



The Soong Brothers

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by Arukir

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The Soong Brothers

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AU where Data has legal custody over his two brothers, because one's a criminal and the other has mental issues, and Lal starts off as a baby so her brain doesn't overload. They all live on the Enterprise together, slowly learning how to be a family.

So far each chapter is a oneshot set in a loose, mostly non-chronological order, but it might develop a real plot later.

Note: Lore's not a murderer in this AU, but he's still grumpy and hates humans.

Chapter 1: Babysitting

Lore thinks he'd make a great babysitter. Data disagrees.

Top fanart drawn by me! It took me 2 hours and 13 minutes :)

Bottom fanart done by AI

(Lal's younger in this particular chapter than she is in the artwork)

"Brother," Data said as he entered the room, "I request your assistance in finding someone to watch baby Lal while I am on duty."

"Why do you need to find someone to watch her?" Lore asked, looking up from where he had been reading a padd on the couch. Data did not ask what he was reading, having long ago accepted that it would most likely be horror, which Data had no interest in, and that Lore would make up graphic and unpleasant descriptions whether it was horror or not just to get Data to stop asking. "Just leave the brat with me. It's not

like I've got anything better to do while on my 'parole'," he muttered, saying the last word like a curse.

"I will not be doing that," Data said as calmly as ever, though Lore decided to pretend he sounded slightly panicked at the idea.

"Why not?" Lore demanded. It's not like he really cared much about his so-called 'niece' nor did he have any real interest in watching her, but it was the principal of the thing that mattered. Besides, the sooner Data trusted him the sooner he could escape this stupid ship, and things like *babysitting* would go a long way in earning his younger-older-twin — *ah, the confusing life of a technically-decommissioned android* — brother's affection.

"So far, you have killed every houseplant I have," Data answered.

"I wouldn't kill your kid!" Lore snapped, more upset at the idea than he thought he'd be. "Honestly, *brother*, I'd expect those sorts of accusations from the humans," another perfectly innocent word he said with disgust, "but from you?" His mood flipping like a dime, Lore suddenly grinned, almost manic. "Shame, shame, brother mine. Being me shouldn't be a crime."

"Brother, you have started rhyming again." Data watched as Lore leaned back on the couch and began to hum absently. If he had been as human as he dreamed of being, Data would've sighed. His brother's malfunctions worried him greatly, though he rarely addressed them, as he knew Lore would grow upset if he mentioned them too often. "This is why I cannot let you watch Lal, brother. I am sorry, but you can barely be trusted with your own survival, much less the survival of another."

"It's not like I'd have to feed her, bathe her, or give her water. It's not like you've got a dumb *human* of a daughter," Lore argued, feeling strangely committed to the idea of babysitting his niece. "I'd just have to stop her frying her circuits by doing something she shouldn't, something to bring you woe. This wouldn't even be a problem if you'd just deactivate her when you left, you know."

"Your rhymes are getting more forced, brother," Data informed him. Then, considering for a moment, he decided to move over to the couch and sit next to the other. He ignored Lore when he petulantly kicked at him. He added, "I cannot shut Lal off whenever she is inconvenient, that is not how a family operates."

"It's what father did," Lore grumbled.

"And that was wrong," Data said, ignoring the way Lore's eyes widened slightly, as they always did when he admitted fault in their creator. Besides the occasional twitch — that might've been faked, Data still couldn't tell — Lore had complete control over his artificial facial muscles, and Data knew that his brother was trying to make some sort of point with every expression, no matter how small. Nothing Lore did was ever fully without ulterior purpose. "Baby Lal may not require physical nutrition or care, but she still needs high levels of mental stimulation and emotional bonding. The entire point of giving her a childhood is to help her bioartificial brain develop."

"Yes, yes, I know," Lore dismissed, crossing his arms. "Well, I still could watch her. I'm a master of mental stimulation—"

"Watch who?" B4 asked, entering the quarters. In his arms, Spot was curled up and breathing gently in sleep. Data was pleased with how much Spot had taken to his brother, even if it was most likely due to the fact that her various attempts to claw him to shreds had both failed and did not bother him.

"Starfleet Lapdog Jr," Lore answered. He used to call Data 'Starfleet's Bitch', but wisely decided to change it when he began to apply it to Lal as well. "Turns out that Data can't give his daughter the time and affection she needs because of his work~" Lore continued in a sing-song, grinning maliciously.

Fearing that Lore might decide to make up another hurtful song, as he occasionally had a habit of doing, Data quickly turned to B4 and asked, "How was your day, brother?"

"Very adventurous, Data," B4 said with a smile. He walked over to the couch to sit on Data's other side, giving Lore a wide berth as he did so. It wasn't that he was scared of his brother, it was just that... he was scared of his brother. "Spot left the quarters, which I remember you said she isn't allowed to do by herself, just like Lore—"

Lore attempted to hit him with a throw pillow at that, but Data managed to block him before he could, taking the pillow from him. Hence why Data usually sat between his brothers.

"—and I didn't want to bother you while you were at work, so I went to find her!"

"Did you retrieve her all by yourself, B4?" Data asked, ignoring Lore's muttered cursing and attempts to retrieve the pillow.

"No, Wesley helped me," B4 told him, gently stroking Spot's fur. "I bumped into him while I was searching. I like Wesley, he is... Hmm... Oh, I can't remember the word."

"What is the definition?" Data asked.

"It means..." B4 thought for a moment. "...that you treat others well?"

"Considerate, helpful, neighborly," Data began guessing, "magnanimous, thoughtful, altruistic—"

"Sweet, nice, kind," Lore mocked.

"That's it!" B4 grinned, pointing at Lore. "Wesley is very kind."

"How do you forget a word like kind?" Lore asked, incredulous. "Honestly, Beta, you're better than this. You aren't some weak-minded biological whose squishy mind retains information like a bucket with a hole in the bottom."

"But Lore," B4 began, face scrunched in confusion, "a bucket with a hole in the bottom couldn't hold anything very well."

"I believe that is the point," Data explained, handing Lore back the pillow he had confiscated earlier so that the other might scream into it in frustration. "He is saying that you are not like a bucket with a hole in the bottom, and therefore should hold knowledge much better than one such item would hold water."

"But I'm terrible at remembering things, brother," B4 protested, trying to remember exactly how Lore had worded his analogy so that he could wrap his mind around it.

"I am aware," Data agreed, ignoring how Lore burst into laughter at that. There were a lot of things he ignored about Lore. And what he said next was most certainly not a petty attempt at revenge. Of course not. That would require Data to feel emotions like his brothers, which he obviously didn't. So, his intentions were completely benign when he added, "I believe that it was Lore's way of trying to compliment you, B4, by saying you are above the humans he so detests."

"Oh, Lore, really?" B4 asked, tearing up. Before Lore could protest that that was most certainly not what he had meant, B4 climbed over Data and pulled Lore into a hug. Spot, startled, ran to hide in her room (technically Data's bedroom, but everyone called it hers). "I think you're better than everyone else too!"

"Data, help me!" Lore hissed quietly over B4's shoulder, trying and failing to extract himself from the other's embrace. Data gave his head a single shake 'no'. Lore gasped. "You did this on purpose, didn't you, you little—"

It was at this point that the door to their quarters slid open once again and let in Geordi LaForge, who was carrying a wrapped bundle carefully in his arms. "Hey, Data, Lal's all done with her check-up."

Geordi paused just inside the room, taking in the scene before him. B4 looked like his tear ducts had malfunctioned again, Lore looked just shy of assaulting someone, and Data — though the android would forever deny the possibility — looked entirely too pleased with himself. *Just another day with the Soong brothers*, Geordi mused to himself.

"How'd the little brat do?" Lore asked, remembering that he was trying to convince Data that he should be allowed to watch her — although he barely remembered nor cared why he wanted to anymore, and was close to shrugging and giving up on it — and thus deciding to show that he could care about stupid things like check-ups. "Finally taking after her dear uncles and spiraling into a mess of malfunctions?"

"Lore!" B4 admonished. "That wasn't very kind at all, that was... Oh... Th-the opposite of kind!"

"Inconsiderate," Data suggested, "insensitive, impol—"

"Mean," Lore tried.

"Yes, that's it," B4 agreed, nodding excitedly. "That was very *mean*, Lore."

"Well, I'm a very mean person," Lore snapped, still struggling against B4's hold.

Holding him tighter, B4 answered, "I don't think you're a mean person, brother, I just think you need more examples of love in your life."

"No, I don't!" Lore protested. Desperate, he looked over at Data's human pet (Data hated when he called him that), and begged, "Can't you deactivate him or something? Please?" he added, remembering Data's insistence that 'please' was somehow magical and figuring that this would be a good time to test it. If it worked and Geordi helped him, he had a new weapon against the pathetic humans. If it didn't and Geordi ignored him, then he could bring this situation up the next time Data insisted that he would've gotten his way in some situation or other if he'd been more polite. Win-win.

"Lal's in tip-top shape, Data," Geordi said, ignoring the others' antics. "We had a little incident where she tried to stick a flux coupler in her mouth, but I got it from her

in time. It wasn't easy, though, she's a strong little baby," Geordi said with a chuckle, handing the sleeping infant over to Data.

"I am sorry for the incident, Geordi," Data told him sincerely. "I do not understand why she keeps up her attempts to eat your tools, despite them not being edible and her not being able to feel hunger. Perhaps... Perhaps she is malfunctioning."

"Calm down, Data," Geordi told him. "You modeled her after a human toddler. I'm sorry to say it, buddy, but human toddlers like sticking things in their mouths. It doesn't matter if it's food or if they're hungry, if they can fit it in their mouths then they're going to try to eat it."

"That is most nonsensical behavior," Data said, fascinated by the idea. "If I may ask, why would they do such a thing? It seems a hindrance to the survival of an infant."

"Don't look at me, Data, I'm as clueless as you are about this stuff." Geordi shrugged.

"No-one's as clueless as Data about this stuff. Except maybe B4," Lore mused. He had given up escaping and had instead shifted so he could lay back on the arm of the couch while B4 continued to hug him, turning his brother into a sort of blanket and further trapping himself, but at least he was more comfortable. "Which reminds me — La-Forge, you have my dear brother's ear; tell him he's being an idiot about getting someone to watch Lal. I'll give you a treat if you do~"

If Data was human, he would've buried his head in his hands. Actually, he wouldn't have, as his hands were occupied with holding Lal. But he still imagined that he could feel the urge to do so. "Lore, I do not wish to have to explain to you the differences between Spot and Geordi again. Especially since we are both aware that you know that humans are not cats."

"No, give me that lecture again, brother," Lore drawled. "After all, B4 doesn't understand the difference, it'll be good for him to listen in."

"I know the difference," B4 argued, his voice slightly muffled from where he was snuggled into Lore's chest. "Cats are smaller and have claws. And they have fur," he added, proud of himself for knowing.

"Geordi might just be a declawed, hairless giant," Lore suggested sarcastically.

Shifting slightly to give Geordi a wide-eyed, appraising look without releasing his brother, B4 whispered, "You think so?"

"It's definitely a possibility," Lore told him as seriously as he could manage. His eye began to twitch violently as he fought back a grin.

"I apologize for my brothers, Geordi," Data told his best friend, gently rocking Lal as he did so.

"It's fine, Data, I'm used to it by now." Geordi shrugged. "What's this about you needing someone to watch the kid, though?"

"The captain very generously gave me a few months to get Lal settled," Data reminded him. "But that time is over now, and I cannot watch Lal while on duty."

"And Lore thinks that you're being an idiot because..?" Geordi asked, though he doubted that Lore needed an actual reason to declare someone else an idiot.

"He won't let me watch her!" Lore explained angrily. He remembered now why he wanted to do so in the first place, and his determination to do so was strengthened once more. "My dear brother doesn't believe I'd make a good babysitter."

"You? Responsible for a child?" Geordi shuddered. "Yeah, good call, Data. I don't even wanna think about what would happen if you let Lore watch her."

"Why does everyone think I'd harm the brat?" Lore hissed. He was beginning to feel rather hurt annoyed at the implication. "You leave me alone with the fleabag, and I don't hurt her!"

"I don't think you'd hurt Lal, brother," B4 mumbled. His voice was faint and his eyes were beginning to droop.

"B4, don't you dare fall asleep on me," Lore said quickly, head snapping to look at him in panic. B4 slumped fully against him, and Lore struggled against the sudden dead weight pressing him into the couch. "B4? Beta? Wake up, you idiot! Beta! Get off me! DATA, HE DID IT AGAIN!"

"...perhaps Mrs. O'Brien would be willing to watch her," Data mused. "I am sure Lal would enjoy spending time with Molly."

"Yeah, that's probably for the best," Geordi agreed, holding back a laugh.

Just another day with the Soong brothers, indeed.

Chapter 2: Thorns

Lal and Lore talk for a bit. Lore is accidentally protective.
Warning: plant death :(

"Uncle Lore?" Lal asked, interrupting Lore's attempts to prune his latest plant. He had given in and started actually taking care of the blasted things, figuring that if killing them hadn't stopped Data from giving them to him, then maybe disproving his brother's theories on their supposedly calming nature would.

Lore looked down at the 'child' that had yet again invaded his room without knocking, just managing to keep his annoyance down to a mild grimace as he snapped, "What?"

"Are you a child?"

"What?" Lore repeated, this time with more force. "Of course I'm not a child! Where in the world did you get an idea like that?"

"Father says that I can't explore the ship by myself because I'm a child, and you aren't allowed out by yourself either," Lal explained. "As you quite obviously aren't a pet like Spot, I thought you might be a child that was uploaded to an adult body too soon."

"I never had a child body, that ridiculous concept was thought up by your father just for you," Lore told her, sneering. Then, sensing the opportunity for some fun, he smiled and added, "And who says I'm not a pet? Maybe I am and your *darling father* just forgot to mention it."

"You aren't a pet, Uncle," Lal protested. "You're father's brother."

"Well, why can't I be both?" Lore asked.

"Uncle!" Lal whined. She really was starting to get good with tones, she was already much better than Data was; he'd be proud if he didn't hate her and everyone else in his so-called *family*.

"Oh, alright, I'm not a pet," Lore conceded. And, despite not actually being sure of this fact, he firmly added, "I'm not a child, either."

"Then why aren't you allowed out by yourself, Uncle?" Lal asked, tilting her head in a way that was infuriating reminiscent of Data.

"Remember when your daddy explained prison to you?" Lore asked. At her nod, he continued, "Well I kept escaping prison because these dumb monkeys your father considers worth serving couldn't build a proper cell if their lives depended on it. So I got a choice between becoming scrap metal or living with your dad and letting him control my life. Truly a gracious choice Starfleet gave me," he added sarcastically.

"Oh," Lal said, pausing to process the new information.

After a minute of quiet, Lore returned to his plant, figuring the kid would go away now that her question had been answered. In his defense, he did not have a proper childhood and had little to absolutely no understanding of how children worked.

"Why were you in prison, Uncle?" Lal asked, interrupting him again.

"Well, you see, they had the most wonderful view through the cell window and *why* do you think?" he snapped. "I broke the law, kid."

"Which law?"

"A lot of them." For just a microsecond, Lore considered going into detail, or maybe making a few things up. He thought she wouldn't ask him questions anymore if he spun a horrifying enough tale for her. In fact, she might not talk to him at all afterwards...

He didn't go into detail.

"Why?" Lal pressed. "Surely you knew that you'd go to prison?"

"I did it because I felt like it," Lore told her irritably, avoiding thinking about the actual answer to that question. "I don't get why you're so interested in this, kid. Your dad's raising you as a proper little law-abiding Federation lapdog, so just focus on that and leave me alone."

Lal did not leave. However, she did go quiet again, which Lore counted as a win. He went back to his plant.

After several more minutes of having a child stare straight at him without moving or blinking (he cursed the fact that his emotional spectrum included being creeped out), Lore sighed and set down his pruning tools with a clang. "Shouldn't you be bothering your dad or the O'Briens or something? I thought I wasn't considered trustworthy enough to be alone with you?"

"Father is busy teaching Uncle B4 how to use a replicator." Again, Lal didn't add, because she was more polite than Lore was. "He told me to go talk to you until he was done."

"Tell your daddy that his attempts to trick me into spending time with you won't work," Lore grumbled, picking up his pruning scissors again and wishing he was allowed access to the computer mainframe so he could upload a gardening program rather than trying to learn this skill like a pathetic human.

"Of course, Uncle," Lal agreed. Then, with a smirk that looked far too much like his own and thus worried him more than he would care to admit, she added, "After he is done with B4. Until then, I am to speak with you."

"Knock yourself out, kid." Lore rolled his eyes. "Don't expect me to speak back, though. I have to finish this little *project* your father has tasked me with." And here he thought that he was done acting on the will of others.

"You have kept this one alive much longer than the others, Uncle," Lal told him, studying the plant curiously. "You should be proud of yourself."

"For not killing a bush?" He snorted. "It ain't that hard, kiddo."

"It's so green," Lal said in wonder, gently brushing her fingers over the leaves. "None of dad's plants are this green. You're very good at this, Uncle Lore."

"...whatever," Lore huffed. His brother's brat praising him over a skill he didn't even want to have did not make him feel touched. It *didn't*.

"Ow!" Lal suddenly gasped, jerking her small hand away from one of the plant's thorns. Oh, right, he'd forgotten she had pain receptors. She looked down at the small cut on her finger — Data was still trying to strike a balance between her false skin being flexible and resilient, leaving her vulnerable to minor injuries while he figured it out.

"It bit me," Lal breathed, and Lore almost made a mental note to tell Data to update her dictionary before he decided that it wasn't his problem. She looked up, eyes wide and shiny with unshed moisture. *Great*, Lore thought, *she has the same tear duct malfunction as Beta*. "Oh, Uncle, you've killed it!"

"What?" Lore blinked, then looked where she pointed. He had indeed killed the plant, his pruning scissors cutting straight through the main trunk. He waved a dismissive hand. "Eh, it doesn't matter; I doubt your father would let me keep something

as fun as a plant that bites people, anyways. Speaking of Data, let's go find him, shall we?"

"Hm? Why?"

"You don't think I'm bandaging your liddle-widdle finger up, do you, brat?" Lore asked, exiting his room to enter the main room where the replicator was. "'Sides, if the plant's kicked the bucket, there's not exactly anything left for me to do here."

"I don't understand, Uncle." Lal frowned, following him. "No buckets were kicked during our conversation, and certainly not by a plant."

Lore sighed. "I'll explain it to you later, kid. Or better yet, I'll make your dad explain it; that should be good for some laughs."

Chapter 3: Names

Lal has some questions about names.

Apparently the main theme of this fic is Lore reluctantly learning to be a good Uncle to Lal. This was not on purpose, but it's probably going to continue.

"What's the meaning of your name?" Lal asked one day.

Keiko looked up from where she had been crouching and stacking blocks with Molly, and turned to the other child in her care. "My name?"

"The meaning of Father's name is *facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis*," Lal told her. "The meaning of Uncle Lore's name is *a body of traditions and knowledge on a subject or held by a particular group, typically passed from person to person by word of mouth*."

"Really?" Keiko said with interest. Technically, she already knew both of those facts. What caught her interest was the six-year-old that was telling her them. She forgot how smart Data's daughter was, sometimes.

"Yes," Lal confirmed, nodding. "Uncle B4's name is a reference to him being the 4th Beta version of the Soong Android line, the first to be viable. What's the meaning of your name?" she repeated her question.

"You know, I'm not sure," Keiko admitted. "I've never really looked into it."

"Oh." Lal frowned for a moment, tilting her head. She looked over at her playmate and asked, "What's the meaning of Molly's name?"

"That one, I do know," Keiko chuckled. She fondly remembered spending months scouring baby name books and arguing over them with Miles when she was pregnant. "It's got a few different meanings, but the one I like most is *star of the sea*."

Lal's face scrunched up in confusion. Of course, the casual onlooker wouldn't know it was in confusion, they would most likely think she was having a spasm or something. But Keiko had nearly six years of babysitting the kid under her belt, and had become adept at reading her slowly-improving attempts to mimic human expressions.

"Molly neither resembles a star nor resides in the sea," Lal told her. "That name is most unfitting."

"It's not meant to be literal, Lal," Keiko told her patiently. She reminded herself that the person she was speaking to was a toddler, no matter how well-spoken she was, and it wouldn't be right to get mad at her for criticizing the name Keiko gave her child. "It was just poetic and beautiful, and I thought those would be good traits to name my daughter after. And she's my special treasure, like a star in a sea would be."

"A star in a sea would be quite disastrous," Lal corrected.

"Nevermind." Keiko shook her head. She gently asked, "Why are you so interested in names right now?"

"Father's name fits him well," Lal began, "he is a methodical and fact-oriented being. Uncle Lore's name fits him equally well, as he enjoys making up complex stories. Uncle B4's name is a literal description of what he is."

"Okay," Keiko said, still not understanding. She waited, silently prompting Lal to explain.

"My name is not like that," Lal continued. "It's neither a proper noun nor a literal descriptor. It's more like yours or Molly's names. I've been wondering as to the meaning of my name, lately. And why it's not like the rest of my family's own designations."

"I'm sure Data had a good reason behind your name," Keiko assured her. "Trust me, naming a child is a duty parents take very seriously. I'm afraid I don't know the meaning of your name, sweetie, but I'm sure whatever it is, is as gorgeous and special as you are."

"Do you really think that?" Lal asked, her voice almost managing to sound slightly nervous. She was better at tones than she was at expressions.

"I most certainly do," Keiko told her, smiling brightly.

Lal was silent for a moment. She turned her head to the other side. "I think I'll ask Father about the meaning behind my name when I get home."

"I think that's a wonderful idea," Keiko told her. "Until then, how about you help Molly stack the blocks, hmm? She could really use your help over here."

"Molly, may I assist in stacking the entertaining structural cubes?" Lal asked the other toddler.

"Lally's silly," Molly replied, lightly whacking Lal with a block. Molly burst into giggles for a moment, then grinned and asked, "Wanna help build a tower?"

"I would love to," Lal said stiffly, moving closer and gathering up some blocks. She looked over what Molly already had of the tower. "You're off to a good start, but you've neglected your foundation. I'll strengthen it while you—"

At that moment, Molly laughed and knocked the tower over. Lal blinked, then said, "Or perhaps it would be better to start over and build up a strong foundation from the beginning. A very intelligent move, Molly."

"The green ones are mine," Molly told her. "You can have the red and yellow ones."

"...I like purple."

"There's no purple." Molly looked through the blocks. "There's pink. That's almost purple."

"It is not. But thank you."

"Greetings, Lal," Data said when Keiko dropped her back off at his quarters. "How was your playdate with Molly?"

"Greetings, Father. We built a tower," Lal informed him. "Molly taught me that destruction is as important a part of play as creation."

From his place on the couch, Lore snorted. "Careful, Brother, it sounds like she's taking a bit too much after me."

Before Data could respond to that distressing statement, Lal spoke up. "Father, what's the meaning of my name?"

"Your name means 'Beloved'," Data told her.

"'Beloved'," Lal repeated. "That is a positive meaning, I am grateful for it. But why didn't you just name me Beloved, then? Why is my name not a proper noun like your and Uncle Lore's names, or a literal descriptor, like Uncle B4's name?"

"Most human names are not proper nouns or literal descriptors, Lal. As we are modeled off of humans and my own Father was human, I wished to give you a more hu-

man name." Data tilted his head to the side, considering. "If you want to, you may change your name to be more fitting with my own name and your uncles' names."

Lal was silent for a full second, giving the matter deep consideration. "Thank you, Father, but I would rather keep my name. I'm fond of it. Besides, Molly knows me as Lal, and I'm unsure she would be able to properly grasp such a big change so early on in her development. You... chose my name well, Father."

"I am glad you like it, Lal," Data told her. He straightened his head. "You are aware that I have trouble with my emotions. I wish for you to know that if I am able to feel anything at all, then you are truly beloved by me. And even if I am not, you are still beloved by many on this ship, including your uncles."

Lore huffed from the couch, but he stayed quiet. The one time he had outright said he didn't love her in front of Lal, the kid had burst into more tears than B4 would after a nightmare. Since then, Lore hadn't once repeated the sentiment, for reasons he refused to name.

"My name is very fitting, then," Lal decided. She frowned slightly. "Lal sounds better than Beloved, I think. I don't know why. They mean the same thing, so how can one sound better?"

"They just do, kid," Lore yelled from the couch. There was not enough space between them to warrant raising his voice, especially considering that all of them had far better hearing than a human, but Lore would take any opportunity he could to make a lot of noise. "Don't listen to your dad here, there's no reason for us to try to fit in with the humans. I'm sure we could find you a proper name if we tried."

"I don't like the idea of choosing a new name, Uncle. Mine is already well-fitting."

"It doesn't have to be completely new," Lore told her. His face lit up in the way it always did when he found himself stuck on some new idea. "Let's be honest here, Beta's name sucks b—"

"Brother," Data said evenly, though they both knew it was as close to a warning tone as he could manage.

"—point is, let's go for a proper noun," Lore continued. His lips pursed in thought. "I kinda like that your name sounds a bit like mine, so let's keep the L in it, huh? How's about... Love?"

"It is indeed fitting, but I don't wish to give up my current name," Lal told him. "I thank you for the offer, though, Uncle."

"You don't gotta get rid of your human name entirely," Lore argued. "You're right that the monkeys would probably just get confused if you did. But Love could be your special, secret android name."

"I do not like the idea of you teaching Lal to keep secrets, Lore," Data told him firmly.

"Brother, we live in the same quarters," Lore scoffed. "That's not really gonna be avoidable. For instance — Lovey, who knocked over your daddy's paint last week?"

"I was not in the room at the time, but I would speculate that it was most likely Spot," Lal said robotically. Which wasn't quite as suspicious as it might seem, as most of what she said was spoken robotically.

"Uh-huh. Now, who really did it?" Lore asked.

"You. You were gesturing as you spoke again and knocked a hand into the containers by mistake."

"See, Brother?" Lore said, turning to Data with a proud grin. The grin fell when what he just did caught up to him. "Um... maybe forget about this?"

"My memory banks are functioning at optimal capacity," Data replied blandly, in that way that meant he was going to give Lore a very long lecture the moment Lal was no longer in the room.

"You are suggesting a nickname, then, Uncle?" Lal asked, getting the conversation back on track to what she considered important.

"I guess, yeah," Lore agreed. In truth, he didn't care much about Lal's name. But he could tell that this was annoying Data, which was always a win, so...

"Like how Mrs. O'Brien sometimes calls me 'sweetie'?"

"Sure." Lore shrugged.

Lal nodded to herself, then turned to him with a small smile. "I accept your token of affection, Uncle. You may call me Love if you wish."

"It's not a 'token of affection'," Lore protested.

"I don't understand what else it could be," Lal said. Her face scrunched up.

"Your uncle is not the best at emotions, Lal, even if he is better at them than I am," Data told her. "He is merely embarrassed to be seen as being capable of love."

"That is very confusing, Father."

"It is indeed, Lal."

"How much longer on my sentence, again?" Lore grumbled, throwing himself dramatically against the couch.

"I'm tired," Lal suddenly declared. She walked over to the couch. "Uncle, please vacate the couch so I may nap."

"I'm comfy," Lore told her, glaring. "Why can't you nap in the fleabag's room?"

The bedroom he was referring to technically belonged to Data and Lal, but everyone called it Spot's.

"The bed is for bedtime, it is not bedtime," Lal explained simply. "The couch is much better suited for napping."

"Tough luck, I was here first."

"Father, I am at an impasse with Uncle Lore," Lal said, turning to Data. "I request your assistance in this matter."

"I am sorry, Lal, but Lore was on the couch first," Data told her. "Perhaps B4 would let you use his bed for your nap."

"Uncle, move slightly," Lal demanded after pondering Data's offer for a few nanoseconds. She climbed onto the couch and pushed at Lore until he complied. "We will share the couch."

"Eh, whatever, I'll move," Lore relented, starting to get up. He was stopped by a surprisingly firm grip on his arm.

"No. Stay," Lal mumbled, her voice already growing faint. The yellow glow of her eyes flickered as her eyelids slid closed.

Lore looked up at Data and raised an eyebrow in confusion.

"I believe she is attempting to show affection," Data told him slowly. "She often comments on how Molly O'Brien shows affection through cuddling."

Sighing, Lore laid back down and bent his arm so it was curled around her. When he was *absolutely sure* that she was too asleep to hear him, he chuckled and quietly said, "Maybe I am a little fond of ya, Lovebug."

Chapter 4: Fingers

Like father, like daughter. ;)
Goofy mini-chapter!

For those who don't remember, one episode of Next Gen had Data playing with a Chinese finger trap; he couldn't get out by himself, and Riker (I'm pretty sure it was Riker) eventually had to help him with it.

Edit: I have since been informed that it was Picard, not Riker, and that just makes it funnier XD

"Father! Father, help, it will not let go of me!" Lal yelled, panicked, as she rushed into the room.

"What will not let go of you?" Data asked calmly. Meanwhile, his defense programs were switching on and he was internally debating whether to move to barricade the door first or to check on Lal first.

It was, admittedly, an overreaction. Data had discovered years ago that he had unusually strong responses to things that concerned Lal.

"The eastern entertainment tube," Lal explained, holding up her hands.

Data paused, his defense programs shutting down. Wrapped around a finger on each of Lal's hands, and therefore locking them together, was a Chinese finger trap.

"Oh my god," Geordi wheezed in amusement. "Data, she really is your daughter."

"Of course she is, Geordi. Was there any doubt as to her parenta—"

He was interrupted by Geordi falling onto the floor in a laughing fit.

"It is not funny," Data told him, trying and failing to free Lal's fingers.

"It most definitely is."

"Geordi, assist us," Data pleaded. "It will indeed not let go of her."

"Give me a minute, buddy," Geordi huffed out between laughs. Each time it seemed as if he was calming down, he would look over at the two highly advanced Androids struggling with a children's toy, and he'd be set off all over again.

"Geordi, this is a most inappropriate reaction," Data told him. "Geordi. Geordi, I require your assistance. Geordi, stop."

But Geordi did not stop.

Just as he managed to get close to stopping, Tasha and a security team showed up, having been called by Data. To help Lal escape. From a *Chinese finger trap*.

So, no, Geordi did not stop. Not for a long, long time.

Chapter 5: Logs

The personal logs of the Soong family.

I plan to add more to this particular chapter in the future.

Dear Diary,

Hi!!!! <3<3<3

It's me, Soong Type Android Model Beta Four. I hope you remember me even though it's been a while, I really like talking to you. I didn't used to be so good at remembering things, but then Lore did something funny to my brain, and now I can! Yay! He's a good brother :)

My other brother, Data, has a daughter now! Her designation is Lal, and she's the tiniest EVER. Data says she is a baby. I do not know what that means, but she's very cute and silly. Perhaps baby means happy, squealy, tiny thingy.

Data says I am Lal's 'uncle'. I am so excited, I have never been an uncle before! Oh! And now I am Uncle B4! Is that humorous? I think it might be! Hahaha, lol.

Lore is an uncle too. He is not as excited as I am. Or maybe he's just bad at showing it, like Data is. Data is so excited, even though he says he can't be — he has not stopped talking about Lal for weeks and weeks! I am glad, I can remember a lot about her now that I've heard it so many times.

Just in case, I want to write it down here. It is important.

Data's daughter is named Lal. She is my niece, and I am her uncle. She is Lore's niece too, and he's also her uncle! She is a baby, and she is *amazing*.

Bye, Diary!!!! :D :D :D <3 <3 <3

I can't believe I'm actually doing this stupid journal thing. What am I even supposed to write? Maybe I can just fill the page with whatever random thoughts I have. That counts, right?

The halfling, whatever-her-name-is, has informed me that it doesn't count. Well, shit. Shit, fuck, damn.

Hey, this is actually kinda fun!
But I still find it really dumb.

Mandated therapy sucks, B4 has no brain
Data's got a brat now, her crying's a pain

Oh no, it seems I'm again stuck on rhyme
Eh, I really don't care, this is actually fine

I'm stuck on a Starship, with a new kind of leash
It's funny they think they can control this beast

Monkeys are stupid, they have less brains than B4
Someday I'll escape, and walk right out the door!
Then I'll rule over them as their android overlord!
...but for now I'll stay trapped here, painfully bored.

Lt. Commander Data Soong, personal log, Stardate 4xxxx.x

Baby Lal was a success. She— oh, she is crying again. Why is she crying? Geordi!
Geordi, she is crying again. Make her stop.

[I don't know what to do, Data, I know next to nothing about babies!]

Geordi, help, she will not cease. I have already checked over her, she is unharmed. I
do not understand why she is crying.

*[Doesn't Tasha have, like, a bunch of little siblings? And Doctor Crusher is literally a
mother — why don't we go ask one of them?]*

That is a good idea, Geordi. Yes. We shall go ask the females, they will have maternal
instincts.

[That's not exactly what I said...]

Come, Lal, we are taking you to those who can make you stop— oh. She is silent now.

[I guess she just wanted to be held]

Oh. This is... Not an undesirable experience.

[Look at her little toes! Are they just the cutest? D'aaw, she likes my visor. ...Data, what's the matter?]

It appears I have left my personal log recording. Hmm... I believe this log is suitable for today. Lal requires my attention, I will devote it to her rather than redoing this entry.

Computer, end log.

Lal Soong, Stardate 4xxxx.x

I received a doll from the O'Briens for my fourth birthday. Molly has a doll too. She has declared our dolls friends. I attempted to explain to her that they are made of cloth and therefore have no consciousness nor friend-making capabilities of their own, but she is insistent. I have relented in favor of playing a game Molly calls 'tea party'. I like tea party.

Uncle B4 drew me a picture of Spot and her kittens. He claims the cats helped him. I doubt this, but I enjoy the sentiment.

Uncle Lore gave me a book, which Father confiscated, and then they went to talk in another room for over an hour. Uncle Lore told a story to make up for the lost present. He says it was from the book. It was a very unusual story. Uncle Lore has been confined to his room.

Father gave me several dresses. They are in an old Earth style. Geordi says he is going to show me a holodeck program called Nancy Drew, and the dresses are for that. I am very excited.

I received other presents from various crewmembers, but these ones were my favorites, and I have deemed the others of too little importance to be transcribed.

It was an enjoyable birthday. :)

— end of "The Soong Brothers" —