

Taken Lightly

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Shiv is taken into Dakota's newest center for metahumans. Things don't go as well as planned. Shiv background fic.

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1 - White Cage

Disclaimer: I do not own Static Shock. It belongs to Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. I just love it. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: AU. I rather dislike Gear. This has no Gear. Richie is working with Static by making his stuff basically. You don't like the idea. Pretend its taking place during the timeline of the episode 'Gear'. I consider it AU but hey. Taken Lightly

Chapter 1: The White Cage

He could never really say to himself that he didn't deserve this. He was by most standards completely mental. However in his present state, he was in no fit mood to think on these matters. He was truly maniac at the moment. He had always been and he supposed the doctors only thought this was natural. He had been confined to a cell in the institution nearly four days prior. It was designed as almost a mockery of humanity. It was labeled, in a benign way, as the center for the mental and social rehabilitation of metahumans in distress. It was arguably, especially by humanitarian groups of Dakota, a controlled human pie-tri-dish for any doctor with an interest in metahumans. However you were to take it, it was a high security mental institution which could easily be called a prison created strictly to house bang babies. It was tastefully named the 'Crane Rehabilitational Clinic' but by anyone from any of the metahuman gangs in the city, it was the White Cage. He slashed exhaustedly at the walls of the cell he was confined to. It was small with nothing in it to speak of. It was called the breaking room by inmates. A small room with solid white walls with no real escape. It was used to settle the incoming patients. Shiv had been an entirely different case. Most metahumans came in and brutally attacked at anything for all of three hours. They grew bored and cooperated enough to get out of the room. They were traditionally not fed in the room as it was so dangerous to enter into the room of an angry bang baby. One or two doctors had come in too early with a few gang members. However, it had been four days since the arrival of Shiv. Even the most callous had to admit that to continue in this manner would be starving the young man. Shiv however showed no signs of ending his assault on the cells. It was obvious he was tired. The energy around his hands flicked and blinked from time to time. But he always continued. They knew something had to be done about this situation. Shiv looked around wildly. He was nearly exhausted and for some reason his powers were not agreeing with him. However, the last thing he wanted was to stop. The Metabreed had been like a family to him. Well, he couldn't say that. It was far more complex than that. He however had always been on the edge in the hierarchy. It was worst to be the weakest and lowest in a gang rank. He was far too small to avoid it. He had always been the first taken down by Static and the last to get back up. He was also the first to run and the last to come back. It was a dangerous act being the scapegoat. However, he had powers and that kept him useful. It was always good to be useful when lacking in other areas. However being useful only goes so far. The doctors sat in an observation room level to the cell. They watched through a viewing wall. The four were all of rather different opinion on the entire situation. Only around half of the doctors were truly doctors to the extent of having any desire to help other human beings. Most were rather heartless scientists who would love to dissect half the metahumans in the city. A hand full of the doctors however including a Dr. Robert Todd were actually working on a cure for the Big Bang epidemic. He had been watching the situation carefully with his two assistants, a young Asian woman by the name of Dr. Sarah Lin and a middle aged African American man named Dr. James Jackson. Another doctor, a young woman of half Ethiopian descent named Dr. Caren Adams, sat on the far end of the observation room. They sat at a desk in order of Dr. Adams, Dr. Lin, Dr. Todd and Dr. Jackson. Dr. Xaolin flipped

through her papers busily adjusting her glasses. She appeared worried as she stopped flipping the papers. "Are these the only files on the metahumans?" Dr. Jackson looked over at her for a moment. "Did you look through the fifth file cabinet?" "Yes. It's just we don't seem to have much information on him." she paused for a moment reviewing the documents yet again. "I thought with more information we could find a way to stabilize and transport him." Dr. Todd and Dr. Jackson nodded to one another. Dr. Adams however seemed less impressed with the other woman. She sighed to herself. "I suggest that we do one of two things if we wish to transport him." The other doctors turned to her interest showed from their faces. Even Dr. Lin put down her clipboard. "I suggest we either use a mild form of knockout gas and transport him after it has taken its effect." The other doctor looked at her in almost shock. The action could have any number of harmful effects on the young man. The gas had for one very been used on metahumans meaning that it had no record of effects and no diagnoses in cases something went wrong. Also in the baby's weakened state and hysteria, it could put him into shock. Dr. Todd was the first to speak. "That's a highly dangerous course of action. Don't you think so doctor?" "I think it is no more dangerous to him than it would be to us to handle him without precautions." "We are not trying to kill our patients. We're trying to rehabilitate them. If it didn't kill him, it could leave permanent brain damage." "It was just a suggestion. Besides I have another idea remember." she said stretching for a moment. "The metahuman Shiv has genetically altered DNA which makes it possible for him to create weapons of light energy." The other doctors nodded. "I have been doing a bit of research over the past few days and have found quite a few details on the nature of these abilities." She paused to see if her colleagues were listening. They were all listening quite attentively. "He seems to be able to consciously manipulate the positive ions in the molecules of his hands. This manipulation duplicates the ions positively charging them into a solid object of pure protons. However the action itself takes up a very high level of energy. He uses the energy of light with the wavelength of between 500 and 700 nanometers as a form of kinetic energy to fuel this process. However the lower the light energy the more draining it is on his own energy supplies. I used this information to create a temporary antidote to his powers. If applied it will make it impossible for him to utilize this process. I suggest lighting the room with light of a 400 to 500 wavelength to remove him, applying the antidote and moving him into a usual cell." The other doctor applied impressed. All but Dr. Lin who looked in at Shiv for a moment. "Has it been tested?" "Why of course. It's completely safe." she said arrogantly. Dr. Todd stood up to leave the room. "Brilliant, Dr. Adams. Just brilliant. I'll make the arrangements." His two assistants stood up leaving as well. The remaining doctor smirked slightly. "Safe enough for a bang baby." Outside in the hall, Dr. Lin and Dr. Jackson walked beside one another. Dr. Lin flipped through her notes wearily. She was a rather demure woman. She had never been one to argue and enjoyed the security of having all of the information with her at all times. She hated the idea of having to justify something with a solid copy to back it up. Dr. Jackson was far more straightforward. He was a man of ethics and was not afraid to speak up. The two walked for a moment silently. Each was thinking quite the same thing but it was Dr. Jackson who noted it. "Do you think she tested that antidote correctly?" "I sincerely doubt it." Dr. Jackson looked surprisingly at her. He had thought he was the only one to think so. "Why didn't you say anything Sarah? You're obviously worried about the boy." "Yes but I had no evidence. I also think it would be best for him to get somewhere where we can get him something to eat." "You know as well as I do that there are probably some type of side effects to that antidote." She sighed flipping through her papers. "I understand that. I am only hoping that we can find a counter treatment soon after but if it can stabilize him I'm willing." "I still think it's ridiculous to risk it." "Yes but it is also ridiculous to continue to starve him while we look for a more humane solution. It is better than gassing him you must admit." "I can't believe she suggested that, can you?" "Yes actually. She's always been a scientist more than a doctor. She's brilliant but not a humanitarian." "And you are still not going to do a thing about it." "I don't have any evidence. I can't prove a thing all we can do now is wait." "You sound so confident." "I'm glad because

really I'm not very confident." she paused frustrated. "If only we had someone to persuade the boy to cooperate." "Hasn't Static dealt with him before?" It was almost as though a light went on in Dr. Lin. She lowered her papers and turned to him. "That may not be a bad idea." That concludes chapter 1. I hope everyone enjoyed it.

2 - The Transmission

Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. Milestone, Dwayne McDuffie, DC Comics and WB own it. It would be cool if I did. I would had Shiv live up to his full potential. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: No Shiv in this chapter. If you want Shiv skip it. V/R though. I also go a little overboard on conspiracy Richie. He had a UFO in his room in an episode. He believes in Roswell and geniuses tend to be a bit off. Also a big underlying theme. If you can guess it you get a cookie. I hope everyone likes this chapter. BTW, each chapter is 3 pages.

Chapter 2: The Transmission

Virgil Hawkins battled bang babies on a daily basis. He had actually just broken up the Metabreed, a bang baby gang, only a few days ago. Things had calmed down significantly since then and Virgil was spending some time just hanging out at the gas station of solitude. The station was almost a world different than when they had originally found it. It was fixed up to be clean enough for his super genius partner not to go into cardiac arrest and an old couch had been moved in to make the place fairly homey. It was still dimly lit with the occasional interspecies visitors but all and all, it was a nice place to spend a good free of crime fighting. Richie sat on the far side of the station in what he had dubbed his control center. It was packed with three desks and a table coated with inventions, schematics, parts, Backpack, a new version of the Shock Box, his computer, designs and various tools for any task from nuclear physics to sewing. The walls were littered with information on every bang baby in the city and everything Richie considered important to know about them. He was however at the moment sitting in the said corner listening to any broadcast he and Backpack could pick up. It was a very quiet day. "Rich, admit it. No one is doing anything today. Give it a rest." Virgil said lying on the couch almost half way across the room. Richie removed his headphones and looked over at Virgil. "And what if a bang baby attacks? What if the Metabreed comes back? Or Hotstreak? We have to be vigilant." "We don't need to be nothing, Rich." Virgil stretched. "You have Backpack set on auto sensor. If anything happens, it'll know." Richie grunted slightly. He hated the idea of having his job taken over by any machine. Even if it was his beloved computer. Being a super genius left few options in terms of being a super hero and he was beginning to think he was running out of things to build for Virgil. He could only make so many things before all of Static's needs were filled to any rational extent. "At least take a break. You're making me nervous running around like that." But just as Richie began to get up, Backpack began to beep rather maniacally. Richie put his headphones back on, booting up the information onto his computer as Virgil raced around the station getting into his gear. Richie pushed a flurry of keys on his keyboard as Virgil pulled on his mask and grabbed his saucer standing behind Richie waiting to hear where he was going and why. "So what is it Rich?" "It looks like a video file. Someone is feeding out a .avi file onto a general..." "Pretend for a minute, you aren't a super genius." Virgil interrupted. "It's a movie that someone wants you to watch." "You didn't have to dumb it down that much." Richie gave him an indignant look then returned to the computer. "I traced it back to downtown and Bingo!" "What is it?" "It's a video clip from the Crane Rehabilitational Clinic." "Okay. Play it." "What?" "It's a video clip, isn't it? Play it." "V, it could be a trap. Or a brainwashing program. Or..." "Fanmail." Richie snorted. "Your ego gets any bigger and we'll need a new hideout." "Rich, it's from a hospital. It's not going to be anything dangerous." Richie groaned and began downloading the file to view it. The screen went black for a moment before showing an Asian woman in her twenties. She was petite with long very straight black hair and glasses. She was dressed in a lab coat and held a clipboard in her arms. She was expressionless and seemingly calm. "Crane

Rehabilitational Clinic, Dakota, United States of America, 20 00 hours, July 23rd" she said calmly without blinking. "I am sending a message in hopes that the bang baby presently known as Static will receive it. If you are that person, we are in desperate need of your assistance. You have valuable knowledge on the fugitive metahumans and it is my hope that you will come and assist myself and my team. Transmission end." The screen went black and returned to normal. Richie and Virgil stared for a moment quietly. Richie pulled his headphone down around his neck as Virgil rubbed his head. "What do you know about the Crane Clinic?" Virgil said looking at Richie. "I know that if you're a bang baby, you stay far away from it." "Anything else?" "You want everything I know on it, V?" "Yeah. Only summarized, Rich. If you told me everything I'd be here all summer." "It's a mental institution/prison basically. It houses metahumans so the jails don't have to." "It doesn't sound that bad." "Yeah, that's what the workers want you to think. The institute is known for housing every scientist willing to cut up a bang baby. It has no moral ethics. Its giant lab for research with criminals as the lab rats. Its not a place to mess with, V." "Is everything a conspiracy with you?" "Its not a conspiracy. Its like a death camp. No way out." Virgil sighed. "Rich, my pop said its not that bad there. He says its working on a cure for the big bang." "By cutting up bang babies." "Rich, I have to go." he said slightly annoyed. "They said it was urgent." Richie rubbed his forehead. He obviously didn't think it was a good idea for Virgil to go. He racked his brain looking for an argument for Virgil's. Nothing was coming to mind. Well actually two hundred seventy four ideas came to mind. None that he thought stood up to Virgil's logical which was a critical factor in winning a planned argument. According to Virgil, it was his duty as a superhero to risk his life on a daily basis because he had super powers and no one else was willing to. It was noble but in Richie's opinion unnervingly dangerous. He had tried to find ways to make it less so. He had found ways to waterproof his uniform and made up countless strategies specialized to the fighting style, powers, weaknesses and disposition of every known criminal bang baby in Dakota. He didn't like surprises. You can't prepare for a surprise. "Come on Rich, what's the worst thing that could happen?" Virgil said to Richie with a grin. Richie almost twitched. A rough number of around three thousand extremely violent and/or inhumane ideas popped into his around the same minute. "So not helping, V." Virgil bent over and hugged the now rather worried super genius. "Nothing is going to happen. Like I said Pops doesn't think its that bad and he'd know about this." Richie did have to admit that Mr. Hawkins had an almost unnatural knack for knowing these things. "I'm putting a wire on you." Virgil sighed still hugging Richie. "You're paranoid, you know that, don't you Rich?" "I prefer prepared." "Call it what you want, Rich." I almost didn't get the slash in. I hope you review. Ideas are welcome.

3 - The Clinic

Disclaimer: I own nothing. I do not own Static Shock. It belongs to Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. All I own is the necessary equipment to change it into something I can understand. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: I am so sorry if I make Richie too cranky. I'm trying not to. But it is a hard business making Richie worried and happy. This is about two lines over my limit. I hope no one minds. Oh and before I forget. Thank you so much for all of the reviews. This is my highest reviewed fanfic yet. It's in the double digits. I am so grateful and I hope you enjoy this chapter as well. Taken Lightly Chapter 3: The Clinic Shiv had been drugged or he thought he had been. He had at one point gone unconscious but couldn't remember when but then again, he couldn't remember much from the past day at all. He had been moved but unlike what they had planned, he hadn't been rebellious in the least. In fact, he had fainted from hunger shortly before they had gone in. Doctors had been near to fainting themselves, some out of concern and others by the idea of a specimen dying before being properly examined. He was however unaware of this, his memory was still fogged over. He had been caught by the clinic after a plan by the Breed had failed. This was apparently the end of it for Ebon. He abandoned Shiv for the police with no intent of any break out. He had been left for dead basically. He had been very worried about the whole ordeal for he had been hurt in the struggle. He knew very well how dangerous it was to be a wounded, abandoned metahuman in the inter city. He was a fugitive which counted out any help or security in the almost nonexistent police. He also had Static to worry about who had wounded him in the first place. However the greatest danger was not the authorities at that point. Being arrested would be one of the best things that could happen. It gave him time to rest and recover. It was the human gangs that posed the greatest threat. The gangs of Dakota had developed an almost instinctual hatred for metahumans. He remembered it well from shortly after the big bang. Shiv pulled himself up and looked around. He was lying on a cot in a small room of neutral color with one glass wall and no windows. He collected himself for a moment. An escape would be simple. He had obviously been fed. He was no longer hungry and his bruises had healed for the most part. He was in a fit state for a break out. He got up and walked over to the glass wall. He looked around. No one was around. He giggled maniacally. It was so easy. He backed up and tried to create blades. Nothing happened. He quickly became confused. He tried again and again and yet again with no luck. He looked around the room. It was well lit or lit well enough for him to use his powers. He looked down at his hands. They were off color with a reddish hue. They almost appeared burned. His skin was peeling slightly and he had now realized that they stung severely. That explained why he was in such a primitive cell and why no other bang babies were around. He had been drained of his powers, cured or something. He was helpless at this point. He had minimal body strength and little to no tactical abilities. It was becoming blatantly obvious why he had been the scapegoat of the Meta Breed. He was quick, more acrobatic than most and had powers. Shiv was beginning to think this was a very bad situation. Virgil decided to go to the clinic the next day. He came clad in his Static gear wired by Richie who had been barking out rules since the moment he had left the gas station. Virgil had been tempted to turn it off twice but had decided against it. "Look V, try not to get into any situation where you can't get out." "I told you Rich, I won't. Stop worrying, I'm a superhero remember." "Yeah, I remember, V." "Anything else, I'm standing right outside of it. I have to go in." "Yeah, I know I put a tracker on you a long time ago." "Virgil pretend to think this was sweet and not creepy for a moment. "So anything else or not?" "Just... be careful

and don't get yourdissected."Virgil laughed. "I'll remember that one. Talklater Rich."Virgil turned off the communicator and walked intothe building. The entrance was a large waiting room with severaldoors, an elevator and a front desk. He stood for a moment notknowing what to do. Some things were easier in his Static gear thanin his street clothes. However it worked the other way as well, hewould feel perfectly comfortable dressed down as Virgil in his streetclothes sitting in this waiting room reading a magazine from one ofthe racks. However the idea of himself clad in his Static costumereading a medical journal or teen magazine made him feel almostdisgusted. However, he couldn't help but staring at a bright well litcover of a National Geographic sitting on the table. Richie hadoriginally subscribed shortly before his powers had kicked in forhomework reference and he liked the pictures. However he hadabandoned them saying that the level was too rudimentary using thoseexact words. Virgil however had grown very much attached to the oldmagazines from the out-of-date subscription and read them cover tocover when Richie wasn't around. He had seen a newer issue from timeto time and had bought them in a sneaky, almost closet obsessive typeof way, hiding them under a pile of comics when they went to magazinerracks. He often received weird looks from the clerk as the purchasewas as followed: 'Icon', 'Hardware', 'Batman', 'Green Lantern,'National Geographic: Cover Story Inca mummies'. However this hadcaused no end of joy for his father whom occasionally walked behindVirgil some days who had slipped a National Geographic between thepages of a comic book to read it without Richie noticing. Howeverbefore Virgil had a chance to pick up the magazine to see what thecover story was, two doctors walked out of the elevator. One was thesmall Asian doctor from the clip and the other was a middle agedAfrican American man. They walked towards him giving Virgil his firstgood look at what Richie had dubbed 'the enemy'. The man was builtwell with no facial hair and a white lab coat appearing to be acynical and aggressive but good spirited man and the woman who wasmuch smaller than he had guessed by the tape. She came only justabove the bridge of his nose in height and was built very delicatelybut pressed an air of utmost seriousness. Virgil stood nervously fora moment then smiled. The male doctor smiled back as the femaledoctor simply did a nod to acknowledge the action. "Welcome to the Crane Rehabilitational Clinic,Static." the male doctor said shaking Virgil's name. "I amDoctor Jackson and this is my associate Doctor Lin.""Pleased to meet you Static. I trust the messagewas received well." Dr. Lin said calmly."Yeah. I got it right away.""You must be a very bright boy or have a verygood team helping you." said Dr. Lin staring down at herclipboard."The reason we called you here Static is that wehave a problem with a patient." said Dr. Jackson leading Virgilinto the elevator. "Patient number 9749-3796-3A-12B also knownby a street name of Shiv is..."Virgil turned quickly and interrupted. "Youcaught Shiv. He's one of the Metabreed. How'd you...?"He was stared at by both doctors as though he wereeither going to be attacked or had lobsters crawling out of his ears.Either way, it was not a comforting feeling. Dr. Lin spoke first."Patient # 9749-3796-3A-12B was found alone on Milestone Street.He wasn't accompanied at all.""We never take metahumans in gangs. Its toodangerous. Patient 97..." Dr. Jackson said interrupted."You can just say Shiv?" Virgil saidgetting very annoyed hearing that excessively long number."Fine. Shiv was found wounded as a lonemetahuman. It looked like he had been in a fight."Virgil winced slightly. It wasn't often he felt badabout being a superhero but he had never meant to hurt anyone before.He hadn't been paying attention in the fight with the Metabreed andhad beaten on Shiv rather severely. It was almost instinctive after afeew years of crime fighting to shoot electricity at anything that gotup again and was trying to kill you. He had also imagined that theMetabreed would care for itself. He had in no way tried to get anyonekilled. "So what's the problem?"The elevator opened on the third floor. The doctorlead him out taking a sharp left turn. Dr. Jackson continued to speaknot turning to face Static who by now had broken almost thirty fourof Richie's paranoid little guidelines. "The patient, Shiv asyou call him, is refusing to cooperate with anything we ask. We havelimited information on him besides what Dr. Adams had dug up. Wefinally were able to move him after a four day wait which caused a great deal of distrust to begin with.""You do know that this

place has a bad rep with bang babies?" The doctors looked at one another as though wondering if the other knew anything about this. Dr. Lin looked down at her papers and Dr. Jackson just appeared as though he wished dearly that he had some papers to stare at. "Well anyway, " Dr. Jackson said trying to end the awkward moment. "We thought since you had dealt with him before that you could help." "I don't know how good it'll do. He really doesn't like me any better than you, guys." Virgil said with a grin. The doctors again groaned to themselves awkwardly. This was not at all going as they had planned. "Could you at least try?" Doctor Lin said almost distressed. "He hasn't been cooperating at all and has hardly eaten. I know the rumors about this clinic. They have a point about us locking up all of these children. But we are in no way trying to kill anyone. We're trying to help people. If you could get some information from him maybe we could find his parents or a relative to take him in. Could you please try?" Dr. Jackson turned his head rather slowly. He hadn't ever heard her say anything with anywhere near the passion as the speech she had just given. The tiny withdrawn woman who had never had an opinion on anything in medical school and had spent more time learning the mechanics of the human liver than about socialization had just given a rather heart felt speech. Virgil appeared to have felt the same way. "Alright, I'll try." The Asian woman smiled but only slightly and directed him to Shiv's cell. I know I'm not getting anywhere in this chapter but I'll have more soon. I also apologize for the minimal appearance of Shiv.

4 - The Cell Room

Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to the glorious man who is Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. If I were to own it though Aqua Maria would be present more often and speak with her accent in her native tongue. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is.

A/N: I told myself not to write this chapter. I told myself that I should practice my drawings and take a break until I got some readers and reviews. I lie to myself obviously.

Chapter 3: The Cell Room

Virgil was led by Doctor Lin into a room much like the average prison. The differences were superficial. It was cleaner with glass walls instead of barred doors and a control panel on the side of each cell. She led him to a cell approximately three cells from the end. She stopped before going in front of it and turned to Virgil. "He's in that cell there. You'll have to use the intercom to speak with him." the doctor began to walk away. "Hey!" She stopped and slowly turned to Virgil. "Yes?" "Aren't you staying?" "No. Oh yes, one more thing." "Great, I thought for a minute, I was on my own." "Good luck." "What?" "I said good luck." she said and walked away down the hall. Virgil groaned and stood for a moment. He had never really liked Shiv that much. He was unnervingly maniac and constantly trying to kill him. It did not make for a good friendship. It was then it hit him that Richie was still on standby on the communicator. He took out the small microphone and ear piece setting it up to give Richie the news of what was going on. "Rich, you there?" He heard what sounded like Richie almost falling out of his chair and dropping the keyboard of his computer. "ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?!?! WHAT'S HAPPENING!?!?! WHAT'S GOING ON?!?!?" Virgil winced as the ear piece was in his ear and Richie was screaming rather loudly. "Chill, Rich. Everything's fine. I just thought I'd tell you what's going on since the doctors aren't around." The sound of Richie sighing and picking up his keyboard could be heard through the ear piece. "Alright try not to scare me again, I think I almost broke the keyboard." Virgil laughed into the mike. "Fine. I'll give an I'm-not-in-mortal-peril warning next time." "That's all I ask, Zappy. So what's the news? Do they want to cut you into it'sy-bitsy pieces and sell it as protein bars." Virgil made a disgusted noise. "You have to stop watching Soylite Green." "It's people, Static, it's people. So what's going on on the third floor." "I'm sorry but that tracker is going from being a useful tool to a device for your amusement." "And. Can't super genius abuse their powers once in a while?" "Never mind. What do we know about Shiv?" "Shiv, eh? Should have known." the sound of flurried typing and papers began almost instantly. Richie was more efficient than any computer when it came to bang baby info. "Shiv is a metahuman who uses medium to high frequency visible light energy as means to fuel a complex, and in my opinion overly draining, system to create weapons composed entirely of proton ions. He's a sprinter with fastest clocked time of 21 mph on foot lasting fifteen minutes. He also uses a combination of long range and short range combat specializing in keeping a good amount of space between himself and his opponent. The best strategy is short range combat as he has minimal strength and endurance." "Okay, what else?" "Okay..." the sound of typing and papers whipping filled the communicator. "The structure of his bones were significantly altered in the big bang making them hollowed for speed much like the bones of a bird." "Not facts, Rich. Like what's his name?" "Shiv." "His real name, Rich." "Who cares? Shiv works just fine for identification." "Rich, these doctors caught him and they want me to talk to him." "What?" "I'm not kidding." "...I don't know what to tell you. You're better at this than I am. You actually talked to the Metabreed before. Use your instincts." "Thanks Rich." Virgil said sarcastically. "Look if it gets too rough, leave him. He's not our business." "How very caring, Rich." "I'm serious. I don't get attached." "Fine. Static Out." Virgil walked over to

the intercom. He took a deep breath to himself. It was now or never. He pushed the button. "Shiv, you in there?" Shiv had been sitting on the floor by the end of the cot. The familiar voice sounded inside the cell. He wasn't in any mood for this and decided against encouraging the superhero. He sat as quietly as possible. Virgil hadn't expected a welcome but he had expected something. He tried again and again and several more times with no luck. Shiv was not going to talk with him. Virgil sighed. He was too stubborn to leave but wasn't going anywhere talking to Shiv either. He sighed and reached into his pocket. Inside were several pieces of rather old paper. Virgil frowned at them for a moment trying to remember what they were. He opened them. They were flyers for missing children his father had given him. He had told him to tell him if Virgil were to ever see any of the kids. They were given to him before the Big Bang. He had consistently carried them with him for probably a week then quickly forgot. Richie must have shoved him into his Static costume's pocket and hoped that he could pick up a few lost kids. Virgil unfolded them looking through them one by one to pass the time. Until he arrived at the bottom, he looked at it shocked for a moment. It read as: "Jomei Chen, answering to the name of Joe, 16 years old, Asian, male, pierced on both ears. Hair often spiked with a goatee. Excitable, active and friendly. Missing since: April 24th, Dakota MI, suspected runaway." The picture was of the lean Asian boy described on the flyer. He was identical to Shiv in every aspect except for the hair color. The boy's hair was black. Virgil didn't know for sure that it was Shiv but his instincts told him it was and Richie had told him to go with his instincts. He pushed the button again. "Shiv, are you there?" There was no answer. "Come on, Joe. I just want to talk." He could hear stirring in the cell and Shiv moved enough to look out from behind the glass at Virgil. He appeared almost as shocked as anyone could. "What did you call me?" DunDun DUN!! I have to say I was going for something different but this is good. I hope you review. I need ideas.

5 - The Compromise

Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. Shiv would not be the first of the Metabreed to go down every time. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: Thank you so much for all of the reviews. You have no idea how grateful I am. I am so sorry if his name is wrong. I haven't seen Power Outage and can't seem to find any reference to it. I did a fair bit of research before doing his fic and it never came up on any of the communities or websites. The new name is going to stay. I hope no one minds. Taken Lightly Chapter 5: The Compromise

Virgil pushed the intercom again nervously, "Joe. That's your name right?" Shiv was still staring at him but now standing. He didn't move as he stared. He appeared shocked, confused and on some level slightly amused. However he always looked at least slightly amused. "How did you know about that?" Virgil thought for a minute wondering if he should tell him the truth or pretend he knew him. Virgil's heroisms kicked in about then and better logic. He'd never be able to maintain the old buddies idea after almost electrocuting him to death every other day. It would be illogical for someone to continuously try to kill an old friend then suddenly stop and make up like nothing had happened. Plus, Richie would laugh at him for even trying. He decided the truth was the safest route to take. He pushed the intercom and took out the flyer holding it up to the glass. "I saw this flyer. It's you, isn't it? Your parents were looking for you before the Big Bang." Shiv looked at the flyer. The boy appeared happy without a care in the world. He looked like the last person to run away from home for any reason but looks were often deceiving. He knew that. "Yeah, that's me before the Big Bang." Shiv said almost as though he were thinking about something. He didn't look at Virgil while saying it. "I just wanna talk." "No, you want me to cooperate." He said looking up with only one eye from the flyer. "I'm not trying to force you into something. I just want you to have the doctors question you. So you can get out of here. I talked to one of them. They're not trying to hurt you." Shiv looked at him angrily. He didn't want to be lectured by that. Static disgusted him and he quickly snapped back from the shock of hearing his previous alias. "Get out of here, Static. I'm none of your business." "Come on, Joe. If you can stand there and talk to me for this long without trying to cut me in half, you're not that angry at me." "I don't have a knife." "Don't give me that! You can make weapons with your hands. It's not like you're some normal street thug." "I can't work my powers! They drugged me with something!" Shiv yelled growing angry. "What do you mean?" Virgil looked at him absolutely confused. Shiv raised his hands. They were still a red hue. "It doesn't work!" Virgil made a slightly disgusted sound. However, he was more shocked internally. He had just met the sweet tiny little woman that had led him to the room. He had quickly brushed aside Richie's conspiracy theory into the Roswell category. He couldn't imagine that sweet doctor or the good-natured man at the entrance burning someone's hands in some way to disable a meta-human's powers. It was like Sharon being nice to him. It wasn't natural or right somehow. "Who did that?" Shiv gave him a look. It wasn't a happy look. It was irritated and impatient. He had noticed the impatience of Shiv's personality. He was too active to wait. He must have been going stir crazy in that cell. "The doctors. Who do you think Ebon?" Virgil was still trying to make himself understand the situation. How could those doctors do this? Dr. Lin was so concerned about Shiv and Dr. Jackson seemed indignant about how he was in the clinic. They couldn't have done that. It just didn't add up. "Look! I want to talk to you. How about a deal?" Shiv appeared to relax and slightly amused. He liked deals. "What kind of a deal?" Virgil didn't like the look in Shiv's eyes. It was too amused. It was the same look as when he was out fighting. It was like an animal. "I want you to

give me a chance to talk to you and you want to get that stuff off your hands, right?" Shiv appeared amused. Maybe too amused. He was getting excited, excited for the first time in several days. His maniac nature could only be subdued for so long and this was close to its limit. "Yeah. What's the deal?" Virgil was getting increasingly nervous. Shiv was practically shaking with excitement and it had come out of nowhere. It was as sudden as turning on a light. He had gone from a brooding inmate to acting like a child about to receive a treat. It was unnerving but he thought it was better him happy than angry. "If you talk to me and answer honestly then I'll get that off your hands and find you a way out of here." Shiv appeared much like a child who had just gotten their treat. He lit up with a rather maniac smile. He quickly tried to compose himself which looked increasingly more difficult than it should be for a nineteen-year-old. "Hmmm... that is a good deal. I may actually get to like you. But one thing..." Virgil gave a look of worry and surprise. He didn't like the idea of Shiv having a large say in this. It wasn't that he wasn't up for compromise but Shiv was insane and the insane did not reason well. "What's that?" "I want to get my powers back first and a bigger room. There's no room to move around in here." he said as seriously as Shiv could which was not very at this point. Virgil almost laughed with relief. It wasn't illegal. "Alright, Shiv. Whatever you say." Shiv nodded grinning rather proudly. He appeared satisfied with the arrangement. Virgil stood for a minute thinking this over. Richie was going to kill him once he heard about this. He pushed the intercom again. "One more thing. I have to question you, so don't kill the doctors." Shiv looked at him maliciously which quickly changed to a grin. "I'll try. Can't make any promises though, hero. I'm not some saint like you." Virgil quickly became very nervous which he brushed off quickly. He couldn't be distracted by it. He had to be calm. "Fine, I'll get the doctors to get that stuff off your hands." Virgil turned off the intercom and left the room. It was awkward in that elevator. He had bargained with a madman. He had taken quite a risk in letting Shiv have his powers back. However, he had seen humanity in his eyes for those few moments after he mentioned his name. It hadn't been Shiv looking at him. It was someone else. Just the mention of that name had brought something out in him. He felt for him at that moment. Virgil shook his head. Richie was right. He couldn't get attached. That's a death wish if there ever was one. But still he was a meta-human as well. He could understand the want for his powers to return. It was almost a part of himself now and he couldn't imagine having them taken away without any consent. He left the elevator to see Dr. Lin waiting for him. She appeared curious and a bit worried but also calm. Virgil walked out trying to organize his thoughts. She walked up to him calmly clinging to her clipboard. She opened her mouth to speak but Virgil was too quick for her. "I talked to him. I made a deal with him. He wants that stuff off his hands. It's hurting his skin and he wants a bigger room. He said he'd talk to me if I could do that." Dr. Lin appeared surprised. She looked down at her papers. "It'll be done. Come back as soon as you can. We really need to learn who this young man is." Virgil considered telling her about the flyer but decided against it. He didn't know why. He supposed it was curiosity. He was curious himself on how the madman in that cell and the happy boy on the flyer could be the same person. "Yeah." The doctor almost smiled if you could call it that and walked out of the room. Virgil left out the door, took out his saucer and flew off. He wanted to head home but he knew Richie would like an update and decided to go to the gas station. He flew down and walked into the moderately sized abandoned station. He yelled out a greeting to Richie telling him he was back. The sound of Richie tripping over something and several metal cans falling over echoed the station. Virgil laughed to himself. Richie ran over and appearing alert. He was wearing the goggles from back when he had been known as Push. He wore them when he was working at his computer. He said they relaxed his eyes. Virgil had always been unconvinced but never said anything about it. "So V, what'd you find out?" "Nothin." Richie gave him a look showing pure indignity. "Nothing?" Virgil had begun taking his costume off. "Nothing. I just did what the doctors wanted and..." "And what?" "I made a little deal with Jo-Shiv." "You what?" "They took away his powers and he wouldn't talk unless he got them back." Richie rubbed his head. He was trying to think this through. It wasn't easy by any means. He wasn't

happy with Virgil's decision but he had to admit to it if it was the only way. "There wasn't any other way?" "No, Rich. He wouldn't even talk to me until... I mentioned it." Richie sighed then smiled. "Alright." He trusted Virgil. Lying to Richie is bad. I hope everyone enjoys.

6 - The Counselor

Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. Shiv would speak perfectly crappy Thai and Japanese. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: Sorry for the delay. I have been hearing a lot of the same. The chapters are too short. I thought to myself how can I solve this. So I tripled the size of this chapter. The chapter is nine pages long compared to the usual three. Lots of angst, character development and of course, Shiv. ~text ~ is a flashback

Chapter 6: The Counselor

Home is a place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." ~Robert Frost

Virgil spent the next day at the Freeman Community Center where his father worked. He had promised to help with a charity that was being put on. Static duty had been at a continuous low. One of the many reasons was that Hotstreak had been sent off by his grandmother to some school a ways north. Something about the city air making him cranky and overly aggressive. The Breed was still nowhere to be seen and had, in all of the present parties' guesses, officially abandoned Shiv. Virgil had been surprised actually but he ran the idea by Richie and he assured him that it was true. Richie would know. Speaking of which Richie was also at the center. He had been hauling in boxes with Virgil all morning. He hadn't asked about the case with Shiv and Virgil was glad. It was easier not to worry about it. "I think that's the last box, V." Richie said putting down several bags placed inside a cardboard box. "Do you think Haiti really needs all of this stuff?" Virgil said irritably. "Well, the average income of a Haitian family is between 200 to 500 American dollars and judging by your current economic deficit." "I see, your point." "I thought you would." Richie said, grinning. Virgil picked up the box stacking it with the rest of them in the large gymnasium. "So, when were you supposed to be back home?" Richie groaned slightly and took off his glasses to clean them. "My dad wanted me back after lunch. I don't see why, really." Virgil groaned slightly. It was nearly one in the afternoon. They had been up working on the project since nine. Richie had gotten sick of the entire ordeal by eleven and his asthma hadn't helped the situation. However, the minor attacks had gotten both of them several breaks throughout the course of the morning. All in which Sharon and Adam had nagged Virgil about. True, he didn't have to take a break with Richie. It wasn't mandatory but he had convinced himself it was for moral support. "How you feelin', Rich?" "Fine." Richie said slightly annoyed. Virgil was overly protective about little things wrong with Richie. It was sweet. He had to admit but not without being deathly annoying. "Well, I better get going. My dad'll probably blame you if I'm late and I'll be the kid who acts like a hood again." "So, he still hasn't changed much." "He's a success story in slow motion, V." Richie left on his scooter shortly after leaving Virgil to continue working by himself. Well not technically alone. A fair number of volunteers including Frieda, Daisy, Sharon and even Adam were present, as well. The boxes had to be arranged by around three in the afternoon for some trucks coming to pick them up. The center wanted to gather as much as possible so the drop off date was extended to the day before pick up. This left Robert Hawkins and the rest of his family scrambling to get everything together before the trucks arrived. Virgil looked at the box Richie brought in before he had left. It was put together like so many had been. Bags and goods were thrown into the box haphazardly and had to be organized before being taped and sorted. Virgil groaned. He had been lucky and Richie had agreed to organize these messes earlier. However, he wasn't here and Virgil was, leaving it his responsibility. He looked at the label to see who had packed it. A label on the side read: SOLADA CHEN. Virgil grunted and pulled out the missing child flyer. Jomei Chen. He shook his head stuffing it into his pocket. It had to be a coincidence. There must be at least a hundred

Chen's in Dakota. It wasn't an uncommon name on the Asian side of town. He was just being paranoid. He looked inside the box. It was mostly clothes and some old toys. Virgil sighed in relief. It showed no signs of being anything out of the ordinary. Then rummaging through the box, he saw something. It was a shirt. It was baggy, loose and black with a red design on the front. It seemed familiar. He removed the flyer from his pocket again and was shocked to see the same shirt being worn by the boy in the picture. Virgil mentally slapped himself. It was a coincidence. He looked at the shirt and noticed something. Inside the collar of the shirt in silver marker was the word: JOE. This was not a coincidence. Virgil picked up the box and carried it over to his father's office. He thought to himself how insane this was. However, he expected everything dealing with Shiv would be. He knocked on the door. "Hey Pops!" Mr. Hawkins opened up the door wondering what it was Virgil wanted. He could guess. Most likely to get out of something. He hadn't been working as hard as he could have. Mostly due to Richie's asthma which Mr. Hawkins had only begun taking serious after a camping trip which they had taken Richie on. To make a long story short, it hadn't gone well. "What is it, son?" "I was organizing this box and I think it's a bunch of stuff that belongs to one of those missing kids." Virgil said it brokenly trying to figure out how much to and not to let out. Mr. Hawkins looked at him surprised and a little bit suspiciously. Virgil unfolded the flyer and gave it to him. "This guy. I think this is his stuff." Mr. Hawkins wasn't necessarily listening. He was looking at the picture with what appeared to Virgil to be regret. Though, he couldn't be sure. "I remember this boy." "You knew him." Virgil said surprised. "He was a kid who came into the center for counseling. Poor kid." "What do you mean?" "It all happened about a year before the big bang." ~Joe sat in the waiting room of the Freeman Community Center. His legs shook and swung back and forth as he waited. He had never been a calm boy. He was always moving and fidgeting in some way. One of the many reasons his parents had chosen to send him to so many psychiatric centers. He got up from the chair and began walking around. He was told to wait in the waiting room. However this had been a half an hour ago and forty minutes was his limit for limited mobility. He walked into the empty gymnasium and picked up a ball. He was soon dribbling and shooting on both ends of the court. What could he say, he had a lot of energy and enjoyed being up and busy. Mr. Hawkins walked into the gymnasium. It was not uncommon for teens to run off, after getting bored with waiting, to the gym to play basketball and this one seemed like no exception. The fifteen-year-old boy was running up and down the court in loose baggy clothing dribbling and shooting the basketball. He was apparently talking to himself or more accurately giving a full commentary on the imaginary game. Mr. Hawkins smiled. The boy reminded him of his own son a bit odd but harmless. "Come in! It's time for you to come in!" he yelled loud enough for Joe to hear him. Joe dropped the basketball and walked over. He knew how to work with shrinks. You tell them some stuff, they nod and you get pills. It was a simple operation and one Joe wasn't at all displeased with. "Hi there. So I guess, you're my new one. Just call me Joe. I hate my full name. It sounds girly. I have no idea what made my mother name me that. I guess, it was a judgment lapse or something. Are you really a doctor? Can you give me meds? Cause I already have a lot. They don't work real well. Well, they did for a while but..." Mr. Hawkins stood for a moment trying to take everything in. It was like a storm of continuous dialogue. He didn't even stop to breathe. "Yeah, so my meds made me weird for a while and I lost all this weight. So they switched me to something else which doesn't help much. They say I need it because I'm hyper. I don't think I'm hyper. Do you?" Joe said looking at Mr. Hawkins in the gym waiting for a reply. "Maybe, we should go to my office." he said leading Joe out of the gym and into his office. Joe jumped clear from behind the seat into it. He then began adjusting from the landing into a better sitting position. "So, your parents say you're having trouble in school, acting out and they suspect that you may have a drug problem. Do you have anything to say about that, Joe?" "I don't like school anymore, I'm too loud and I don't think it's a problem." "Why don't you like school, Joe?" "It's hard and I don't like it." "What's hard about it?" "Paying attention to the teacher." "You go to a private school, is it mostly lecturing then?" "Yeah. I just don't stay interested." Joe's eyes were wandering. He was already scanning the

contents of the room. Hewasn't comfortable, really. He wanted to skip the personal questionsand go right to the conclusion. Mr. Hawkins looked down at his clipboard. He wasn't going to prytoo far at the moment. It wasn't unusual for boys his age to dislikeschool. "So, how are things at home, Joe?" Joe looked up for a moment. "Fine."The conversation continued for some time. Joe had managed to deterit onto a number of subjects not previously planned. Skateboards,hair dye, and a huge Bull Mastiff on North Street were a few. Hewalked out of the building and picked up his skateboard propped upagainst the side of the building. He got on and skated out into thestreet. It was busy that afternoon. He had been surprised. It usuallywas. He skated quickly avoiding the north side. It was notoriouslyknown for gangs on the north side. He had only gone there a few timesto save time and it hadn't been much fun. His house was almost four blocks away from the center. He stoppedhis skateboard and got off at the front gate. It was a fenced home ina high middle class neighborhood. His father, he supposed, made quitea bit. He was sent to private school and his mother didn't have towork. He picked up his skateboard. Walking in the front gate, he shutit behind him. Across the yard, a dog sprang to life from a lethargic state. Thedog was a brown akita who ignored every human being on the planetbesides Jomei Chen and was an ever faithful companion. The dog becamewildly entertained with just the presence of his master. The dogjumped wildly half strangling himself against the collar and ropearound his neck. He barked and yipped springing up to two feet in theair. Joe dropped his skateboard and ran over to see the dog. The dogbarked jumping up on his hind legs to lick the young man's face. Joeshoved and pet the oversized puppy. "Get down, Spike." hegroaned wiping his face. "Did my mother tie you up, again?!?"The dog barked loudly and let out a deep howl. "I'll have to tell her not to or we'll end up on some showfor animal abuse." he said, cheerfully untying the dog. "Canyou imagine me getting a mugshot?"The dog stared with blank bliss. He really had no idea what amugshot was, but he was sure his master would take a good one.He pat the dog on the head and ran off to the house. Spikefollowed excitedly. His brown eyes never leaving his master's face.Joe walked into the his house and removed his shoes. Spikeimmediately became silent and sat politely on the floor next to hismaster. "You're too well behaved, Spike."Spike made a groaning noise and licked his master's face. Joeshoved him away and threw his shoes into a pile by the door. Hejumped up to his feet and walked from the entrance way of his house.The house was immaculately clean. His mother spent almost the entireday cleaning was his guess. The entrance lead into a hallway whichbranched off into the other rooms of the house. His room was straightahead and up a flight of stairs. The dining room was to the left. Thekitchen to the right. The living room was down the hall. Finishingoff with his parent's room which was on the far right end. He couldsmell food cooking from the kitchen. He tried to ignore it but heknew it was unavoidable. It was his mother. She was in the kitchen.He hated the chore of going in to talk to her. It wasn't as thoughshe cared whether he was home or not. He walked into the room tryingto be cheerful. "Hi mom!"She stood nervously. She trying not to look at him which wasgrowing increasingly difficult with him staring at her. "Sa-wat,Jomei."He forced a grin. Great, Thai. Hismother was from Thailand originally. However, it had been almosttwenty years since she had been in any place where Thai was a neededlanguage. She spoke it frequently. He found it not only annoying andgave him more to remember. "Sa-wat." he said, still forcinga happy face. He did that a lot. Look happy. People liked peoplehappy. "I'm going up to my room, mom. Spike and I are going toplay some video games." She didn't reply.Joe held back a groan. Typical. Helooked over at the counter for the mail. He had a few mail-orderskater magazines that he subscribed to and wanted to know if they hadcome. Nothing. The counter was basically empty except for smallappliances, some books his father was forcing him to read and, ofcourse, pills. He and his mother both took medication for one thingor another. He had ADHD medication which either had no effect or madehim horribly ill. His mother took medication for PPD. He didn't knowwhat it was but he figured it was why she hated him. Hewalked out ofthe kitchen and into his room. Spike followed happily.Joe jumped on his bed, turned on hisplaystation 2 and started to play. He had a variety of games: mostlyzombie, fighting and skateboard.

He sat on his bed absorbing himself into the game. Spike crawled up onto the bed and placed his head on his master's lap. The dog didn't enjoy seeing his master unhappy but sometimes the affairs of humans were even too great for a dog to handle. So, he could only comfort and hope for the best. Joe leaned forward as he reached a closed door on the screen. He knew, oh too well, what was behind that digital door and it was not friendly. Spike moved his head. He knew it, too. As soon as he opened the virtual door, the creature flew out and Joe jumped to his feet on the bed. The dog knew he was smart to move. He could have went flying or worse yet, made his master lose. Joe pushed buttons maniacally as he stood on his bed playing the game. He muttered to himself. Spike whimpered as he repeated, no no no and grew excited with happy groans as he chanted yeah, yeah, come on. They were an inseparable duo and they liked it that way. His father arrived home within an hour of Joe. His father was a businessman named Tadashi Chen. He walked into the door, removed his shoes and walked toward his son's room. He opened the door. His son was sitting on his bed in his messy room playing video games accompanied by this dog. His father sighed. He should have known. "Jomei." "What?" Joe said, not turning away from his game. His father held back the urge to reprimand the boy. "Have you done your homework?" "No." "Have you read anything, at all, today?" "No. Nothing but street signs." He groaned. "Jomei..." "Joe." "Jomei," he repeated louder. "You have to study." "Joe, dad." "Jomei, are you even listening?" "Yeah," he said leaning in toward the screen. "Uh-huh." He walked over and turned off the game. "You have to been sitting in here doing nothing for too long! God do your homework!" Joe was still in a state of shock that he hadn't saved since the last zombie mob. "JOMEI!" "Huh?" "JOMEI CHEN! GET UP AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK!" "Stop yelling at me!" His father was completely indignant. He couldn't see how his son had become such a lazy, incompetent bum and worst of all was that he was a bum with a big mouth. "I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT, JOMEI! NO VIDEO GAMES! NO MAGAZINES! NO T.V! NOT UNTIL YOU GET YOURSELF TOGETHER!" Joe stared half shaken. He looked around. His mother was standing in the doorway not saying anything. She had a look of apathy. Joe looked at his father then again to his mother. His father was even now was more comforting. "Yeah, dad." he said dragging himself down to the kitchen to get his school books. He was upset and felt utterly alone. Spike followed nudging at his master's arm. Joe sat in his room for hours. He couldn't do this. He stared at the text book. It was history. He hated history. He was up until near one in the morning working. He could never concentrate and his father refused to help him with anything. He still hadn't finished but he found lying to his father was the only way to get any sleep. Joe turned off the lights in his room, turned on his video game with the volume down as low as he could and lay on his bed wrapped in his blanket. He stared into the screen as he pushed the buttons on the controller. Spike crawled on the bed next to his master. Joe pulled the blanket over the dog and put his arm around his neck continuing to play the game. Joe leaned his head on Spike's neck. He sniffled continuing to play the game. Spike licked his master's face. "You're a good dog, Spike. You really are." Spike licked his master's face. He didn't like the balance of the house. He found it frustrating how the older humans treated his master. He wasn't a bad human. He did his best. He was sure of it but it was never good enough. Spike looked at the boy's face. He looked so upset alone in his room. He didn't have to smile for Spike or for the game. Spike licked his master's face again trying to comfort his master. There were some affairs of human that not even a dog can solve. ~Virgil listened intently as Shiv finished talking. He had left the Community Center mid-afternoon and had gone to the center to see if he could learn any more. Shiv had told him apparently, happy to have company. Virgil paused after Shiv ended his explanation. He thought to himself. "Joe." "Yes?" "What did you say your mother had medication for?" Static was sure he had heard wrong. It couldn't be. Shiv groaned lying on the cot, his head hanging off the end upside down. "Well, I don't know what it was exactly but they called it PPD. My guess is she was addicted to pain killers. Seems the type." Virgil was taken aback. He knew what that was. He had seen at least a dozen news reports on it and heard a good deal of ranting from Sharon. "Joe, that's not a drug addiction. That's postpartum depression." Shiv looked

at raising an eyebrow. "Who isn't depressed incities?" he said, grinning. "You watch way too many sitcoms if you think people are happy." "Shiv, post partum depression are all those crazy people on TV who hate and kill their babies. I'm surprised you made it past a year." Shiv looked vaguely distraught for a moment. It was far more human than he thought Shiv could ever be. He suddenly snapped with a grin. The humanity in his face was gone. "Well, I guess I had to get my crazy genes from someone. Always thought it was my aunt in Thailand." Virgil held back a groan and tried to smile. Shiv's sense of humor was not for him. It was so forced in the small cell. "Well, I have to go, Joe. Don't kill the doctors." "It wouldn't be like you hero to take the fun out of life," Shiv said leaning over the edge of the cot as Virgil started to walk away. "Just when I was starting to like you, too!" Virgil walked into the elevator trying to leave quickly. Doctor Lin and Jackson were nowhere to be seen and he was sure Richie, being a super genius, couldn't be wrong about every doctor. This guesses were quickly confirmed. Just then an Ethiopian doctor namely Doctor Adams. She walked over to Virgil quickly. Her skin was not a far cry from Ebon's and her general presence boded the same. "You must be Static. I've heard you were lurking around." Virgil didn't know exactly what to do in this situation. She was the exact type of person Richie had been ranting about for years. The cold, uncaring professional with more interest in drugging rats than the beneficial drug that was the final product. He began to think Richie's conspiracy theories were not the unfortunate side effects of being a genius. "Yeah, doing what I can to help." She looked at him with a half grin filled with delight and disgust. "Well, I am glad at least one meta-human is trying to make things right." She walked off without saying goodbye and Virgil was sure he heard her mention "a loose lab rat". Virgil flew to the gas station to find Richie scrambling over his computer equipment. He appeared frantic. He could imagine why. Sure, he wasn't wired this time but he had a tracking in his shock vox. He looked in his coat and it dawned on him. He had left his shock vox in his room after he had gone to the community center. Richie, hearing something, turned around quickly. "Virgil!" Virgil felt no end to the guilt he felt at that moment. Richie looked absolutely terrified. "Yeah, it's me, Rich." Richie stood up. He had quickly changed from terrified to outrageously angry. "WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S YOU!!?! WHERE WERE YOU!?! " Virgil didn't know entirely what to say. "Rich, I'm sorry. I forgot my shock vox in my room and..." "I know I went to find you and that was all I found in there. Where were you?" he snapped he was ferocious. The developed and undeveloped sides of his brain were at war. His logic told him it was all a mistake and Virgil was probably rescuing a cat as his teenager emotions protested saying that he was out to drive you mad. "I was... out." Richie's logic immediately dropped the cat theory. "You were back at this center, weren't you?" Virgil grinned rubbing his head. It was obvious that Richie was right. "You weren't wired, V." Richie said amazed at his accuracy. He was hoping he was wrong. He was hoping that Virgil would have gotten indignant and yelled him for thinking he was that stupid. Sometimes being a super genius bites. "Rich," "Anything could have happened and no one would have known anything about it." "Rich, nothing happened." "Yeah, this time! What about the next time you forget your shock vox? Or the next?" Richie said half yelling. He had a look of absolute distress. "Rich, I don't think you're cut out for tracking me on this one." he said. "If you wanna help you can but don't track me Rich." Richie's pupils shrunk. He had never been cut off like this not in a calm moment on Virgil's behalf. "V, I..." "I'm sorry, Rich. I was have to find out where Solada Chen lives." Virgil said and left the main room of the gas station. Virgil is getting a bit too caught up in this little case of his.

7 - The Secret

Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to Mister Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. They would tell us something about the characters' backgrounds but then I would feel the urge to write this fanfiction. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: Finally the slash. I promised. I hope you like this chapter. It's a little rough and I hope it doesn't offend. No flashbacks in this one. But a resolution to the end of the last chapter. I've been trying to ignore this fanfic. It's not working. I hope you enjoy.

Chapter 7: The Secret

"So, you're not going to tell me where your mother lives." "Nope. Not a chance. I'm gone for a reason and I'm not going back." Shiv said sitting on the cot in the small cell. He appeared to be playing games with Virgil. Virgil sighed. "You making things up, Joe." Shiv grinned. He appeared amused at the idea as if it were a whole new game to play. "Possibly. Maybe. I don't plan on telling you." Shiv paused for a minute. "But I don't plan on lying a lot either." Virgil sighed. "You're a human headache, Joe." Shiv grinned. "A meta-human headache, remember?" Virgil shook his head. Shiv's games were beginning to annoy him. He had been going to see him for at least a week now and the threats had stopped and games begun. He was like an overly active child, really. He only cared about games and having a good time. However, he had broken a border he was sure would thoroughly upset Richie. He had broken the hero-villain interaction rules. It was a common understanding that heroes were not to trust and converse casually with a villain as quoted by Richie a number of times. However, Virgil no longer saw Shiv as a threat or maybe he didn't see Joe as a threat. Wait a minute, did he just separate the two. Virgil shook his head. Here he wasn't thinking straight but there was no other way to describe the complete difference in Shiv from time to time. He was so genuinely human sometimes and so maniacal the next. It could only be described as two people. One far more subdued than the other. "What do you have to hide, Joe?" He appeared surprised by the question. It was as though he had not anticipated it. He stuttered. "Uh... nothing. What would I have to hide?" "I don't know. I assume something since you ran away, joined a gang of mutants, and have to real concrete negative emotions." "I already told you about my home. That was it." Virgil couldn't get much out of him afterwards. He assumed that he had hit a nerve or something. He flew back to the gas station to store his Static gear. Richie wasn't there. He wasn't surprised after yesterday. A feeling of guilt passed through him. It wasn't like him to exclude Richie from anything. Richie was a constant part of life and he was tossed aside for the moment. It had been cruel. He thought for a moment wondering where he would be. He knew he wouldn't be at home and the community center was out of the question being they were fighting. Richie had given up on the arcade after he had assumed super genius status and had found the exact formula to beat any high score on any game in the small arcade. He said it was a waste of annoyance, which was primarily money for parts, now that he knew how to beat anyone in the world on any game in the world. That only left the school. It was locked as it was after school hours but that had never stopped Richie before. He had always been more mischievous than Virgil. Virgil approached the school. It was near twilight and it appeared to be empty. Virgil walked up to the window of the science lab. He saw a small blinking red light easily mistaken for a school camera, Backpack. He'd know that light anywhere. It was definitely his scope camera. "Rich. It's me." Backpack stared right at him. The machine seemed surprised by not only the awareness of the familiar human but by the willingness to reveal himself. It appeared to intrigue the small computer. However, its curiosity and awestruck wonder was interrupted all too soon by an undeniable force of nature. Richie stormed over almost knocking Backpack off on the

windowsill where he had descended only moments before. The computer apparently in a state of terror at the sudden violent behavior of his creator withdrew its camera scope and quickly scurried underneath one of the nearby tables. The machine huddled a bit in a defensive position. He was now ready for the fight to ensue. Richie stared at Virgil for a moment. It was unmistakable anger however he quickly changed his expression to something much more subdued, a more appropriate facade. "What are you doing here? Its after hours." "I should ask you the same thing." "Backpack has a heat sensor around the building. If anyone is within 100 meters of the school, I know. If anything over twenty pounds gets too close I know." Virgil groaned a little. He should have guessed. "What do you need something? I left thirty zap-caps in the gas station and I haven't finished the waterproof gear yet." Virgil felt guilty. He did ask a lot of Richie and he didn't like the reaction of strictly a professional nature. "I thought we should talk Rich." "Bout what?" he said going back to whatever he was working on. "You know what." he paused. "About yesterday." "I know I took the situation too personally and felt an inappropriate degree of jealousy and protectiveness over a situation that was strictly professional." "Could you not talk like a computer for a minute, Rich? I know you're mad." "I'm not mad. I thought it over last night and..." "You are mad I saw it. You looked at me like you were going to kill me for a minute." "I was surprised." "You were angry!" Richie slammed down his saunter gun onto the table. "Fine! I am angry! I'm angry that you have been spending too much time on a lost cause and THAT YOU DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO SO MUCH AS SAY HI TO ME FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS!!" Virgil was somewhat stunned by the outburst. Though it was characteristic of Richie, it was also very loud. "We've been friends for ten years, dating for four, and partners for at least three! Yes, I am jealous Virgil!!" With that Richie rushed out the door of the science room and soon after out of the school. Virgil crawled up into the window. "I'm a jerk, Backpack." Backpack refrained from his recoil and beeped in agreement. "I better go fix this mess and get you back to him." Backpack beeped in agreement again and crawled up onto Virgil's back. Virgil jumped back out of the window, closing and locking it with his powers. He then began to run around the school yard climbing over the fence to get to the main street. He looked around for Richie. He didn't appear to be anywhere near the school anymore. Virgil stood for a moment. He had a feeling he had gone left actually it was more than a feeling. He knew. His powers had always been developing and he had learned to recognize people by their electrical currents. It was helpful if not somewhat creepy. He ran in that direction. It was dark by then with only street lights to see by. They lit three-fourths of the path leading into a relatively unfriendly ghetto. It was on the northwest side of Dakota littered with apartment buildings and stray animals. Virgil knew this was no place for Richie or himself for that matter. The ghettos were dangerous for bang babies. He turned a narrow corner between two old tenements and heard something. "You tramping round here for?!" "Lookin' for someone!" Virgil turned the corner to what was going on. There were a number of young men all with some type of blunt object and in the middle was Richie. This was very bad. He knew at that instant exactly what was going on and it had nothing to do with the Big Bang. "Hey, get away from him!" The three men turned around. Virgil felt a rush of fear go through him. "So, I guess, its true that they come in pairs." Gay bashers was the usual term for people like these. Gangs of marauding people who feel it is doing a public service to bash the skull in of anyone who doesn't have the general sexual preference. Virgil had never actually been in contact with people of this nature. Well, he was sure he had been but not like this. "Get away from him!" "So he's yours, is he?" the man appeared amused. "Isn't that nice." The other men had revealed the poorly hidden objects. They were a wrench and crowbar. Virgil felt strangely relieved. He knew it was a mistake but, when you are being slowly approached by a group of violent similarly minded people, you have survival instincts. He let out a burst of magnetic energy. The metal objects flew out of their hands sticking to the walls of the tenements. He sparked slightly. "Get away from us." This was far more than the men had expected. They appeared terrified, mouths agape and eyes wide. It was as though they'd never seen a metahuman before. "He's just like the Breed! Get out of here! He'll kill us!" the leader said beginning to run away.

"What about the other one?" another man said still standing near Richie. "He's probably one too!! Get away from those freaks!!" the leader said still terrified and with that they dispersed. Virgil quickly stopped sparking and sighed with relief. The scare tactic worked. They weren't after metahumans too. He ran over to Richie who was lying half crawled up on the pavement. "Richie!" he said and knelt down next to him. Richie uncoiled and looked at Virgil. "What are you doing here?" "Looking for you. Are you all right, Rich?" Richie appeared to have a bloody nose and a bruise on his forehead and Virgil had to withdraw every instinct to assume the worst. "I'll be fine. Just a scratch." He said sitting up. "Nothing is seriously injured." "You sure?" "Yeah, V." Virgil hugged him. It was a reflex more than anything else. He had to do it. "I'm sorry, Rich. I shouldn't have been so wrapped up in everything. I..." Richie didn't move. He hadn't expected this sudden outburst of affection but then nothing like mortal peril and himself being injured to end a fight. "V, you don't have to apologize. I'm fine." "But..." "You get involved in things which reminds me." he said with a smile. "I'm willing to help you with this little project of yours." "You are?" "Yeah. After this little fiasco, I don't feel all that threatened and if, I'm not threatened and you're not threaten, I get curious. I want to figure this out too." "What about 'don't give attached'?" "I still stand by that. He is a sociopathic murderer but that doesn't mean I don't want to know what's going on." Virgil smiled. "Could you find an address for Solada Chen then?" The next few days went by much smoother than previously. Richie was back to cracking jokes and Virgil again wearing the surveillance equipment Richie told him to without complaint. "Alright V, this is a camera-microphone-communicator, invented by your personal mechanic, to make sure that both of us know exactly what is going on." "Going on where?" "You're going back and I am going to know what is going on." That was that. Not that he minded. It was far better than having himself pitted against Richie. If he was going to have a super genius run his life, he wouldn't want anyone besides Richie to do it. The doctors had stopped addressing his visits by now. They figured he was just doing what he was suppose to be doing and that was that. "Alright V, you're in right." Richie said through the communicator. "Yeah." Virgil moved down to the hallway with Shiv's cell. "Hi Joe." "Why are you calling him, Joe?" "His name is Joe." "Who are you talking to?" Shiv said with the utmost curiosity in this voice. "How does he know about me?" "I'm talking to you... Richie." "I know, I'm Richie." "Is he the blond you're with all the time?" "How does he know who I am!?! "Is he?" Virgil's head was spinning for a moment. "Yeah. You used a zap-cap on him before." "Oh yeah." "Why are you talking to him?" "He helps me out." Virgil could hear Richie chuckle over the communicator. "So, what was that big secret of yours, Joe?" Shiv stared up at the ceiling. "I don't have any secrets." "I know you did drugs, Joe. I don't care. You had a rough life. I'm not going to judge you." Shiv looked at him for a minute. "I've never had a girlfriend." Virgil raised an eyebrow. "And?" "I have different preferences." And more problems arise, remember to tune in next time for more of the dramatic adventures with Taken Lightly. Back to reality, thank you for all of the reviews and I hope you enjoyed yourself.

8 - The Good Mother

Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to Mister Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. But a girl can dream. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: Okay, this is really quite an anti-drug chapter. I hope it's accurate. Also a bit of a sad chapter. Joe is getting ready to run away. I hope you like it though. Also sorry. It took so long. Taken Lightly Chapter 8: The Good Mother

Richie had found the address of Solada Chen in almost no time at all. She was living in an upper middle class neighborhood on the west side of Dakota. Virgil hadn't bothered to wear his Static costume as he was afraid he'd scare her off. The house had a fence, garden, and doghouse with no dog. A skateboard sat up against the side of the flower bed. Richie looked around the yard. He found it, eerie. It was so deserted in mood. Virgil knocked on the door. Richie quickly removed himself from his examination and placed himself behind Virgil on the landing. "Remember, we're doing an article for school on missing children." "Very sympathetic, Virgil." "Best I could think of." The door opened. Standing in the entrance was an Asian woman around her late forties with her hair tied back. She looked tired and oddly sad. She wore a long skirt and a white blouse. However, she certainly had a resemblance to Shiv. Her eyes curved the same way his did and her skin was the same pale bronze. However, she was built far portlier and shorter in height. She looked at the boys for a moment. She was just shorter than Richie and came up to Virgil's chin. "Hi." Virgil said with a wave. "Are you Mrs. Chen?" Her expression did not change. "Yes. What is it?" "I'm Virgil Hawkins and this is Richie Foley. We're doing a report on missing children for the Community Center where my pops works. We were wondering if you wouldn't mind answering a few questions." She sighed irritably. "Come in. My husband isn't home. He hasn't come home before ten p.m. since Jomei ran away. He used to come home all the time to help him study. You aren't the first one's to come and ask me about this. It has been a while though." Virgil followed her down the hallway. He saw a door half open and looked inside. It was a teenager's room. It was dusty and needed desperately to be cleaned. Clothes were scattered across the floor, CDs sat on the dresser, a video game controller was sitting on the floor and the bed was unmade. It looked so lived in and so dead at the same time. "That was Jomei's room." she said, walking back toward them. "I can't bring myself to clean it. I don't want to touch his things." she said and shut the door to the room. "We still hope he might turn up." She looked tired. Virgil and Richie looked at one another as they continued into the living room. "What happened, Mrs. Chen?" She sighed to herself. "So many things. I had a hard time having a child. We tried for years and it never worked out. We thought it wasn't meant to be, but Tadashi, that's my husband Tadashi, wouldn't give up on it. He told me it was only a matter of time. He never gave up on the idea and gave me hope." Solada smiled briefly, but it faded quickly. "I went to a doctor to ask about why it was taking so long for us to have our baby. I had some tests and there was a fertility defect. However, we decided to try one last time and Jomei was born." she paused for a moment. She was solemn but only superficially. "He was born three and a half weeks early. Some things weren't quite right with him. But we didn't mind it, he was our baby." Virgil looked at her sympathetically. He hadn't expected this. He had expected her to be different, colder. "Did you have any problems with Joe?" "I couldn't bond with him. I had wanted the baby for so long. It caused a lot of trouble but my husband understood and we worked through it." she stuttered for a moment and stood up. "Would you two like anything?" Virgil and Richie looked at each other. Neither were very hungry after that declaration. It was something about it that created a knot in your stomach. "No, thank you." Richie said, holding

his notepad. "What was wrong with Joe?" Her expression did not change as she sat back down. "He was ADHD from this premature birth. He couldn't sit still well. Videogames were only things that could keep him in one place." "When did he run away?" Virgil said sympathetically. "It was the night of the big bang. April 23rd." "Could you tell us what you think lead up to him running away?" Richie said seriously. She sighed. "Joe was never a bad kid. But he had trouble in school." "Joe sat at the desk by the window in his Geometry class. He hated the class. Actually, he disliked a lot about his school. He was forced to wear a uniform: jacket and tie, listen to boring lectures, sit still, and worst of all, with no entertainment. He sat looking out the window. He wasn't really thinking about anything. He was just watching things go by when his afternoon activity was rudely interrupted. "Mister Chen!" Joe snapped out of the trance. "Yeah." The class giggled. The woman at the front of the class was a thin, elderly woman. Her hair was a mix of grey and black tied into a tight bun. She appeared annoyed. Though, when wasn't she? "Do you know the answer, Mister Chen?" Joe smiled and leaned back with his hands behind his head. "And what was the question?" The class giggled again. Joe relaxed further. This was his ideal environment: surrounded by laughter. The teacher was angry. She gave him a stern look and pointed at the board. "The area of an equilateral triangle inscribed inside a circle, Mister Chen." "I have no idea," he said, smugly. He turned. A girl two seats away from him had her hand up and appeared as though she was about to jump out of her skin. "I think she knows, though." The class ended within an hour. They had reframed from usual discipline with Joe. He was in the office so often it was getting ridiculous. However, despite his behavior problems, he was well liked by the school. The secretaries found his boyish charm and humor entertaining. Even the senile old janitor, who hated all of the students, enjoyed his company and would occasionally allow him to skateboard in the halls after hours. He walked outside the school. He unlocked his skateboard from the bicycle rack and jumped on. He skated down a hill leading from the school and turned into a small alley. He jumped off and looked around. It was dank, dark and hidden out of sight. He had been told by a classmate that he could get drugs here. The location was perfect for drug dealing. It was far out of sight and close enough to a private school that no one would suspect. It was also far easier to coax naïve private school students than those in public school. Joe was unfortunately very naïve. His logic was that marijuana was used as medicine and that he was ill. He hated to think of it that way but he was. His medicine wasn't working. It made him sick half the time and if not then had no effect at all. He held his skateboard under his arm and looking around. He didn't see anyone. Joe sighed, it must have been a joke. He never did like Andrew. Joe dropped his skateboard and jumped on. "You, Joe?" Joe stopped sharply and turned. It was a very deep voice and commanding. "Yeah.. I'm Joe. Joe Chen." Aman in his early twenties walked out from the back of the alley. He was African American with very dark skin and cornrows lined his head. He was wearing a vest, loose pants and a tight shirt. It was the toughest person Joe had ever seen outside of one of his video games. "You're Ivan Evans." Joe said surprised. He was staring, in between feelings of awe and absolute curiosity. He had expected some named Ivan to be well... Russian and white and smaller. "Yeah. So you're Joe Chan. So... Chan." "Chen." "Chun, whatever." "Chen." "So Chang, you got some type of problem." Ivan said, removing the contents of his pockets and vest. It was a variety of powders, pills and plants inside small plastic bags. "If you need painkillers, I got over the counter, script pill and morphine." Joe squinted a little trying to act seriously. "I don't need those and it's Chen." "Right. Chung. I got red devils if you can't sleep, crank, if you sleep too much, pot if you care about too much, acid if you just want to go on a trip..." Ivan lagged on but it was lost to Joe. He looked over the drugs trying to pick up any information he could. He was never good at paying attention. "It's Chen. I just need something to mellow me out." Ivan quickly put most of the small bags away into his pockets. "Okay, Lee. You want this then. How much did you bring?" Joe pulled off his backpack and pulled out a small wallet. Ivan snatched it and took whatever was inside and handed Joe a plastic bag of a bright green plant. Ivan stood there counting the money as he put back Joe's wallet. Joe didn't know exactly what to make of the transaction. He didn't

know what to do at all really. He stood for a moment. "You want somethin' else?" Joe jumped a little. He was surprised by the reaction. "No. Nothing." "Then get out, Chun." Joe dropped his skateboard and pushed himself out of the alley. "It's Jomei "Joe" Chen!" "Joe-May Joe Chung... Chan... whatever." Ivan muttered to himself as Joe sped away. Joe spent the next few days experimenting with the new drug, buying more from Ivan, and acting like a sloth. He was far mellower than before. He got up in the morning and ate breakfast without jumping on things and getting distracted. Tadashi smiled from his newspaper as Joe picked up his skateboard and books and walked out the door. Solada was washing dishes as Tadashi began to gather his briefcase. "You don't think it's odd?" Tadashi stopped for a moment. "What do you mean? With Jomei?" "Yes. He doesn't seem himself. He's tired." "He's calm." Tadashi said with a grin. "We're just not used to it." "That's not it. He's too quiet and he does... He just isn't right." Tadashi turned to his wife for a moment. He broke away from his grin and into a comforting look. "He's fine, Solada. I haven't heard those video games in days. He's upstairs doing his homework half the time. He's getting better, Solada. Getting a handle on this. It's a good thing, Solada." He said, kissed Solada goodbye and walked out the door. She returned to the dishes. "Then, why are his eyes so red now?" Joe sat in his desk at school. He was silent without even a smile. A few had asked why his eyes were so red. He said it was allergies, an allergic reaction, it was infected, pink eye and that it was a parasitic worm. He didn't think anyone believed any of the excuses but were far too taken aback to ask anything else about the subject. He sat silently staring straight ahead. He wasn't thinking about anything or looking at anything. He was just staring. He could remember if he had done his homework or even breakfast. It was a weird feeling, not knowing things that you really should. The teacher was walking up and down the rows of small desks handing something out. He couldn't remember what class this was. It was either Study Hall or History or something. The teacher placed several pieces of paper on his desk. They were tests from the last four weeks. Joe groaned it'd be a C to D+. It always was. He failed anything. He looked down at the oldest. It was a 78, a C+. He looked at the next it was a D, then a D-, then an E. Joe stared in confusion. This can't be right. He was calm. He better this had to be wrong. Joe was sitting with his head in his hands. His classmates filed out as he sat. It was almost shock. He was failing. He didn't fail. He was the obnoxious, cocky class clown who always squeaked by with a C-. The teacher walked looked up from his desk. He saw Joe sitting there, head in hands. He got up and walked down the aisle by the window and sat down in the chair in front of him. Joe didn't notice. The man was in his late fifties with glasses and a beard. He had been teaching at the school for almost thirty years. "Is there any reason you're retests turned out like this?" Joe looked up. "I guess I didn't study." "Are you sure you don't know any other reasons?" "Yeah." he said and got up leaving the classroom. He skated home and walked in through the gate. Spike barked happily. "Shut up, Spike." Joe said irritably and walked inside the house. Joe left his tests on a small end table in the living room and went into the backyard to smoke. Solada was standing on the floor above and looked outside. She felt the pit of her stomach give out. She knew it all along. It was obvious really. She knew she should get down there and yell her lungs out at him. She knew that she should get rid of that horrible stuff but she couldn't. She couldn't stand to be that close to him. It would mean being near him and she couldn't. It was too much for her. Tadashi arrived home shortly. Joe was sitting on the couch. Tadashi picked up the tests and shot Joe an angry look. The yelling began instantly. Tadashi's flurry of anger and disappointment continued for almost two hours. Joe sat without flinching. He was in complete apathy. He didn't care, and if he did, he wasn't showing it. Solada should stay at a distance. She was silent as she always was. She looked at her son. He sat tired and careless. She hadn't seen him like this before. He was so still and it scared her. After the lecture, he lay on his bed in his room curled in on himself, trying to sleep off some of the more negative effects. He hadn't expected the sore throats, tiredness, and worst of all general apathy. He had stopped caring about beating his growing number of games, trying in school, and even skateboarding seemed pointless. He pulled the heavy blanket over his head and coughed slightly. His father now suspected something and excuses were

harder and harder to make up. He couldn't think straight anymore. He pushed his face into his mattress. Spike stood in the doorway to Joe's bedroom. He stood and pushed the door open with his nose. He peered into the small darkened room. He hated seeing Joe like this. He didn't know what made him act this way but it wasn't natural. It was altered and strange. He didn't jump or yell anymore. He didn't run to greet him after school or play with him. Spike walked across the room and crawled onto Joe's bed. Joe turned, seeing the old dog crawling onto the elevated mattress. Spike groaned as he began to lick Joe's face. He scratched behind Spike's ears. "Sorry, boy. I've been awful to you." he said, rubbing his eyes. "You didn't do this." He felt horrible. Worse than ever now. His father's outburst still stung and his mother who just stood there. Even though, he was insulted, disgraced and mentally dismantled by his father. He felt it burn in the pit of his stomach. He grabbed Spike around the neck and fell asleep tightly wrapped in his heavy blanket. Spike lay beside him trying his best to help him with merely with his existence. He knew he could do so little but he could only hope this would help his master. The boy did not deserve more complexity in his life. So, he simply lay on the bed as a loyal friend. Outside the door, Solada looked in at her son crawled up into his dog fast asleep. She knew was in pain and exactly what was going on. She wished she could go into the room and make things so much easier. She wished that she could tell Tadashi that he was trying and that not all people are perfect. However, she could not. She felt disgusted by his very existence and feared so greatly that she may hurt him. She wished that she could only love the young man in that dark room. But that wasn't the reality and she could only apologize. "I'm sorry, Joe. I know this isn't nearly enough for all I have done. Standing out in a hall apologizing but I am so sorry." Sad chapter. Please Review.

9 - The Big Bang

var nopopup = 0; rsi_hints = 'Cartoons,Static Shock,Drama'; Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to MisterDwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. I wish it did. Then, Shiv would have a split personality named Joe and they would argue. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be abit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: This is the second to the last chapter. I know it makes me sad too. I've loved writing this bad boy. I hope you like this one and I will have a present for you next time. Its a little slashy but not. I hope you like the chapter. /// =flashback Taken Lightly Chapter 9: The Big Bang

Virgil and Richie had returned from the Chen home a few hours before dinner. It was a silent walk back to the gas station, where they gathered their things silently. They felt a wave of guilt knowing what Solada had told them. Even Virgil and Richie's curiosity couldn't denounce the fact that they had uncovered something, not only very personal but something not for them to know. Virgil had also been taken aback by Solada, she was not what he had expected. She wasn't the cold hearted monster, he had expected a woman like her to be. She was human with a horrible problem that she had no control over. Richie sat at the computer by the cluttered desk playing with the mouse. "Should we just lay off on it?" Virgil turned. He was sitting on the small sofa in the gas station thinking things over. The question had taken him a little by surprise. "I don't know, Rich." Richie stared at the wall for a moment. "It...it isn't our business. The entire pursuit isn't actually morally acceptable." Richie said obviously speaking from sheer intellect. "But?" Virgil said, leaning over the back of the couch. "Quit talking like a computer, Rich. If I wanted logic, I'd ask Backpack. What do you actually think about this?" Richie sighed. He hated when Virgil did this. It was so much easier to tell him the facts without really getting down to emotions. "I think that it all depends." "On what?" Virgil said, looking directly at Richie. "On how attached you are." Richie paused for a moment. "Or he is." Virgil shot Richie a look. "Don't act like you don't know." Richie said bluntly. "About people... like him." Virgil's raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean? What are you talking about Rich?" Richie sighed. He had forgotten that not everyone was an expert on human psychology. "It's a psychological response. People usually have one or two responses to severe neglect. It can result in a variety of neurological shortcomings and..." "Rich, can you give me layman's terms?" "Since his mom ignored him so much, he could either have no desire for relationships of any kind or could have a distorted view." "You're saying..." "He could have taken your interest as meaning something else. Friendship. Compassion. Any positive emotion." "He's insane, Rich. He's manipulative." "He may be insane but I don't think he's that manipulative." Richie said, looking at his computer screen. Virgil shot Richie a look. "It's just a guess from his physical attributes." Richie said, bringing up some files on his computer. "He is erratic and highly unstable. He's one of the hardest bang babies to guess when planning a strategy because it only has a broad range of similarities." "This doesn't prove your point, Rich." "He's direct. It's the common similarity. I assume, he is the same mentally. He probably doesn't lie or manipulate." Richie paused, spinning the mouse on the mousepad. "I'm guessing, anyway." "I don't know, Rich." "I think you should go one more time to tell the doctors anyway." "You're right as usual, Rich." Richie sat silently for a moment. "I told you not to get too attached, V. Did you?" Virgil was surprised by the statement. He really did not expect that at all. He got up off of the couch and walked over to Richie and hugged him. He really didn't know what else to do. "Not a chance, Rich." Virgil went to the center again the next weekend. He wore his Static costume to the visit like he always did. He wasn't looking forward to the encounter. He really didn't know how he was going to tell Dr. Lin. She had had such confidence in

him. It seemed almost cruel to disappoint her. Richie was right, though. He had become far too close to Shiv. He wasn't even a friend. He was a marauding metahuman with no regard for human life. He couldn't treat him as an ally, a friend. He took a deep breath and walked into the building. He turned down a hallway as doctors passed quickly. Dr. Adams turned as he walked by her and she looked up from her clipboard. She looked up to Static slowly with the clipboard at her side. "Static," she said with a cool smile. "So glad to see you." Static turned quickly. It was uneasy being around her. She was cold. "Yeah." "May I speak with you in my office?" Static recoiled a little and put his hand inside his coat turning on the two way microphone on his inner coat. "About what?" "It will only take a moment." "Fine...ma'am." Static said and walked into a small office. She locked the door behind her and looked over to her desk. She placed her hands on the desk behind her. "I know about you and Dr. Lin's plans. I don't like it and I don't pretend to." "What do you mean? You're here to help bang babies and that's what she's doing." She grinned. It wasn't normal at all. It was almost maniacal. "I am here to help normal people. Bang babies are examples of mutation. A horrible imperfection that needs to be corrected. I have no desire in helping any one of those monsters and especially not one that is at such an easy distance." "What kind of doctor, are you?" Static said, half scared out of his mind. "He came in here, half dead. You saved him. Why are you doing this?" "Saved him?!" she said, loudly. "I saved a specimen. I have no intention of releasing him. I need him alive to study. However, I've learned all I can by observation. I need to go further." Static stared. He didn't know how to react. "And if I had any control over the issue, you would be in a cell with that monster." "Metahumans are people. How can you do this? I can't let you! I'm going to get him out of here! BANG BABIES ARE NOT JUST LABRATS!!" Static was hysterical. He charged his hands. He wasn't even thinking at the moment. It was pure instinct. Suddenly, Dr. Adams removed a black handgun from her coat and pointed it at Virgil. "Don't move." Static froze. He was less than ten feet away from her. He knew that an electric charge would trigger a reflex in her finger. He didn't know what to do. His fist sparked viciously. "I should have gotten rid of you the moment you walked into this clinic. You bang babies are nothing but trouble. You have no place in society." At that moment, the door opened and standing in it was a very frightened Richie and a confused Dr. Lin and Jackson. Dr. Lin rushed forward. "Caren! Caren, what is going on?!" "Shut up, Lin! Can't you see! I'm getting rid of the only thing stopping our research!" She rushed to Static's side. "He's a child, Caren!!" "Not anymore! They aren't human and you know, they aren't!!" "Caren!" Dr. Jackson yelled as a shot was fired. Everything happened in an instant. Richie screamed, throwing a zap cap from a belt on his side. Dr. Lin pushed Static and collapsed onto the floor in a heap. She was screaming and blood poured from her side. Dr. Jackson rushed to her side, huddling over her yelling for help. Static was in shock as he lay on the floor for a moment. Richie was hunched over him. He appeared to be upset but Static couldn't tell. He could hardly see. His pupils were dilated and the rest of his body was shaking rapidly. It took a long moment for him to get a hold of himself. Static blinked his eyes. He swallowed hard and tried to rise to a sitting position. Richie was indeed upset. He looked terrified. His face was pale and he was shaking almost as violently as Virgil. Richie tried helping him up as he sat on the hard tile floor. Static panted for a moment and turned. His mouth gaped. Dr. Adams lay in a heap on the floor of the office. It appeared as though she had been burned electrically from the inside out. She was charred almost black with a brittle appearance. It was an image hard to get out of your mind. Static looked up at Richie, who appeared oddly unfazed by the scene he had just caused, appearing more worried about Virgil than the fact that he had just killed someone. He appeared to be calming by the moment knowing that Virgil was all right. It was eerie. Static stood up and backed out of the room. Richie followed. Paramedics had arrived to pick up Dr. Lin and appropriately Dr. Jackson had gone as well. Static just wanted that image out of his head. It was horrible, more than anything he had seen before. "Are you all right?" Richie said, nervously hovering behind him. "What do you think!?" Richie looked upset. "I know it was close. But you're okay. Right?" "Who cares about me?! Someone just died!! You killed her!!!" "She was trying to kill you."

Richie said. He looked scared but not completely able to understand the situation. "She was hysterical. What was I supposed to do?" "You could have restrained her!" "And let her do this again. She won't come back to get you this time! Never!" "Is that all that matters to you?" Virgil said, half shocked. Richie didn't answer. It was awkward. "Is that what being a super genius does to you?" "You don't understand, V. I had to make a decision. She would have killed you, V and that doctor and anyone else that she wanted!" Richie said seriously. "I have to get back to the gas station. I just came because I heard the wire. I'll see you there, V." "Don't call me that in my gear." "Yeah... right." Richie said almost hurt by the comment and left the hallway toward the exit. Static stood in the hall for a moment. The doctors had cleared and he was alone. He felt his stomach almost give out. It was hard to breathe for a moment. The entire experience had rattled him. He pulled off his white mask. He didn't want to be Static at the moment. He didn't want to be him when he felt so scared. He swallowed hard. He knew he had to confront Shiv. There was no way around it. It had to tell him he was bailing out of this. He walked into the hallway where Shiv's cell was placed. He didn't bother to put his mask on. He would be gone soon and for some reason, he didn't seem to care anymore. He walked over to the cell and pushed the button. "Shiv." Shiv rolled over, immediately. He appeared happy to see him. He grinned. "What? I'm not Joe today..." Shiv stopped suddenly seeing Virgil's face. "You... your... what happened to you?" "Nothing." Virgil said hastily. "I have to tell you something." Shiv appeared concerned. "Static... what's... why are you covered in blood?" "That's not important. I'm trying to tell you that..." "Yes, it is. Are you bleeding?" "No!" "Then, why are you covered in blood?" Shiv said. He looked scared. "Let me out! You're bleeding." "No!" Shiv looked around. "Then come in here. You're hurt. I can tell." "No! I'm not going in there!" "You look exhausted. You need help!" "And why should I trust you, Shiv!?" "Because you already trust me!! Why are you calling me that?" "What are you talking about?" Virgil said backing away. "You come here. You got me out of that stupid little cell. You called me by my name. You knew my name! You took off your mask!" "Shiv, you don't understand." "Stop calling me that!!" He was maniac. He was now standing up with his hands formed to purple blades panting. "I don't want to be called that! Not by you!" Virgil was slightly frightened. He knew he was safe but he was like a caged animal. You didn't feel safe so close. "Alright, Joe. What are you saying?" Shiv lowered his arms. "What am I saying? What am I saying!?! You know what I'm saying. How couldn't you?" Virgil didn't like how this sounded. It wasn't going the way he had hoped. "I will not be abandoned again! Not by you!!" "Abandoned? What do you think is going on?" "You hate Shiv, I know, you do. But you didn't hate Joe. You wanted to see him and that's why you keep coming back. You wanted to see Joe." It was hard to tell if he was going to start laughing or crying. He was completely hysterical. "Shiv..." "DON'T CALL ME THAT!!!" he said yelled with his blade in front of himself. "I don't want you to call me that!" "Fine. Joe, I never loved you. I don't know what you thought but I didn't. I never did and you didn't either." Shiv backed up. "You don't mean that. You're just confused. You just don't understand yet." He was huddling back on himself into the corner of the cell. Virgil sat down on the floor outside of the cell. "Do you remember the night of the Big Bang? I do. I wasn't supposed to be there. I came because Wade's gang wanted me to finish off this bully problem I had. You know Hotstreak, right?" Shiv didn't answer but he slouched slightly. "Well, he was called F-Stop, back then. He used to beat me up in school all the time. I went to Dakota Union. That's a public school. Wade used to stick up for me. He told me to finish off the problem. I went to the pier that night and they gave me a gun." Shiv turned his head slightly but quickly turned back the wall when Virgil turned to check. "I couldn't do it though. I ended up in the middle of that gang war. Then, the crates exploded. I climbed over the fence and passed out." Shiv slightly turned his head over his shoulder. Virgil moved his hand up and pushed a button on the side of the door. The wall moved out of the way. There was no longer a solid barrier between them. "I ended up at home the next day and I found out about my powers. Lights worked by themselves, metal could float, everything. I decided to be Static. To make something good out of it." Virgil looked up. Shiv was sitting on the other end of his cell no longer crawled in on himself. He

was sitting watching Virgil with interest. "You went back home?" "Yeah. What happened to you, Joe? How did you become, you know." "Shiv. How did I become Shiv?" Shiv looked almost frustrated. "I was stupid. I was really stupid." Joe walked down the hall of his school into the front office. He was slightly drowsy from the medication he had to take. He was now off anything that Ivan could give him and being watched very closely by his parents. It was probably in one of his groggier moods of his existence. He looked into the front office and sat down in one of the small chairs. The secretaries talked on the phones, jotted down notes and shuffled through papers. One of the secretaries looked up from her papers and smiled. "Joe?" "Yeah." he said, quickly lifting his head. She handed him a small brown envelope. Joe frowned at the envelope and walked out of the office looking at the tawny paper envelope. He stood in the empty hall for a moment. He sighed and at last quickly ripped the small envelope open and looked at the small piece of paper inside. It read coldly: Geometry: D-History: E-English: D-Science: E P.E. : A Teacher's Comments: We are unhappy to inform you that your son's conduct is deplorable. He appears to be neglecting his medication and frequently makes outbursts in class. He is a distraction to the other teachers and students. His social skills, concentration, comprehension and cognitive skills have not improved over the past few months and I suggest trying stricter or more dramatic treatments for his condition or at least have him make an effort. Joe was furious. "I do make an effort! What do they think I'm some stupid, lazy..." Joe trailed off as he quickly walked out of the building. He got on his skateboard and rode away from the school. He was thinking to himself then smiled. His father. His father knew he studied and how hard it was for him. His father would understand. It was one bad marking period. He wasn't that bad a student. Joe stopped at his house and turned into the yard. He greeted Spike warmly and left his skateboard up against the side of house. He walked in through the front door and walked down the hall to his bedroom with Spike at his heels. He changed out of his school uniform and into some more comfortable clothes as Spike crawled onto Joe's bed. Joe turned on his video games and sat on the bed. He sat with Spike playing his games for probably an hour or more. He was happy actually. The small dim room was not dreary today. It was a welcome, cozy feeling knowing that his father would be on his side on this one. He was sure of this. He had actually told his father how he had ended up buying drugs and though they were far from close. He was his father and they were teachers with no personal relationships, whatsoever with him. It was nature to favor his son over his son's teachers. It was only right that way, in Joe's opinion. Tadahashi arrived home around five in the evening. He walked into the door and he was greeted subtly by Joe who was in the living room. He was surprised. Joe was usually in his room as he and Solada avoided each other fiercely. He turned into the living room and folded his arms over his chest. Joe turned his head and grinned mildly. "Hi dad." "Jomei..." "You know, Joe is one less syllable to say and sounds better." Tadahashi resisted the urge to scold the teenager for his comment. "Jomei, where's your report card?" Joe smiled. Tadahashi shot him a smirk. Joe laughed. "I didn't burn it again. It's in my pocket." he said and pulled out the piece of paper handing it to his father. Tadahashi opened the paper and looked it over. His expression quickly changed. His face quickly went from a pleasant mood to shock to furious. "What happened?!" "It's my teachers." Joe said confidently. "Your teachers... Jomei, you were on marijuana for half the marking period and you blame your teachers?!" "I got off it and I tried! You know I did!" "You tried? If you have tried, you could have gotten this up to a passing grade in half a marking period!" "You know I tried!" "If you tried, you'd do better!! When I was your age, I was..." Joe stood up. He looked angry, almost furious. "I'M NOT YOU!!" "Fine! You don't have to be me!" Both Tadahashi and Joe were furious. They were standing now barely two feet apart screaming at one another. "I don't expect it!! But, you have to do well in school!!" "I try!! It's not easy for me but I try!!" Joe's muscles tensed as he rose higher on his feet. He was at full height the same as his father. However as he rose on his feet, he was taller by almost an inch. He didn't usually get into heated arguments with Tadahashi. Joe was almost always laid back with a controlled presence. "Don't even try to say I don't!" Tadahashi's glasses slid on his face slightly. He had never been this furious at Joe in his life.

"If you tried, you would pass Jomei!! How do you expect to make it on your own!! YOU HAVE NO PLANS!! NO REAL TALENT!! YOU CAN HARDLY..." Joe erupted with a mixture of anger and hurt. His father had always joked in some way about how skateboarding and videogames wouldn't get him anywhere but, he had never attacked him in this way before. It was a direct honest attack and Joe was not prepared. He was now standing almost eye to eye with his father. "I hate you." Joe ran off to his room and locked the door. He was unsure whether he had yelled or whispered it. His mind was spinning. He couldn't think straight. He only knew that he had to get out of his parents' home. He had been hurt by them before. Many times. His mother had never even smiled at him for as long as he remembered, let alone touched him, and his father had been too absorbed in his shortcomings to see anything good in him, he knew that now. He had never had a safe nurturing parent and he was sick of the ridicule and neglect. He wanted a family or to be on his own. It was better to have no one than many who didn't care at all. He pulled down a duffel bag from his closet and began filling it with anything he could think of. Spike watched from his master's bed anxiously. However, he did not make a sound or interfere. Spike had always understood his master. He could tell how he felt and how he acted. His master was hurt and he was not going to interfere in his master's flight. It was the only decent thing to do. Joe finished packing and looked around for a way out. He noticed the small window on the far end of the room. He zipped the bag and flung it over his shoulder. He walked over to his bed and scratched Spike behind the ears. "I'll miss you, boy. You were the only one who really knew me, my only friend. Take care of yourself and try not to get in too much trouble." he said as he rubbed the old Akita's head. He rose and walked over to the window. He pulled the window open and jumped out of it onto the yard below. He sprinted across the yard, over the fence and into the street. He began running. He didn't know where he was going. He didn't particularly care at that point. He just intended on getting as much distance between him and his parents' house as possible. He stopped nearly a mile down the abandoned road. He looked around. It was near some type of pier. It was fenced off with large tanks on platforms with a toxic symbol on it. Inside on the far, it looked like a riot. He wasn't sure what was going on. But, he heard something: sirens. It was the police. He knew if he got caught he would be taken back to his parents' house. He panicked and slipped through the fence. He had just walked into the middle of a gang war. It had to be almost five hundred people there, all were fiercely fighting one another. "Get out of the way!!" He heard someone say to him or maybe to someone else, however, it was too late. He was punched in the face by what looked like a Latina woman. He was on the ground for probably no more than five minutes. However, the fight moved so quickly he was stepped on almost seven times, apparently, left for dead by the gang bangers. He turned to his left. He had dropped his bag but it was gone. Someone had picked it up. He was about to consider the option of just lying there until it was over. He really was safest being stepped on and not in the line of fire. However, before he could decide, he heard yelling from the other end of the pier. The police were firing on the crowd. There were explosions and a thick mist like gas covered the pier. It was like a fog. Joe rose to his feet and looked around. The air was thick with the dirty gas. It was impossible to see anything more than ten feet away from you. The gas was rising. It was now almost twice as tall as he was and thickly coating the air. He looked around again hoping to see something. It was near impossible. He could hardly breathe as he looked in every direction. Finally, he saw someone. It was the Latina woman from earlier. He stared unable to stop. She appeared to be melting or not melting but changing into water. He was awestruck and disgusted at the same time. He knew she needed help, even if she did punch him in the face. But just as he got up to move toward her, he felt something. It was stinging in his hands and eyes. He stood for a moment. He was sure he was screaming. However, when you are that much in pain you can't hear as well as normally and you wouldn't want to. The area was deafening with screams. The gas had an almost acidic effect on the skin. Full grown men were literally brought to their knees by it as it absorbed itself into their cells. Joe would have done the same if his knees hadn't locked from fear. He looked down at his hands he was sure they would be raw and red by now. To his

great surprise that was hardly the result. His hands were glowing a pale purple. He began panting. This was impossible. It couldn't be happening. He looked around still terrified. The gas was clearing and he did the only thing he could think of: run. He ran right down the middle of the yard and right to the wall. Then, He leaped over and ran into a nearby alley. He looked back in shock. He had just ran more 500 yards and jumped clear over a 10 foot fence in less than three minutes and wasn't even close to being out of breath. That's it. Please Review.

10 - The Breed : Part 1

var nopopup = 0; rsi_hints = 'Cartoons,Static Shock,Drama'; Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to MisterDwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. However if I won it in a round of Trivial Pursuit, Shiv would have a back story and a sexy heroic villain episode. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: Llied obviously. I decided to break up this chapter into two. I hope no one minds. Also I have a gift for everyone. I posted a thank you at:

<http://www.deviantart.com/view/23368778/Taken> Lightly

Chapter 10: The Breed

Virgil sat unturned against the outside wall as Shiv finished. He felt uneasy sitting there. Shiv, however, seemed unfazed. He looked up at the open cell. Nothing was stopping an escape and he knew it. There was an urge, a savage one, to kill and escape. It was an uneasy feeling for him. For the first time in three years, he couldn't act on it. He felt a resistance to it and a strong one. He threw back his head and began to laugh. It was manic, no denying it. "What have you done to me, Hero? What have you done?" Virgil turned slightly. The outburst had rattled him. "Trying to bring back the dead, I see." Shiv was now unable to not laughing. "It's silly to try. What's dead is dead." Virgil was confused and growing more nervous. "Joe. Joe, what are you talking about?" "I was Shiv, earlier. So, who is it? Shiv or Joe? It doesn't matter to me." Shiv grinned widely. He was back to the games. Virgil didn't know if it was safest with the gate open now. It seemed risky. He turned slightly to look behind him. Shiv was already standing up. He appeared to be looking forward, not really at anything though. "You were invited into the Breed. You were!" Virgil didn't move. He was trying not to startle Shiv. For some reason, he appeared to be far too animal-like. He was acting like a playful predator. "I remember!" Shiv walked out of the small cell in front of Virgil. His blades were not out and he wasn't really doing anything. This only made Virgil more nervous. "You were!" Virgil began to stand up slowly. He looked at Shiv for a moment. He felt an awkwardness he had never been this close to him without being in mortal peril. "Yeah. It was three years ago." Shiv looked at him confused for a moment. He was staring at Virgil. Shiv's head cocked slightly to the side as if, he was really focusing on something. "You still have somewhere to go. That's why you didn't join." Virgil felt a wave of guilt. "It's not that you couldn't go back." "Go back. Go back!" Shiv looked angry. "I'm a freak! I'm on the news four times a day!! My father only would skin me!! I could have gone back as Joe! But I'm not him anymore!!" Virgil shot him a stubborn look. "What are you talking about? You're still Joe. I mean you're still you. You're never going to stop being you! What are you talking about?" Shiv standing rigidly. It was as though he didn't know how to address the question. He did not fidget and it worried Virgil. He had been comparing Shiv, in his only mind, to a predator increasingly more often and predators were always most still right before attacking. It was unnerving but Virgil remained calm. It was an uneasy trust he had with him. Something that could be easily severed but had to be broken to do so. Shiv had not and Virgil had to acknowledge that. "Maybe... you don't... didn't..." Shiv was half muttering but it was directed at Virgil. "Didn't what?" Virgil said standing now. Shiv seemed unfazed by it. Almost as though, he wasn't paying attention. "What didn't I do?" he was speaking as calmly as possible. He was hoping it would, in some way, mentally sedate him. "You didn't live with two names." Shiv wasn't really looking at him. It was a stare and it was in his direction but it was not to him. It was blank. His eyes were wide and dilated almost unseeing. "You take off that mask and you aren't Static. You're someone else." Virgil was silent. He didn't understand much about what he was saying. It was foreign, or maybe not. He had felt the loss of identity associated with having another name. He felt he had to behave a certain way under the name

of "Static" that Virgil was completely free of. He supposed that was what he was talking about. "You lost yourself?" Shiv began to chuckle which erupted into a heavy maniacally laugh. Virgil backed up slightly. Shiv was now laughing louder than before. He had extended his blades and was in what seemed like a mania. He breathed heavily lowering his blades to his sides, panting. He appeared tired as he stood there. The entire situation seemed to be emotionally exhausting him. "You think I was always like this! I was sane, Hero! I was even normal!! I wasn't Shiv. Shiv was part of the Breed. I wasn't him until the Breed." Virgil stood trying to understand. "The Breed? The Breed named you Shiv? You weren't..." "Ebon gave me that name. He thought it fit me. He doesn't look at people as people. I was a shiv to him. A tool at his disposal." Shiv appeared almost to regret something. He still had that maniac grin but something wasn't right and it was noticeable in his eyes. "What happened after the Big Bang, Joe?" "I shouldn't even let you call me that." "What'd you like being called?" "I said I shouldn't. You can, though but only you. I'm not letting everyone get to know my personal aliases." "You make it sound like there are more than two." Virgil said jokingly. "Did you just make a joke?" Shiv appeared amused. Virgil realized he had. It wasn't unusual for him but a non-malicious joke to Shiv seemed iffy. Shiv chuckled to himself. "So you want to know what happened?" "Yeah." "Fine, it's a long story though. I didn't become Shiv overnight." "Joe spent the next few days sleeping anywhere he could find, which was almost everywhere with his new abilities. He was losing weight very quickly and gaining muscle on his upper body. This came naturally as the chemical ran through his blood. He was flexible, fast and balanced. It was amazing for Joe who had never been too light on his feet. He felt a sense of newfound freedom in it. The ability to go anywhere he wished was a dream come true. He had resorted to stealing to get food. It wasn't nearly as hard as he thought it should have been. He could fit into any of the ventilation systems of any restaurant easily. This made his choices far from limited. However, he seemed to prefer fast food. This system he had set up worked well for the first two days. But as he lost weight, he went from being able to live on two small meals to needing a minimum of six full meals to have any energy at all. With this new development, Joe had decided to spend almost all of his time near food. However, it was a rare joy when he was not hungry and could just play in an empty alley. He finally had one of those rare joys. He had just bumped off nearly seventeen candy bars from a small gas station. As he needed so much food, he had begun relying more and more on candy for energy. It was small, easy to carry, and full of sugar. He walked into a small alley and after eating around five, he stood up and tightened his belt, an old seat belt he had stripped from a car in the junkyard, around his heavy oversized pants. He had grown far too small for his old belt and pants around the waste but had no way of getting new ones. He had grown almost four inches in the past week and the ends no longer dragged on the ground. He had discarded his old tee-shirt because it had gotten in the way in vents. He only wore a white sleeveless undershirt that now fit snugly on his newly developed upper body. He had almost gotten a new body in a week. He raced across the alley and jumped almost twenty feet up flat onto an apartment landing. He smiled widely. He enjoyed the liberating feeling of being so agile. He continued to climb and scale the building, jumping from rain gutters, windowsills, and sometimes out the walls themselves. He somehow knew instinctually where to put his feet and hands. He didn't know how but he loved it. After finished climbing, he sat on the top of the brick building in Paris Row eating a Snickers bar. He simply stared into the smoky sky. He felt a calmness and liked it. When, it was rudely interrupted. "Hey, Hotshot!" Joe turned quickly. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. It was a giant armadillo. He subconsciously decided, he was eating way too much sugar. "What?" "Yeah, you! You got enough chocolate for everyone." he said irritably. "I'm eating it." Joe knew he was short with the possible hallucination, but he was feeling increasingly more protective of his chocolate. "I don't think you understand." "It's my chocolate. What's to understand?" "Look, Chan, I'm a bang baby. You give me anything I want." "Bang what?" Joe said unenthusiastically. He was getting annoyed with his new imaginary friend. However, he wasn't really thinking straight because if he were, he would either be very scared right now or wouldn't be talking to it at all. "You're not too sharp, are

you? I'll have to beat it into you." With that the bang baby rolled into a ball and spiraled toward Joe. Joe did what instinct dictated and jumped as high as he could landing on the side of a perfectly smooth water tank which hung precariously over the edge of the building. He knew instantly he couldn't survive a fall off a building like this. He clawed desperately at the metal trying to get a hold on the metal and tried desperately to dig into the side with his wide skater shoes. It was no good. He had nothing to hold on to. He was scared, very scared. He was slipping and was going to die. His eyes were shut tight as he continued to claw and wish for his short nails to take. Suddenly with a sudden rush of tingling from his hands, they did and he could hear a shriek from the armadillo man. "You're a bang baby!" Joe opened his eyes. His hands were glowing a pale purple and were in the shape of two long swords. He was half terrified and half relieved. He pulled one out of the water tank and a thin stream of water poured out. It was a perfect cut. The blades extended to his elbows where it changed gently into his bronze skin. This was impossible. It had to be. Still stunned, he jumped down onto the rooftop. He looked at the armadillo man hunched his shoulders and moved his blades forward. He had watched a total of three Wild Discovery's in his life. He was taking note. "Yeah, I am! I'm...uh ...one of the toughest bang babies you'll meet." Joe realized how horrible his bluff was. Carmen, however, did not. He appeared heavily shaken which was understandable since he had never met another bang baby before and Joe was looking pretty intimidating with his two sharp blades. Carmen appeared to think that he had obviously been toying with him and was going to gut him like a fish. "L-look M-mr. Blades... Knives...I-I was j-just passing by. I was never gonna take your chocolate. As a matter of fact, have mine." Carmen was now on the ground in fear emptying all the candy from his pockets. "As a gift." Carmen then ran away as fast as possible. Joe was standing there sweating. He was scared out of his mind but the worst part was the realization of what he had just done. He couldn't believe he had just threatened someone. He wasn't a cruel person. He did talk back a lot but it was all in fun. He wasn't like this. He began to run down from the building. They wouldn't go away. Light swiftly faded from the streets and suddenly, they were gone. He sighed in relief. They only showed up in the light. He could handle that. The next few days dragged on painfully slow as Joe continued his raiding for food by night. He went from alley to alley, through abandoned subways, and in unlit factories. He didn't dare risk coming out during the day for fear that his powers would emerge again. He feared them. Probably more than he had ever feared anything. He often slept from five in the morning to around dusk. He became so accustomed to the darkness he could hardly believe he had lived in sunlight. However, this was only a temporary solution and Joe knew it. Something was inside him and it was working its way out. He had noticed it a few times now. He had stolen a pair of hoop earrings for no reason but that they looked nice. He had felt terrible but he had decided to keep them and wore them now almost every day. He didn't know what was getting into him. It had been nearly a week since he had stopped living in sunlight. This particular day, Joe was sleeping in a small heap curled in on himself inside an abandoned subway car. He positioned himself under the seat to avoid any light at all. He rolled over onto his stomach and felt something up against his face. It felt like hair. Joe let out a shriek and backed up quickly into the top of the seat. He rubbed his head and looked at it. It was hair all right, short black hair. Joe whimpered slightly realizing it was in fact, his hair. He immediately felt the top of his head. His hair was dramatically more risen than usual but it was all there. He slid out from under the seat and walked out onto the open tracks. He looked up at the small opening he had made from the caved in subway entrance. It was dark. He could go out to look for food. He crawled out and hurried down an abandoned street. He had chosen a less than desirable side of town to live in because the street lights were often broken. He raced down the empty streets looking for anything that could be a possible meal. He found it. A food packing truck was driving slowly along side the empty street. He raced over and jumped onto the platform on the back of the truck. His past few weeks on the streets had taught him how to be unnaturally silent or perhaps it was his abilities. He couldn't be sure. He jumped onto the top of the truck and looked for an entrance. He crawled to the front and looked at the driver. It was a large man only

half paying attention to his surroundings. He supposed this made sense. The buildings were so old in the neighborhood no one lived there and not even the resident gangs of Dakota used the area. It isn't nice but it wasn't dangerous either. Joe glanced in at his options. He saw that the window on the passenger's side was open slightly and a small window to the back was wide open. If he could open the window, he would be fine. Joe crawled over to the passenger's side on the roof truck. He drew himself as close as he could to the edge without being seen or falling off. He leaned over slightly. The truck was traveling at around 25 miles an hour. Joe could run around the same speed, with full control of course. However, any faster made it hard to breathe and turn for that matter. He had run thirty for a short time once but he was never trying that again. He hung over waiting for a moment. It was all up to the driver now. It was odd how instinctual this was. He knew exactly what to do like second nature. The driver turned for a moment. Joe saw his chance and reached down into the truck through the opening in the window. He flicked the switch next to the seat allowing the window to roll down. The driver turned quickly but not fast enough. Joe was already sitting in the middle of the hood on the truck. Now all he needed was the hope that the driver wouldn't roll it back up. He didn't. Joe grinned widely. It was taking a lot of self-control just to stop him from laughing. However, he remained reserved and waited. The driver was more weary now. Obviously, he had heard about these mutants running around and wasn't taking any chances. Joe was undeterred. The driver turned looking on the other end of the street. This was his chance. He positioned himself over the hood of the truck with his fingers braced around the rim and flung himself into the window and through the small opening, landing silently inside the bed of the truck. It was easy. Joe looked around hungrily, rubbing his hands together. It was easy from here. He tore open a box and began to gorge on the contents. It was junk food, chips mostly. He ate an entire shipping box of them. It was complete bliss. He looked around for a moment to find a possible escape. It was no good. He had to wait for a stop which was no big deal to Joe. He could easily help himself to something to eat and wait for the driver to stop for gas. The driver probably continued for twenty minutes before stopping. He got out of the truck leaving his new stowaway alone. Joe crawled out through the small open window into the driver's seat. He looked around for the driver. He was nowhere to be seen. Joe looked at his setting. He was in Paris Row. He recognized it. This was bad. He didn't know the neighborhood nearly as well as he would have liked and he needed to find a dark place to hide before dawn. Joe took a deep breath. He had to stay calm. It couldn't be as bad as it seemed. He looked around as he stood crouched in between the driver and passenger seat. Then something caught his eye in the rear view mirror. He looked behind him quickly. The truck was empty except for him. Joe looked up at the mirror and lowered it so he could see himself. He had three notable purple streaks in his hair. He backed up quickly. This was impossible. His hair was purple. How could it be purple? Joe opened the door and ran out without even closing the door. He ran. He didn't know where he was going or how fast he was running. He didn't know how long he ran. He didn't care. He just wanted to get away from all of it. He was a freak. He knew what the armadillo had meant by Bang Baby now, and he knew what that gas had done. He was becoming some type of monster. He thought living in the dark could save him but obviously not. He ran until his body ached, his lungs burned and his heart felt like it was going to burst. He couldn't run anymore. He simply fell in the alley. He was on his knees now in the dirty alley. He could feel his head throb. However, it was nowhere near how it would feel that morning. Joe heard someone. Then, he realized it was several people. He turned slightly and tried to move. He staggered to his feet but somehow was helpless to move. He was too tired. He wasn't sure exactly what they were saying or who they were but he knew they were trouble. He was restrained by two larger than him and beaten. He was helpless to defend himself and even if he had accepted his powers he was too weak to use them. He blacked out after only a few minutes of the beating. He knew he had had his first run-in with the anti-metahuman gangs of Dakota. It was light in the alley as he lay on his side. He felt something. He wasn't sure what was going on exactly. He also had no way of knowing what time it was or how long he had been out. However, he did know one

thing, someone was poking him. "Hey! Hey!" Joe felt someone smack the side of his face. He groaned and opened his eyes slightly. "You alive?" Joe's pupils dilated. He wasn't used to light and groaned. "Are... you ... alive?" the voice was louder now. His eyes adjusted. Hunched over him was a man with pure black skin in a purple vest with pure white eyes. He recognized him. It was Ivan, the drug dealer. He was changed like him. "Ivan?" Ebon's eyes widened. He was firstly surprised the boy was alive. He had watched the beating and it hadn't been a pretty sight. Secondly, how did he know his name? He was almost positive he didn't know him. He wasn't a notorious banger. He was sure of that. He knew all of them and had made deals with many. This was not a banger and so obviously had no gang. If he had, he wouldn't be in this state. Ebon decided to play it by ear. If he knew him, that was fine and possibly beneficial. "Yeah but it's Ebon, now. Can you get up?" Joe thought on it for a moment. He wasn't sure. He groaned as he struggled to a sitting position. He was surprised that was far easier than it should have been. However, Joe was not the type to look into things too thoroughly and why fight it? "Good." Ebon rose to standing. He always felt best taller than someone when talking to them. It was a bad habit he had had since he was young. It was the only way Adam used to listen to him. It gave him a greater sense of power and he enjoyed this power. "I've been watching you with interest." Joe folded his legs and looked up at Ebon. Not many could hold his unabided attention this way. "I have a proposition for you." Joe smiled naively. He felt some degree of comfort in Ivan. "What kind of proposition?" Ebon chuckled to himself. This was easier than he thought. "I'm offering you a place to stay and a crew." Ebon paused for a moment. He didn't remember the boy's name. He had to improvise. He had seen him create some type of swords with his hands. He had it. "Shiv." Joe looked at him confused. "Shiv?" "Yeah, you need a new name, after the way they treated you out there. You'll be called Shiv." Joe didn't understand completely but it was comforting to see a familiar face. "Alright. Who else is in this crew?" "I see you're a smart man. Come with me." Suddenly, Ebon grew into a large black mass and swallowed Joe up inside it, disappearing into the wall of the alley. It was the strangest feeling and absolutely dark. There was no way to compare it. One would imagine a black hole was like this, void of all light. Joe, however terrified by the sudden assault did not feel in danger. He had been looking for a place this dark. When Joe arrived, he was in a subway station. He wasn't sure where. It was lighter than his previous homes though. He panicked. His comforting darkness was gone. He immediately rose to his feet and stuffed his hands into his pants' pockets. He had to hide them from the light. "Settle down, Shiv." "But... I can't... the light makes..." "You stronger. You don't need to be afraid of your power here." "But they..." "Make you Shiv." Ebon said. There was a finality in his voice. "Now, time to meet your new crew." Just then a large bird, or was it a human it was impossible to tell, flew down and landed next to Joe. Joe jumped slightly. She startled him and no one could blame him. She was quite the sight. "This is Talon. She had trouble with her gift, too." Joe turned to her almost excitedly. She walked around him looking him over. She shot a look at Ebon. "Shiv?" "Yes, Shiv and don't call him anything else!" Talon winced and mouthed something to him. However, whatever it was Joe couldn't hear it and wasn't paying much attention. It ended quickly and Ebon turned to Joe. "You go get settled, Shiv." Joe grinned widely and ran into the small broken down train. He was happy to finally have a family. However, Talon seemed to feel differently. She flew next to Ebon. "He's not a banger, Ebon." "It makes it that much easier." "He doesn't know anything about things, Ebon. He belongs back where he was." "Don't worry. I know what I'm doing." Ebon went into the abandoned train to look for Joe who was surveying the train's interior. He seemed satisfied. "Shiv." "You know, Joe is fine, too." "I told you you're not being called that!" Joe flinched. "Okay... Shiv then." "I don't think you understand. I'm your friend, Shiv. I took you in, helped you out and you don't seem to appreciate that. You have to prove yourself in this crew." Joe felt a wave of guilt and fear. He understood now. He wasn't badly hurt because Ivan had saved him. "I'm sorry, Ebon." "Fine. I don't want you talking to Talon. She'll gut you alive." "She didn't seem..." "I'm your friend, Shiv. Trust me. Stay away from Talon and I have some errands for you." "Errands.... Ebon, I need to go out and get some food. I haven't eating

since...""ARE YOU QUESTIONING ME?!" Joe jumped. He didn't know how he could have been so stupid. "Right. Errands. What kinds?" This became the habit of things. Every night, Joe would go out and run "errands" for Ebon. The errands involved stealing very valuable merchandise of every kind. Joe could do it, of course. He was probably one of the most dexterous and agile metahumans in the city. He knew his way around scores of security systems and how to split by any guard. However it wasn't the security systems or guards that bothered him, it was his conscience. That was the moment it started. To avoid the horrible guilt, Joe simply told himself that Shiv did it. So it went on. Shiv would sneak into almost anywhere and steal. However, unlike Joe who had stolen free of guilt for food, Shiv happily stole for pleasure. He loved the rush and made it a point to get too close to the guards and take unnecessary risks. However, the increased activity had its downfalls. When he was on his own, he basically ate, looked for food, and sleep. Now, he was forced to exert himself. He was soon far too thin for his old clothes and had to knot his belt to keep his pants from falling off when Shiv robbed. It was wearing on him. Ebon had noticed this. He knew that if he got any thinner, he wouldn't be able to keep his pants on during a robbery. Ebon quickly found new clothes for him and disposed of his old pants and shoes. He felt cheated somehow but his adoration for Ebon overrode the feelings. He was sure Ebon was doing it to help. He was his friend after all. He had told him so. Joe had held on to his old muscle shirt. He didn't want to get rid of it. It was a reminder of who he was. He was Joe Chen and Shiv was simply a tool. He felt a part of himself irritated at the thought. He wasn't sure what it was but he had a sneaking suspicion it was Shiv. Wait, that was crazy! He is Shiv. He couldn't be annoyed with himself this way. Joe was worried something was wrong. He hadn't spoken with anyone but Ebon for almost two weeks now. However despite the evidence to the contrary, he wasn't lonely. He had grown far too attached for that. He wasn't sure what it was but he felt a growing affection for Ebon. He looked forward to the daily assignments and any time he could spend with him. Ebon paid more attention to him than anyone ever had. He was sure he had only his interests at heart. Why wouldn't he? This gang was like his family. Family didn't do that to itself. It didn't hurt itself. Use itself for gain. He was helping Ebon because he wanted to. Ebon had told him this and it made sense. He wouldn't do anything as dangerous as he had if Ebon knew he couldn't or if he didn't want to. He was willing and happy to do it. Joe thought this to himself then stopped. He had a thought and it confused him. He didn't like to steal. Shiv did. He did not. Shiv liked to steal. He did not. He thought about that. Was it really as crazy as it sounded? Shiv wasn't real. So he couldn't enjoy. Joe shook his head as he stood in the small train compartment. He looked at himself in the broken glass. It reflected only enough to see a vague transparent image. His hair was almost completely purple now. He hoped that he didn't disappear like his black hair. However worried Joe was he was, he was in far more trouble than he could imagine. Ebon was hardly the benign friend he had assumed. He had been carefully monitoring Joe. He hadn't allowed him sleep in almost a week now. Joe was running on some type of emotional high he wasn't aware of. Also, Ebon didn't plan on giving him time the chance to understand what was going on. Shortly after joining the Breed, Ebon had put him on a steady intake of marijuana. Ebon knew he was naïve but no one could be that stupid. He was exploiting Joe and he didn't want Joe to get caught on. However, he didn't seem to be anywhere here it. In fact, he seemed to be growing attracted to him. Ebon found the idea ridiculous, to say the least, but it was in his favor. The more in the dark the kid was the better. Working him around the clock and mediocre praise was all it took with this one. There was something wrong with the kid but it wasn't Ebon's problem. His problem at the moment was a little more concrete. Ebon needed a robbery performed. It wasn't that complex but wasn't something he wanted to take on. The best and easiest route would be to get Shiv to cut his way into the vault. He was stealthy enough to slip by the guards and quick enough to sneak in, cut through the vault, and sneak out. The only catch was Shiv's little problem. Ebon had actually never seen Shiv use his powers besides that one time on the roof with Carmen. He didn't know if he had since. He assumed but wasn't sure. He brushed off the detail. It couldn't be a concern. He had Shiv wrapped around his finger. He would do anything he asked.

He entered the small compartment. "Shiv!" Joe was lying upside down on an old train seat. His eyes were slightly bloodshot around the outside edge. Below his eyes, it was slightly greyed. He looked a mix of maniac and exhausted. It depended on whether you looked him straight in the eyes or were watching his inability to stop his feet from moving and shaking. His skin was no longer a healthy bronze like before. It had faded slightly to a dull yellow at best. He grinned widely when he noticed Ebon. It was almost haunting in a way. It wasn't as happy as it used to be or sane. He tilted his head slightly. "What is it?" he said, still bearing the grin. "I have a favor." Interested sparked, Joe pushed against the back of the seat, flipping himself to sit on his feet. Ebon still couldn't get used to this entirely. He was getting more flexible by the day. The harder he pushed himself the better he became. He didn't tire or slow down. He was Ebon's perfect workhorse. "Shiv, I need you to go get something." Joe had no idea what he was getting himself into at the time. He was asked to rob Alva Industries. It was a maximum security factory. He didn't see how he could possibly do it especially without his powers. Ebon transported him inside then quickly left. He was on his own. He had been ported to an empty room. He sighed and looked around. There had to be one somewhere. He scanned for only a few minutes when he noticed it. A ventilation duct. It was placed above the door frame. Joe backed up and jumped onto the wall holding himself up by the air duct. He placed his feet on both sides of the small rectangular port. His hands were gripped tightly around the thin metal bars. Then, he heard something. Someone was coming. Please Review. Thank you for reading.

11 - The Breed: Part II

var nopopup = 0; rsi_hints = 'Cartoons,Static Shock,Drama'; Disclaimer: I don't own Static Shock. It belongs to MisterDwayne McDuffie, Milestone, DC Comics and WB. However if I won it in a round of Trivial Pursuit, Shiv would have a back story and a sexyheroic villain episode. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me, it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: This is the final chapter besides a short epilogue. I'll post later. I hope you enjoyed the fic. This chapter is insanely long and rather intense. No real happy ending but no French tragedy either. Sorry for the long wait. I've been working on other things. However, here it is. I hope you like it.

Taken Lightly Chapter 11: Shiv

A large African American security guard walked into the small storage room. He looked around. He had been on shift for nearly eight hours now. The pay was good he had to admit but Alva's hours were grueling, however, he wanted the job. Perhaps, it was the fact that he was overworked or maybe Joe was just that good at what he did. Whatever it was, Joe was positioned directly above him and the guard didn't notice in the slightest. However Joe was not one for chance tonight, he pulled himself higher tightening his grip on the vent and held his breath. He couldn't be caught. There was no way to get away without using his blades and he was not using his blades. The guard walked into the room calmly. He didn't notice Joe at all. He was actually more deeply concentrated on the fact that he was probably going to be home by midnight and that it had been an uneventful night. He almost smacked himself. 'Of course, it had. This is Alva Industries. The security could stop a cold. Nothing was getting in.' Little did he know that Joe was no more than seven feet behind him and had gotten in with little to no effort. As soon as the guard was past the door, Joe began to lower himself slowly onto the floor. He landed silently. It was almost effortless for him to, his bones were hollow from the Big Bang. It made him lighter on his feet than anything else alive. He could jump higher and land softer but it came with a price of course, any significant blow shattered his new bones. However, he had always stayed a step ahead and as all as he did that, his bone density wasn't important. Nonetheless he had more pressing matters at the moment, he needed to find a key. He scanned the guard, creeping close behind him. He was no more than a foot from him now. He tried to focus. It was hard, in the back of his mind was Shiv, who wanted nothing more than to make a scene. He couldn't let him though. He had to get in and out before he got cocky. He knew his cockiness was a vice of his. It'd probably kill him one day. Hopefully, it wouldn't be today. Then, he saw it. The key was in the guard's pocket, a small corner was exposed. He could get it. It wouldn't be that hard. He reached for it. However, he made one fatal error. He forgot to hold his breath. The moment he removed the card key he exhaled and being only inches from the guard it was impossible to miss. It was an amateur mistake but a costly one. The guard spun instantly and grabbed at him. He was too slow though even with Joe that close to him. Joe jumped heaving himself over the large guard and onto a nearby shelf. The guard looked awestruck. His pupils dilated. He pulled out a walkytalkie and began to yell into it, "Bang Baby! Bang baby in Sector 8!" Joe panicked. He jumped down from the shelf and ran out the open door. He began to sprint but luck wasn't with him. Everything was locked. He was trapped in a maximum security mouse trap. He knew this but continued down the hall. It was his own choice. Guards were at every corner. The events after that were blurry as they happened at such a high speed. It is certain though that shortly after he passed the second corner, he felt something. The something that he had felt was a gun wound. Joe had been shot for the first time. It should have been much worse and the pain excruciating but he was on an adrenaline high. Blood flowed quickly. He looked behind him. He realized then what had happened.

However the shock of being shot for the first time was nothing compared to a realization made clear by the guards. "This way! He's this way!" The guards' voices were indicating a cruel fact about anything when it is shot. Any good hunter knows this rule of thumb: if you have shot an animal, he will run and to find him all that is needed is to follow the trail of blood left behind. The animal will run out of fear until he bleeds to death or until he is too weak to go on. At this moment, there is a cruel irony. It is said to be only humane to now kill the terrified and exhausted being. This rule was often used with animals, however, it was not above these guards to use the same technique to kill a young bang baby. After all to most, bang babies had lost their humanity and were no more human than animals which were not exempt from this brutality. Joe was no more to those guards than a tiger to a group of villagers. "Shoot to kill, you idiots! He's a bang baby!" Joe was terrified. The guards were both behind and in front of him now. This couldn't be happening. The guards grew closer now. Joe reared holding his wounded arm. His eyes darted from one guard to the next. There was no humanity in their eyes. Why would there be? He was not human to them. He was no more than a dangerous animal to them: fascinating, deadly and inhuman. Joe thought to himself it had to be impossible. Then, he fell. He couldn't feel anything or hear anything. He was numb with fear and adrenaline. He looked behind him. It was his leg. A pool of bright red blood was surrounding it. They had shot his leg. He couldn't run anymore. The sickest part was that he hadn't been running. They shot his leg for sport or revenge or perhaps amusement; a story they could tell about how they had taken down a bang baby. He lay there for a moment, shaking. He was waiting now. He was waiting for the end of what was a cruel game. He could hear the guards' guns cock. He was practically in tears. Even that wasn't stopping them. Then, it went black. Joe was laying still for a moment. Light slowly returned and his eyes adjusted. He was in the subway on Milestone Street. Ebon was standing right above him. He was alive. Ebon, his friend, had saved him. He turned his head to face Ebon. The fear that had consumed him only moments ago was gone. He was safe and in company he knew. His leg and arm were still bleeding badly but somehow he managed to sit up and face his friend. Even with the lack of detail in Ebon's face, he was definitely furious. His stance was assertive, if not a little hostile, and his eyes piercing. "Do you know what you did?" That moment it hit Joe and a flood of memories came back to him. "I didn't get it." "Yeah, you didn't!" Ebon's pale white eyes narrowed. "Y'also almos' got me shot!!" Ebon picked him up by the neck and pinned him to the wall of the compartment. Joe whimpered and terror overtook him. He hadn't seen this side of Ebon or anyone for that matter. "E...ebon." "I told chu to get it!" He was squeezing his neck, now. Joe was gagging and flailed his good leg slightly. It was a hopeless effort. He was wounded and Ebon was far stronger than him to begin with. "THEY'LL BE LOOKIN' FO' YOU NOW!!" Joe was trying to pry Ebon's hand off of his neck. It wasn't any good. "I... I.... couldn't.... do.... it.... without.....my..... pow.... ers...." Ebon's eyes widened but it faded quickly and he whipped Joe across the floor. He landed with a crack. It was almost definitely his bones. They were fragile and had most likely snapped. Joe was truly helpless at this point. "I TOLD YOU TO USE THEM, YOU STUPID..." "I CAN'T!!" Joe was yelling. He couldn't tell though. His ears were ringing too loudly and tears were running down his face. He was scared for his life and overwhelmed with guilt from failing Ebon. "YOU CAN! I'VE SEEN YOU!! YOU LYING SON OF..." His eyes were now directed and narrowed toward him and, his voice was painfully loud and angry. He was looming like some type of predator. He was not wounding Joe entirely out of anger. He was doing so as another assertion of dominance. It was a pack order of sorts. He was dominant and Joe his submissive. Joe couldn't resist an urge to defy and cut him off. "I... I CAN'T!!! I C-CAN'T DO IT!!! I'LL KILL THEM!!!" Joe was in tremendous pain. He couldn't hear anything but Ebon's screaming voice. It rang in his head as he lay half curled on the floor. "YOU CAN'T KILL THEM!! WHAT TYP A' CRAP IS THAT!?" He kicked Joe hard to the ribs. At least some of Joe's ribs cracked. Ebon didn't seem to notice as Joe curled further in on himself holding his ribs with his good arm. "THEY'D KILL YOU AND YOU WOULDN'T DO A THING TO STOP THEM!! YOU USELESS..." "STOP IT!!" Ebon looked slightly taken aback then angry. "Don't you EVER TALK BACK TO ME!!!" Ebon picked

him up again and throw him through the half smashed window of the subway train. He landed with a painful crack. Glass was bedded in his skin, hair and clothes. Ebon slowly walked out of the compartment and up to Joe. Joe lay motionless for a moment then rolled to look at Ebon. Joe's eyes were still wet from crying and dipping blood. One of the glass shards had cut right above his eye and blood poured down into it. Ebon gave a look of disgust and spit at him. "You better learn faster. I don't keep no pathetic bangers." He said and walked away. Joe lay for a long time. He had failed Ebon. He had failed his only friend. Ebon had done so much for him. He had taken him in, given him a family and at least in Joe's mind, had loved him unconditionally. He deserved this. He had to, it didn't make sense if he didn't. He ran his hand through his hair and pulled out the last strands of his black hair. He looked at it. It was tinted red with blood. He held it in his hands for a moment staring at it. It was in some small way all that was left of his old body and it was only a few strands of black hair. He wasn't himself completely anymore. He was officially unnatural and unnatural was only natural for him now. He took out a small piece of paper and wrapped the black hair in it. He placed it in his pocket. He wanted it with him. Joe pulled himself up to sitting. He was still for a moment. He had felt upset a moment ago but it had faded now. He felt cocky and almost annoyed. His pupils dilated. "If you just had let me use my powers..." Joe's eyes returned to normal. He suddenly felt the cockiness fade away and a return of sorrow. He was Joe, again. "You would have killed everyone." His pupils dilated again and his emotions faded into Shiv's. It was an uncontrollable sensation. He could not react because it was not him. He was conscious of it but it was not him and in no more control than if someone was sitting next to him. "And?" It was Shiv. "We would have done what Ebon said." "And killed all of those people." Joe said. He was growing upset. He felt a sense of disbelief and irritation at the callousness of Shiv. "So it's fine for you to die but not them?" Shiv said with a playful tone. "No." Joe said. It was slightly hesitate. It directly contradicted what he had just said. "Well, I don't see what you're saying, then." Shiv said and laughed maniacally. "You can't kill people. It's wrong!" "I don't think it is. Ebon doesn't think it is. The guards didn't think it is. It's only you. Maybe, you're wrong." "I am not." "Well, if everyone else is wrong." Shiv chuckled. "I think you're just crazy." "I am not!" "I think you're going crazy and you don't even know it." "I AM NOT!" "I think you're completely nuts and you can't admit it. Or maybe you're so crazy, you can't even tell." "STOP IT!" "How can I stop it? I'm not real. I'm you." "YOU ARE NOT! YOU ARE NOT ME! I'M NOT CRAZY!" "Then, why are you talking to yourself?" Joe was crying again. He couldn't go crazy. He couldn't. "Get...out... of... my... head!" Shiv laughed. "I am you. I can't 'get out of your head'. I am you and soon you'll be me and you... you won't exist." "NO!!! I AM NOT YOU!!!" Joe was yelling and sobbed to himself. He couldn't let it happen. He couldn't. Shiv was gone. Somehow, Joe had pushed him out for now. It was harder than before though. Shiv didn't have the human qualities that restrained Joe. You cannot be just and powerful. It was impossible. You had to be barbaric and cruel to be powerful. That was the separation. Joe was human and Shiv was not. He was power. They were two separate people but weren't. They were individuals but were not. They were fighting for dominance and Joe was not winning anymore. Talon sat on the old subway car. She had seen it all. She didn't know how to react exactly. It was a confusing and slightly disturbing scene. His voice had changed pitch at least twice for one. She needed to talk to him. She had obeyed Ebon this long but enough was enough. She could talk to anyone she wanted and if he said otherwise. She'd gauge his eyes out. She flew down behind Joe. He was sitting on the ground holding his ribs. He was slightly hunched and seemed to be calming down. She approached him slowly with her hands behind her back. She walked slowly with her head slightly tilted to the side. She didn't want to startle him. He didn't seem like he could take a good scare. "Shiv. Shiv." Joe turned a little. He was surprised to see her. He had never talked to her. He knew he wasn't allowed to talk to her and he didn't want to answer that name at the moment. He wanted to have a minute to sort things out and recover. He could if he had time. Talon was irritated. She was a spirited woman to put it nicely and hated to be ignored. She walked around in front of him. "What is wrong with you!?!?" She was a far enough

distance that she didn't feel threatened but close enough to talk to him. Her hands were on her hips and she was bent over slightly to be at eye level with him. "First you talk to yourself! Now you don't talk at all! Shiv... Shiv... Is anybody in there?" Joe was still silent. He just wanted some time alone, some time to think. "You act like there are two people in there?!" Talon noticed that he wasn't listening. "Hello? Shiv! SHIV!" Joe snapped his head up and met her eyes. He seemed annoyed, irritated by her in some way. "Don't call me that!" Talon recoiled a little. She hadn't been expecting that. She recovered quickly though. It was the way things were. You don't show weakness. She knew that Shiv had to learn that but felt sympathetic for him. "What am I supposed to call you? Your name's Shiv." Joe was bruised across his body and bleeding badly. However, he somehow managed to stand up. He was at around eye level with her. He stared at her for a moment. "My... name... is... not... Shiv, and I never want you to think it is." He stared directly at her. His eyes were blood shot with grey bags underneath them. He was exhausted but he was perfectly serious. "Fine. What is it then? Why are you called Shiv?" "Ebon... Ebon called me that.... I didn't... think it ..." He was almost talking to himself. Suddenly, something dark slid across the floor. The mass grew into a form which rose from the ground into a figure. It was the ever omniscient Ebon. "What are you talkin' about?" He sounded angry. Joe froze at the sound of his voice. Talon, however, did not seem to have the same reaction. "I was talking to Shiv." Talon said with a bit to her voice. She was annoyed with him. Ebon turned to Joe quickly. "I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK TO ANYONE!" He said and hit Joe on the side of the head. Joe was not prepared for the assault and fell to the ground. He crawled back up to his knees. The side of his face was bleeding bad. Ebon had hit a piece of glass and it had tore into his skin. He didn't move. He simply tried to hold both his bleeding face and injured ribs at the same time. Talon gawked for a moment at Joe then jerked her head toward Ebon. "Are you crazy?!" "Shut up, Talon!" Ebon said angrily. Talon's eyes narrowed and her feather rose. "I dare you to say that again, Ebon." She was furious and certainly possessed an air of intimidation that Joe did not possess. "What is wrong with you? WHY ARE YOU RUNNING SHIV DOWN LIKE THIS?! I TOLD YOU HE WAS NO BANGER!!" "If he ain't now, then he's gonna be!" Ebon said simply. The argument deteriorated from there. There was nothing further to discuss. Joe was not a gang banger but Ebon had a certain knowledge that few had. He could understand and predict beyond what was evident and Joe knew it now more than anyone. The next few days, Joe was silent. It was an unnatural silence only broken by his incessant mumbling to himself. It was always the same, a constant argument between himself and "Shiv". If he had been objective, he would have known he was going insane. The days before the beating from Ebon, he did question his sanity. He didn't anymore. It is a fact that the insane don't question their sanity and that is what makes them insane, the lack of questioning and probing for understanding. Joe didn't ask questions anymore. He didn't need to speak to be a tool for Ebon. He wasn't beat when he was silent. It seemed to suit his ends. Shiv was no longer a problem as he did not let him speak either. The attack at the corporation had taught him that as long as you are not caught, you didn't have to kill. He wasn't seen by anyone when he stole anymore. He was like an animal. He was clever and sneaky but dangerous all in one package. However, this was a far cry from the person he would become. The event that led to this was on a cold night almost three months after the Big Bang. Ebon, Joe and Talon were walking down beside a street on the outskirts of the northside of Dakota. They had been looking for something to knock off. It was a slow night though. The sky was cloudy and Joe swore he could sense rain. It was a smell in the air. He didn't say anything though. He never did anymore. Talon looked back at him. He was walking furthest back and keeping an eye out. She was concerned somehow. She knew he wasn't her responsibility but she couldn't help that nagging feeling that having him in the Breed was horribly wrong. Ebon didn't seem to notice. "Anyone see anything?" Ebon said without turning around. "You know, he won't answer you Ebon. Why is he on watch?" Talon said irritably. "He's got the best eyes." "And won't talk." "He better if the police show up." "He won't." "How do you know?" "He doesn't anymore. At all." Ebon turned back to looking forward. "You know, I'm right." Joe wasn't listening. He didn't listen much

unless he was being instructed. It was a good strategy. It kept him from being beat up and kept him in his head. He was beginning to like it in there. Cars rushed down the busy street. They were easy enough to mistake for normal people in the pale light and the drivers didn't pay any attention to them. The cars were probably moving much faster than they should have in the area. The streets were not very wide and people lived all around. However, the police in Dakota weren't ever very good at monitoring speeders or anything else for that matter. Joe continued to walk, ignoring the whoosh from cars. Then, he heard something. It was oddly familiar. He turned his head quickly to look across the street. "Spike?" Talon and Ebon turned to Joe surprised. They didn't know exactly what he had said but it was something. "Did you see something?" Ebon said looking directly at Joe. "Spike. What?" Joe said no louder than a whisper. He couldn't understand. However, the confusion was short lived. Spike was standing across the street. He was dirty and appeared hungry, much like Joe himself. Spike had heard him though. Even though, he was old and across the street. He heard him. The Akita became excited at the sight of his master and best friend. What happened next never left Joe and it probably never would. The old dog began to run from the sidewalk and into the busy street. It happened in an instant. He was shot by a speeding car. Spike gave out a horrible sound on impact it was between a whine and howl. There was a horrible cracking sound and it was over. It was that fast and that merciless. Joe was practically in shock. Joe ran into the street jumping clear over a car and up to his old friend. He knelt down and stared for a moment. He didn't know what to do. He bent down further and touched Spike. He wasn't breathing. His only real friend was gone. Joe was crying. Everything was falling apart all at once. The driver of the car got out. He looked angry. "That stupid dog ran right out in front of me..." "Don't... talk ... about... my... dog." Joe was still clinging to Spike as his head slowly turned to the driver. "Your dog! It figures. Stupid street kid would have a dog like that." The driver never saw it coming. Ebon and Talon didn't either for that matter. Joe was off the ground and in the air in seconds. His blades were glowing a brilliant purple as he charged the driver. The driver was probably dead within moments, if he was lucky. However, Shiv didn't want to kill him. He wanted to mutilate him. By the time Talon and Ebon got to the scene, the body was no longer recognizable. Shiv was panting and laughing hysterically. The car, Shiv and the remains of the driver were coated in blood. Even Ebon was shocked by the sight and Talon was speechless. Ebon scanned the scene. There was a car. There was a driver. He scanned, however, the sheer amount of blood made it hard to concentrate on anything but Shiv. But Ebon saw what Shiv had been crouching over only moments before. It was a dog. A dog had been hit by a car and Shiv had decided to make ground meat out of someone. Ebon's shock remained for a few more moments before recovered. He turned to Shiv who was standing there grinning maniacally. "We should get out of here." "Ebon." Talon was still shocked as she looked at Ebon. "No Talon! We should go." . . . Virgil stood and not saying anything for a moment. There wasn't much to say after a story like that or an ending like that for that matter. Virgil knew every word was true that the story was accurate to the note. So, there was only one thing he could do. Virgil stepped out of Shiv's way. "What are you doing?" Shiv asked. He looked confused as he lowered slowly his blades to his sides. "Don't break anything or I'll have to stop you." Virgil said trying not to sound upset. "Just get out of here!" Shiv didn't ask again. His blades dissolved as he ran past Virgil and jumped into a ventilation shaft. Virgil never saw Shiv in the center again. He was gone before Virgil left the building and true to Virgil's orders, nothing was broken. Virgil left the center relatively slowly. It was empty now. The police had come and any doctors or bang babies still in the facility had been evacuated. It was silent and felt as though it had been abandoned for weeks which it soon would be. The incident with Dr. Adams would certainly put the facility out of business. He couldn't say he would be unhappy to see this place closed down though. Virgil walked down until he got to the main lobby and sat down on one of the chairs. He felt a sick unsettling feeling in the pit of his stomach. He slouched into the large chair and tilted his head slightly. The entire experience had put him into a dismal mood. He looked down at the floor and thought for a moment. He knew one person was feeling the same as he was right now, if not for

an entirely different reason, Richie. He put his hand down into the inner pocket of his coat and pulled out his shock vox. He looked at it for a moment. He didn't know exactly what to say to Richie. It had been quite a day and he wasn't thinking as clearly as usual. Not that it was ever easy to apologize to someone but sulking never helps anything. However, Virgil's good nature won out in the end. "Richie. You there, Richie?" It sounded like Richie was waiting a moment to answer hesitant to what he might hear. "Yeah. I'm here, V. You okay down there?" "I'm sorry, Rich. I wasn't thinkin'. You did what you thought you had to." Richie made a confused noise best described as between a 'huh?' and an accented grunt. He was having a hard time understanding exactly what was going on and this was new to him since the birth of his powers. He had expected Virgil to stand his ground on this, bethick headed as usual and eventually, make a halfway apology. This was considerably different. "What do you... what!?!""I was too righteous, I guess. Sometimes people have to do things to stay alive and... I'm sorry, Rich." Virgil could tell Richie was happy if not a little sentimental. "No problem, V. So what happened down there?" "Everybody's gone. The police came and..." Richie interrupted. His voice had a tone between apprehensive and overly interested. "What about Shiv?" "He got away." "He got away?" "Yeah. He pulled his blades on me and got out." Virgil was calm as he lied. He didn't think Richie would understand and they had just gotten back together so nicely, too. "Are you okay, V?" Richie sounded a little nervous over the shock vox. "Fine. He missed and, I guess, he just wanted to get out. He didn't come back after me." "You sure he's gone?" "Yeah. He took off. I was just in his way." "That's good. I'm glad you're not hurt, V." Virgil felt a wave of guilt. Richie was genuinely concerned. He could tell even without seeing him. "I let him go, Richie." "What?" "He didn't run away. I opened the cell and let him out and he left." "You what!?!""I had to, Rich. He trusted me and I had to." "You WHAT!?!""Stop sayin' that, Rich." "Are you insane!?!""Maybe a little." There was a pause. "No more than you, though." "He's going to go back to the Breed." "Probably. I hope he doesn't though." Richie made a groaning noise that he only made when Virgil gave him a headache. "So what now? Do you know where he's going?" "Nope." "Do you know when he left?" "Not really." "Do you know anything at all about Shiv's location?" "Not a thing." Richie paused. "Are you planning on doing anything at all about this?" "To find him. No, I thought I'd give him a head start." "You are crazy, V." "And so are you. That's why we make a great team. Nothing like blind sympathy and aliens." "Roswell doesn't exactly have huge evidence saying they didn't kill aliens." Richie muttered. "I have to admit I am sold on your microchip-1984 theory." Richie sighed but Virgil could tell he was satisfied. "So, what now?" Virgil looked up at the ceiling of the center as he slouched back in the chair. He lowered his shock vox to think for a moment. This end felt unfinished, unresolved. He couldn't leave things in such a mess. He was a hero and had to save the day. However, there was an unsettling feeling inside of him because he knew he couldn't. It was beyond his power. But he felt as though he could still do something. He pulled the shock vox back up against his face. "Do you remember what Solada said?" "About what?" "She doesn't know what happened to Shiv. She said that Mr. Chen used to come home and doesn't anymore. He probably doesn't know, either." "V, I don't think it's a good idea to tell them. We don't even know if they don't know. Besides, think about it, would your pop want to hear that about you?" "It's better than not knowing." "You really think this is a good idea, V?" "I think they should know what happened, Rich." He heard Richie sigh then a blur of keyboard clicks. "Chen, Tadashi. He works in a building in the business sector. Dakota Electronics. His office is on the 40th floor. Are you sure this is a good idea, V?" Richie sounded concerned. "I think it's better than not knowin', Rich." Virgil paused as he got up out of the chair. "I'll be back soon. Don't worry Richie. I'll be fine." "I know but be careful and do the right thing." "I will." Virgil tried off the small machine and placed it in his pocket. "Love you, Richie." Virgil left the center and pulled his mask back on over his face. He didn't want Mr. Chen to recognize him and especially not all of Dakota. He took out his saucer and flipped it out. He jumped on and flew off. He had to admit he wasn't sure of the moral standing of what he was about to do. He knew that finding out your son was one of the most prominent mutants in the city was not an easy thing

to swallow but he knew not knowing whether he was dead or alive had to be worse by far. He knew that they had both been horrible parents in many respects but they seem to genuinely care of Shiv. Something no one else had ever done. Virgil found the building. It was a large skyscraper clustered in the busy district. It wasn't easy to miss by any standards even if, Virgil were on the ground which he was not. He flew up to the large building and began counting the floors. He had to find forty. 36. 38.40. He hovered outside the window for a moment. He had to admit he was nervous but he was a hero after all. It wasn't all fun. He flew closer to the window then used his powers to unlock the window and walk in. He closed the window again and put his saucer away. It was a moderate sized office. It was plain for the most part with only a desk and a waist basket to decorate it. Virgil figured the desk would be the best place to start. It looked like the desk of the average workaholic. It was cluttered with papers, post-its and deadlines. He appeared that he had been taking on anything and everything the company had to offer anyone. Virgil sighed and started to walk by the desk. As he did, his coat got caught on something. He returned slightly to look at it and groaned. He yanked, trying to set it free with no success. He began to pull harder which sent the drawer flying clear out of its slot. Things scattered everywhere. Virgil looked down at it. He felt a wave of unprofessional embarrassment. He couldn't walk through a room without breaking something. He was beginning to understand why his Pop's didn't let him in his office that often. He then bent down to pick the things up. The drawer was full of newspaper articles, a video cassette tape and audio tapes. As he peered through it, it became clear why he wasn't keeping it out in the open. It was predominantly about Shiv and as he observed further it grew even more disturbing. Newspaper articles read the same: "young Asian bang baby", "Shiv, a member of the meta-human crime gang the Breed, was caught today and is being held for numerous crimes", "residents of Paris Row are advised to be extremely wary of any Asian males around 5'9" as they wanted bang baby, Shiv is extremely dangerous even when unprovoked." and so on. He had wanted posters, the missing person's flyer, dozens of photos by the press and amateur photographs. The tapes were simply labeled "JOMEI". Virgil picked it up and flipped up the plastic shield around the inner tape. He placed one hand on his temple and the other was holding the tape with a finger on the magnetic ribbon. He then created a small charge. He was watching the tape. He had found many of these unusually uses for his powers. The tape, however, was full of reports. News reports concerning the Breed or more specifically Shiv. Virgil put down the tape. There had to be hours of footage. It was to an obsessive degree. They appeared to be taken very good care of, almost cared for, and the sheer number of items was staggering. Virgil was too busy staring at the pictures to notice the door open. Tadashi had walked into his office without Virgil even noticing. "Get... away... from... that!" Tadashi rushed over and snatched the papers from Virgil. He held them in one hand and the drawer in the other. He began looking through it immediately. He seemed to be very worried about any of it being missing. Virgil first felt a wave of shock. It subsided though as he noticed Tadashi's interest in the item and lack in him. "Mr. Chen?" Virgil said in a low voice. Tadashi ignored him at first but by the end of the investigation of his collection. (Noticing that it was all indeed there.) He turned to Virgil. He was glaring through his eyeglasses with the same tired grey bags under his eyes as his son. It was actually striking how similar they were. Their frames were almost identical and the face familiar. However, he didn't have the same eyes, Shiv's having a most predominant fold of skin, and his skin was significantly lighter than Shiv's which bore the richer tone of his mother, the Thai side of the family. "Get out!" His voice was lower and also sterner than Shiv's. "You know about Shiv?" The look on Tadashi's face answered the question. He didn't need to say a word. "You know, it's Joe." Tadashi gave him a look of pure hatred. "How can you even ask me that? He's my son! You don't think I'd know my own son!!" He was growing more furious. His eyes were locked with Virgil's. He had the same animal-like gaze as his son. "I RAISED HIM! AND YOU ASK ME IF I CAN TELL IT'S MY JOMEI WITH A CHANGE LIKE THAT!!" Virgil backed up a little then regained composure. Virgil was angry now. He had seen the look on Shiv's face. It was pure loneliness. He couldn't even tell what love was and Tadashi was spurring out this

about raising him. "YOU'RE THE REASON HE LEFT! YOU CHASED HIM OFF!" "YOU DON'T THINK I KNOW THAT!!" Virgil recoiled. He had no idea Tadashi felt that way. He had assumed wrong again about Shiv's family. Tadashi didn't need a heroic lecture. He needed to let himself let go of Joe. "You don't have to tell me I chased him out. Chased away the only child I ever had or could ever have! He was the only family I had left and I chased him away like I did with the rest of them!!" Tadashi was upset if not angry. "You don't marry out of your own in Japan. I DID! I pushed my family away and then I pushed him away! Don't you lecture me about what I've done! I'd do anything to have him home!! I did this to him!! He was my responsibility and I couldn't handle him." "Hey! Stop it! He ran away. It ain't all your fault. He chose to be at the docks. He chose to join the Breed. He could have come home. He just didn't. It's not your fault." "He was my responsibility!" "What about your wife? He was her responsibility too. It's not your fault that Jomei got screwed up and couldn't handle it!" "Solada couldn't take care of him. He was my responsibility!" "You were alone taking care of him! Sure, you could have been nicer but it's not your fault! You couldn't handle him. Who could?" "I could have!" "You pushed him too hard but you loved him! He was your son and you can't keep blaming yourself! It's not your fault and pretending it is isn't helping you!" "I pushed him and now he's a mutant! He'll never be normal again and it's my fault!" "It wasn't your fault! What you did was wrong but you didn't do this to him!" Tadashi looked extremely upset. He had been yelling the whole time and he didn't seem like he could anymore. "Is he all right? Can you at least tell me that?" Virgil thought for a moment. "No. Shiv isn't Joe. Joe died a long time ago." "What?" "Three months after the Big Bang." "But... Shiv. I know it's Jomei. I can tell." Tadashi looked almost hysterical. "It's Jomei." "Jomei isn't coming back and Shiv isn't Joe. Shiv killed him." Tadashi looked devastated but seemed to understand. "The doctors said it was a miracle we had a baby at all. We can't have another baby. He was our only chance. I guess, I thought, if I could see Shiv, I'd have my son back. But he's not coming back is he?" "No. He's not." "When he ran away, it was like finding him dead. My only son dead." Tadashi wasn't looking at Virgil anymore. "Thank you. It's nice to have someone finally tell me what happened. Better to know." "You're welcome, Mr. Chen." Virgil said and flew out the window. Virgil got back to the gas station by around eight p.m. He had taken the long way there. He wanted to fly by himself for a while to clear his head. He felt a little hollow inside. The way a kid feels when a toy breaks. He landed outside. Richie was waiting for him when he got there. Richie knew he would be upset. It was no easy task telling a parent their son was dead. Richie paused for a moment. His insides were twisted in a knot at this point. He was so relieved that Virgil was all right. "Are you all right, V?" Virgil didn't answer and walked into the gas station. Richie was worried which was not unusual since his powers had developed. He was prone to paranoia. However, this was often directed to self-preservation with one exception and that exception happened to have walked in looking more than fatigued. He didn't go on instinct but sometimes it gets the best of everyone. Richie put his arms around Virgil and hugged him tightly. For once, Virgil really couldn't think of any logical solution to a problem. "Thanks, Rich." Virgil really didn't care why Richie was going on instinct. All Virgil knew was that he had had a very long day and he desperately needed to hug from someone. Their curfew was at nine o'clock. Over the next hour, Richie did his best to comfort Virgil. He was by no means an expert but Virgil didn't seem to mind. He enjoyed the sudden outburst of honesty in Richie's actions. Super geniuses were rarely ever completely sincere. Too much on their minds and worries which clustered. It was pure trust that Richie was. They left just early enough to walk back. He didn't really trust Virgil to fly. He seemed shaky. It had been a long day for him after all. Richie walked him home. Richie didn't want to leave him alone that night but Virgil said he would be fine. Richie was reluctant but left. Virgil sat on the couch in his living room. He had changed into his "Virgil clothes" before leaving the gas station. He was looking at the small missing person's flyer. He felt a heavy lump in his throat. He wondered what Joe had been thinking when it was taken. Was he happy? Was he high? Did he have any idea that his father loved him? Or that his mother didn't hate him? Mr. Hawkins saw Virgil on the couch and looked over his shoulder. "It's sad isn't it?" "Yeah, it is." Virgil said still looking at the

picture."They alwayswanted a baby and they loved Joe more than anything and he neverknew. Its a shame. If they had paid more attention to him."Robert Hawkins paused for a moment. "I guess sometimes kids aretaken lightly."The End

12 - Epilogue: The Death

Disclaimer: I do not own Static Shock. Static Shock belongs to Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone Comics, DC Comics and WB. I wish I did though. That'd be sweet. Warning: Will contain slash, drugs, violence and one sided relationships. This will be a bit riskier than my average fics. Knowing me, it'll be okay but I only thought it fair to place a warning. I hope everyone enjoys the rendition of Shiv by a third author. I want to be original and hope this is. A/N: This is the final chapter of TL. I hope you enjoyed it and I hope to keep writing. Thank you to everyone who read, who reviewed, and who is reading now. I hope to see you again.

The Epilogue: The Death

Shiv hunched positioned in a large tree on the south end of a small graveyard on the outside of Dakota. It was fenced carefully with only a few trees surrounding it. It was almost twilight now, making the shadows more exaggerated than any other time of day. Shiv hunched lower, his eyes darted across the small patches. He was looking something. It had been two months since his escape from the clinic. Static had left him well enough alone and Shiv had behaved, for the most part. He had not rejoined the Breed. This trust had been violated and no good beast went back to a pack that didn't want him. He was alone. He had to admit it wasn't hard living alone. He was nineteen now and a considerably healthy young adult with plenty of fight and spirit in him. However, he did miss the company. Shiv's head bobbed erratically for a moment longer then stopped. He had seen what he was looking for. He hunched him and stopped down from the tree and hurried across the graveyard. He stayed hunched, it was habit now more than necessity, as he ran up to single tombstone. He looked down at almost doubting his eyesight from the tree: JOMEI CHEN 1984 –2000 Shiv recoiled a bit. It was unnerving to see his better half's grave, his better half's empty grave. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small folded gum wrapper. He unfolded it to reveal a few strands of pure black hair. They were ratty and rather split but were intact. "Joe, are you there?" Shiv said quietly standing alone in front of the grave. He picked up the few strands of his hair and a feel came over him. He felt tired and worn down all of the sudden. "Of course, I'm here." Shiv put the hair back on the paper. "How should I know you hardly say anything anymore? You used to never shut up." He placed a finger on the hair resting in his palm. He felt tired again but did not respond. He removed his finger and his strength returned. "I didn't mean..." Shiv paused. His other half was weak. He was acted beaten and tired. He used to come out from time to time. He'd make a remark to Ebon and spoke to Static only a few months ago. "Do you see it?" He touched the hair. "I see it." Shiv grinned. "How is it being dead?" It was sick toying with him but Shiv thrived on it. "The same." Shiv was taken aback. Joe had never frightened him before. "I mean the tombstone." Joe hunched slightly and sighed. "You killed me a long time ago. You know that. You don't have to brag." "I didn't kill you!" Shiv was almost indignant yelling into his hand. "I mean I think it's idiotic that they add a tombstone with no body." "A death is a death." "You're insane! I don't know why I talk to you!!" Shiv said crossing his arms in a spiteful pout. "You won't have to." "What do you mean?" "If I'm not dead, then I'm dying." "What are you talking about? You're me." "I am not. You're Shiv. This isn't your grave. It's mine and you know it. You know, I'm right." Shiv did. He frowned for a moment. He knew Joe wasn't real anymore. That he was as fleeting as a memory. "I... I didn't mean everything. I mean... I didn't mean... to... kill you." "Yes, you did. You're an animal, Shiv. We all know it. I was human, Shiv." "Survival of the fittest. If you can't survive..." "...you don't." Joe said. He sounded exhausted. "You kept us alive Shiv and took it all in the end. That's what it takes on the streets." "What about you?" Shiv seemed genuinely concerned looking at the hair. "Leave the hair." His body felt infinitely weaker than it should. Shiv placed the hair on the tombstone. His body felt light and empty of something. Though he didn't remember what. It was all like some type of dream that he couldn't remember. He would no

longer see to Joe and Joe no longer existed. But in many senses, he never did. THE END.