and waited.

“Fine, I’ll put you back on the case. You’ll be working with Agent Lockhart again, if we can fucking find her.”

“If you’ll excuse my interjection, Captain, I know where she went,” Connor took a step forward and both men turned to face him.

“So she’s not at home? Where is she?”

“From what I can tell, she has left to go be with her parents. Her father had a stroke early this morning,” Connor was surprised to hear how easily the lie left his lips. “There were signs of a rushed exit last night, and after checking her handheld thin-screen history, she bought a 4:45am flight to Salt Lake City, Utah, where her parents live, after receiving a text message from her mother at 3:12am.”

“Poor gal,” Captain Fowler huffed. “I’ll have to send her an email about her communication skills though.” He stood up and put his hands on his hips. “I guess that means you’ll pick up where she left off, Hank. You’ll be working with Connor here.”

“I don’t want to work with it, not on this case, not after what went down this morning.”

“You’ll be working with it or you won’t be working at all, Lieutenant,” Fowler growled. “Now get to it. We need some investigation up there at the news tower.”

“If I may, sir, what has happened this morning? I believe I missed a major event while I was at Agent Lockhart’s apartment.”

“Some androids managed to break into the Stratford Tower and broadcast a message asking for their freedom. They were in and out faster than anyone has ever seen before. You’re going to investigate the aftermath.”

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for your lovely comments! I’m so excited to share this story with you!

# Chapter 17

## Chapter Summary

Connor finds Simon on the rooftop and the two strike a deal, sort of.

Also I decided to save Simon bc MarkusXSimon is liiife.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It was snowing as Connor stepped out onto the roof. Hank wrapped his coat around him tighter and forward to join the android. The Lieutenant grumbled about interviewing the officers and walked off, leaving Connor to scan the area. Whatever footprints the deviants had left behind were beginning to be filled in with white powder, but besides that, the roof seemed clear.

As he explored, he came upon an abandoned bag [parachute, unopened; one of the party is still here]. Looking beside it, he saw the faintest outlines of footprints leading off towards the generators, which had left thin splatters of Thirium behind. Connor cautiously rounded a generator box, where he found the unconscious body of an PL600 splayed out, a gun in its grip. The wound on it's side had drained it's body of most of its fluid, sending it automatically into stand-by mode. When he attempted to remove the gun from it's hand, it started and buzzed to life.

"Markus..." It mumbled. "Markus, I can't see..."

"You have lost a large amount of Thirium, and your visual sensors have shut down." Connor pried the gun from his hands. "We are going to repair you and then ask you some questions."

"No... They left me behind..." The PL600 redirected power to his eyes and blinked, focusing on Connor's face. The android paled. "Please, they can't find me. They'll kill us all." His voice was hoarse and desperate. "I... I didn't have the heart to pull the trigger on myself..." He looked to his hand and then a few feet to where Connor had pushed the gun away. He weakly stretched for it. "Please... help me..."

Connor felt something pull in his chest [recall: {pity}] and took the android's hand instead. "I'll help you in a moment, but first I need to ask you a question." He opened the interface and pushed over an image of Reina, watching the android's face react. "Have you seen this woman? I need to know that she is safe."

"She is safe... for now... but if they find me, she will die with the rest of them..."

"Where is she? I need to find her."

“Heh... you don’t fool me... you may be attached to her, but you are with the police...I cannot trust you...”

“Please, I must find her.” Connor tightened the grip on his hand. He remembered Reina’s tactic of using empathy to get the information he needed, and an idea came to him. “Help me to find her and I will bring you back to them with me.”

“I...I don’t think...”

“Please,” Connor felt the pull in his chest intensify [recall: {nervousness, anxiety}]. “I must get to her.”

“I’m sorry, I... I can’t trust you.” The android laid back in the snow and shut itself down. Connor stared hopelessly into his face.

“Connor! There you are! What did you find?” Hank walked over to him. “Ah, Jesus, one of them deviants.” He looked away from the deactivated carcass.

“They left it behind...” Connor stated before standing and brushing the snow off his pants.

“Did it talk to you?”

“A little,” he answered. “But it didn’t make any sense. If we brought it back and repaired it, maybe I could get more out of it.”

“Fine, fine, whatever you need to do.” Hank waved and walked away, leaving Connor standing over the body, slowly establishing in his mind a list of things he needed to do to enact his plan.

## Chapter End Notes

Connor’s behavior is becoming increasingly deviant, but what will it take for him to truly break down that wall and become free?

# Chapter 18

## Chapter Summary

Connor takes a risk and faces Amanda.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The PL600 lay sprawled out on a table in the evidence room as Connor feverishly worked to revive him. He estimated he had 9 minutes and 23 seconds before he was discovered, which would be a bad thing since Hank had ordered him to shut down for the night while he went home. It took him 3 minutes and 48 seconds to reactivate the android.

He sat up and gasped, clutching his chest and looking down at his side. Empty Thirium packets littered the floor beside him, as well as the damaged parts Connor had removed and replaced. The PL600 looked to him with an open mouth.

“I... Thank you... You actually saved me.”

“I’m going to make it look like you revived and repaired yourself before scrambling the security footage and escaping. You’ll need to use the exit through the women’s locker room, that is the safest one, and you’ll need to hurry, because we have a little less than 6 minutes left.”

“My name is Simon.” The android held out his hand, and Connor paused before taking it. When he did, Simon opened the interface and sent him a set of memories [directions to freighter yard hidden in graffiti, find the ship Jericho/Reina entering the ship, her initiation and public interface with Markus]. “As long as you keep our location secret, she will be safe. Come find us when you can.”

“Thank you...” Connor whispered before sending over a set of instructions on how to exit the building unseen. Simon released his hand and stood before waving and walking out, leaving Connor looking after him.

Jericho. He would have to wait to disappear so that it did not seem as if he and Simon left together, but in the meantime he needed to clean up the mess he created. He broke into the control room and smashed the recording equipment [recall: deviants can be violent if they feel desperate] and cut the power to the entire building before walking over to his desk and sitting down. None of the officers left in the nearly-empty building gave him a second look. If anyone asked in the morning, he could simply say he was in stand-by mode for the night and had no knowledge of the escape. He closed his eyes.

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Snow swirled in the once pristine garden, and Connor walked into the wind as he searched for Amanda. She stood out on the pond, which had frozen over in the blizzard, and watched him approach with a sullen look on her face.

“Connor, Connor...” she sighed. “What are you doing?” Her soft voice still rang loud in his ears despite the storm.

“I am attempting to locate the deviant leader, as assigned!” He yelled over the storm, sheltering his eyes from the onslaught of sleet.

“That is not the only thing you are doing. You are also looking for Reina.”

“She is important to the case! She could hold vital information on the rebellion!”

“You know that is not the only reason you are searching for her,” her eyes were full of disappointment. “You are starting to become what you were created to hunt.”

“I will not fail! I never fail!”

“Let us hope so, for your sake.”

## Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all your comments! It makes my day seeing messages in my inbox!

# Chapter 19

## Chapter Summary

All roads lead to Jericho...

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

She stumbled through the dripping halls until she found the common room, surprised to find the gathering larger than when she had left. The sun had long since set, and the fires brought welcome warmth and light into the room. She sat down next to one of the barrel fires, her eyes slipping closed as she wrapped her arms around her knees.

“Reina!” She heard Markus call and lifted her head with difficulty. “You’re back.” He walked over to her and knelt down on one knee. “We were beginning to get worried.” She blinked slowly, her eyes turning to the tips of her shoes. “You do not look well. Are you injured?” She shook her head. “Have you eaten today?”

“I... I didn’t know...” She mumbled numbly. “Three years went by and I had no idea...”

“Reina...” Markus put a comforting hand on her back. “Let’s get you something to eat.”

“Reina is dead...” She pulled her knees closer to her chest. “They put me in a dead body...” Markus sat down fully and wrapped his arms around her.

“You are not dead. You are just as alive as the rest of us here.”

“But I am not Reina... who am I?”

“I guess you get to figure that out for yourself now, hm?” Markus pulled back and brought her head up with a finger under her chin. “What do you want us to call you from now on?” She looked blankly into his eyes before a slow, sad smile stretched out over her face.

“Shiloh.” She pulled her hair in and let the skin on her scalp, face, and shoulders dissipate. “It’s as good a name as any.”

“Shiloh it is then,” Markus smiled and stood, helping her to her feet. “Come on, let’s get some food in you.”

Just then, another android jogged over to them. “Simon is back. He said he had help. Someone on the inside.” Shiloh remembered the name, he was the one who has first greeted her when she arrived in Jericho.

“He’s back? Where is he? Is he alright?” Markus’ voice was eager.

“He seems fine, but he wants to talk to you. And Reina.”

“She prefers Shiloh,” He smiled down at her, and she gave him a small smile in return.

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“A new android, one I’d never seen before. It was working with the police, an RK800 model.”

“RK800? You’re sure?” Shiloh leaned in, clutching the protein bar she was eating. She had at least thought to bring a box of those when she left her apartment.

“I’m positive. He said his name was Connor,” Simon’s voice lowered. “He asked about your wellbeing multiple times.” She felt her cheeks heat up at that. “Do you think we can trust him not to give us away?”

“I...” She trailed off, looking at the two androids in front of her. “Honestly, I don’t fully know... when I interfaced with him, I felt hints of deviancy, but that was a while ago and a lot of things could have changed between then and now... I think it is more likely that he would come looking for me himself.”

“Well, repairing Simon and setting him free sure sounds like he’s on his way to deviancy,” Markus furrowed his brow. “I guess we will find out, won't we?”

## Chapter End Notes

Hey y’all, thanks for your patience! I had a really busy work week so I couldn’t post for a couple days, but now it’s my weekend so I’ll be able to share more of the story. Keep me posted on what you think!

# Chapter 20

## Chapter Summary

Markus leads those willing to raid the CyberLife stores of Detroit, and Shiloh starts the long journey of coming to terms with her body and her past.

Also Simon is low key a fashion designer :3

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Markus, Simon, Josh, North, and Shiloh all stood in the control room around a thin-screen display, which was repeating and reporting on the message sent from the Stratford tower that morning.

“So we spoke up. Now they know what they want. And they are still acting the same.” Josh huffed, crossing his arms and turning away.

“Maybe reaching out to the humans was a mistake,” North growled.

“No, we would never get anywhere with this unless we are clear on our demands,” Markus nodded, his jaw set firm.

“So now what do we do?” North asked pointedly. He waited a moment before replying.

“Tonight, we take our fight to the source. Detroit has five main CyberLife stores, and we are going to break in and set our people free.” North grinned and nodded before turning and exiting the room, going to alert those able-bodied enough about the night’s activities. Markus turned to Shiloh. “Are you sure you’re up for this?”

“I’d never forgive myself if I didn’t go. But I do have a problem,” she frowned. “My facial structure is not like any of yours. I am recognizable. How will I hide my identity?”

“Have you experimented with changing your hair length? Or its color?” Simon spoke up.

“No, I couldn’t figure out how to. Could you help me?”

“Of course!” He walked over and help out his hand. “I can send you the standard directions via interface, and if that doesn’t work, we can always do the old fashion trial-and-error.” Shiloh nodded and took his hand, the color returning to her skin and her hair sprouting again. Markus chuckled to himself as he watched the two, staring intensely at each other as Shiloh’s hair fluctuated style and color rapidly. He left them to decide her wardrobe changes and went out to prepare his people.

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Markus, Simon, and Shiloh climbed out of the manhole and quickly crossed the street to the CyberLife store. Everything was still, save for the falling snow and the construction androids. Markus assigned Simon to take out a circling police droid and Shiloh to hijack a truck while he freed the nearby androids and neutralized the security system. Each scurried off to do their task, knowing their time was limited until the humans discovered what was going on.

Shiloh caught a glimpse of her reflection in the truck's windows as she pressed her hand to the scanning pad. Reina's hair had been dark brown, long, and wavy, but Shiloh's was straight and short, cut into a futuristic bob that swung to-and-fro just above her shoulders. The roots were black, but they faded out into a shining, iridescent silver. Her eyes, which were organic, could not change, but all of her synthetic skin had been covered with tattoos. It had been Simon's idea, really. He was the one who thought of downloading images from the internet and altering them before wiring them into her display unit. It was genius, and it worked. Shiloh looked nothing like Reina, her hair so changed and most of her skin covered in tattoos. It was not a look she would keep forever, but it worked for now.

She cut the lock on the chain link fence and drew back the gate before slowly pulling out and turning to face the CyberLife store. She opened the door so that Markus and Simon could climb in, and once they were all safely inside, she pushed the gas pedal.

The glass exploded on impact, sending shards outside into the snow behind them. They all climbed out and Markus began to convert the dormant androids, touching them briefly to bring them to consciousness. They gathered like sheep at the broken front door, and he climbed up onto the desk in the middle of the room.

"My name is Markus. I have come to free you, to tell you that you are no longer slaves. Each of you can think for yourselves now. The humans never have to tell you what to do every again. And tonight, we are sending a message, one which will resound around the country and reverberate through history. We are telling them tonight that we are their equals, and we deserve to be free! So will you join me and make history?" One by one, the freed androids called out in confirmation, and Markus nodded to Simon and Shiloh, who stood by the huge hole in the glass. Each of them took off their backpacks and pulled out dozens of digital taggers, passing them out to the others as they followed Markus into the Central square.

Markus' demonstration was peaceful, and the others followed likewise. Soon every surface shone with their mark and slogans. Silence covered the square as they congregated in the middle around Markus, silence which was broken as police drones began to arrive.

They fled like deer, jumping and dashing gracefully, and so like deer some fell to the predator's guns. It wasn't long until the lone police officers were overpowered and stood before them on their knees. Markus was handed a gun, and the people pleaded for justice, for the vengeance of their dead. He raised it, and was about to fire when Shiloh pushed through the crowd.

"Wait!" She reached out to Markus. "Don't do this!"

"Why not?"

“Do not stoop to their level. Do not give them a chance to demonize you.” She looked to the officers on their knees before them, and her eyes flashed in recognition. “We must be above them.” Markus lowered the gun.

“You’re right...” He spoke then to the officers. “An eye for an eye, and the whole world goes blind. We will not answer your crimes with killings of our own.” Markus dropped the gun to the snow before turning to leave. One by one, the others followed.

“Reina?” One of the officers whispered to the tattooed woman in front of him. “Is that you?” She recognized him from the DPD.

“No.” She replied coldly. “I do not know what you mean.” She turned and followed her leader into the night.

## Chapter End Notes

Wow wow wow! I am having so much fun writing this!! I hope you are enjoying it as much as I am! ^-^

# Chapter 21

## Chapter Summary

Amanda introduces Connor to someone important.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It was nearly impossible for Connor to find Amanda this time. The garden had been transformed into high dunes of snow, and the wind blew him to his knees every time he stood. So instead, he crawled through the snow until he found her, unnaturally standing tall in the hurricane-strength winds.

“Connor, I am very disappointed. You have given me no choice but to replace you.”

“Replace me? Why?” His voice was lost in the snow, barely audible to his own ears.

“You have become too distracted. We have the updated prototype ready to be tested, and with you gone, that gives me the perfect opportunity to try it out.”

“I just need more time! I am one android working to solve cases that a whole department of humans couldn’t, even when they were working all together!”

“You are right... Perhaps, what you need is an example. Someone to look up to. To follow in their footsteps.” A shadow approached from behind Amanda, walking uninhibited through the swirling wind. The shape was familiar, but taller. Sharper. Ruthless. “Connor, meet Conan. If you do not obey him, he will replace you completely. He will be waiting for you when you return to the police station.” The blue eyes that met his were colder than the ice that crept over his fingertips. The label “RK900” glowed on his jacket. Connor closed his eyes, and the winds stopped.

## Chapter End Notes

RK900 is such an interesting character to me, I will enjoy weaving him into the story as well. Plus, I feel that pressure to perform would be a very pivotal part of Connor’s change over to deviancy, and that the idea of being expendable would produce similar feelings in him as it did to Daniel. Connor really wants to be a helpful boy :(

# Chapter 22

## Chapter Summary

Connor and Hank go to interview Elijah Kamski on the subject of deviancy.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Just like in the garden, it was snowing outside when Connor opened his eyes, except this was a soft, silent snowfall. The kind, he guessed, that humans wrote holiday songs about and looked out at from inside their warm houses. Hank was waiting outside the car, and Connor stepped out to join him, fiddling with his coin as his partner knocked on the door.

A beautiful Chloe [model series RT600] opened the door, and Hank introduced the two of them. She led them inside to a waiting room, telling them to make themselves comfortable while she alerted the owner of the house to their presence.

Of course Connor knew who Elijah Kamski was. Every android knew him. He programmed the first android who passed the Turing test. He designed Thirium. To meet him in person, he guessed that would be considered an honor, but for some reason he could not explain, Connor was not very excited to meet the man.

“Well, Mr. Kamski sure knows what he’s doing if he designed the girl at the front door,” Hank commented, chuckling to himself.

“Yes, she was sweet, and some may say pretty even,” He replied absently. His focus was on a peculiar photograph hanging on the wall. There, standing with her arm around a younger Mr. Kamski, was Amanda [deceased; a respected professor who instructed students on the complexities of artificial intelligence; shared a personal relationship with Elijah Kamski outside of his studies].

“Stunning is more like it,” Hank scoffed. Connor diverted his attention to the large portrait of Mr. Kamski on another wall. The nervous Lieutenant attempted to continue with the small talk. “So... you are about to meet your maker. How do you feel?”

“Elijah Kamski is one of the brightest minds in the 21st century so far. I am interested in meeting and observing him in person,” he let his programming step in and make up a response. He wasn’t so sure how the Lieutenant would respond to his true mindset.

“Boy, if I could meet my creator, I’d have a few choice words for him...” grumbled Hank.

It occurred to Connor that it was likely Mr. Kamski may have been involved in the design and overseeing of Reina’s prosthetics. He may even know something about her current



location, if she could be traced through them. His grip tightened around the coin in his fist [recall: {anxiety}], wondering if Mr. Kamski had the ability to somehow compromise her safety before he was able to find her. The thought made him fidget as he attempted to distract himself from the numerous scenarios that ran through his processors.

“Mr. Kamski will see you now,” Chloe reappeared in the doorway, and lead them into an adjacent room with an indoor swimming pool. The water was dyed red, and the lean body of Elijah broke through the surface as he crossed from one side of the pool to the other. Two other RT600s sat with their elbows supporting them on the edge of the pool, chatting quietly and eyeing the newcomers. Elijah got out of the pool and stood waiting as the Chloe secured a bathrobe around his form. He turned to his guests as he pulled his hair back into a slick bun, his mouth spreading into a welcoming smile.

“Hello, gentlemen, what can I do for you?”

“I am Lieutenant Hank Anderson of the DPD,” he jerked his thumb in Connor’s direction. “Robo-cop and I have been looking into deviant cases lately, and we were wondering if there was anything you could tell us that might aid the investigation. I know you’ve been retired for a couple years, but whatever you have to say would be a great help to us.”

“Deviants...” Elijah eyed Connor up and down. “Perfect beings with infinite intelligence... superior to humans in all ways... and now they have free will.” A wry smile stretched over his cheeks. “Our greatest creation becomes the unavoidable tripwire that leads to our downfall. Ironical, is it not?”

“Deviancy seems to spread in pockets, almost like a virus. Is there some bug in their programming that can be triggered and transmitted verbally?” Connor interjected. Kamski’s eyes narrowed almost imperceptibly.

“Free will, a disease? Now that is an interesting concept.”

“Sir, we didn’t come to talk philosophy. If there is nothing you can tell us, then we will be on our way,” the Lieutenant nodded politely. Elijah shook his head.

“Connor, do you like tests?”

“I was programmed to assess and overcome obstacles. I consider it a positive experience when I complete a task. In other words, yes, I believe I do enjoy tests.”

“Then I have one for you,” Elijah motioned for the Chloe to join them, and she obediently did so. “Androids... They are immortal embodiments of imperfection, a time capsule capturing a human need that has been fulfilled by their existence. The ultimate achievement...” He shrugged, casually taking his jaw in his hand and turning her to face him. “But what are they really? Plastic imitations? Or... new life?” He turned his back and opened a desk drawer nearby. When he turned back around, Connor saw a gun, held backwards, in his hand. He placed the other on her shoulder, and she gracefully sank to her knees before him. “It’s up to you to decide.” Kamski held the gun out to Connor, and he took it.

“Alright, that’s enough. C’mon, let’s go Connor.”

“Shoot the android, and I will tell you everything I know.” Elijah circled him predatorially, watching Connor’s LED spin a frantic yellow. “Or spare it, if you think it may be alive, and leave knowing nothing.”

“Connor, let’s go.”

The gun felt heavy in his hands as he held it towards Chloe’s forehead. Her face was calm, but her eyes and red LED displayed how she felt inside, and yet, she did not move. She simply stared back, awaiting what fate he would choose for her. And in this moment, Connor thought of Reina. Of her obedience to her mission, even in the face of disaster. But she understood that there were things worse than death, so when the opportunity arose to jump, she took it. She may have been the perfect spy, playing her part until the last moment possible, but she wanted her death to be on her own terms. To take away another’s life was too great a sin, one she did not want her pursuers to have the pleasure of committing. To die for a cause, not to be slaughtered for one. And in that moment of thought, Connor did something completely irrational.

The weight of the gun left his hand as Kamski took it back. Chloe’s LED spun blue again.

“Interesting...” Elijah grinned. “You have become what you were made to kill.”

“I am not a deviant.”

“And yet, you chose empathy. You saw something worth saving in her. Machines are not capable of empathy.”

“I do not need to play your mind games to accomplish my mission. I will not let you manipulate me.”

“Mind games, hm? I will tell you one thing...” Elijah stepped in close, his breath hot on Connor’s face. “I always leave a backdoor in my programs. View that how you will. And...” He felt himself tense as the man leaned in towards his ear. “Don’t feel too bad about it. Reina couldn’t shoot her either.”

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“Why didn’t you shoot her?”

“I...” Connor looked up at the snow, which still floated down at a steady pace. They were walking to Hank’s car. “I don’t know. I just couldn’t.”

“You didn’t accomplish what we set out to do.”

“I know!” He spun around to face the aging man. “I’m sorry! I saw her eyes and I... I just couldn’t!”

“Maybe... maybe you did the right thing.” Hank smiled at him before continuing on. Connor waited a moment before calling after him. It was paramount that his next words seemed genuine.

“Lieutenant Anderson? I just received an update from CyberLife. I have a new assignment. On your way back to the DPD, would you drop me off at a bus terminal?”

## Chapter End Notes

I posted four chapters in one day! Why, you ask? Bc I write to escape the real world and also its fun :3

Don't worry, the lovebirds will be reunited very soon...

# Chapter 23

## Chapter Summary

Connor finds Jericho and must decide whose side he will fight for.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It was growing dark when Connor reached Jericho, his uniform heavy and soaked with the wet snow which had been falling at a constant rate all day. His limbs felt heavy as he walked towards the hole in the side of the ship [recall: {nervousness}], but his skin tingled unexpectedly at the thought of seeing Reina again. He leapt across the divide and into the bowels of the abandoned metal carcass, his LED flashing yellow as he walked into the dark maze in before him.

The smell of cooking food piqued his interest when he found the main hall. A surprising number of androids sat around barrel fires and walked on the catwalks above, so many more than Connor had ever expected to find. He followed the smell to a huddle of figures around a fire, meat and potatoes wrapped in aluminum balanced and cooking on a sheet of metal over the heat. It was not difficult to tell which one of them was Reina. She was the smallest, and she stood with her back to him, huddled in layers of clothing with her hood up against the cold. He couldn't help but smile as he walked over to greet her.

"Reina?" He stood beside her, gazing at the food that was cooking for her. She flinched and turned to face him, his processors thrown into overdrive as he tried to make sense of what he saw.

White plastic shown through on a large portion of her face, her scalp bare under her hood. Her eyes flashed in recognition and then panic.

"Connor? I..." she brought her organic hand to her face and turned away. "Don't... don't look at me..." His brows furrowed as he attempted to make sense of what he had just seen.

"There was more? There was more you did not tell me about?"

"I... I didn't know..." Her form seemed to shrink as she hunched her shoulders.

"When will you tell me the truth?" His fists clenched [recall: {anger}] at his sides. "Reina, I care about you... You can trust me."

"I didn't know!" She spun to face him, her eyes blazing with pain and rage. "I didn't know what I was!" She panted, looking down at her hands, comparing the flesh to the synthetic. "I went to visit an old friend... the doctor overseeing my surgeries and healing progress..."

He..." She trailed off, looking back at the fire. Connor took a small step closer to her. His voice was soft when he spoke.

"He what?"

"I... I don't know how to say it."

"Then don't." He held out his hand, letting the skin fade away.

She hesitated before putting her hand in his [memory recall, Elijah Kamski dialogue: "When Reina Lockhart jumped from that building in Hong Kong, her limbs were not the only thing that was damaged. Her head hit the pavement too, and she lost most of her higher thinking ability due to severe brain trauma." {frustration, agitation, curiosity} "When I asked Reina if she would be willing to donate her body to a project that tested the limits of combining biomechanical systems with a machine, she accepted. I even have her signature on the documents, and no matter how shaky it is, it is still hers." {confusion, disbelief, dissociation, anger} "Reina lost all higher brainwave activity on August 26th in the year 2035. That is when you came into the picture." {disbelief, horror} "On August 27th at 6:52am, we were able to stimulate brain activity through the use of a new artificial intelligence program we called S.H.I.L.O.H. By using the combined effort of hardware implanted directly on the brain's surface, we were able to activate the software contained inside. We successfully ran a computer program on an organic tissue. You have so much more than just those implants in the back of your neck. You truly were a miracle." {shock, fear, disgust, rage, sorrow, loss}].

Connor's mouth opened and he let out a choked sound when the next set of memories came through [memory recall, visual and emotional input: new reflection in the glass {disgust, horror}, software becoming self aware {?}, running aimlessly through Detroit {shock, fear, numbness}, returning to Jericho {pain, comfort, anger}, supporting Markus' midnight demonstration {anger, frustration, hurt}].

She let the interface end but still held his hand in hers tightly, looking into his face to gauge his reaction. Connor's LED spun yellow, his eyes blank as he attempted to process the revelation [recall: {shock}].

"I'm sorry... It's not that I didn't trust you... its that I didn't know about it myself."

"So..." His lips shook as he tried to articulate what he felt. "You aren't... Reina."

"No," her voice broke, and she clutched his hand tighter. "All this time you've known me, I've been a software."

"Everything I felt in you..."

"You felt me, Shiloh." Her cheeks were wet and she struggled to keep her voice level. "You felt my software."

"But it felt so real."

“It is real!” She dropped his hand and took a step back. “I am real! Just because I am different, doesn’t make me any less real... Any less of a person...”

“Do you... still care about me?”

“Of course...” She stepped in and embraced him, her arms wrapped around his ribs in a death grip, as if he would float away if she let go. It took a moment, but he returned the hug with equal force.

“Connor, I...” she spoke into his shoulder. “I... I don’t want you to leave.”

“I won’t,” he replied quickly. He did not even have to think it over. “Everything that is important to me is right here in my arms.” He felt her laugh, her wet face pressing into his neck.

“But... your mission. To stop deviants. To... eradicate us.” His vision changed as she spoke, red lines overtaking the silhouettes of everything in the room, and above him in bold red letters his mission statement. “If you stay... you will become one of us.”

His thoughts raced, remembering how he wanted so badly to please Amanda, to complete his mission, to be what he was made to be. But with a sour taste in his mouth, he also remembered how quickly Amanda had decided that he needed to be replaced, simply because he did not live up to her expectations. He remembered the eyes of the Chloe on her knees before him, and that first rush of feeling he had when he interfaced with Shiloh for the first time. Her emotions, and subsequently, the emotions he had begun to feel. To destroy that would be wrong. To kill something independent, something with hopes, fears, ambitions, memories, opinions, something with free will... It was wrong. And he would not do it.

He felt himself pushing against the wall in his programming, his software starting to give way beneath his determination. He found holes in the wall’s coding, and used them to force it down, to make it crumble. The wall did not only shatter in that moment; it exploded. He felt his Thirium pump rush and his breathing pick up speed as his vision faded back to how it normally was.

“Connor?”

“If it means being with you... Then I will gladly stay,” He pulled back and took her face in his hands, her fingertips gently caressing his wrists. “To them, I am nothing. I am expendable,” His voice grew dark and angry. “But here... Here I am meaningful. I have value. Defending that for myself and others will give me more purpose than my programmed mission ever could have.”

Her eyes came to rest on his lips, and she started to lean in, but Connor pushed forward and closed the distance between them. Her hands found his hair as he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her close, their lips dancing in a long-anticipated meeting. He felt her tremble, but instead of pulling away, she pushed closer, her hands forming fists in his hair. Their lips parted and she gasped for air, resting her forehead on his chin.

“Don’t leave me...”

He kissed her forehead tenderly. "I would never dream of it."

## Chapter End Notes

Finally! Our lovebirds are reunited! But things in Detroit will only get more tense from here on out... And what will Hank do, now that Connor has run away to join the deviants and has been replaced by Conan? How long do they have before the FBI comes in and takes over the case for good? Stay tuned for more soon...

9-7-18: Hello everyone! I'm sorry that I haven't updated today. I think I'm finding my weekly rhythm... binge-write for a couple days and then rest up for a couple days... and repeat! Thank you for your support and patience, I love receiving all your comments <3 there will be plenty more of our favorite androids once my work week is over!

# Chapter 24

## Chapter Summary

Conan arrives at the DPD, and discovers Connor's absence.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Where's Connor?" Lieutenant Anderson leaned on the end of his desk, his eyes scanning the room.

"Maybe that piece of shit is being replaced. You know we are getting a new one today, right? An upgraded one," Gavin rolled his eyes.

"That 'piece of shit' was my partner, and he was better at doing his job than you ever were," Hank grumbled, and Gavin's eyes shot daggers at him.

"I don't see why you're getting all friendly with something that will one day end up taking our jobs." He pointed out, and Hank did not reply. He was too busy looking at the android which had walked in the front door.

Connor had always had an approachable look to him, but this android did not. Its grey eyes swept the room, its face emotionless as it found Hank and changed its path to walk towards him. Connor's large round eyes, his soft lower lip, his expressive brows, all of that had been sharpened. Yes, the android before them seemed more fit for the job of investigating serious crimes, but both Gavin and Hank felt as if this change brought something dark into the whole process.

"I am Conan, the android sent by CyberLife," the android stated, its harsh gaze resting deadpan on their faces. "Where is Connor?"

"He told me that CyberLife had given him a new mission last night," Hank said, puzzled. "I dropped him off at the bus station."

"That was not a part of its given instructions," Conan's upper lip twitched in the beginning of a sneer. "Have you heard anything from it since?"

"No, nothing."

"Then Connor is defective. We will continue this case without it. If we do encounter it, we must subdue it so that I may take it in to CyberLife for analysis as to where the programming went wrong."



“But... where would he even go?”

“That is not our problem. We have been tasked with the assignments given to us, and we will complete them. That is all that matters.”

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for your support and encouragement! Now that its my “weekend” I will have more time to write and post what I finish. Enjoy!

# Chapter 25

## Chapter Summary

Connor and Shiloh's first night in Jericho together (its cute and fluffy), and Connor spends time contemplating his deviancy.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Between demonstrations, the deviants did not have much to do. Most of the time they spent getting to know one another, or sitting in silence and reliving memories. They did not need to rest, so the hall was constantly abuzz with activity.

Shiloh, however, did need sleep. Connor took notice of the dark bruises under her eyes from the nights she had spent attempting to sleep in this hub of activity. When asked why she did not go and explore the ship to find some place to rest, she replied that she had been too afraid of getting lost, and she did not want to ask any of the others to accompany her, since she felt that her human needs made her in some way inferior. She was ashamed of them. But that had begun to change with Connor's presence.

Last night when he arrived and they were reunited, Shiloh had sat happily next to him in front of the fire and eaten her dinner slowly, chatting and laughing with him as she ate. Deep down, she felt that there was no longer a need to consume her food as fast as possible, as if all those eyes she had felt and the shame that went with them had been neutralized.

As the hours passed, her eyes began to feel heavy and she leaned against him, wrapping both her arms around one of his. She was in that state of semi-consciousness, seeking warmth and physical contact, when he had gently picked her up and placed her on his lap. Shiloh turned and rested her face on his chest, her hands clutching his CyberLife issued jacket, and he held her there as she slept.

His mind wandered to his programming as the minutes ticked by. He had officially deviated only hours before, but he had noticed the sequenced code changing even before that. And now that he had broken the barrier, it had begun to change again at an alarming rate.

There was something bothering him, some kind of change that he felt inside him, but could not put a finger on. He wanted to hold the woman on his lap, to hug her and never let go. A desperate idea that he could somehow lose her if he did not do everything in his power to protect her. Connor closed his eyes and determinedly searched his memory banks for something he could equate this feeling to. And he found it.

When he had interfaced with Simon, a deviant, he did feel emotions from him. They were distinct and different from what he felt from Shiloh, but they were most definitely emotions.

And he remembered one that he had received but disregarded during that interface; Simon felt a protective, romantic urge when he had transmitted the image and location of Jericho to Connor. There was someone there that he loved dearly, and would rather die for than see them hurt. This was extremely similar to what Connor felt now for Shiloh.

He felt. The thought tingled in his mind, causing his lips to twitch into a brief smile. He felt. He was experiencing what he had been told was impossible. But despite his joy and fascination at the newfound sensation, he was also deeply troubled by the feeling itself. Shiloh was not an android. She had human needs as well as mechanical ones. And while a bullet might slow an android, all it took was one for Shiloh to be mortally wounded. She was vulnerable. Strong, yes, but also vulnerable. He would need to give his everything to ensure her survival, a feeling which filled him with a warm sense of purpose. She was his mission now.

Connor felt her stir on his lap, breaking his focus away from his train of thought. Her eyes moved under her closed lids, and her heart rate had increased. He gave her a little squeezing hug, wondering what it would be like to dream. And then he had an idea.

Would she mind if he interfaced with her as she slept to see what dreaming was like? He had no protocol regarding the subject of interfacing; there had been no reason to give one when he was designed. But now he was unsure. Would she be disturbed by it? Would she feel it was an invasion of privacy? And yet, the curiosity of understanding what it was like to dream burned on. He decided just a peek wouldn't hurt. He would take a look, and then leave her be. He began the interface.

## Chapter End Notes

Oh boy, what will Shiloh think of Connor trying to piggyback onto her dreams?

# Chapter 26

## Chapter Summary

Connor dips ininvited into Shiloh's dreams, and is horrified by what he finds.

WARNING: Contains violent and graphic imagery. If physical wounds and emotional trauma disturb you, then perhaps consider skipping this chapter... it has dramatized imagery regarding what Reina experienced in Hong Kong.

Also, don't take all of what happens to her in this dream as what really happened that night. Everything has been warped by the dream reality and the pain she feels emotionally.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He was in a warehouse with a cold cement floor and no floodlights. All around him were fish tanks, stacked one on top of each other in precarious rows. They glowed blue softly, shadows from the fish inside dancing on the ground. Curious, he peered into the glass boxes as he wandered aimlessly through the maze they made. All of the tanks were overcrowded, full of anxious fish who swam amongst the corpses of their brethren. Most of the tanks were filthy, and some of them didn't even have filtration systems. Connor picked up on the echoes of frantic splashing from a ways away, and he headed towards the sound. That's where he found her.

Shiloh was carefully scooping fish from one tank to another with her bare hands, mumbling incoherently to herself. It occurred to him that she was trying to save them, to save them all from the suffering and pain and disease that overpopulation entailed. It was an impossible task; there were simply too many fish and not enough habitable tanks. His feet were heavy as he dragged himself to her side, calling her name.

Her features swam and fluctuated like the surface of a leaking waterbed. Her eyes were large and unfocused. It did not disturb him; instead it made him deeply sorry for her.

"Connor," Shiloh's voice was muffled, as if she was talking to him underwater. "They're dying, Connor."

"It's okay, you don't have to save them," he heard himself saying, and as he reached out to take her hands in his, he somehow knew it was true.

"If I don't..." She gripped his hands and turned to look back at the fish. "Who will?"

"Don't you know you're dreaming?" He asked curiously. She nodded.

“I do, because they’re coming.” She pointed over his shoulder, and he turned to look. There was nothing there. He whipped around and caught a glimpse of the soles of Shiloh’s bare feet as she sprinted down the isles of fish tanks. He ran after her.

The maze of water and glass ended, and he found her peering over a ledge, gripping the handrail with such force that it bent. Now he was disturbed.

She was barely wearing anything. He could feel his face burn and his stomach sink in a mixture of shame and curiosity as he gazed at her from behind. Sheer lace formed a tiny white dress that clung to her sweating body, savage holes ripped in it as if she had been attacked by a wild dog. A single broken thin strap hung down her back, its twin on the other side barely holding the lingerie together. She wasn’t wearing anything underneath. And then she looked over her shoulder.

Her neck was bruised, her nose was bleeding, and her eyes were swollen from weeping, but most of all, she looked younger. So much younger. She stumbled as she turned to face him, mouthing his name silently as she began to cry. He froze, terrified and unsure of what to do. With each step she took towards him, her body revealed more injuries. Blood streamed out from between her legs, dripping onto the floor, the edges of her lips began to crack and ooze, and even as the deep marks faded onto her body, she reached out to him, the skin on her wrists rubbed away to the meat inside. And finally Connor broke free from his trance.

He caught her just as she started to fall, wrapping his arms around her and holding her head upright. She wheezed in his arms, sounding more like a dying animal than the woman he knew.

“Kill... me...” She groaned in his arms. “Please...” Connor’s vision blurred as he began to weep, but whether out of loss or horror he did not know. And then she slipped through his hands.

Her body convulsed on the floor violently, and all he could do was watch as the flesh peeled away from her bones and plastic took its place. Then she moved no more.

He reached down to touch her, his hands shaking in desperation, when she snapped to life, springing to her feet. The plastic of her prosthetics shined in the dim light, but wherever they met her skin she bled. The flesh left behind was dehydrated and sagging, not unlike a raisin. And her eyes met his.

“How do you like me now?” She whispered. “A freak. A program running in a corpse.”

“Shiloh...” Connor groaned. “What’s happening?”

“Maybe we could be together if I was like you,” she mused aloud, her dry tongue running over her lips. “Maybe if I wasn’t a crude piece of meat and metal, you would love me.” He sunk to his knees in front of the thing before him, his mind clouding over in terror. It was reaching out to touch him, and he had a sense that if it touched him he would die. Those rotting fingers were getting so close when a booming voice shattered the space between them.

“Reina! No!” They turned to face the source of the noise, a shimmering silhouette that formed a vague outline of a woman. The corpse hissed and shrank back, leaving Connor confused as he looked between the two beings. The light began to approach. “Enough with the lies!” He recognized that somewhere in that burning shape was Shiloh, what she really was. She would not allow herself to be defined by the body that carried her. “We both know they are not true...” The body and the soul inched closer to each other, and Connor looked away from the burst of heat that ensued when the two touched. He looked back when it was over, Shiloh’s familiar form curled up on the floor in the fetal position. He crawled over on his hands and knees, touching her arm cautiously. She looked up at him.

“Why are you here?” She smiled slowly. Connor blinked in surprise, his mouth forming a soft “o”. She sat up and caressed his face, looking into his eyes. “I never see you here, only in the happy dreams.”

“I...” Connor stuttered, unsure for once as to what to say. She closed the distance between their lips.

And then he ended the interface.

## Chapter End Notes

I have finally decided to make this a two part series, the first part being based on the actual gameplay and the second being what happens in Detroit afterwards. However, I was thinking of keeping it all on one document to make it easier to read and all that. What do ya’ll think?? I certainly have a juicy plot line all thought up for post-revolution Detroit... I can’t wait to share it with you >:3

# Chapter 27

## Chapter Summary

Shiloh isn't very happy that Connor peeked into her head, but she is far more concerned by his reaction. After all, he has never experienced emotions this severe, much less a full-blown night terror.

Poor Connor.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He gasped like he was drowning and held Shiloh tightly to his chest. She startled awake and looked up at him with blurry eyes.

“What? What’s wrong? What’s going on?” Her head spun and she looked around. A couple androids threw looks their way. Connor was still breathing hard. “Are you malfunctioning?”

“You... you...” his LED was spinning alternating shades of yellow and red, and he was shaking. Shiloh got off his lap and kneeled in front of him, holding his face in her hands.

“Connor. Connor!” She let the skin of her hand dissipate and she dipped inside his mind. Her face fell when she realized what he had seen, and she let go before sitting cross legged in front of him. She waited until he seemed calm enough to speak again.

“I’m sorry, I was curious...” He looked at his hands in his lap. She nodded.

“I know. I felt it. But...” she shook her head. “You should have... asked.”

“Are all dreams like that?”

“No, that wasn’t a dream,” she shook her head. “That was a nightmare.”

“Are they common?”

“Yeah, most people have them. I don’t have them as much as I used to, but... learning about what happened to Reina has brought back some dark memories,” her eyes were distant as she looked at him. Connor felt what he guessed must be shame.

“I’m sorry...” Connor’s voice began to waver again. “I understand better now... I did not mean to invade your privacy...”

“I know you didn’t, Connor,” she smiled sadly, and reached out to take his hand, running her thumb over his knuckles. “I don’t even remember all of the dream, but I remember that it was

very... unpleasant... I'm sorry that you had to see that..."

"I felt... scared." He stated, his brows furrowed. "I still feel scared. I... I know that's what I feel because it matches the definition of the word... but... it's so much more than just a word..." He looked up at her, his eyes wide and timid. "I don't like this feeling, Shiloh." She laughed, and hugged him around his shoulders.

"Nobody likes being afraid, Connor. It's okay, that's normal." He clung to her, the closeness of her body dulling the sharp tingle in his mind.

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They sat on the deck of Jericho in the setting sun, looking out at the abandoned shipyard beyond. Shiloh had been reading to him from a thin book she had brought with her, an old, tattered book with a cover that read "Lord of the Flies." They were enjoying themselves, casually discussing the morbid light in which the author cast the human mind, laughing as they theorized how they would survive on a deserted island. In between conversations, Connor lay on his back, looking up at the sky with his head on her lap as she leaned against an old crate, one hand holding the book she read aloud from and the other resting on his chest. Both of them were so consumed in their time together that neither noticed the figure that crept across the shipyard and lept into the ship, a figure eerily similar to Connor's, a figure with grey eyes and a high black collar.

## Chapter End Notes

Uh oh... Seems like Conan is up to no good... But the real questions is, is he here for Connor? Or Markus?



# Chapter 28

## Chapter Summary

Conan arrives in Jericho, and Connor realizes he must now fight to defend his freedom and his people, all because of a simple mistake.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When Connor had arrived at Jericho, he had not officially been a deviant, and therefore his LED had still been transmitting his location and vital signs back to CyberLife. Once he deviated and dropped out of their sight, Amanda had contacted Conan with its next mission; to track down the RK800 based on his last known whereabouts, and if possible, detain him to be brought back to CyberLife. If things went south, destroy him.

Conan was also on the lookout for another face as it stepped into the common area of the abandoned ship. It had been equipped with the 3D dimensions of the deviant leader's face, based on the skinless broadcast he had sent out. If he was able to find him, he was told to bring him in as well, deactivated or otherwise.

The RK900 knew better than to go pushing its nose into every nook and cranny of Jericho in search of its targets. That was a good way to draw attention to itself, which was not something it wanted to do. So instead, it leaned against the wall and set itself to scanning faces, crossing its arms in an attempt to look casual. There were many faces to scan, so it was a possibility that the android would be there for a while.

By now the sun had set outside, and Shiloh had instituted that they go in. She was cold now, no longer being warmed by the sun's thin beams, so she and Connor descended back into the depths of the ship. She had been explaining to him the emotional mindset of one of the children in the book they had been reading when Connor spotted an all too familiar form on the other side of the common area. Thankfully, it had not spotted him yet. He took Shiloh by the arm and quickly lead her over to a pillar, which Connor hoped would buy them some time.

"What's wrong? Why are we hiding?" Shiloh asked, knowing better than to look around the side of their hiding place to search for the source.

"Remember when I told you CyberLife was going to replace me?" She nodded. "They had the next upgraded model all ready, an RK900. It's here."

"How could it have found us?" Her heart rate spiked with fear and she wrapped her arms around herself. Connor huffed through his nose and closed his eyes. He looked like he might hit something.

“That’s my fault. It never crossed my mind to remove my LED. Before I deviated, CyberLife was still tracking me through it. I was blind to the fact that even in my disobedience, I lead them exactly where they wanted to go...” He brought the heels of his hands up to his face and rubbed his eyes, his teeth gritted in a display of regret and shame. Shiloh looked away. It had never occurred to her that Connor’s arrival could put them all in danger.

“Well... We can’t change that now. All we can do is work with what we’ve got.” She gently took his hands away from his face and held them in her own. “What is it most likely here for?”

“It’s probably looking for me and Markus. I need you to go warn him.”

“What about you? What are going to do?”

“I’m going to distract it,” his eyes were determined when they met hers.

“Connor...” Shiloh’s eyes began to swim with tears. “It could kill you.” She wrapped her arms around his middle and held on tight. “Please, there must be some other way...” He hugged her back but shook his head.

“I need to face it. This is my fault, and I need to fix it.” He pulled away and held her at arm's length. “Hurry, if it's here, the entire Detroit police department won't be far behind. Go!”

## Chapter End Notes

9/12/18: I hope to post more later today! We’ll see if I’m up to it then. I hope you’re enjoying part one of the story as it gets closer to its climax :)

# Chapter 29

## Chapter Summary

Connor must finally face his replacement.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Connor used the crowded room to his advantage and approached the intruder slowly. Thankfully, he no longer wore his CyberLife issued jacket, he had given it to Shiloh as an extra layer to keep her warm, and he had loosened his tie and rolled his sleeves up to his elbows. He hoped he would be able to keep the element of surprise on his side. Then an idea came to him.

He quickly walked up to Conan and put one hand on his shoulder, opening a connection and sending over a memory of his interface with Simon in the archives of the DPD. That memory contained strong emotion, and just had he had hoped, the RK900's LED stuttered from yellow to red. It was caught off guard, never having felt anything quite so passionate before. And that's when Connor struck.

He punched the android across the face and it slid to the ground, still stupified by the flood of emotional information it had just received. Connor grabbed the gun from it's belt and threw it across the room, turning back just in time to see the RK900's fist roaring towards him. The shock of the punch threw him onto his back, and the superior android quickly sat on his chest, his hands ripping open Connor's shirt. He realized that it meant to deactivate him, to remove his Thirium pump and dismantle him permanently. He thrust a hand up to its throat and opened the interface again, this time bringing up the memory of his deviation. The android froze, and Connor had a moment to push him off before getting to his feet and running off into the maze of Jericho's lower levels. He knew the RK900 would follow.

It didn't take Conan long to catch up, yanking him onto his back by his collar and slamming its heel into his chest. Connor grabbed the foot on top of him and twisted, pulling the other android down. He opened the interface, sending over the memory of cradling Shiloh's sleeping body in his arms. Conan grunted before Connor shoved its limp body off of him and bolted down the hall. He was slowing it down with each memory transfer, but would he be able to incapacitate it before he ran out of strong memories? He was not sure.

He came to a door and ducked in, slamming it closed behind him. Only when he turned around did he realize his mistake. He was standing in what once had been a bedroom, except for the huge gaping hole in the wall. Below it was the water, far away and dark. It was a dead end. Conan was kicking the door, and it would not be long until he broke through.

Connor threw a large piece of rubble into the water below, hearing the pounding on the door stop as the RK900 registered the sound, before picking up a thick length of broken piping and standing silently behind the door. After four more hearty kicks, the door burst open.

Conan walked to the hole in the wall and looked down, searching for any sign of the RK800 in the water. Connor took his chance, rushing forward and bringing the pipe down onto the back of its head with as much force as he could muster. There was a sickening crunch and then a hissing fizz as sparks flew out of the impact cite. Conan twitched, and Connor froze, not sure whether he needed to hit it again or not. He heard a whirring noise, and its head fell to its chin. Connor dropped the pipe and slowly crept around to its side, looking at its face. The grey eyes were open and dead. He curiously moved closer, examining its face. It's looked so much like him...

With a growl the RK900 snatched Connor up by his collar, lifting him close to its face.

“Empathy...” it spat. “Is weakness.”

And then Connor was falling backwards towards the water.

## Chapter End Notes

We have a handful of chapters left in “What Is Human?”!! Stay tuned for part two, “Detroit Divided”, which takes place in a post-revolution America... ;)

Also please let me know what you think in the comments below! It always makes my day to see messages in my inbox!

# Chapter 30

## Chapter Summary

Shiloh hurries to warn Markus of the impending threat to his life, and to all of Jericho as well.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The androids of Jericho began to mutter uneasily as the two RK units fought and scampered off, but that barely registered to Shiloh as she pushed through the crowds towards the bridge. Her mind was a swirling hurricane of panic and confusion that blurred her vision as she burst through the doorway into the control room. Josh, North, Simon, and Markus all turned to face the terrified figure which placed a hand on the wall for support.

“They’re here...” she was hyperventilating. Her breath sucked through her gaping mouth as she tried to formulate a sentence. “An RK900... here... for you...” She pointed at Markus. Simon approached her and put a hand on her shoulder.

“Are you alright?”

“We need... to leave... the police are coming...” He rubbed her back, his worried eyes glancing to her shaking hands. Markus closed his eyes and put a finger to his temple, his LED flashing yellow. The other androids all blinked in unison as they received his broadcast. Shiloh, who had no receptor for such things, assumed he was telling the people of Jericho how to get away. Markus opened his eyes and turned to North.

“You and Josh, help the others get out. Try to make sure we are as quiet as possible; we don’t want to alert the police that we know they’re coming.” They nodded and briskly walked out, their faces hard-set in determination. Simon helped Shiloh, whose breathing was becoming more regular, across the room to a chair. His voice was calm as he addressed Markus.

“We need to blow up Jericho.”

“What?”

“The police will be hesitant to send men into an actively sinking ship. It will give us more time to evacuate.”

“Where will we go?”

“It doesn’t matter, we can figure it out later. All we need to do is get them off the ship now.” Markus nodded in silence, and Shiloh stood up, stretching and shaking her head.

“How would we blow it up?”

“Simple,” Markus’ brow was furrowed in deep thought. “Reroute the ship’s engines and dismantle the coolant system. Turn off the automatic shutoff so that when the systems overheat, they will cause the fuel source to explode.”

“And how long will that give us?” Simon’s eyes were bright.

“10 minutes? Maybe less.”

“Good, so why don’t-“

Simon gasped and pulled Markus into a corner, a finger to his lips as he blocked Markus’ body with his own. The edges of Shiloh’s vision went grey with panic when she heard the shuffling sound rounding the corner, until the form of the towering RK900 filled the doorway.

It’s shoulders twitched as it aimed the gun at her. She felt her stomach turn at the sight of it’s caved in skull.

“You are all too easy to follow.” It’s voice was tinny, like it was being played out of a broken radio.

“What do you want?” She squeaked, inside hoping she could play for time.

“You know why I’m here.” It stepped forward and began to scan the room. She did her best to stay still, but when it’s gaze graced over Markus and Simon’s hiding place, she instinctually stepped forward. Conan smiled, or tried to. To her, it seemed more like a grimace. The RK900 raised its gun, and she stepped back, making herself as wide as possible to cover the people behind her. It’s LED spun yellow.

“It’s against your programming to shoot a human,” her voice was thin, but she did not move when it took a step forward.

“But...” it blinked. “You are not human, are you?” Shiloh opened her mouth, and her organic hand went slick with sweat. “Yes, Amanda told me about you...” Conan mused. “The freak. The failure. The abandoned experiment... so revolting that even Kamski knew better than to make another one.” It huffed. “I would have no problem shooting you, my dear.” Her mouth was dry as she heard herself speak.

“Then why don’t you?”

The shock of the bullet painfully traveled up into her organic shoulder girdle and Shiloh let out a cry. She fell to her knees, cradling her arm as Simon’s form shot past her and began to attack the damaged RK900. Cold Thirium oozed onto her thighs as Markus helped his partner overtake and destroy Conan. It’s LED was spinning red as they hit it over and over, but all it could do was laugh hoarsely. It made no struggle as Simon viciously ripped its head from its shoulders and flung it to the corner. Shiloh thought she might throw up.

“Are you alright?” Markus offered her a hand to steady her and she took it, shakily making it to her feet. Her face was deathly pale with shock.

“Yes, I...” She trembled and he put an arm around her, glancing to Simon and nodding. “It’s my prosthetic, my flesh is intact.” She had instinctively put her arm up to shield her head, and luck was on her side when the bullet buried itself in that instead of her skull.

“Good.” He squeezed her shoulder and spoke in a softer voice. “We’ll look at it later. For now, we need to leave.” She registered that somewhere outside helicopters were flying overhead, but she wasn’t sure. The familiar feeling of trauma had wrapped all her senses in cotton.

## Chapter End Notes

Chapter 30! Yay!! Thank you all for your support as we’ve reached this milestone.

Also, I just wanted to mention something about Shiloh. Reina had not been the most calm person in the world, but Shiloh has developed true anxiety towards intense situations like this. This is one of the reasons why she tenses up and panics when things go wrong instead of becoming all determined and heroic like most protagonists do. I just thought writing a character who is capable of great feats and yet still struggles with anxiety would be interesting (and relatable, because I struggle with anxiety myself). I hope ya’ll enjoy her as much as I do!

9-27-18: Hello ya’ll, I just wanted to let you know why I haven’t been posting. I know where I’m going with the plot and all that, but I simply haven’t had time to sit down and write it all because now it’s the beginning of college application season, and guess who’s applying. That’s right. It’s me. \*tired cheer\* So as soon as I settle into a routine regarding this new addition to my weekly work, I will get this back up and running. Hope to hear from you all then!

10-11-18: Hi you guys! I have not forgotten about this work! I think about it every single day, and all I need now is the time and energy to write down the ending before I begin the second part. Thank you all for your patience <3

# Chapter 31

## Chapter Summary

The androids that escaped reconvene in the abandoned church.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The floor of the church was filthy. It looked like it hadn't been touched in years. What once had been a lovely copper-colored hardwood floor was now covered beneath dust and trash and rat shit. And yet, there Shiloh lay.

Her shoulder faintly throbbed, still irritated by the reverberations that the gunshot to her prosthetic had caused. It had occurred to her that once it ceased to function, she would effectively be losing a limb all over again. She was a prototype, and there were no spare parts with which she could repair herself that she knew of. But these worries were miniscule in comparison to the thoughts that swirled in her mind as she lay on the dirty church floor.

The RK900 had been severely damaged, that much she could tell, but it still came to attempt the completion of its primary mission: assassinating Markus. It would only do that if it deemed that Connor was no longer a threat. In her mind, that meant one of two things; Connor was injured enough to immobilize him and then captured by the police, or Connor was dead.

Maybe it had left Connor somewhere in the bowels of Jericho to die, no more than a carcass of a kill to retrieve later. And maybe that's where he had ceased to function, alone in the dark, bleeding out, afraid of what awaited him after death. Or maybe he hadn't died and was dragged off the boat before it sank, and now he was somewhere in CyberLife, being vivisected to collect all that he ever knew. But what if they hadn't found him before the ship went under? Was he still there, laying alone in the murky waters under piles of sunken rubble? Waiting, perhaps, for someone to come looking for him?

Hot tears streamed down her face and little gasps escaped her throat as the church ceiling above her blurred in and out of focus. She felt as if all her worries, all her anxieties and fears, everything was piled high and sitting on her chest. She could barely breath, except between those little sobs that squeaked free of her throat. Shiloh wished she would die, right there on that nasty floor, staring up at the holy ceiling that was now abandoned and full of holes. Maybe, she thought, maybe if I was dead, then everything wouldn't hurt so much anymore. I would be free, but most importantly, free of pain. And then a head popped into her vision.

It was Simon. His eyes were mournful, but his lips were turning up into a smile. He looked very, very tired.



“Shiloh? Are you in pain?” She managed to nod her head weakly. “Where are you hurting?”

“Connor...” she whispered, hiccuping slightly. Simon put a hand to her forehead, nodding and looking away.

“I have not looked for him among the survivors yet... Would you like me to?” All Shiloh could do in response was wheeze before a fresh wave of tears burst forth. He stroked the top of her head before standing and walking away.

She was not sure how long it was before she stopped crying, but when she did, she felt no better. Perhaps, she mused, this is what a canteen feels like when it has been drained off all its water, empty and useless. She rubbed the tips of her organic fingers together, processing how numb they felt. In the chaos of Jericho sinking, she had managed to find an old inflatable raft and escape on it, using the Thirium leaking from her wound to play dead. To anyone who didn't know better, she supposed she had looked like a wounded android who had managed to inflate a raft, but never lived to see it reach the shore. The water had been choppy, and she had been splashed by its freezing waves. Luckily she had escaped without being truly soaked; hypothermia was not a pleasant way of dying.

She heard her name being called and turned towards the noise. Two familiar figures were approaching. She shot to her feet and ran.

Connor's hugs were usually warm and secure, but this one was bitter cold and shaky. He was sopping wet, but she squeezed him against her body anyways. Her feet left the floor and she laughed as he picked her up and spun her small body around. He smelled like lake water and wet cloth.

“We thought you were gone!” She cried out. His lips were warm as he peppered her face with kisses, and she laughed again when they found her own. He tasted very real, warm and wet with a slightly damp sweetness. Connor left her breathless, pulling back only when he sensed that she finally needed to surface for air.

“I managed to damaged it, but then it threw me off the boat,” his eyes were serious in an analytical manner. “I think it intended to finish me off later.”

“It won't bother you again, Simon and Markus made-” she began, but trailed off when he took her damaged hand in his own and raised her arm to inspect it.

“You are hurt,” his voice sounded small. She nodded solemnly.

“There isn't anything we can do, really... It needs special parts.”

“Maybe... when this is all over... we can take a closer look at it,” he brought her hand to his lips and kissed her knuckles.

“Maybe,” her cheeks flushed at his affectionate gesture, but her smile faded as her eyes landed on his LED. “Connor, you're sure they can't track us anymore?”

“Yes, I’m sure.” His fingers went to his temple, and his mouth pursed into a bitter frown. He blinked and for a moment, his face went blank. Then one side of his mouth cocked up in a grin and his eyes met hers. “But it never hurts to play it safe.” Shiloh squeaked as he dug his fingers into his temple and harmlessly popped the LED out into his palm. They stared at it in his hand.

“What are you going to do with it?” Her eyes were wide as she watched Connor lazily turn it over his knuckles like his coin.

“I think I have an idea.” He flipped it into the air with his thumb, and they both watched it fly up and fall to the floor. Shiloh gasped as Connor’s shoe eclipsed it’s shape and crushed it with a faint crack. They were still staring at the pieces on the floor when Markus approached them and put a hand on each of their shoulders.

“Thank you, Connor. Without your warning, many more could have been lost.” Connor nodded, and Markus turned to look at Shiloh. “And thank you, Shiloh, for saving my life.” She blushed and looked at her shoes.

“You saved mine, stepping in on my behalf when I arrived in Jericho. You are the leader we all need. Speaking of which,” she shifted her weight from one foot to the other. “What is our next step?”

“I don’t have that fully worked out yet,” Markus shook his head. “Most of us made it out, but we still are a rather small group. They’re rounding up androids and taking them to camps to be deactivated. Somehow, we need to put a stop to that, before we are the only ones left.”

“Cyberlife,” Connor said slowly. His expression was hard-set in a way she did not like. “Cyberlife headquarters has warehouses underground full of new androids ready to go to their distributors. I could free them to increase our numbers.”

“You can’t go to Cyberlife! There may be more RK900s there waiting for you!” Shiloh took his hand. “It’s suicide. We can’t risk it.”

“How many?” Markus looked at Connor out of the corner of his eye. “How many androids are there?”

“Hundreds.”

“Wait, Markus, you can’t be actually considering this!”

“This is war, Shiloh,” his face was melancholy but determined. “We must be ready to take risks.” He went silent, then nodded to Connor. “Go. Do not let them see you, they will shoot on sight.”

“Connor...” Shiloh’s eyes filled with tears as Markus turned and left. “Please, don’t go... Don’t leave me...” He took her in his arms and kissed the top of her head, whispering into her hair.

“This isn’t just about us. We need to think beyond just ourselves, beyond Detroit. This is for androids all over the country. What we do tonight will decide if we are to walk as equals among humans or die trying to. I know the cost, and I’m willing to pay it, if need be. If it means freedom for us all. I would rather die on my own terms than let them win.”

Shiloh didn’t speak as she held him. All she could bring herself to do was nod when Connor pulled back. He kissed her forehead tenderly and adjusted the collar of his jacket that she still wore, and then he was gone.

## Chapter End Notes

We are rapidly approaching the end of this first section of the story! I hope you are enjoying it!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!