Serial

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/4773104.

Rating: Explicit
Archive Warning: Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Choose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category: Multi
Fandom: Gravity Falls
Relationship: Bill Cipher/Dipper Pines, Detective Dipper/Serial Killer Bill
Additional Tags: Alternate Universe, Alternate Universe - Detectives, Alternate Universe - 1950s, Detective Noir, Murder Mystery, Serial Killers, Alternate Universe - Serial Killers, 1950s, 1950s Slang, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Alcohol Abuse/Alcoholism, Internalized Homophobia, Period-Typical Homophobia, Daddy Issues, Blood and Gore, Angst, Blood and Torture, Period-Typical Racism, it's only mentioned once though
Stats: Published: 2015-09-11 Updated: 2017-03-12 Chapters: 21/? Words: 57104

Summary

Gravity Falls' upcoming star detective Dipper Pines has come across the first case he cannot solve: the mysterious Cipher Suicides. What he doesn't know is that these suicides are not what they seem. What was first thought to be cult suicides turns into a full blown serial murder case that will test the heart of the young detective and lead him straight into the supernatural. Meanwhile, the demonic Bill Cipher finds a new hobby with homicidal tendencies and becomes quite intrigued by a certain young detective. Only time will tell whether this intrigue becomes more than just curiosity. (Spoiler: it does.)

Notes

Unlike Rift, my other Gravity Falls fic, this will be updated at least once a week. Chapters might also have stricter ratings later on, so I just put M to be safe. Anyway, I hope you all enjoy this. :)

Serial

by trollfishprince

Summary

Gravity Falls' upcoming star detective Dipper Pines has come across the first case he cannot solve: the mysterious Cipher Suicides. What he doesn't know is that these suicides are not what they seem. What was first thought to be cult suicides turns into a full blown serial murder case that will test the heart of the young detective and lead him straight into the supernatural. Meanwhile, the demonic Bill Cipher finds a new hobby with homicidal tendencies and becomes quite intrigued by a certain young detective. Only time will tell whether this intrigue becomes more than just curiosity. (Spoiler: it does.)

Notes

Unlike Rift, my other Gravity Falls fic, this will be updated at least once a week. Chapters might also have stricter ratings later on, so I just put M to be safe. Anyway, I hope you all enjoy this. :)

Serial

by trollfishprince

Summary

Gravity Falls' upcoming star detective Dipper Pines has come across the first case he cannot solve: the mysterious Cipher Suicides. What he doesn't know is that these suicides are not what they seem. What was first thought to be cult suicides turns into a full blown serial murder case that will test the heart of the young detective and lead him straight into the supernatural. Meanwhile, the demonic Bill Cipher finds a new hobby with homicidal tendencies and becomes quite intrigued by a certain young detective. Only time will tell whether this intrigue becomes more than just curiosity. (Spoiler: it does.)

Notes

Unlike Rift, my other Gravity Falls fic, this will be updated at least once a week. Chapters might also have stricter ratings later on, so I just put M to be safe. Anyway, I hope you all enjoy this. :)

Serial

by trollfishprince

Summary

Gravity Falls' upcoming star detective Dipper Pines has come across the first case he cannot solve: the mysterious Cipher Suicides. What he doesn't know is that these suicides are not what they seem. What was first thought to be cult suicides turns into a full blown serial murder case that will test the heart of the young detective and lead him straight into the supernatural. Meanwhile, the demonic Bill Cipher finds a new hobby with homicidal tendencies and becomes quite intrigued by a certain young detective. Only time will tell whether this intrigue becomes more than just curiosity. (Spoiler: it does.)

Notes

Unlike Rift, my other Gravity Falls fic, this will be updated at least once a week. Chapters might also have stricter ratings later on, so I just put M to be safe. Anyway, I hope you all enjoy this. :)

Serial

by trollfishprince

Summary

Gravity Falls' upcoming star detective Dipper Pines has come across the first case he cannot solve: the mysterious Cipher Suicides. What he doesn't know is that these suicides are not what they seem. What was first thought to be cult suicides turns into a full blown serial murder case that will test the heart of the young detective and lead him straight into the supernatural. Meanwhile, the demonic Bill Cipher finds a new hobby with homicidal tendencies and becomes quite intrigued by a certain young detective. Only time will tell whether this intrigue becomes more than just curiosity. (Spoiler: it does.)

Notes

Unlike Rift, my other Gravity Falls fic, this will be updated at least once a week. Chapters might also have stricter ratings later on, so I just put M to be safe. Anyway, I hope you all enjoy this. :)

Serial

by trollfishprince

Summary

Gravity Falls' upcoming star detective Dipper Pines has come across the first case he cannot solve: the mysterious Cipher Suicides. What he doesn't know is that these suicides are not what they seem. What was first thought to be cult suicides turns into a full blown serial murder case that will test the heart of the young detective and lead him straight into the supernatural. Meanwhile, the demonic Bill Cipher finds a new hobby with homicidal tendencies and becomes quite intrigued by a certain young detective. Only time will tell whether this intrigue becomes more than just curiosity. (Spoiler: it does.)

Notes

Unlike Rift, my other Gravity Falls fic, this will be updated at least once a week. Chapters might also have stricter ratings later on, so I just put M to be safe. Anyway, I hope you all enjoy this. :)
Gravity Falls Detective Dipper Pines had been working constantly for what seemed like years at this point. His secluded office was covered in stacks and stacks of paper, and some of his fellow officers were starting to get worried. He was a young and upcoming detective, and he had found the first case he couldn't solve: the mysterious Cipher Suicides.

In the past three months, five people had been found dead, each of whom were seemingly suicides. They had each chosen different methods, and were all completely unrelated, except for one major connection: all of them had left coded messages before they died, and even more eerie, each had used the same indecipherable code.

The detective had considered that they were all part of some strange cult, as cults certainly weren’t uncommon in the area, but something told him that these people didn't want to die. Something told him that someone else wanted them to die. And he was determined to find out who it was.

Unexpectedly, there was a knock at his door. Most people knew not to bother him when it was closed. He got up from his desk and approached the door, quickly straightening his tie. When he opened it, he was a little surprised to see his twin sister there.

"Hey Dip! I wanted to make sure things were going okay—also, I brought you lunch!" She held up a brown paper bag and gave him the toothiest of grins.

The detective forced a small smile, "Thanks Mabel. Sorry I didn't come home last night. This case has required my full attention."

"I can believe that! I heard from Soos that you think it's a cult?"

He led her into his office, the lighting of which was far more dim than that of the hallway. "That's my current theory anyway. The second possibility is that it's murder, but some of the other detectives doubt it."

"How come?"

"All of the deaths so far have been ruled as suicides: a hanging, an overdose, one drowned, another one jumped off a building, and there was even this one who went to bathe with a toaster." He let out
a little chuckle at that last one, mainly because it was just so odd compared to the others.

Mabel still wasn’t used to the gallows humor that he had developed during his brief law enforcement career. She gave a weak smile and tried to change the subject slightly. "But why do you think it's murder?"

Dipper sat down at his desk, looking a bit wearily at his sister. "The only part of the messages that weren't in code say, 'My debt has been paid.'"

"Spooky," Mabel shuddered, "What do you think the debt is?"

"Considering they all committed suicide, I would say they owed their lives for some reason." He leaned back in his chair, “It’s just so strange. I don’t understand it.”

Mabel shrugged, “You just don’t have all the pieces to the puzzle yet.”

“If only I had a key…” The detective was interrupted by the ringing of his rotary phone. He picked up the receiver and answered professionally, “Detective Pines’ office.”

“Dipper, it’s me,” the gruff voice of his great-uncle Ford came through the line. “Another body has been found.”

Dipper rubbed the bridge of his nose, silently cursing to himself as he retrieved a pen and his pad of paper, “What’s the address, Commissioner?”

“408 Grapevine Drive,” the commissioner dictated. “This one’s different from the others though.”

The detective was virtually stilled by his words, “How is it different?”

“There’s no doubt that this one was a homicide.”

“I’ll be right there,” Dipper hung up, standing up to retrieve his coat. “Lunch is going to have to wait Mabel. I might have just gotten my big break.”
Bill looked at his reflection in the car window before starting the car. His yellow suit jacket wasn’t going to get stained this time, which was both a good and a bad thing. It was a pain to wash the thing, but he felt the blood added an extra zing that made him seem more dangerous. He adjusted the mirrors, making sure he could see other vehicles behind him. It would be a shame if his brand new Eldorado got into an accident.

Well, technically it wasn’t his Eldorado, nor was it new, but it was new to him.

With a swift snap of his fingers the Eldorado roared to life and he began his lovely drive. It was early enough that the radio was actually playing music rather than the static that he was used too. “Blue Moon” by Frank Sinatra played over it, and he couldn’t help but sing along to the first verse.

“Blue moon,

You saw me standing alone,

Without a dream in my heart,

Without a love of my own,

Blue moon,

You knew just what I was there for,

You heard me saying a prayer for,

Someone I really could care for,

And then there suddenly appeared before me,

The only one my arms will hold,

I heard somebody whisper please adore me,

And when I looked to the moon it turned to gold!”

He sighed, whistling along to the second verse. He was getting really tired of these daily doldrums he kept having. In fact, the past few months had been pretty boring for him. “I should really consider getting a new hobby,” he muttered to himself, before he got an idea.
A new hobby… That’s when it hit him. He could make this job of his fun!

As the second verse ended he cackled along with the trumpets, adjusting the stick shift and speeding down the road, approaching sixty miles per hour. “Oh, now this one is going to be a hit!”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper didn’t really know what to expect when he drove up to the scene of the crime.

However, he mostly certainly didn’t expect to see a Cadillac plowed through someone’s house.

The detective got out of his black Continental, his fingerprint kit in hand, and approached the Commissioner, who was talking to a few of his fellow officers.

“Hello, Commissioner,” Dipper greeted, eyeing the house, “So, what’s the story?”

“Neighbors called in at three o’clock saying they heard a loud crash from down the street, then they looked outside to see what was wrong and here it was. The victim is one Larry Seymour. Got hit right in his own living room. The car was reported stolen three minutes after the accident, and nobody saw the perp for either crime. ”

“Huh,” Dipper replied, “Do you really think this is another Cipher Suicide though? It doesn’t even remotely match the others by a long shot.”

“The victim left a note, well part of one, before he got hit,” Ford sighed, “You don’t happen to have a lighter on you, do you?” He pulled out a Cuban cigar from his coat pocket.

“Yeah, of course,” the young brunette pulled out his old Zippo lighter and lit it, the strong odor of naphtha wafting off the flame, “Was the note in code like last time?”

“You really need to get a new lighter. They stink a lot less now.” He took a long breath from his cigar, exhaling a large puff of smoke, “We haven’t looked at it yet. We were waiting for you to get
Dipper’s face flushed with pride. “I don’t have any reason to, I quit smoking ages ago,” Dipper rebutted, pocketed his lighter, “I guess I’ll look at Seymour first, then see if I can get any fingerprints off the Eldorado.”

“Alright,” Ford replied, “Good luck, kid.”

Dipper hated being called “kid”, though he knew great-uncle Ford referred to anyone younger than he was as one. He nodded and made his way to the scene, first examining the damage done to the house. The Eldorado had nearly plowed through one of the main support beams and had destroyed a large portion of the living room. He stepped over some of the excessive rubble and approached the corpse of Larry Seymour.

Seymour had been sitting on the couch when he was hit, his spine was quite apparently broken, and his head had been cracked open. An expensive pen was in his hand and his note now rested on the floor. Dipper picked up the note and was pleasantly surprised that it was entirely in readable English.

*He’s coming for me, I don’t know how much time I have, but I saw him in my dream again. I can’t pay his debt, I’ll end up like all those people on the news. I’m going to die. I can’t believe I’m going to die! FUCK THAT DEMON! CURSE YOU BI –*

Dipper shivered. *Demon? He didn’t mean that literally, did he? It was just like saying “bastard” or something, right? Except, this is Gravity Falls. Anything is possible. But still. A demon? That was madness. Demons? Absolute malarkey.* Dipper catalogued it as evidence nonetheless before moving to the Eldorado.

The windshield had been shattered and the hood had sustained a considerable amount of damage. The Orlon roof of the Eldorado had been punctured in multiple places, to the point that a chunk of wall was in the passenger’s seat. Dipper looked into the vehicle, hoping to see more clues, and saw something in the backseat.

Before opening the driver’s side door, he dusted the handle for prints, and found nothing clear enough to sample. He opened the door and leaned into the vehicle, looking at the backseat. Nothing was *on* the backseat, but something was *in* it. A message had been cut into the leather.

*VLRSB DLQ X LIQ QL IBXOK ABQBZQLSB*
Another cipher. Just like the others. Except this one looked easy. He already saw a pattern. Dipper pulled out his notepad and carefully copied down the message before dusting the steering wheel for what turned out to be more inconclusive fingerprints.

At least this time he had something. He had a message from the killer.

He exited the house as two other detectives arrived on the scene to start interviewing the neighbors. He motioned for the other officers to take care of the crime scene before talking to his great-uncle.

When Dipper approached, Ford looked over at him with anticipation, “Find anything interesting?” Ford asked, still smoking his Cuban.

“The note is definitely not a suicide note, and it’s readable, but it’s a bunch of hogwash if you ask me. The Eldorado was the interesting part.”

“Did you get any prints?” Ford questioned eagerly.

Dipper scoffed, “Only completely smudged ones. But this time the killer left us a note, which I’ll be decoding back at the office.”

“Thanks Dipper,” Ford smiled and patted Dipper’s shoulder. “I knew I could count on you.”

“Not a problem, sir,” Dipper nodded, flustered by the compliment and blushing. “I’ll see you as soon as I get this decoded.” And with that, Dipper left the scene in his Continental, driving back toward his office.

When he got there, he quickly settled down at his desk and took out his pen and paper.

\[VLRSB\ DLQ\ X\ LIQ\ QL\ IBXOK\ ABQ\ BZQLSB\]

Assuming the note was written in English, X had to be either the letters A or I, since it was a standalone letter. Since Q was at the end of two possible words and at the beginning of the only
possible two letter word, he guessed it could be a T. If Q was T, then the L had to be an O. The message now read:

**VORSB DOT A/I LIT TO IBA/IOK ABTBZTLSB**

Since both T and O were only three letters away from each other, he thought that this might be an even simpler cipher than he thought. Since B ended two of the words and appeared frequently, it was safe to assume it was a vowel, likely an E.

**VORSE DOT A/I LIT TO IEA/IOK AETEZTLSB**

This was a simple letter substitution! More than likely a Caesar Cipher! He had found it! He had finally found a key. *Three letters back.*

**YOUVE GOT A LOT TO LEARN DETECTIVE**

*Holy crud! You’ve got a lot to learn, detective.*

Dipper was going to need a drink.

After the earlier events of the day, Dipper decided not to go to The Skull Fracture Bar and instead made his way down to The Bang Bang Bar, where once his great-uncle Stan had accused of watering down the beer, the day he got banned from the place. Stan was a bit of a crooked cop, but that actually made him a great undercover cop, so it was a win/win for the force. Still, despite Stan’s history with the place, he needed some alcohol.

Dipper parked his Continental across the street as the sun began to set and approached the entrance. The door was wide open, “Manana” by Peggy Lee coming from their new jukebox. There were only a few men in the bar so far, most of them seemed to be regulars, and all of them were much bigger than the skinny detective.

Dipper sheepishly approached the bartender and sat down at the bar, “Give me your strongest
The bartender chuckled, “If you say so, kid.” He picked out a bottle and poured Dipper a dram before returning to cleaning some of the glasses.

Dipper drank it all at once and immediately started coughing, spitting it back out and into the glass. The regulars laughed heartily, as he tried to recover from his alcoholic blunder.

The bartender glanced at Dipper, his lips quirked in blatant amusement. “Couldn’t handle it?”

“Maybe something a little less strong,” Dipper admitted, blushing with embarrassment.

One of the men piped up, “What a waste of good alcohol.”

The others laughed obnoxiously.

Dipper sighed, trying to ignore the commentary, though it was incredibly hard to do so. “How about some Corby’s whiskey?”

“I’d recommend Dewar’s actually,” someone commented near the entrance.

The regulars fell silent as Dipper looked in the direction of the newcomer. The remaining sunlight lightly silhouetted his slender form as he removed his top hat and placed it on the coat rack. As he stepped into the bar, Dipper got a better look at him and discovered that he looked ridiculous. He wore a garish yellow tailcoat with a white button shirt up that was accompanied by a black bow tie with matching gloves. His blond hair was unkempt and in a loose hairstyle, rather than the usual combed look that most people went with. (Dipper had a similar hairstyle, in order to hide his strange birthmark). He also walked with a black cane, despite it being apparent that he didn’t really need one. The eye that wasn’t covered by an eye patch was almost gold in color and scanned the room before staring at Dipper. “Get him a glass of Dewar’s Vic, on my tab.”

The man was strange, but also surprisingly charming.
Dipper watched him, intrigued, as he approached the jukebox and seemingly changed the song with a single button press, not needing to spend the nickel it should normally cost to change the song. Helen Forrest’s “Mad about the Boy” began playing, and he hummed to it as he swiftly sat down next to Dipper. He glanced at the bartender. “And I'll have a bourbon.”

“Oh, it’s no problem at all,” he smirked. “The name’s Bill, by the way.”

“You can just call me Pines.” Dipper was quite embarrassed about his nickname, but even more embarrassed by his real name.

“Pines sounds so official,” Bill groaned, looking at the detective before he began chuckling.

Dipper was confused by the sudden laughter, and eyed him unsurely.

Bill reached into his hair and pulled out a tiny branch that had somehow gotten caught in his hair. The branch was covered in small pine needles. “Just like your name, Pinetree,” he cooed.

On the silver screen

He melts my foolish heart in every single scene

Although I'm quite aware that here and there are traces of

The cad about the boy
The two talked and drank together for an hour, rambling on about all sorts of things: gossip, philosophy, and life. When the clock struck eight, Bill stood up abruptly, balancing on his cane.

“Best be off, Pinetree. I have work tomorrow and it would be a bother if I was half asleep for it.” Bill gave an almost sly smile to the detective, putting some weight on his cane.

“Take care, Bill.” Dipper nodded, “I’ll see you around town.”

“Most definitely.” Bill nodded, turning on his heels and making his way to the door. As he grabbed his hat, he whistled along to the tune of Blue Moon.

*Blue moon*

*You saw me standing alone*

*Without a dream in my heart*

*Without a love of my own*
Anvil

Chapter Notes

Special thanks to Maria Albert from fanfiction.net for beta reading this chapter and the first one! It would definitely not be as good without her! Also, thanks to my other betas mad_penn and ilananight for proofing the first! I don't know if I can update again this week since I'm supposed to be studying for a huge test in Japanese and writing a six page essay tonight--but I'm a horrible procrastinator and super close to starting chapter four--so yeah. o-o Hope you all enjoy chapter two and trust me, it gets gayer.

“The previously dubbed Cipher Suicides now include a homicide, claiming Larry Seymour as the sixth victim,” Shandra Jimenez, the county’s only television news anchor announced. “The alleged killer committed grand theft auto before his hit and run with Larry Seymour, which occurred in the victim’s living room. The alleged murderer is still at large. If you have any information about the alleged killer or his possible whereabouts, please contact the Gravity Falls Police Department.”

Bill stood up and turned the dial on the small CRT television, turning it off. He had heard enough about himself today. Bill yawned and stretched, cracking his knuckles and neck before proceeding with his daily schedule. He walked across his sparse home into the bathroom, looking at himself in the cracked mirror.

He wasn’t quite used to seeing a human face staring back.

His skin was completely clear and nearly perfect, like a porcelain doll. The only issue was the scaly texture around his usually covered eye, the iris of which was an intense, sapphire blue, with a bloodshot sclera. He picked up the leather eyepatch from the bathroom counter and concealed the damaged eye. After adjusting the eyepatch so it wouldn’t chafe, and tying it, he combed through his blond hair with his fingers, making sure it was absolutely perfect.

He exited the bathroom and went into his bedroom, which was definitely the nicest room in his secluded cabin. He had a king-sized bed all to himself and a lavish walk in closet, along with an entire library of books and dozens of strange oddities he had collected over the centuries. He approached his dresser, on top of which was a magnificent golden geode and a monkey paw, and he pulled open the top drawer to reveal multiple pairs of gloves. He picked out a pair of black gloves which extended just passed his wrists and slipped them on.

Next he walked over to the closet, removing a white button-up shirt, a black suit jacket, a gold bow tie, and a pair of golden-threaded alligator skin dress shoes. His fashion sense seemed eclectic to the
“Now, where is it?” he asked himself, scratching his head as he walked around the room. He opened the door to the adjoining bathroom and chuckled with excitement, “Ah, there you are!” He bent down and lifted the anvil before it was engulfed in a blue flame. When the flames were extinguished the anvil was the size and weight of a large marble, easily pocketable.

Bill hummed to himself as he made his way to the door, twirling the cane in his hand, and used it to take his top hat off the coat rack. “Show time.”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

After the events of yesterday, Dipper decided to actually use his day-off for himself rather than the case. In fact, Dipper was going on a blind date that Mabel had set up for him. His dear sister was well renowned around town for being an excellent matchmaker, and his parents were starting to become concerned with the fact he hadn’t had a successful long term relationship in years. Mabel had gotten married a few years ago, while Dipper was in the academy.

He decided that a walk beforehand might clear his head of the case, so he could at least try to enjoy himself. It would certainly help calm his nerves. The date wouldn’t go well if he was fixated on work. Heck, the date itself was bound to be about as enjoyable as a trip to the dentist.

It was a Saturday, the sky was clear, and the sun shone brightly. Today wasn’t going to be bad. It was going to be great. Dipper could feel it. I mean, what’s the worst thing that can happen? The date could go badly, but after all, it would hardly be the first time.

Dipper just had to jinx it.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill stood on the roof of the Gravity Falls Savings and Loan on Main Street, gazing down five stories, onto the road. He was just out of sight of the pedestrians below, yet he could still watch for his target. Doris Hemingway. She was thirty-two years old, with three children, and he was coming to collect his debt for saving the second one. A life for a life, as his deal clearly stated.

The anvil rested between his feet, and another message had been left on this murder weapon, just like
the last.

\textit{XII LC QEBFO ABYQP JRPQ YB MXFA}

\textit{ALL OF THEIR DEBTS MUST BE PAID}

He pinpointed Doris on the street below, his eye fixated on her position nearly a block away. “Found you,” he cooed to himself, gently putting his cane down and picking up the anvil. He hoisted it up so that he could easily chuck it over the edge of the roof. All he had to do was wait for her to come closer.

With each passing second, his heart began to race, adrenaline pumping through his veins in anticipation. What a wonderful feeling! He so loved this human body!

His client walked obliviously down the street, attending to her usually daily business. She was probably going to pick up some groceries or send out a few letters. Oh, if only she knew what was going to happen – Bill couldn’t help but let out a small, yet maniacal chuckle as he eyed his target and released his hold on the anvil.

Time seemingly slowed to a standstill as the anvil plummeted down to the street below onto the unsuspecting Doris. His aim was flawless, he knew it, and yet the anticipation made him feel like he missed her. He was almost afraid of actually missing her.

Almost.

\textit{Splat!}

The deed was done and Bill smiled as he retreated, knowing that yet another debt had been paid.

He had been so focussed upon his victim, he never noticed Dipper was walking only a few paces behind the young mother.

\[\sim\]
Dipper gaped in horrified disbelief as the woman in front of him crumpled to the ground with the sickening sound of pulverizing bone, as something wet splattered his face. He wiped his cheek in a daze, staring in horror at the bright red streak on his fingers, then looked from his hand, to the growing puddle on the sidewalk, staining the woman’s daffodil yellow dress a ghastly red. The victim. Crime scene. I’m part of the crime scene, he thought numbly as a woman across the street began screaming. The scream galvanized him from the frozen horror that had all but paralyzed him, and he fully registered what had just occurred. He had witnessed another murder.

Men averted their eyes and shielded their wives and children from the grisly scene, though some people immediately ran over, either to gawk, or perhaps help. As if she could possibly still be alive.

“Everyone stay back!” he shouted instinctively. “Call the police!” He couldn’t handle this on his own. The bystanders were terrified. He was terrified. What had just happened? One moment, she was walking in front of him and now she was an unrecognizable mess on the sidewalk.

An unrecognizable mess caused by an anvil. This wasn’t how it played out in cartoons: it was gruesome, horrid. All five of his senses were overwhelmed, and he became physically ill. He fought to keep from vomiting, but it was a losing battle. He barely staggered to the curb in time to keep from contaminating the crime scene.

After that, everything went by in a complete blur. Police cars came, and witnesses were held for questioning as the area was cordoned off, and the ambulance pulled up, sirens noticeably, ominously absent. Other detectives arrived and began interviewing people, a select few of whom were brought to the station for more in depth questioning. Dipper was one of them. He was being interviewed for the third time when he finally started processing what was happening again, realizing his great-uncle Ford was the one asking the questions this time.

“So, what exactly happened right before she was murdered?”

“I was just walking. I was going to go on a blind date, actually.” Dipper looked down, “It was my day off.”

Ford cleared his throat. “The previous message was addressed to the Police Department. To you. Are you absolutely certain she was the intended target? That it wasn’t you, and she was hit by mistake? How far were you from her?”

“Ford, one second she was walking a six feet in front of me, the next second her head was crushed
by a fucking anvil!” Dipper exhaled and ran his hand through his hair, “Look, I didn’t see who did it. I don’t think anyone did. Did you search the roof of the bank?”

Ford gave Dipper a sympathetic look and sighed. “Dipper, I was going to wait to tell you this, but we found another message.”

Dipper looked up at his great-uncle, eyes haunted and distraught. “What did it say?” he whispered, hating the fear he could hear in his own voice.

Ford pulled out a piece of paper from the manila folder on the table and passed it to Dipper. It was an image of the anvil, which had white writing painted on it. Dipper used the same method as before to decode the message, recognizing the caesar cipher from before.

“All of their debts must be paid? What does that mean? Who’s doing this? Why?” Dipper begged.

“We don’t know quite yet, but we have a few ideas. Before these past two, the deaths were ruled as suicides, but the M.O.’s definitely changed. We’re now calling all seven homicides.”

“He got bored,” Dipper whispered sepulchrally. “The others weren’t incredibly violent, but these… they make it seem like it’s all a game to him. They’re ridiculous.”

“Cartoonish I’d say.” Ford grumbled, looking at the folder of evidence. “When do you think you’ll be ready to work again?”

Dipper sighed. “I’d say tonight, but I know you wouldn’t let me do that.”

“If you insist, I can have you start again tomorrow.” Ford shook his head. “None of the other detectives are going to like this, but I’m appointing you as lead detective for this case. We need to catch this bastard before he kills more people and so far you’ve figured out more than anyone. Two deaths in two days. Jeez.”

“I’m going home,” Dipper stated as he got up. “That is, if you’re done, of course,” he added, as an afterthought.
“Yeah, you can go Dipper,” Ford sighed, pulling out another cigar. “Just be careful out there, okay?”

Dipper reached the door of the office and looked back at Ford, “Don’t worry about me uncle Ford. Just worry about catching this son of a bitch.”

Ford smiled in relief, obviously mistakenly thinking he was fine, and nodded.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

“I can’t go home,” Dipper thought, as he drove aimlessly through town, trying to get the awful image out of his head. He startled at the sound of laughter through his open window and looked over to see the sign in front of the Bang Bang Bar proclaiming, “Happy Hour until 5:30”. It was nearly 9:00, but just the thought of being happy again and the sounds of merriment drew Dipper in like a moth to a flame. He parked his Lincoln Continental across the street. He crossed the street and entered, not entirely surprised to see the same faces, likely all regulars, but he felt a wave of relief and security as he saw Bill at the bar again.

Bill looked up from his bourbon and smiled wide, giving him a sing-song greeting, “Oh Pinetree. Here for a drink?”

“Why else would I be here?” Dipper asked, not even having to force the smile as he crossed the room and sat next to Bill at the bar.

Bill was dressed even more garish than the last time they met. His shoes in particular drew the most attention. Bill couldn’t help but smirk when Dipper’s eyes lingered on the golden threaded crocodile skin shoes. “Like my shoes?”

Dipper scoffed, “They’re ridiculous.” He shook his head and cleared his throat, looking at Vic. “Dewar’s please.”

Vic nodded, glancing relatively pleasantly at the two before getting Dipper his drink.

“So how was your day?” Bill questioned, taking a drink of his bourbon.
Dipper swallowed hard and reached for the whiskey. “I’d rather not think about it.”

“That’s why we’re all here I suppose,” Bill laughed. “Forgetting our days and drinking away our nights!”

Dipper glanced at Bill in concern. “Is that why you’re here?”

Bill shrugged and defended himself, “I just like hanging out here, Pinetree.” His eye focused on the regulars. “But I doubt that’s what everyone thinks.”

Dipper followed his gaze, taking in the scrutinizing glares from a table of men. He shook his head and looked back at his drink. “This place doesn’t seem too bad.”

“It wasn’t bad until that fucking yellow pansy came in here,” one of the regulars grumbled, glaring at Bill.

“I’d watch what I was saying, if I was you, considering this pansy could kill you with one look,” Bill sneered.

Dipper winced at Bill’s words. “Can we not talk about murder please?”

Vic piped up, “If you’re going to fight, take it outside.”

The man grumbled and turned away from the duo, whispering quietly to the other men.

Bill on the other hand, took it as a victory, smirking as he took another drink, “Aren’t I just a charmer?”

“That wasn’t really appropriate considering what’s been happening Bill,” Dipper stated, staring Bill in the eye. “You realize someone else was killed today, don’t you?”

“Oh, I hadn’t heard,” Bill nearly cooed. “What happened?”
Dipper bit his lip and drank the entire glass of whiskey before continuing, motioning for Vic to pour more. “A woman was crushed to death by an anvil on Main Street.”

“An anvil?” Bill raised an eyebrow, seemingly not believing his tale. “Like in a cartoon?”

Dipper closed his eyes and curled his arm around his stomach. “Yes, and it happened right in front of me. Six more feet and it could have been me. So can we stop talking about it?”

Bill looked surprised and disturbed, and reached for his hand comfortingly. “You did?”

Dipper nodded, drinking down his newly filled glass.

“I’m sorry. Look, say no more, Pinetree,” Bill drank from his glass. “Let’s talk about something happy.”

Dipper glanced at Bill and said sheepishly. “I was going to go on a date today.”

Bill made a low wolf whistle. “Who with, lover boy?”

Dipper blushed in embarrassment. “No clue. My sister set me up with a blind date.” He sighed. “She means well.”

“Oh, I see,” Bill replied. “Well, maybe this was God’s way of telling you she wasn’t the right girl for you.”

Dipper nearly spit out his drink, swallowing it hard, relieved he kept from coughing. “Bill, you’re terrible!”

Bill cackled, “I know, darling.”

Bill was atrocious, uncouth, and far too blunt. But there was something about him that almost made
his behavior completely acceptable. Maybe it was the way he said everything? If only he had as much charisma as Bill, instead of being so awkward. He never knew what to say. So why was it so easy to talk to Bill? He turned to ask Vic for a third drink, overbalanced, and nearly fell off the bar stool. He belatedly realized he hadn’t eaten since breakfast and he’d thrown that up and...

“Vic!” he demanded, not wanting to think about why he’d vomited.

He chugged the third drink, as the man from before stood up and walked over to the bar, the stench of alcohol wafting off his red beard. “This place might as well be renamed The Wrinkle Room.”

Dipper looked at the man, confused by his statement. And why were there two of him? “Wrinkle Room? What?” Dipper hiccuped.

“It’s some of that new fangled slang,” Bill responded, glaring at the brutish man.

“I would think the kid would know, considering he’s hanging out with you,” the man sneered, sheer disgust written all over his face.

Dipper’s thoughts were starting to become a little sporadic, but the urge to punch the man was surprisingly strong. He knew he was being insulted, but worse, that Bill was being made fun of too.

Bill stood up, balancing with his cane, “Well, I can see we’re not welcome here anymore, Pinetree.”

“Wha...?” Dipper got up and stumbled, wondering why the floor had suddenly tilted to the left.

Bill took out his wallet and gave Vic forty dollars, “For our drinks and the trouble.”

Vic took Bill’s cash and cleared both their glasses with a nod.

“I wasn’t done drinking that!” Dipper huffed, swaying as he floor suddenly tilted to the right as he reached indignantly for his glass.

Bill steadied Dipper, “Easy there, Pinetree. It’s time for you to go home.” He lead Dipper toward the door, calling back to the regulars, “I’ll see you all tomorrow!” he promised gaily.
Dipper examined Bill once they were outside. “What was that all about?”

Bill smiled, his fingers rubbing Dipper’s arm where he had grabbed him. “Nothing you need to be concerned about Pinetree.”

Dipper looked down at Bill’s hand and then back up at Bill, feeling his cheeks becoming hot for some reason. “D’you need a ride home, Bill?”

Bill laughed, “Pinetree, I am not letting you drive.”

“Wha...? Bill, I’m fiinnne!” Dipper slurred.

Bill chuckled. “Of course you are, Pinetree. Now, let me walk you home before you hurt yourself.”

Dipper frowned. “I live across town though. That’ll take forever!”

Bill’s single visible golden eye shifted slightly, and oddly, his pupil almost seemed as if it were elongating vertically, as if he had the eye of a cat. “Then let me drive you home. Where’s your car?”

Dipper stared bemused at the beautiful, golden eye, and couldn’t help but abide by his command, “Of course, that makes sense,” he agreed, to his surprise. He reached into his pocket and handed Bill the keys to his Continental and pointed to it.

Bill jingled the keys and gestured at it in surprise. “That’s your car? I didn’t realize you were loaded, kid!”

“It was a gift!” Dipper justified, reaching for his keys, and stumbling into Bill.

“Ah, ah, ah, Pinetree,” Bill gently scolded, holding the keys out of Dipper’s reach. “I’m not letting you drive yourself home. You’re too entertaining for me to give you up just yet.”
Dipper glowered at Bill and conceded, realizing he wasn’t going to win any arguments right now.

Bill smiled, “See? Giving in is a lot easier than you’d think, kid. Now, let’s get you home to bed.”

They crossed the street and Bill somehow opened the driver side door with a mere snap of his fingers instead, of actually using Dipper’s keys. “Get in, kid!”

Dipper blinked in confusion. Wow. Maybe he’s right and I really shouldn’t be driving. Did I really just see that?

Dipper tried opening the passenger side door, yanking as hard as he could on the door when it suddenly popped open at Bill’s command, leaving Dipper lying flat on his back on the pavement. “Ow, fuck.”

Bill’s laughter filled the air again as he got back out of the car, crossing over to help Dipper, “Language, Pinetree, language. You’re hilarious, kid.” But his voice was breathy and low, instead of mocking.

Dipper laid there for a few moments, just staring at Bill’s hand. He was so peculiar, so different from everyone else. Odd. Queer. His heart fluttered for a moment as he took Bill’s gloved hand and stood up, mere inches away from him. “Bill…”

Bill smiled, ruffling Dipper’s hair, catching a glimpse of the birthmark on his forehead, but thankfully not commenting on it. “Come on, darling. You need to go to bed.” He stepped away and slipped into the driver’s seat nonchalantly.

Dipper blinked and then sat in the passenger’s seat, closing the passenger door as Bill started the car. The engine roared to life as Bill shifted gears and began driving down the road. “Pinetree, you’ll need to tell me where to go from here. I don’t exactly know where you live.”

Dipper stared at Bill, his inhibitions seemingly fading away with each passing second. “Why are you so nice to me?”

Bill sighed, changing gears and taking a left. “Fine, I’ll take you back to my house.”
“What?” Dipper shook his head confused, “W… Wha… Wait?”

“It won’t be a problem. You can sleep in my bed.” He glanced over pointedly.

Dipper blushed at the innuendo. “Is it comfy?” Dipper asked, not sure what else to say.

“I don’t sleep all that much, but I guess so.”

Dipper smiled, feeling remarkably safe and content. “I’m tired.”

Bill chuckled, “That’s why you’re going to bed, kid.” He turned once again onto a dirt road pretentiously called Golden Trail. He shifted gears again, going slower down the road.

Dipper took in the sights of the pine trees and the rest of the moonlit landscape as dark shadows shifted through the trees as they passed by. It was almost like he was dreaming. He felt light and bubbly, yet at the same time heavy. It was funny, really. Bill was right. He was hilarious! He giggled to himself as the car slowed to a stop, looking over at Bill as he got out. “Wait. Where are you going?”

“Pinetree, we’re here,” Bill crossed over and opened his door, holding out his hand. “This is my house.”

Dipper took his hand and exited the vehicle, gazing at the old yet luxurious cabin. His whole body felt so heavy, he just wanted to go to bed. Dipper’s knees wobbled and he leaned onto Bill, groaning and closing his eyes. “Sleepy.”

Bill chuckled and steadied him before he began walking him to the front door, “You’re absolutely hopeless, Pinetree. Honestly, what would you do without me?”

“Probably be getting all the girls,” Dipper boasted with a slur.

“What?” Bill raised an eyebrow as he opened the door, “Yeah, some lady killer you are, Pinetree. You’re not even trying to make sense, are you?”
“Not at all, cap’n!” Dipper giggled, stepping into the cool cabin.

Over the next several minutes, Bill tried to lead the stumbling Dipper to his room, and finally managed to get Dipper into his bed.

Dipper chuckled and kicked off his shoes, snuggling the blankets. “They smell so nice.”

“It’s cause they smell like me,” Bill smirked, sitting down next to Dipper on the bed.

Dipper gazed up at Bill, his red cheeks becoming even redder. “Are you going to sleep too?”

“If I was going to be in bed with you, we wouldn’t be sleeping.” Bill ruffled Dipper’s hair again, this time clearly seeing his birthmark. “The Big Dipper?”

Dipper pulled away, tucking himself under the blankets to hide from Bill, “Don’t call me Dip. I like Pinetree better.”

Bill smiled to himself, running his hand along Dipper’s back as he stood up, “I like Pinetree better too, kid.” He crossed the room and turned off the light, “I’ll see you in your dreams, Pinetree.”

“Goodnight, Bill.”
If Only In My Dreams

Chapter Notes

MINOR TRIGGER WARNING FOR THIS CHAPTER!
There is a single sentence that references self harm that I have marked with an asterisk at the beginning and the end, for those who'd rather not read that sort of thing. So if you see an asterisk and would rather not read that, just look for the asterisk at the end of the sentence and you'll be okay.

Thanks once again to my betas ilananight and Maria Albert (FF.NET) for being super cool and editing this chapter.

If you have any comments or suggestions, feel free to comment or shoot me a message on tumblr (my URL is the same as my username). Chapter 4 is going to be a pretty massive update, which I hope to get out by this Friday or earlier depending. :D

Dipper blinked as he found himself in an exquisite ballroom, surrounded by hundreds of faceless couples. All of the women wore beautiful but unexceptional ball gowns while the men wore tuxedos as they waltzed together lifelessly. Dipper looked around, realizing he was the only one without a partner.

He bit his lip, trying to find some way to escape from the scene. Maybe he could wait near the wall until the dance was over? Maybe there was a balcony he could wait on? There was always the possibility of dancing with a man – if he wanted to be the laughing stock of the ball, that is.

Just before he gave up however, he felt a tap on his shoulder and turned around to find an oddly familiar fellow.

The man had an intricately decorated yellow suit on with a tailcoat and black tie, which matched his pyramid shaped head in color and design. His hands were covered by black gloves that matched the large singular eye on his flat and broad face. Despite not having a visible mouth, the man spoke in an energetic and eerie voice, which reminded Dipper of nails on a chalkboard while at the same time completely hypnotized him.

“May I have this dance?” the pyramid headed man asked.

Dipper gulped, “I… Won’t people stare?”
“Kid, do you see me? They already are – might as well have fun.” The man took Dipper’s hand and twirled him so that Dipper was not only closer to him, but in such a way that Dipper was now holding his hand.

Dipper blushed brightly as they began to waltz. This was more than wrong, it was absolutely queer. If anyone saw him doing this…

The pyramid man chuckled to himself, his bulbous eye closing. “Kid, your thoughts are hilarious.”

Dipper was mildly aggravated by the man’s actions. “It’s not polite to read people’s minds without asking.”

This only made the man chuckle more, “Is it even normal to read someone’s mind? You realize this is a dream, don’t you?”

“What?”

“What have you always wanted in life that you couldn’t do?” The pyramid man leaned his flat face closer to Dipper’s face, his eye getting uncomfortably close to Dipper.

“I don’t know.” Dipper tried to avoid eye contact. “I’ve never had a deep desire to do something that I couldn’t.”

The pyramid man laughed, parting from Dipper. “That’s the biggest lie I’ve ever heard!”
“It’s true!” Dipper glared at the peculiar man. “I’m perfectly content with my life as it is.”

“You surely wish you had a different job at least!”

“I like being a detective…”

The man scoffed. “Ah, kid, please. Get a new job, seriously. If you don’t already hate it, you’re going to once I’m done with this place.”

Dipper blinked, once again completely perplexed, shaking his head in an attempt to clear his garbled thoughts. “I’m perfectly content with how my life is now.”

The pyramid man sighed, crossing his arms as the music stopped, “I guess it can’t be helped. You’re one stubborn man. What a stalwart guy.” He shrugged. “I’ll break you somehow, I suppose.”

“What are you talking about?” Dipper backed away.

“Listen kid, you’re entertaining, and right now, I’m extremely bored.” The pyramid man whimsically sauntered toward Dipper. “I’m going to make sure that I’m getting my money’s worth by investing my time in you.”

Dipper couldn’t even speak; this was all so outlandish and miraculous that this couldn’t be his own thoughts. His dreams were never this exciting. Then again, how could it not be his? This was all in his head, right?

The pyramid man chuckled, holding up his hand. “You’ve got a lot to learn, kid.” With a snap of his fingers, the dream changed.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper now found himself in a golden wheat field. Thousands of locusts were devouring the once abundant and healthy crops all around him. He looked around in horror at the desolation, trying to
see something more, something else, anyone else. The weakened stalks began falling over by the
dozens as he tried to figure out where he was. His eyes widened as he saw they were creating a
distinctive pattern: VLR PELRIA ORK COLJ EFJ.

Dipper gasped, trying the alien words mentally. *What does it mean? Is it just like the other coded
messages? It's got to be…*

He gasped in terror as the scene before him vanished. He felt arms wrap around his neck from
behind and hands cover his eyes, as a tall, hard body pressed against his back. A soft “Ssssshh,”
entered his thoughts, anything but calming, as goosebumps formed over his skin. His heartbeat
stuttered in fear as he heard the voice of the pyramid man crooned in his ear.

“Well, this is certainly different. A warning? Now, who left this nasty little thing in your head?”

A gust of wind blew past Dipper as his vision returned, but he could still feel the arms around his
neck. He looked down to the hands that rested on his chest now and saw ancient glowing blue
symbols etched into blackened skin, surrounding the stranger’s arms and interlinked like chains.
Bloodshot eyes that were on his palms stared back at Dipper.

“Who are you?” Dipper asked shakily.

The stranger whispered into his ear. “Isn’t it obvious, *detective*?” He chuckled maniacally as the field
caught on fire, blue flames engulfing everything.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper’s eyes shot open as he sat up with a gasp. His heart was racing and he was covered in a cold
sweat. He was still in yesterday’s clothes. His head began throbbing and he laid back down,
groaning in pain. He hadn’t had a hangover since he was twenty-one; why did he have one now? He
opened his eyes and glanced around the room. A chilling realization setting in: this wasn’t his room!

He was in someone else’s house and in someone else’s bed. Worst of all, he had no idea whose! *Oh
god, I slept with someone!*

He stumbled out of the unfamiliar bed, balancing himself against the bed frame, as the room started
spinning, a wave of nausea falling over him. *I drank way too much. What was I thinking?*
He examined the bizarre room more closely. The antique furniture was mismatched, from different time periods. Some pieces appeared centuries older than other pieces. The decorations themselves were peculiar as well, from hanging wall masks from ancient tribes to the monkey’s paw that rested on the wardrobe. *Who would live in a place like this?* That’s when it hit him: this was more than likely Bill’s house.

Dipper jumped at the sound of a knock on the door and stared at it wide-eyed. *What did I do? Did I do something with Bill? This is wrong. This is so wrong. What did I do?*

The door opened just a crack, Bill’s gloved fingers the only thing visible. “Pinetree, are you awake?”

“Y…Yeah,” Dipper responded shakily, sitting back down on the bed.

“Can I come in?” Bill asked, sounding amused.

“I guess…”

Bill opened the door, still dressed in what he’d worn at the bar, though his hair was a bit messed up and his shirt was unbuttoned about halfway down his chest and untucked. His tie hung around his neck, untied. “How’re you doing, sleepyhead?” Bill’s nonchalant nature wasn’t making the situation any better for Dipper.

“My head hurts and I barely remember a thing.” Dipper rubbed his forehead and looked away from Bill.

“You were completely blitzed and we got kicked out of the bar,” Bill chuckled, crossing the room and sitting next to Dipper on the bed. “I also had to do the driving.” He took Dipper’s car keys out of his pocket and gave them back to Dipper. “I wasn’t expecting you to have such a sweet ride, kid.”

“You thought I’d have a hunk of junk?” Dipper asked, desperately trying to sound calm, as if drank himself unconscious and woke up in strangers’ beds every day.

“Basically,” Bill chuckled.
Dipper bit his lip, swallowed and stared intently at Bill. “Did I do anything weird last night?” he asked bravely.

Bill shrugged, “Not really. You were kind of emotional and childish, but otherwise nothing too out of the ordinary.” He smirked as he examined Dipper’s expression. “What you think we played some backseat bingo or something?”

Dipper turned completely red. “Oh heck no! No, I mean, that would be so wrong. I’m not like that. I like girls!” he protested vehemently.

Bill chortled and gently punched Dipper in the arm. “No need to get so defensive, Pinetree. That’ll only make people think you’re more queer!”

“What do you mean by queer?” Dipper squeaked.

“Ah jeez Pinetree, relax!” Bill laid down on the bed as he laughed uproariously. “Seriously, kid, stop being so funny, I’m going to die of laughter here.”

Dipper sighed and shook his head. “I can’t deal with this right now. What time is it anyway?”

“Fifteen minutes to ten,” Bill said, without looking at a clock or watch. “Do you have to be somewhere today?”

Dipper pinched the bridge of his nose. “Shit. I was supposed to be at work almost two hours ago!”

“Got a big case?” Bill queried, sitting up.

“A major one, yeah.” Dipper looked down at his rumpled clothes and cursed again. *I can’t go to work looking like this!* “You wouldn’t happen to have something I could wear, do you?”

Bill shrugged. “My stuff might be a bit too big for you, but feel free to raid my closet.”
“Thanks,” Dipper nodded at Bill and walked to his closet. “Would I be able to use your bath too?”

“Go nuts, kid.” Bill shifted, relaxing once again on the bed.

Dipper could feel Bill’s eyes on him as he reached the closet, and felt his face flush with heat, wondering what the distinguished but odd man was thinking as he watched him. He opened the closet door and nearly gasped when he saw just how massive the closet was. He had never seen a walk-in closet before, much less one with such unique clothing. All the shirts hung neatly on one side, and all his suit jackets and pants hung on the other side: black, white, gold, yellow, and a few other vivid colors flooded his vision. Bill’s closet would be the envy of most of Hollywood. Everything was exquisite, yet like the man himself, completely overkill and bizarre. Dipper somehow felt more at ease and he let out a small chuckle as he looked back at Bill. “Bill, you’re absolutely ridiculous.”

Bill couldn’t help but smile. “Well, pick something Pinetree! You don’t have all day.”

Dipper looked back at his closet and wandered into it, picking out a white button up shirt, black trousers and blazer, all of which looked small enough to fit him, and a skinny black tie. He still had to look presentable, so he couldn’t just grab anything — especially when anything could include bright yellow furry pants or a gold plated diving helmet. “So, where’s your bathroom?”

Bill hopped off the bed and onto his feet. “This way!” He opened a door on the side of the room which led to the bathroom. Dipper followed close behind, the pile of clothes in his hands.

The bathroom was as fancy as Bill’s bedroom, and had the same strange sense of taste. The large mirror, which had an expensive gold frame around it, was cracked in three different places, forming a strangely symmetrical triangle in the lower left corner. The faucet, which was made of copper, had become the same green color as the Statue of Liberty as it had tarnished. The enamel of the sink was covered in dazzling golden sparkles, much like the toilet, which looked like a golden throne, of sorts. The bathtub was resting on classic gold clawed feet, though they appeared to be the claws of a lizard, instead of the paws of a lion. The shower was adjacent to the tub and was three times the size of Dipper’s, and tiled in white marble, and it had a glass door instead of a cheap curtain, like his own.

“So, what do you think, Pinetree?” Bill asked with a smile, watching him intently.

“I can’t believe you get to use a bathroom like this every day,” Dipper admitted in awe. He put the clothes on the counter and stretched before turning back to Bill. “I’ll clean myself up and go to work I guess.” For the first time since being hired, he didn’t look forward to his work.
“I can make us some breakfast,” Bill offered. “Also, you might want to borrow a pair of sunglasses, unless you want to hide those raccoon eyes with some makeup.”

Dipper blinked. “I’m not a girl!” *Did Bill even have make up? Why?* He rubbed his eyes and looked in the mirror. “I’ll take my chances with the sunglasses, thank you.”

Bill chuckled and ruffled Dipper’s hair. “I’ll see you in a bit.” Bill exited the bathroom, closing the door behind him as he snuck one last peek at Dipper.

Dipper let out a low sigh before examining his face in the broken mirror. As usual, his jaw was completely hairless, unlike his great-uncles’, who both boasted a seemingly permanent five o’clock shadow. He really did have raccoon eyes – more so than usual. His dull brown eyes were also minorly bloodshot. *Maybe I should just call in sick.* Dipper shook his head. *No, I need to solve this case. The case is more important than my health.*

Dipper stretched and began stripping down. He cast aside his tie, his white button down shirt, his black socks and trousers, leaving him in just his boxers. A few scars riddled his arms and legs, but most of them were concealed by hair, except for a long vertical scar that was on his forearm. He closed his eyes and covered it with his hand, pushing back the memory it was linked to. Dipper had a number of scars that he regretted, but that one and the four that traveled from his collarbone to the top of his left shoulder were the most painful ones. Those were the ones he remembered vividly.

He walked over to the shower and turned it on. Warm water erupted from the faucet. Bill’s water pressure was far more impressive than the pathetic trickle in his own apartment. Steam began filling the bathroom as he got into the shower, closing the glass door behind him. At first he just let the water fall on him, drenching him and relaxing his muscles. He looked at the ceiling as the water fell over him, thinking about all sorts of things. The case, his missed blind date, his life, his parents…. *Bill.*

He shook his head and picked up the gold bar of soap and a thick white washcloth and began soaping himself. *He scrubbed particularly hard at the scar on his arm, the pain forcing him to remember how he’d gotten it.* After soaping himself clean he shampooed his hair with a honey-colored shampoo. A portion of Bill’s scent flooded Dipper’s nose, making him breathe deeply. It was intoxicating how…. *I should really consider getting this shampoo.*

Dipper stayed in the shower for quite some, the decadent feel of it making the stark reality of his job, his real life, seem as ephemeral as a dream. Finally, reluctantly, he turned off the shower and grabbed a towel.
Bill tried to give Dipper some space as he showered, but the soft sighs he occasionally heard from the bathroom made him dawdle as he dressed. *What is he doing in there?* Whatever it was, Bill was not concentrating because of it. And it was not only aggravating but also made Dipper even more attractive. Bill had already set his sights on the young detective, but the more he got to know him, the more he realized just how much of a good decision he had made.

Not only was Dipper too smart for his own good, he was far more entertaining than the other detectives.

The shower stopped and Bill was still only midway through picking out his clothes, so he grabbed a few more items as quickly as he could: a yellow button-up shirt, black bowtie, leather jacket, black trousers, and leather dress shoes that had gold-plating at the tips. He was successful in putting on everything below his belt before Dipper opened the bathroom door.

Dipper had gotten dressed in the bathroom and had towel dried himself enough so that he wasn’t soaking his borrowed clothes.

Bill eyed Dipper appreciatively. “You look like a million bucks, kid.”

Dipper’s eyes slid away from him. “Thanks. They fit really well.” He sounded more baffled than pleased. Dipper made eye contact with Bill for a brief moment before looking at the bedroom doorway. “I think I’m going to skip breakfast and just go to the station.”

*Crap. Maybe I shouldn’t have magicked them up to fit him. The kid’s looking like a cat in a room full of rocking chairs.* “Fine by me,” Bill lied casually, as he buttoned up his shirt. “Where should we meet up tonight?”

“I don’t know,” Dipper shrugged. “I’ve got a lot of work to do. I’ll see you around, I guess.” He walked over to the door, placing his hand on the doorknob before Bill stopped him.

“At least let me show you out.” Bill complained. “Jeez, Pinetree.”
The two exited the house together. Bill walked Dipper to his car, but before Dipper started the car Bill decided to give him something. Bill snapped his fingers and conjured a black business card behind his back before passing it to Dipper through the open driver’s side window.

“What’s this?” Dipper asked, examining the shiny card.

“My business card,” Bill answered. “If you need to get into contact with me for any reason, just give that number a call,” he pointed to the glittery golden numerals. “I’ll always answer it.”

“I should give you mine too,” Dipper decided, to Bill’s satisfaction.

Dipper pulled out his wallet and retrieved one of his own cards, cheaply printed on plain white cardstock. “It only has my office phone number on it, but it might come in handy.”

“Thanks.” Bill smiled, poking Dipper’s forehead affectionately. “I’ll see you around, Pinetree.”

Dipper smiled uncertainly as he started the car. “See you later, Bill.”

Bill watched as Dipper drove off, waving until he was out of sight. Once he was, he sighed with relief. Now that Dipper was gone he could get to work and boy, did he have a lot of work to do. He had to plot out his next few kills very carefully. The game was just getting started.
Bill twirled his cane as he walked down the street. His gold plated dress shoes clicked against the pavement like a tap dancer’s shoes as his steps rhythmically matched his whistling. The night air was cool and still, as if it knew that the creature wandering the streets was out for blood. It had been nearly two weeks since he had last sealed a deal with one of his clients, and despite him being prepared for his next kill, he had found another job to busy himself with.

He had to steal something. Well, a lot of things.

Bill was going to rob an entire neighborhood.

He had his objects of desire in mind already. He wasn’t just going to take anything, heaven’s no. Bill was going to take objects that would be of use to him, yet nothing that would give him away. Guns were off the table, mainly because they were so impersonal. If he ever obtained possession of a gun it was going to be for a good reason, nothing trivial like this. He had considered taking more than just one kind of thing, but he wanted to add more mystery to it. If it was a general mass robbery there would be no chance that it could be linked to him.

There had to be an inkling of suspicion that this crime could be linked to the Cipher Homicides. For once, he wasn’t going to have to plant the idea in anyone’s dreams. He could depend on a certain young detective to make the connection.

He turned off of Main Street just as the clock tower bell chimed eleven and proceeded walking down Ritter Road. His whistling turned to humming, and as the rhythm of his steps changed, so did the song. Bill spun around as he heard the trumpets blare in his head, his cane linking onto a nearby streetlamp. He sang the lyrics that he could remember out loud, though not loud enough to make too much of a ruckus.

My head keeps spinning
I go to sleep and keep grinning
If this is just the beginning,
My life is gonna be beau-tiful!
He laughed as he straightened himself out, continuing on his way. He continued to sing to himself as the neighborhood came into view, a sadistic and gleeful grin spreading across his face.

* * *

**I've got sunshine enough to spread**

**It’s just like the fella said**

**Tell me quick ain't love like a kick in the head?**

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper blinked, staring at the empty ballroom before him. Unlike his last encounter with the pyramid man, this time the ballroom was only lit by a pathway of candles that rested on the marble floor. The soft candlelight shone blue instead of orange, making Dipper feel more at peace, rather than nervous. In the very center of the ballroom was a circular oak table with two chairs, surrounded by more candles that formed a perfect equilateral triangle around the table, which rested in the middle like an eye.

He walked down the pathway of candles curiously. *What am I dreaming this time?* He scanned the area, trying to find any clues to what might unfold in this dream, but this dream seemed empty. It was like Dipper had been left in an abandoned room to his own devices. Something didn’t feel right. *It’s too quiet.*

“I knew you would miss me.” The all-too familiar voice of the pyramid man echoed through the ballroom.

Dipper stopped in his path like a deer in the headlights and looked around. “I knew something wasn’t right about this. Where are you?”

“Right here, kid!”

Dipper gazed at the table and saw the man suddenly sitting there. He wasn’t too different from the last time they met, though instead of the gold suit he was wearing a normal looking tuxedo and top hat. The top hat rested on top of the point at the apex of his strange head.

“Have a seat, kid.” He made a grand gesture to the chair across from him. “It’s been a while.”
“Two weeks, to be exact,” Dipper cautiously walked over and took the seat adjacent to the pyramid-headed man. “I didn’t think I would dream about you again.”

“Trust me detective, you’ll be seeing a lot more of me in the future,” the pyramid man assured.

“How do you know I’m a detective?” Dipper asked.

“I’m a figment of your imagination, aren’t I?” the pyramid man commented, “I know everything you know.”

“You don’t seem like something I could think up though.” Dipper leaned back in the chair and frowned.

“Then who thought me up? This is your head, kid. Nothing else can get in here.” His tone was honeyed as he brought more questions to the forefront of Dipper’s mind.

Dipper took in the room once more, silent before he asked another question, “Is there no dance tonight?”

“You didn’t seem too fond of dancing last time, so I thought you might enjoy some privacy more.”

“But why do you want to talk to me?” Dipper leaned forward, trying to decipher even a vague expression on the man’s face.

“You entertain me, detective,” he leaned forward to match Dipper. “It’s as simple as that. Any more questions?”

“Who are you?” he squeaked, hating how desperate and unsure he sounded. Dipper started as a knock unexpectedly punctuated his question and looked around in confusion. It sounded eerily intrusive, alien, as if it belonged in another time, or another place.

The pyramid man looked around for a brief moment, annoyance flashing in his eye, before he responded with more than a little arrogance darkening his tone, “I don’t need a name for you to talk to me.”
Dipper leaned in more, narrowing his eyes, almost glaring at the man. “Is that your real face?”

The man’s eye widened for a brief moment before it narrowed too, “So you figured me out. You certainly are quite clever.”

“I couldn’t possibly think up something like a man with a pyramid head. It’s too weird. Therefore, if you truly are a figment of my imagination, there is no way that that is your true face.”

“Oh, but detective, you forgot one simple fact!” His voice became quite tremulous as his excitement rose, “If you can’t think of something with a pyramid for a head, then how could you imagine someone who would hide themselves within a pyramid mask?”

“So you admit that you aren’t from my mind?” Dipper demanded desperately.

The strange knock grated harshly in the reality of the moment, setting Dipper’s teeth on edge.

The pyramid man was silent for a moment before bursting into roaring laughter. “Oh, detective! You’re killing me here. Seriously, you should consider being a comedian.”

Dipper balled his hands into fists. “Just answer my question!”

“Dipper, wake up!”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper snapped awake as he heard Mabel’s frustrated voice. He was sitting in his brown leather arm chair in his dark, once neat office, which had slowly deteriorated into madness. Papers covered his desk so deeply that it was completely inutile, and one of the walls was inevitably becoming a case map for the Cipher Homicides. He rubbed his hand over his face, sighed deeply, and trudged to the door, as if sloughing through mud, or quicksand, trying to escape the clutches of the strange and disturbing dream. He unlocked the door and swung it open tiredly, instead of eagerly. “Hi Mabel. I wasn’t expecting you,” he greeted his sister unenthusiastically.
“Gosh Dipper, did you even go home last night?” Mabel scolded, stepping over a box of papers and crossing the room to the window. “You should really let some light in…” She pulled back the curtains, only to find that the window had been painted over with a thick layer of black paint. “Dipper! Why did you paint over the window?” she demanded.

“The outside was distracting me from the case.” Dipper admitted, “I’m really close to a break. I can feel it.”

“Dipper, you’ve been locked up in here all week…” Mabel looked down at her feet with an awkward shyness that she’d never shown him before. “I’m getting worried. I think the case is too hard for…”

“It’s not too hard for me, Mabel.” Dipper ran his hand through his hair, “I’m the only one who’s making any leeway in this case. Great-uncle Ford appointed me as lead detective for a reason,” he defended.

“Dipper I’m worried about you! There hasn’t been a murder in two weeks and you’re working on the case just as hard as you were before, maybe even more so.” Mabel wiped her eyes, “You’re obsessing over this.”

Dipper sighed and put his hand on her shoulder, “Mabel, I’m just trying to find the killer before he gets anyone else.”

“I know.” Mabel looked into his eyes. “Just promise me you’ll ask for help if this case gets too hard. We’re all ready to help whenever you need it.”

Dipper gave her a hug, crossing his finger behind her back. “Of course I will,” he lied. He’d never risk endangering her or anyone else. The murderer was cruel and unpredictable, void of all pity and morality. He’d viciously, seemingly gleefully murdered a young mother. Dipper knew with sick certainty he would have committed the horrible crime even had she been pushing a baby carriage or holding her toddler’s hand. Dipper pulled away and looked at his sister softly, “And you promise me not to get involved in any of this.”

Mabel giggled, seemingly oblivious to the danger. “I promise!”

The phone rang loudly, disturbing the bittersweet moment. Dipper sighed heavily again and plodded reluctantly over to his desk, instead of racing eagerly to pick up the phone, stiff with dread.
“Detective Pines’ office,” he all but whispered timorously.

“Dipper, I need you to come to my office.” As he’d feared, it was Ford, but oddly, his voice wasn’t as grim as it usually was. In fact, he sounded quite befuddled. “There’s been a robbery.”

Dipper almost fainted in relief. “A robbery?” Thank God. Not another homicide. No one else had died because he wasn’t able to find the killer. “Why are you calling me?” he demanded, annoyed, and almost angry with his great-uncle. He didn’t have time to waste on some stupid petty theft! “I’m sure that Detective Powers would be…”

“It’s all about the circumstances,” Ford interrupted, “Listen to me Dipper. An entire neighborhood was broken into last night. Every single house on South Lewis Street was robbed.”

“What?” Dipper leaned against the desk. “You can’t be serious.”

“Except we’re still trying to figure out if anything was actually stolen. That’s why I want you here.” Ford sighed. “After I brief you on the details, we’ll be going to the scene of the crime.”

“Alright, I’ll see you soon,” Dipper agreed.

“Good, see you soon.”

Dipper hung up and looked up at Mabel, who gave him a disquisitive look.

“What’s wrong? What’s happened? Why do you look like that?” Mabel asked almost fearfully.

“There was a break in. Well, multiple.” Dipper stretched and combed his fingers through his hair again. “Someone broke into an entire neighborhood.”

“A robbery? Oh, thank goodness!” Mabel cried in relief.

Dipper knew exactly how she felt. He crossed the office and retrieved his suit jacket from the arm chair. “It’s certainly strange, but at least, for once it has nothing to do with the Cipher case.”
Mabel smiled sweetly at her little brother, walking toward the door. “Well, you’ll find out soon enough Dipper. You’re amazing!”

Dipper couldn’t help but smile, for the first time in what felt like years, opening the office door for her. “Thanks, Mabel. I really needed to hear that.”

Chapter End Notes

Had to split chapter 4 into chapters 4 and 5 because it was over twice the size of my usual chapters and key details would have been lost completely. Unfortunately, that meant chapter 4 is, as you can see, quite short. Chapter 5 will definitely be posted on Sunday or Monday since it’s being beta’d as we speak! Since I now have a little build-up as well, I can hopefully post early-ish next week, though I’m still not sure how early that would be.

Thanks to my beta Maria Albert from fanfiction.net for editing this chapter.
Dipper met with Commissioner Ford in his office. They began discussing the strange break-ins as they walked to Ford’s car.

“Every single house on the block was broken into?” Dipper asked, knowing what Ford had told him but still unable to believe it.

“Yes. The intruder entered each house somehow and then exited through a window in the kitchen. We still haven’t figured out how the culprit got inside, but judging by the pattern of the glass shards, they broke the windows to get out.”

“But that doesn’t make any sense! Why not leave the same way they entered? Why break the window instead of unlocking it, if they were already inside? And how could they break window after window without waking anyone up? What about their dogs? Someone must have a dog, right? Why leave a trail, when they could have easily left without a trace?” Dipper demanded frustrated, shooting off his questions with machinegun rapidity.

“They probably want the attention. Whoever this is, they definitely know their stuff.”

Dipper nodded in agreement as they arrived at Ford’s car. They got in and began making their way to the crime scene, at first in silence, then Dipper looked at Ford curiously.

“I was wrong, what I told Mabel. You think this is connected to the Cipher case, don’t you?” he accused.

Ford was silent for a moment before he sighed, “I do.”

“But it doesn’t fit the M.O. at all,” Dipper argued in frustration. Not that there was much consistency with any of the homicides, except for the notes. “Were there notes?” he asked, feeling the first uneasy flare of dread.

“No, none that we’ve found so far at any rate. It’s not a murder, but I think the culprit is messing
with us. They want us to think it isn’t them.”

Dipper shook his head in denial. “I don’t know, Commissioner. It just doesn’t add up.”

Ford sighed, “We’ll see, Dipper.”

When they arrived at the crime scene, police officers were already talking to some of the families; people were still trying to process what had happened. Ford decided to split off from Dipper and walk over to the officers to get more details while Dipper approached the homeowners to ask a few questions of his own.

The first several families he talked to didn’t seem to know anything of value which frustrated the detective, but ever since the Cipher case he had begun to expect situations like this more often than not. Eventually he walked up to a tired looking father holding a toddler, with two boys running around him and playing in the grass. Dipper held out his hand to the man and introduced himself professionally, “Detective Pines.”

“Ah yes, hello.” The man blinked, shaking Dipper’s hand. “Leland Hemingway. I live at 534 South Lewis. Is there anything I can help you with?”

Dipper felt the blood drain from his face as he stared in shock at the widower.

“Detective? Are you alright?” the husband of the last murder victim asked compassionately.

“I was just wondering if you caught a glimpse of the culprit,” Dipper responded, struggling to sound professional and impersonal, when he wanted nothing more than to beg the man for forgiveness for not preventing his wife’s death, or at least, for not already capturing her murderer.

“No,” the exhausted looking man said. “I slept through the whole thing. It’s the first night I’ve slept since…” He swallowed hard and looked as if he was fighting tears. “It sounds like most people did,” he added gruffly, as he hugged his toddler more tightly and his eyes flashed to his two older boys, as if assuring himself they too were still safe.

“Did you notice anything missing?” Dipper asked gently.
Before the man could respond one of his sons piped up, “I went to make toast this morning and I couldn’t find any knives or anything.”

The man sighed sadly and looked part sheepish, part frazzled and entirely overwhelmed. “That’s right. I have to do the dishes.”

Dipper frowned at the boy’s comment, an uneasy feeling blossoming in his chest. “Would you mind if I took a look at the kitchen?”

The man nodded. “Of course not. Go right ahead. Sorry for the mess.”

Dipper entered the innocuous-looking house to find that it was indeed in some disarray. Toys were strewn about the dirty floor. Dishes were scattered across the coffee table in front of the fireplace along with a number of half empty coffee mugs, as if Mr. Hemingway had been living on caffeine to make up for his missing sleep.

Dipper found the kitchen untouched by the other investigators. Just like the living room the kitchen was messy and dirty. The counters greasy, smudged, and covered in spilled cereal, which made the still immaculate white drawers stand out glaringly. Dipper looked into the mass of dirty dishes overflowing the sink, scanning it for any knives before something interesting caught the corner of his eye. One of the white wooden drawers had been clearly scratched up, damaged.

He turned to examine it in detail and realized something had been carved into it. BSBO… What does that mean? Are those the boys’ initials? First and middle names? Why would they do that? An act of violence or rebellion… for attention, or grief, or rage?

The detective dusted the drawer handle for prints, finding none, before slipping on a glove and opening the drawer. Kitchen utensils. Forks, spoons… but no knives. He frowned, and studied the cluttered countertop, his eyes widening as they landed on the bare butcher’s block. He looked back to the sink. Surely they were all just unwashed, right? He began emptying the sink, neatly piling the dishes on the counter after scraping off days-old food into the trash. Shit. There wasn’t a single knife anywhere. Not even a butter knife.

His unease turned to dread as the implications sank in. He all but ran out of the house, going next door to 538. After briskly knocking and requesting entrance, he entered their kitchen. No knives in sight. Oh God. He yanked open the drawers and felt a shiver of fear as he saw the empty space in the neat drawer of silverware. Not a single knife anywhere. And there, on the front of the incriminating drawer, another ominous carving: MFKB
Dipper darted outside, heading for his great-uncle.

“Christ, Dipper, you look like you just saw a ghost. What did you find? A body?” he asked in dread.

“I’ve checked two houses and they’re gone! They’re all gone!” Dipper yelled, raking his hand frantically through his hair, fighting to keep from shaking.

“Dipper, calm down! Who’s gone? What’s gone?”

“The knives. Butter knives, steak knives, all of the knives are missing! And there are messages carved into the drawers! I don’t know what they mean yet, but I’m going to find out.”

Ford nodded grimly. “Let’s check the rest of the houses.”

All of the houses were the same, missing knives and carvings in each. The other carvings were ABQBZQFSB, EXSB, MLOZRMFKB, VLR, X, and PBBK. Dipper took note of each on his notepad and started deciphering each carving while he sat on the curb. The cipher was the same as the others: three letters back. He had seen VLR, ABQBZQFSB, and X enough times to know that they meant YOU, DETECTIVE, and A.

Everything else came easy enough; he ended up with a list of words, which he then organized into a coherent sentence. It wasn’t hard to do. They were in a tidy little pattern, according to the house numbers. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A PORCUPINE, DETECTIVE PINES?

His eyes widened when he finished his work, his stomach churning. Oh God. What should I do? It sounds like they’re threatening me. If Ford sees this, he’ll take me off the case.

Dipper crossed out the words and tucked his notepad back into his jacket before standing up and approaching the commissioner.

“Did you figure it out, Dipper?” Ford asked eagerly, taking the Cuban out of his mouth.
Dipper shook his head. “I’m going back to my office. I can’t concentrate out here,” he lied.

“Alright. But call my office the second you solve it,” he ordered.

“Yes, sir,” Dipper promised, feeling horrible for keeping the truth from his great-uncle, but refusing to be intimidated so easily. There was no way he was going to let this murderer frighten him.

~ ▲▲▲▲▲▲~

A cheerful ring jangled and Bill leaned forward and picked up the stylish black earpiece of his candlestick telephone, along with the phone itself, “Yellow?” he asked in a singsong tone.

“Hey Bill, it’s me…”

“Long time, no speak, Pinetree!” Bill leaned back again, putting his feet up on his desk. “How’ve you been?” They’d been calling each other frequently for the past two weeks but hadn’t actually seen each other since Dipper woke up in Bill’s house.

Dipper sighed. “Things are getting pretty weird at work.”

“Want to talk about it over dinner? Or should we just go to the bar? We could go to the Bang Bang Bar again, or maybe try the Skull Fracture bar, if you’re interested.”

“Why don’t you just come to my office? I have a dart board and some bourbon,” Dipper offered.

“Darts and drinks? That’s a great combination! Count me in!” Bill grinned. “See you soon, kid.”

“Bye.”

He waited for Dipper to hang up before doing the same. He sprung from the leather chair and stretched, cracking every single one of his vertebrae then crossed the house, heading toward the bathroom. He hadn’t fixed himself up since leaving the house yesterday to steal all the knives. He was eager to play with them, though Dipper took a much higher priority.
Bill decided that his outfit hadn’t been dirtied from his previous escapade and chose to simply fix his hair before leaving for the detective’s office. He teleported into an alley on Main Street then walked the rest of the way, finding the police station with ease. He grinned as he entered the lion’s den.

A frazzled-looking desk sergeant eyed him warily. “Can I help you?”

“Just tell Detective Pines that Bill is here. He’s expecting me,” Bill said smugly, not about to give them his last name. After all, he didn’t want to make this too easy for Dipper. Where was the fun in that?

The sergeant called and a minute or so later Dipper appeared.

“Bill! Thanks. I really needed to see a friendly face.”

_Yea, that’s me. Your friendly neighborhood murderer_, he thought with a grin.

Dipper led him through a labyrinth of desks to his office. Bill eyed the utilitarian, cheaply furnished and horribly messy room in distaste. “That’s the thing about public service: no class,” he said, shaking his head disapprovingly. He walked over to the complex wall of case notes, maps and other evidence, impressed by some of the connections Dipper had made, ones he hadn’t even been aware of. _So the Hemingway broad and the Seymour guy went to grade school together. Huh. Imagine that._

He eyed the single, overstuffed armchair in the corner, incongruous with the room’s otherwise cheap vinyl and metal furniture, and sank into it happily. “So where’s the bourbon, kid?” Bill asked, tossing his top hat towards the coat rack, landing perfectly on one of the tines. “We got to turn that frown upside-down!”

Dipper’s eyes widened as he stared at the hat. “How did you… Could we wait on the drinks for just a bit?” Dipper asked, eyeing the occupied armchair in a strange mixture of dismay and contentment.

“You could always sit on my lap, kid.” Bill offered cheekily.

Dipper blushed. “No. That’s OK,” he squeaked, as he sat behind his desk.
“Tough day?” Bill asked sympathetically. “I mean, it must be for you to still be at work at ten o’clock at night, right?

“Sorry, I’m being such a party-pooper. I had a weird night and was up ‘til the crack of dawn with another strange case and… I just needed a break, you know?”

Bill stood and frowned, taking off his yellow brick tailcoat and hanging it on the coat rack. “Anything I can do? What’s the new case about?”

“I can’t really say. But if I told anyone everything I know, they would want me off the case,” Dipper admitted.

_Uh-oh. Did I slip up somewhere? Make it too easy? Did he lure me here to arrest me or something? Nah, he’s not scared enough. He just looks frazzled. I can get him to talk._ “Was it another murder?” Bill asked, adjusting his bowtie before picking up the armchair and setting it down by Dipper.

Dipper eyed him oddly.

_Crap. Was it heavy or something, for a human?_ “I’ve been working out,” Bill said preemptively, flexing his non-existent muscles.

Dipper nodded. “You look good,” he admitted, blushing deeply.

Bill grinned. _Deflection is the mother of invention._

“Um no, that’s the thing,” Dipper argued, pulling a bottle of bourbon out of his desk drawer, opening it and taking a swig directly from the bottle. He looked incredibly frustrated as he handed the bottle to Bill. “This time it was a robbery. The guy literally stole all the knives out of a neighborhood.”

Bill hid a grin at the thought of the indirect kiss he was sharing as he held the bottle up in salute and took a deep drink, enjoying the burn. Nothing like cheap liquor to set fire to a man’s belly, or a demon’s. “Knives, huh? You mean all the silverware, to sell it or something?” he asked, passing the bottle back.
“No, just the knives. Steak knives, butter knives, everything,” Dipper said, looking completely baffled and taking a deep drink.

_I love my job! _“So, why do you think someone would do that?” Bill prodded, holding his hand out for the bottle.

“I’m trying not to think about it. I mean, what would someone do with nearly 200 knives? We estimated 184 knives were stolen.”

“Maybe the culprit is going to melt them down or something?” Bill suggested, accepting the bottle and drinking again. At the rate they were drinking, Dipper was going to be putty in his hands in no time. _And I love playing with putty. Getting my hands all sticky._

Dipper took the bottle and chugged then passed the half-empty bottle back to Bill. “I’m done talking about this damn case. I live it enough already.”

_You wish you could live it as much as I do, Pinetree._ “What do you want to talk about then?” He drank and passed the bottle back to Dipper.

“Anything but my job… speaking of which: where do you work, Bill?” Dipper took another swig.

“Oh, I’ve done a lot of things.” Bill spoke whimsically. “I’ve worked as a blacksmith, a taxi driver, postman, piano mover… It’s hard to remember them all, to be honest.”

“You make it sound like you’re in your fifties or something,” Dipper chuckled. “Just how old are you anyway?” He drank again.

“A girl never tells her age,” Bill said with wink.

Dipper blushed in embarrassment. “You’re not a girl, just really… flamboyant.” Dipper held out the bottle.
Bill raised an eyebrow and spoke with only the slightest air of sarcasm, “Me, flamboyant? What would make you say that?” Bill took the bottle and drank a bit more.

Dipper took back the bourbon, “I didn’t even know you could buy furry pants, much less yellow ones.”

“Oh, you can find all sorts of things. It just depends where you look.” Bill crossed his legs and leaned back in his chair. “Are we going to be drinking until you’re blitzed again or are we going to at least do something fun along with it?” Bill asked, eyeing the nearly empty bottle. It was way too late to keep Dipper sober, but then, that was the whole point.

Dipper frowned, “Rude.” He licked the last drops of bourbon off the lip of the bottle, and set it down on his desk, not noticing that it fell over.

_Holy shit. That tongue. That mouth. My kingdom to be that bottle._ “I was just being honest. All we ever do is talk and drink,” he sulked coyly.

Dipper’s eyes widened. “What do you want to do?” Dipper asked, reddening further.

_That’s an easy one to answer, but I don’t think he’s quite ready for that._ “Well, you offered me bourbon and darts. So how about we play?” Bill asked, gesturing towards the board on the wall.

“You want to play darts?” Dipper asked, as if unsure whether he was serious.

“Sure,” Bill stood up. “If your ego can take the hit, kid. I’ll definitely beat you,” he said confidently.

Dipper smirked and stood up. “Oh yeah? Bring it on, tough guy.” He took the old darts out of his top drawer and handed the yellow ones to Bill.

Bill noticed last names were taped to the darts’ flights. _Maybe from old cases Pinetree had worked on?_

Dipper kept the fluorescent green ones for himself.
Bill twirled one of the darts in his gloved hand. “Should I go first, Pinetree?”

“Ladies first,” Dipper taunted, the bourbon on his breath thick enough to taste, even from a distance.

Bill chuckled and stood in front of the dartboard, taking aim. “I assume you saw the petticoats in my closet.”

“Who keeps petticoats?” Dipper asked. “Do you actually wear them?”

Bill chuckled and threw the dart with precision, intentionally missing the mark slightly. “Rarely, but sometimes I like to feel pretty.” He turned to Dipper, smirking. “Your turn.”

Dipper took Bill’s place in front of the board, glancing at Bill nonchalantly as he aimed his dart. The bourbon made him more than a little unsteady, continually having to correct his balance but swaying even more.

Bill sighed and walked over. “Need a hand?”

“Huh?” Dipper looked up at Bill, blinking innocently.

Bill stood behind Dipper and held his arm gently, helping Dipper aim the dart. He chuckled, placing his chin on Dipper’s left shoulder as he assisted. Dipper suddenly tensed and shuddered, and it didn’t feel like a sensual one. What the hell? “Why are you shaking?” Bill demanded, more harshly than he intended.

Dipper responded angrily. “I can do it myself!” He pulled away from Bill and glared at him.

Crap. Must be the alcohol. He wasn’t like this the last time. I thought he was more the happy drunk kind of guy. Guess I’m stressing him out a little bit too much. “Alright, Pinetree.” Guess I should give the detective some space in order to not piss him off.

Dipper turned to the board and attempted to aim the dart, shaking his head once before throwing. It
sailed wide, embedding in the wall at least three feet from the board.

Bill grinned. *Oh, I could have some fun with this*…

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper glared at the first dart, which had landed completely off target. He refocused on the board. He was better than this! He threw the second dart, expecting a perfect bulls-eye. Instead it ricocheted off of the dartboard frame in a way that shouldn’t have been possible, flying back into the room and hitting Bill in the head!

Bill didn’t make a sound as he fell to the floor.

“Oh shit!” Dipper dropped the remaining darts and ran to his fallen friend. “Bill! Oh my God! Are you okay?”

Bill didn’t so much as quiver. Dipper saw to his horror that the fluorescent green dart had actually buried itself in the side of his skull.

Dipper’s eyes watered as he began to panic, cradling Bill in his arms, “No, no, no, don’t do this! Come on, you need to be okay…you can’t actually…this is impossible! Shit!”

Bill’s eye fluttered open dramatically as he mumbled, “Pinetree…”

“Oh my God.” Dipper looked down into Bill’s eye. “I’m going to call an ambulance!”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill stopped acting as soon as Dipper mentioned the word ‘ambulance’. “Pinetree, I’m actually fine,” he belatedly assured the panicked young man.

Dipper kept holding Bill despite his shock. “There’s a dart in your fucking head!”
Bill grasped the dart and pulled it out of his skull, pretending to simply pull it out of his messy hair. “See? I’m fine. It just got caught in my hair. Pretty funny, huh?”

Dipper blinked before dropping Bill flat on his back. “Why would you do that?” he shrilled.

Bill winced a little as he hit the floor before sitting up. “Do what? Play a little joke? Yeesh, kid, don’t you have a sense of humor?”

Dipper trembled, rubbing his eyes. “You think that was funny? That pretending to be… that that was a joke?” He was all but screaming.

Bill chuckled uncertainly. “Sure it was. I mean, you freaked out, Pinetree. It was hilarious.” Bill stood up and held his hand out to Dipper to help him up.

Dipper pushed Bill’s hand away angrily. “Do you see me laughing? That wasn’t remotely… just get out!”


“Get out!” Dipper yelled, pointing to the door.

Bill blinked and slowly walked toward the door, not taking his eye off Dipper as he reluctantly left. I guess I better let him cool off for a bit, maybe sober up.

~ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ~

Once Bill was gone Dipper burst into tears. How could Bill do that? That wasn’t funny at all! What kind of sick sense of humor does he have, that he would think that was funny? How did the dart even ricochet like that? It was impossible to the detective. His heart was beating fast as he clutched at his chest. What if Bill actually got hurt? What would I have done? He’s my friend...
Special thanks to Taurine and Maria Albert (FF.net) for being my betas for this chapter! Next chapter will probably come out early next week, sorry! I'm starting a new class at my college and probably getting a second job, heheh!

For all of you on tumblr, if you want to talk about or have fan art for my fic, please use tag it as: serial tag. That way, I can find it and freak out over how awesome your thing is. If you have any comments/questions/concerns, feel free to throw me a message at trollfishprince.tumblr.com!
The midnight air was stale and dry, filled with the intriguing strains of piano music coming from the bar down the street. Two men walked down the street, moving confidently from the glow of one streetlamp to the next. The older one had a five o’clock shadow that looked like it had been rocking around the clock for more than a few days, while the younger had hair that was markedly thinning, in spite of his futile efforts at combing it over.

“Stan, you old fox!” the young man laughed, walking briskly. Al was always on edge while around Stan. He had been ever since he first discovered Switchblade Stan was in reality Stanley Pines, an undercover cop. Not that Stan knew he knew, of course. “How can someone as old as you get all the babes in this town?”

“You've got to have class, Al.” Stan's gruff voice grated against the air like sandpaper. “Class and confidence.”

Damn I hate this lying asshole. “Like you have any class,” the young man scoffed, brushing back his already thinning black hair. “It's all absolute bullshit if you ask me.” Stan was a master bullshit artist, whose mission in life seemed to be to try to catch him. Al had avoided arrest for years, always avoiding arrest by the skin of his teeth.

“You're just too young to know any better.” Stan taunted as they approached the door to the bar.

Yeah? Well you're the one who's not likely to get any older, old man. The only reason Stan was still alive was because it was better knowing who the undercover cop was, than trying to figure out who his replacement was.

The two men entered The Skull Fracture Bar, which was normally filled with a collection of lowlifes and ruffians. This time, however, the bar seemed unusually tame. Most of the sound came from the poorly tuned piano from across the bar. The delightfully peculiar pianist played a classical tango excitedly, seemingly ignoring everyone else around him. He wore a white button-up shirt and black bow tie, which was accompanied by awfully messy golden hair.
Despite only showing his back to Stan and Al, both men immediately recognized the pianist.

Stan's mouth was agape as he stopped in the oak doorway, “Holy shit! Al, are you seeing what I'm seeing?”

“Is that Bill? I thought he ditched town six years ago.” Al added, trying to sound casual. Holy fuck! Is Bill the one who’s responsible for all those murders? Shit, this is perfect!

As he finished the piece Bill looked back at the two, a leering smile on his face as if he’d already known they were coming. He slid off the piano bench and practically gliding across the wooden floor as he approached them. “Long time no see, Fez.” He greeted Stan with a nod before his eye fixed on Al. “Pop, you've certainly grown.”

Al had never really liked the nickname, though he hadn’t hated it either. Bill said he called him that because seeing him reminded him of the pop of a gun, but he’d always thought there was some other reason that Bill had never shared with him. Bill was like that. You never knew what he was really thinking.

“Billy! Holy cow, it really is you!” Stan laughed, slapping Bill heartily on the shoulder. “What's it been, six years? Geez kid, you haven't aged a day.”

“I try to keep up appearances,” Bill said with a fond smile on his face. “Can I buy you both a drink?”

“Of course!” Stan responded, already making his way to the bar.

Al glanced at Bill, trying to keep looking cool. Holy shit. Is this really it? Are we going to do it? Tonight? Did Bill really mean what he said, six years ago? Is he really going to help me kill Stan? Why now, after all this time? “I'm not really in the mood to…”

“You're going to want to drink up, Pop.” Bill responded coolly. “Tonight's going to be quite the eventful night for you.”

Holy shit! We're really going to do it! Al crossed the room and sat down at the bar next to Stan, his heart racing with anticipation. Not fear. No, he wasn’t afraid, not of the cop, and certainly not of Bill.
“What are you getting?” he asked casually.

“I don't know yet,” Stan replied. He waved down the bartender as if he was more than just a long time patron. “Hey Johnny! Surprise me! It's on Billy's tab.” He gestured to Bill behind him.

The bartender smiled at Stan, “Sure thing, Stan my man! What about you, Al?”

“A Budweiser please.”

Bill snorted, shaking his head. “When are you going to man up and start drinking the good stuff, Pop?”

“I like beer,” Al said with a self conscious scowl, as he took the bottle, and drank from it, instead of pouring it into the glass like he wanted to. It looked cooler, drinking it from the bottle.

Bill strutted over and sat down on the other side of Al. He eyed some of the bottles behind the counter, but he didn't order anything.

“What are you getting, Bill?” Al challenged moodily.

“Nothing tonight I'm afraid.” Bill's smile faded with a sigh. “I've already had my fill.”

Bill smirked as his eyes fixed on Al once again, as if he’d heard him think that, and was amused by it. “So how's your life been, Pop? I bet you've been getting into all sorts of trouble since I've been gone.” His gloved fingers laced together as he placed his elbows on the bar, leaning forward as if to get a better look at both of them with his single eye.

Bill's never one to turn down a drink. He must be ready to get down and dirty... Al glanced at Stan as he received a cocktail straight out of Las Vegas. Drink up you big oaf. This night is going to be your last.

Bill smiled in satisfaction as he drank deeply. “You could say that.” And I haven't been caught yet.
“This kid's always finding himself in messy situations,” Stan added. “Yet no matter how hard the cops try to get him, he's always got an alibi.” Al could hear the quelled frustration in Stan's voice as clearly as a trumpet.

“An alibi, huh?” Bill's canines seemed particularly sharp as his teeth became more visible. “Must be pretty hard having to get a new one every single time Pop. How do you do it?”

You know very well how I do it, Bill. “I have my resources,” Al bragged, taking another swig from his beer.

“I wish I had something like that!” Stan falsely boasted. “I just have to post bail every time.”

“It's a wonder where you get all that money, Fez,” Bill teased.

“When I don't have the money, I always have friends with big pockets.” Stan finished his cocktail and immediately requested another one from Johnny.

Those friends by meaning the fuzz. Al glared at Stan out of the corner of his eye.

Bill's eye flashed back to Al. “Don't you wish he'd ever introduce us to some of those friends?”

“Tell me about it,” Al agreed, signaling to Johnny for another bottle.

“What about you, Billy? Why'd you come back?” Stan asked as he received his second cocktail.

“Yeah, what's the story?” Al asked, as if he didn't know about the crime that would occur that night, featuring a certain undercover cop.

Bill chuckled, “Oh, me? I just missed good ol' Gravity Falls.”

“There has to be more than that,” Stan prodded.
Bill smiled lightly, his fingers tracing an invisible pattern on the bar. “If you have to pry, I have found a new delight in life. A new... friend, I suppose.”

Al blinked at the unexpected piece of information. A friend? He doesn't have friends. What does he really mean?

“It’s about time you found a girlfriend, Billy!” Stan said with a happy laugh, downing the second cocktail.

Bill laughed heartily. “Fez, you're killing me tonight! Seriously, we should hang out more often.”

“If you stay in town long enough, maybe I will,” Stan seamlessly threatened, as Johnny gave him a third cocktail.

“I'm a changed man, Fez,” Bill smirked. “I'm not like I was in my younger days.”

“You certainly don't dress like you used to,” Al added with a snort.

Bill blinked and looked down at himself. “That's right. I left my coat and hat at Pinetree's office.”

“Pinetree?” Stan asked curiously. “Who's Pinetree?”

Bill looked back up at the two. “He's my new friend.”

Pinetree... This guy must have made some serious deals with Bill if he's a “friend” of his. “What's his real name?” Al queried. Bill never called anyone by their given names.

Bill shot a dangerous glance at Al. “Don't be so nosy, Al. You'll meet him soon enough.”

“So you'll introduce me?” Al challenged.
“In a sense,” Bill smiled deviously.

Al ground his teeth. *One of these days, I’m going to wipe that smug smile off your face.*

Stan laughed again, finishing his third Vegas cocktail. “Billy, you’re just like old times, I swear!” The empty glass slipped from his hand, smashing against the scuffed wood floor of the bar. “Whoops! Sorry about that Johnny.”

“It’s not like it’s the first glass you broke, Stan,” Johnny sighed.

Al glanced back at Bill. “Bill, can I talk to you outside?” *Something’s off tonight*...

“Of course, Pop.” Bill stood up, adjusting the collar of his white shirt. “We’ll head to the back room.”

Al nodded. “Stan, don’t cause any trouble while I’m gone.” *I’d swear he’d been drinking before we got here. He’s really blitzed for only three drinks.*

Stan grinned, tilting to the side as he waved to him. “I can’t promise you anything, kid!”

Al followed Bill without another word.

Bill led him to the backroom, which was barely large enough to be considered more than a closet. As soon as he closed the door Al had him by the collar of his shirt. “What are you planning, Bill?” Al demanded, though his voice remained cool.

“Me?” Bill taunted. “I’m not planning anything, Pop.”

“Wrong fucking answer, Bill.” Al slammed the whimsical fiend up against the brick wall of the room roughly.

“You got me, I’m a dirty liar,” Bill said with a smirk. “I’m not planning anything, I’m doing *so many things.*”
Al glared furiously at him, “You've been the one on the news haven't you?” he challenged.

Bill coughed, grinning ear to ear, “Oh bravo, Pop. Do you want a prize? A gold star for all your effort.” He laughed sarcastically.

Al couldn't stand the tone the demon was using and punched him in the stomach. The more Bill taunted, the more his short temper flared. “Why are you killing all those people? Don’t you realize how much attention it’s bringing to the rest of us? The police are out in fucking droves, Bill!”

Bill chuckled, his golden eye glowing as his pupil dilated vertically. “I'm collecting all my debts, Pop. So many people in this town just love making deals with demons.” Bill gripped the hand on his throat tightly, slowly crushing Al’s wrist. “Including you.”

Al immediately released Bill, backing up against the adjacent wall. “Me?” No, no, no. He can't mean me. We've only done business a few times. It's not like he plans to collect now, right? Shit! I shouldn’t have hit him. I have to get out of here.

Al turned to the door and reached for it when he heard the snap of gloved fingers. When he tried to open the door, it was locked.

Bill's maniacal chuckle overwhelmed his senses, sending a shiver down his spine. “You thought you could get away so easily? What do I look like to you? The cops? Ha!”

Al turned around, facing the demon again. He gripped the knife in his pocket. I can still make it out of here.

Bill reached out and snatched the hidden knife away from him, like a scolding parent taking candy from a toddler. He grabbed him by the throat and pinned him against the wall. His voice was scarcely above a whisper. “I know what you're thinking, Pop.” He smiled as one of his gloved hands went over Al's face.

Al panicked and struggled taking a few breaths. “Bill, I'll get yo...” His mind started growing fuzzy as his eyes suddenly felt heavy. What is this?
The last thing Al could process before passing out was Bill's cold chuckle as it touched his ear. The
demon whispered a few final words. “I’ve found someone far more interesting to play with than
you.”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill left Al's unconscious body in the backroom as he walked toward the bar. “Johnny, hey! Can I
get some bourbon or something? I am in need of something strong!”

Stan looked at him as he leaned against the bar quizzically. “I thought ya said you weren't drinking
tonight?” he slurred, looking completely and utterly blitzed.

Bill smirked. Stan hadn't gotten this drunk without a little bit of help. Modern medicine works even
better than I thought. “Well, I lied, Fez, my boy. I'm going to get juiced.”

“Where’s Al?” Stan asked, looking past Bill in confusion.

“He slipped out the back way. Said he wasn’t feeling well. You know that lightweight can’t drink
more than a single beer without puking his guts out,” Bill scoffed. He needed to make sure Stan
didn’t try to go after the pathetic crook.

Stan shook his head in disgust. It obviously bugged him that the little shit had managed to evade him
all these years. But all that ended tonight.

Johnny passed both men new drinks, another Vegas style cocktail and a relatively small glass of
bourbon. “You both have a ride home?” he challenged.

Stan laughed. “Johnny-boy, I'm staying here 'til the sun comes up.”

Bill picked up the glass, swirling the copper liquid. His eye focusing on the bourbon before he
looked up at Johnny. “I think I changed my mind. I'm not drinking tonight after all.” He turned
around, a shit-eating grin spreading across his face as he found a target, the toughest looking thug in
the bar, who weighed at least three times as much as he did. “I think this guy could use a drink
though.” Without hesitation, Bill arched his arm back and threw the glass of bourbon directly at the
man’s back. Not only did the bourbon coat the man's broad back, but the glass shattered, spraying
shrapnel everywhere.
The man turned around, infuriated.

“Fez, why would you do something like that?” Bill exclaimed in mock horror, loud enough for the whole bar to hear.

Stan barely looked up before the thug charged him and soon the whole bar transformed into a war zone, giving Bill all the cover he needed to pick up the trash. Bill headed for the back room and hefted the limp crook, then teleported him back to Al’s house on South Lewis Street.

Bill enjoyed ensuring everything was just so, before Al awoke. He eyed his black bag of “toys” lovingly.

Al awoke tied to one of his own wooden dining chairs. He groaned as his eyes fluttered open, immediately meeting Bill’s excited gaze. “Fuck you,” he snapped, but Bill could see he was ready to piss himself.

Bill chuckled coldly, flashing a venomous grin. “Sorry Al. Here’s where we part company. I’ve got a new toy to play with.” He pulled out a knife from his sleeve and cooed as he stroked it with his gloved hand. “Are you jealous?”

“Faggot piece of trash! I’ve made multiple deals with you! You can’t kill me,” Al sneered.

Bill glared at him, his gold eye glowing brightly as the pupil elongated. “Listen, Pop. You made deals with me, but none of that means anything unless you pay me back.” Bill sighed, twirling the knife in his hand. “I explained that to you at the beginning. And to think I found you interesting enough to let you get away with it for so long.”

Al struggled, “So, you're just going to kill me? After everything you've done for me? Isn't that pointless?”

Bill chuckled. “Pop, if you haven't noticed, this entire realm is a joke. Nothing that I do has to make sense when it gets washed away by time so easily.” Bill leaned over Al, pressing the tip of the blade against his right bicep. “Human life is so fragile.” He pushed the blade into Al's arm easily, twisting the knife as he did so.

Al screamed as blood began seeping onto his clothes. “Fuck you, Bill!”
Bill laughed. “Really? Is that it? I thought you’d be a little more creative than that. You’re more 
disappointing than I thought.” He backed away, reaching down into the large black bag on the floor, 
pulling out a steak knife.

Al gulped, struggling frantically against the ropes. “But why did you help me all those times? At 
least tell me that!”

Bill sighed, exasperated. “I’ll be honest. I wanted to see how many deals I could get out of you. Most 
people won’t make deals with demons on repeat occasions.” He stroked the tip of the knife with his 
gloved fingers delicately.

“Most people don't lead a life of crime either,” Al smirked, in spite of the pain and fear.

Bill rolled his eyes. “Most people would begging by now. Or using their mouths for something a 
little more creative. But no one ever called you smart.”

And he actually did it. The little shit started trying to flirt with him. He thought that was what he 
wanted, but instead, the sight of it turned his stomach. “You’re really disgusting, Al. Time to pay 
up.” Bill plunged the knife into Al’s left shoulder effortlessly, twisting it, needing that rush he always 
got when the blood started to flow.

Once again, Al screamed and writhed in pain, cursing the demon, and then begging him in the next 
moment. That was more like it. Except why wasn’t he enjoying this more.

Bill grabbed a hand full of knives, and began plunging them in one after the other, careful to avoid 
any major organs. He left each knife in place as he worked. He’d get into the groove any time now.

Al’s blood ran freely, down his arms, his sides, his legs. He looked like a pincushion, or a macabre 
porcupine. He was whimpering and begging now, like the pathetic little shit he was, but still, 
something was wrong. Why aren’t I smiling?

Blood was pooling on the floor below Al's chair, as his arms and legs became useless from all the 
injuries. As Al's vision began to fade, Bill pulled out yet another knife from the bag. Bill glanced 
over at Al and then back at the knife. “I think you'll be my last one for a while,” he said with a 
regretful sigh.
“What?” Al whispered, barely conscious, barely alive.

Bill glanced back at the blade. “My last kill.” He pulled off one of his gloves with his teeth, revealing blackened fingers and nails. “This isn't fun.” Why isn't this fun? It's always fun.

It took a while for Al’s gaze to focus on his fingers. “You're growing soft. You like me, and you want to let me live,” he suggested hopefully.

Bill’s eye wandered back toward Al. “You think I’m soft?” he asked curiously. He shook his head to himself. “No, that's not it. I just haven’t added my little touches.” That has to be it.

Bill sauntered over to his client, placing the tip of the blade delicately against his forehead. “I just haven't cut up that pretty little face of yours.”

Al glared at him as his eyes began to close. “Go to hell.”

“Hell doesn't exist, Alfred.” Bill uttered his name for the first time as he began to carve a little triangle into the man's forehead. “If it did, I would be there right now.” Bill looked up for a moment. “Actually, maybe this is the hell I've been cursed with.” He chuckled to himself, “No, I'm not suffering for all eternity.” Once he finished the intricate design, Bill slashed the knife across his jugular. Al was gone in moments.

Bill dragged the black bag closer to the body and turned on the radio as he started working on his new sculpture. Bill hummed along as he repeatedly stabbed Al's corpse, using the rest of the knives in his bag. Wasn't this supposed to be fun? Then why was he feeling so empty?

Bill gazed out the window, staring at the full moon for a few moments before taking off his eye patch so he could use both of his eyes. He smiled to himself and continued his work, trying not to think about anything in particular, but his mind eventually drifted to a certain brunette detective.

“I still need to get my hat and coat.”
Dipper didn't have any dreams that night, to his relief. When he woke up however, he regretted drinking so much. “Fucking hell.” He cursed, rubbing his temple with his fingers and looking around his office.

Everything was even more wrecked than usual. His desk had been cleared of all its papers, which now lay in a messy pile on the floor to the left of it and his armchair had been pushed over. The only thing that really caught his eye as being particularly out of place was the ripped yellow tailcoat that was on the floor, along with the top hat that lingered untouched on the coat rack. “Shit. Did I do that?”

Chapter End Notes

The gory description for the crime scene comes next chapter mwahahaha! I'm actually not super satisfied with this chapter, so if I edit it a bit later, I'll give you all a heads up. I'll admit, this was a really hard chapter to write, since a majority of it wasn't in Bill's or Dipper's POV (also, I had major writer's block eww). Not to mention Dipper was barely in this chapter... I'm hoping to get out another chapter before next week, but midterms are happening so I can't promise anything except that the next two chapters are going to be angst-filled and emotional.

Special thanks once again to Maria Albert from fanfiction.net for beta-ing this chapter, and for actually helping me clean this chapter up a lot.
Clouds

Chapter Notes

I strongly suggest that all of you review the dream sequences from chapter three--otherwise one part of this chapter might not make any sense. ALSO, if something seems weird in the chapter, like a sudden number out of nowhere or missing dialogue, something weird is going on with this upload and it keeps glitching out randomly and replacing some text.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dipper’s hand lingered over the telephone as he mulled things over. Shouldn’t he still be mad at Bill? He wanted to be, but he couldn’t be. He looked down at the ripped tailcoat in his other hand and brought it up to his nose. It smelled more like bourbon now than of Bill. Did I overreact? Or was that necessary? I shouldn’t have ripped his coat. Damn it, what was I thinking drinking like that? Do I want to end up like Stan?

He shook his head, sitting in his desk chair, bringing the tailcoat with him. He leaned back and sighed tiredly. The fabric was soft against his fingers, not exactly silky, but still soft. Kind of like Bill, not too soft, but he cares, right? I mean, he’s a good friend, or at least pretty good. I just don’t know if he… Dipper sniffed the tailcoat again before placing it back on his desk.

What was Bill to him anyway?

He looked back at the phone, grasping it firmly when suddenly it rang loudly. Dipper pulled away startled at first, before answering, “Detective Pines’ office.”

“Dipper,” intoned the all too familiar, grim voice of the commissioner. “There’s been another one.”

Dipper bit his lip and shut his eyes tightly to keep himself from cursing, “Where was it?”

“South Lewis Street, the same street that the robbery happened on.” Ford informed him. “How long do you think it will take you to get there?”

He looked at his desk and at the tailcoat that rested there for a moment before responding to Ford. “I’ll be there in half an hour.” He bent down and opened his bottom desk drawer, revealing a half
bottle of bourbon.

“See you soon, Dipper.”

“See you.” Dipper hung up the phone and took the bottle in his hand, popping out the cork and taking a swig of the copper elixir before putting it away again. He straightened himself out quickly, tucking his button-up shirt into his pants and straightening his tie. As he walked across the room, he picked up his black suit jacket from its place on the armchair. When he put his hand on the door knob, he closed his eyes and let out a long exhalation, in an attempt to keep his emotions in check, though he could feel the all too familiar sting of tears.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Gray clouds covered the sky as Dipper drove to South Lewis Street. He parked about a block away and walked the rest of the way, trying to enjoy himself for a brief moment but to no avail. There was only one car in front of the house, the commissioner’s old, beat-up Plymouth.

Ford stood in the front yard of the small blue house, gazing up at the sky before he locked eyes with Dipper, who took note of the case file under his arm. The Commissioner looked a bit relieved to see the detective, which was either a good sign, or not.

“Glad you’re here Dipper.” Ford forced a small smile and nodded, putting his hands in his trench coat.

Dipper looked up at the sky, ignoring his great-uncle’s greeting. “Do you think it’s going to rain?”

Ford shrugged, looking up again for a brief moment. “Who knows?” His eyes lingered on the young detective. “Are you okay Dipper?”

The detective once again ignored him, blinking as he looked at the house. “Have any of the other detectives been notified?”

Ford bit his lip. “None of them were in their offices, since it’s Sunday.” Ford cleared his throat, “The lieutenant told me you didn’t leave your office last night. You also had a visitor?”
“Yeah, Mabel came to see me last night.” Dipper lied. “I must have fallen asleep in my office after she left.”

“Anyway, back to business.” Ford handed Dipper the case file to Dipper. “The victim is Alfred Williams, 29. Your great-uncle had been tailing this guy for years but had never been able to catch him. He always had a flawless alibi.”

“I’ve read some of his file already,” Dipper replied as he flipped through the case file. “I remember how much Stan wanted to catch this guy.”

“Well Stan last saw him at The Skull Fracture Bar last night,” Ford stated, walking toward the front door. “That was what Stan said when I questioned him this morning after he was arrested.”

“Arrested?” Dipper asked in shock as he followed Ford. “What for?” Did he actually do something illegal, or was it just part of his cover?

“There was a particularly nasty bar fight that involved most of the bar.” Ford’s tone revealed his aggravation. “Needless to say, the bar is closed for the next couple of days and I had very little sleep last night.” Ford put on a glove before opening the door to the house. “That was before we got the call for this.”

Dipper dusted the door knob for prints before he entered the house. It was a quaint little home, despite the shotgun that rested over the mantle of the fireplace. The furniture was expensive looking like the furniture in Bill’s house, though it mostly consisted of newer pieces of less exotic origins. The only thing that seemed out of place was the butter knife that had somehow been lodged into the oak floor in the center of an adjacent doorway.

What the hell? How is that even possible? Dipper walked over to the knife and examined it, finding that it had actually been jammed between the floor boards rather than through the actual floor. He scanned some of the floor nearby to see if he could find anything else unusual when he saw the crime scene. His heartbeat immediately picked up when he saw the body.

It was more gruesome than Dipper could have imagined. A pool of dark red blood surrounded the victim, some of which had been used to paint a coded message. KLT VLRSB PBBK X MLOZRMFKB ABQBZQFSB! F QEFKH QEBPB XOB DBQQFKD QLL BXPV CLO VLR, PL FJ PTFQZFSD KLEFKD QEFKDP RM COLJ KLT LK.
Dipper covered his mouth in astonishment as he stared in abject horror, examining the scene closely. He tried to focus on his academy training, how it had prepared him to mentally process murder scenes like this. It wasn’t working very well, but he was going to be able to suppress any thoughts of sickness while investigating.

Despite being tied up, Alfred’s feet had been run through with large steak knives, which were embedded in the floor. Knives littered the man’s body like needles on a pincushion up until his chest. His shirt was open and a long sequence of numbers had been carved into his skin, reading 20-8-9-19 9-19 20-8-5 14-5-24-20 3-15-4-5. 7-15-15-4 12-21-3-11 4-5-20-5-3-20-9-22-5!

The porcupine that the last code referred to… this must be him.

Alfred’s head had been propped up with multiple knives around his neck, which due to the lack of blood in that area, must have happened posthumous. The only blood that even touched his neck was what had either come from his back or the intricate carving on his forehead.

Dipper slowly rose from his position near the floor, hesitantly approaching the victim. He made sure not to step over the message in blood. He pulled out his notepad and pencil carefully transcribing the message and number sequence before he started sketching out the carving on the man’s forehead.

He jumped when Ford cleared his throat from directly behind him and said, “It’s different from the others.” He hadn’t even realized Ford had entered the room.

Dipper continued drawing the triangular carving, not looking back at Ford as he worked. “It’s brutal, just like Mrs. Hemingway’s murder.” Is the murderer targeting people on this block? It’s entirely possible, but maybe it was just a coincidence. Then again, what else could connect a saintly housewife and a criminal? Unless… could they have been having an affair? “Who called this in?”

Ford blinked and adjusted his glasses. “Excuse me?”

“Who called in his murder?” Dipper continued sketching the carving in his notebook.

“One of the neighbors heard shouting from a couple doors down at around 4 AM. We had a couple of officers do a drive by, but everything seemed quiet,” Ford responded sounding mildly defensive. “Why do you ask?”
“He definitely struggled while he was dying. Look at these injuries.” Dipper motioned, pointing with his pencil to Alfred’s legs. “He was obviously awake when this was happening.” Dipper finished the sketch of the carving and began circling the victim slowly, in an attempt to pick up any clues.

“So, what’s your question?”

The detective ignored Ford and muttered to himself. “Someone should have heard him screaming, not just shouting.” His eyes narrowed as he focused on the man’s arms. It appeared that part of one forearm had been bruised prior to the stabbing. “Is there going to be an autopsy?”

“Most definitely. The coroner should be getting here before 11.” Ford checked his watch, “It’s just passed 9:30, so he’ll be arriving soon.”

“Good.” Dipper stood up and put his notepad in his jacket pocket and turned to Ford. “I’ll decipher the code and figure out what the numbers mean back at my office.”

“Are you sure you’re okay, Dipper?” Ford asked. “If this is getting…”

“I’m fine Commissioner,” Dipper replied, walking toward the door. “Call me when you get the results of the autopsy.”

“Dipper, if this case is too much…”

Dipper exhaled shakily, his muscles tensing. “Ford, I can handle this. Trust me.”

He was lying. This was too much and he knew it. But no one else can figure this out except for me. I can’t let anyone else get tangled up in this.

With that, Dipper exited the blue house and walked down South Lewis. The clouds had become darker, a few sprinkles coming down from the sky. It was most definitely going to rain.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~
The sound of Bill’s record player was muffled, but he could still hear the heartfelt melody of “I Don’t Want to Set the World on Fire” by The Ink Spots from the bathroom. He had spent the past three hours soaking in his bathtub, which was still steamy. His feet were propped up on the rim of the tub while his head was tilted back. He let out a long sigh, contemplating the events of the night before.

Why wasn’t it fun this time? It’s always fun.

He closed his eyes, thinking back on the blood and what he did after Al croaked. He had carved the code into his chest and then painted in his blood. It was messy, and he got it all over his shirt and trousers, but OK, at least that part was fun…

But was it really fun?

Bill exhaled with mild frustration and quietly sang the second verse to himself.

I've lost all ambition for worldly acclaim
I just want to be the one you'd love
And with your admission that you'd feel the same
I'll have reached the goal I'm dreaming of believe me
I don't want to set the world on fire
I just want to start a flame in your heart

Bill looked at his blackened hands with a sigh, closing his eyes. Why do I feel like this? I don’t understand.

Maybe you’re starting to regret this game of yours…

He shook his head. He couldn’t let himself think like that. He sat back, trying to lull himself to sleep even though he was in the tub. Despite not having dreams of his own, he still occasionally enjoyed sleeping. A few hours of calm sometimes did him good.

However, this time, for the first time in his millennia long life, he had a dream.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~
Bill found himself in the middle of a desolate wheat field. The once golden wheat had been devoured by a swarm of locusts, which surrounded another figure, swirling and buzzing.

What is this? He blinked and looked around, “I’ve been here before, haven’t I?” His voice echoed through the scene. Something unnatural had been added to his tone. This was usually the voice he used when he was in Dipper’s dreams.

“So you remember this place?” Though Bill wasn’t speaking, his natural voice echoed through the strange land. “Or do you remember it from Pinetree’s dream?”

“I…” Bill shook his head, astonished by what he was seeing, “I’m dreaming?”

The locusts cleared and revealed a young man who looked much like he did, though his skin was pitch black and his spider silk white hair hung down in front of his left eye, though Bill could still see the golden iris and black sclera. The man’s right eye glowed the same piercing sapphire blue that Bill’s left eye did, which matched the strange symbols that were up and down his body. “Of course you’re dreaming. This place doesn’t exist anymore.”

Bill blinked, blurry images flashing through his mind. “Who are you?”

“I am what you used to be… more accurately, I’m what remains.” The man stepped forward, cocking his head. “I didn’t think I’d last long enough to talk with you.”

Bill narrowed his eyes at the stranger. “You left that message in Pinetree’s head, didn’t you? ‘You should run from him.’ Why?”

He shrugged and smiled. “I would have thought it would be obvious to you.”

Bill was not taking kindly to the stranger in his mind. “Why don’t you tell me anyway?”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill’s eyes snapped open when he heard his phone ring, and he immediately summoned it into his room with a snap of his fingers. He forced himself to ignore the slight pain in his left eye as he
answered the phone whimsically, “Yellow?”

“Bill?” Dipper mumbled quietly, so much so that the receiver barely picked up his voice. “It’s me.”

_Something’s wrong…_ Bill cleared his throat, speaking with a softer tone. “Pinetree, hey. How are you feeling?”

“You uh…” Dipper trailed off for a moment. “You left your coat and hat in my office.”

“Yeah.” Bill chuckled lightly. “Should I come get them?”

“No, it’s okay.” Dipper gulped from the other end. “I wanted to apologize…”

“Pinetree, we should meet up and talk about this,” Bill encouraged delicately. Dipper was obviously not functioning at 100% and Bill had to figure out what exactly was bugging him.

“If you want—actually that’s a good idea… yeah.” Dipper responded. “Where do you want to meet up?”

“We could meet in Meadow Park and walk to my house. It’s not that far,” Bill suggested.

“How about we meet in Sycamore Park instead? It’s closer to my house…”

_WAIT, is Pinetree insinuating that I might be spending time at his place? Or is this for his convenience?_ “Yes, that sounds fine,” Bill replied, trying to swallow his curiosity.

“Alright, when should we meet up?”

_Now_. “Whenever is best for you. I’m free for the next couple of…”

“Can we meet up in an hour?” Dipper asked guiltily. “I know it’s sudden but…”
YES! “Relax Pinetree. That’s fine. I’ll see you soon.” Bill smiled.

“Okay. See you,” Dipper mumbled.

Bill waited for Dipper to hang up before he did. *Now, what to wear…*

He got out of the bathtub and dried himself with a snap of his fingers, grabbing his leather eye patch and tying it around his messy blonde hair before doing some quick preening. Once he was satisfied with his appearance he exited the bathroom and went into his room, snatching the first things he saw from his closet. The second he was dressed presentably, he was heading out the door, cane in hand.

For a brief moment he paused and looked up at the dark grey sky. The wind blew past him, seemingly caressing his hair as it continued on through the area. The air felt wet against his face as he contemplated bringing an umbrella, but then he decided against it. He wasn’t going to be out for long.

Chapter End Notes

Chapter eight will be coming in either two or three days as I finish it off and send it to my beta. Things are really starting to heat up, aaaaah I’ve been waiting to write these chapters since I first started the story <3

Once again, major thanks to Maria Albert from fanfiction.net for beta-ing this chapter.
BEFORE ANYTHING, I NEED TO DEEPLY APOLOGIZE. I should have had this posted on Thursday or Friday but life got in the way (also, my boyfriend broke up with me). Sorry for not posting it sooner, I won't let it happen again <3 More notes at the bottom.

TRIGGER WARNING: Minor self-harm in the fourth from last paragraph.

The detective sat in his armchair, staring at the coded message on his notepad intently. KLT VLRSB PBBK X MLOZRMFKB ABQBPQFSB! F QEFKH QEBPB XOB DBQQFKD QLL BXPV CLO VLR, PL FJ PTFQZEFKD QEFKDP RM COLJ KLT LK. Despite how long it was, it would be easy to decode, since it followed the same exact cipher as the messages from before. Dipper pulled out his pencil and worked through the cipher methodically until he got the message.

Now you've seen a porcupine, detective! I think these are getting too easy for you, so I'm switching things up from now on.

Oh my God. He killed him that way... for me? Like... like some sick kind of present? Dipper looked at the number sequence carved into the victim’s chest, trying to figure out its meaning. This cipher was completely new, different, and that frightened him. That fact that this time, it was carved into the victim terrified him. The murders were escalating in brutality and creativity. What would happen next?

He forced himself to study the new code.


Dammit, what does it mean? Dipper’s hand ran through his hair. Come on Dipper, think. You can’t afford to waste any more time.

His heart rate began to quicken with his frustration and before he knew it, he was breathing heavy. Stop freaking out, you idiot! You can solve this!

He couldn’t solve it.
Dipper threw his notepad across the room and marched right to his desk. He opened up the desk drawer and pulled out his half bottle of bourbon, taking a long swig in an attempt to calm himself down. He put down the bottle with a sigh and stared at the torn tailcoat on his desk in silence. I should give this back to him... Even though I pretty much destroyed it.

Before he knew it, he was holding the receiver of his phone and had just finished dialing Bill’s number.

Bill whimsically answered the phone like he always did, “Yellow?”

Dipper was barely able to force himself to speak and when he did, it betrayed how he was feeling. He mumbled so quietly that he doubted the receiver picked up his voice. “Bill? It’s me.”

Bill cleared his throat, speaking much softer. “Pinetree, hey. How are you feeling?”

Dipper bit his lip. “You uh…” he trailed off, trying to gather his words. Just tell him he left his coat and hat. “You left your coat and hat in my office.”

“Yeah.” Bill chuckled lightly, which made Dipper’s heart skip a beat. “Should I come get them?”

Dipper started messing with the receiver’s curly cord. “No, it’s okay.” He gulped. Just apologize to him. “I wanted to apologize…”

“Pinetree, we should meet up and talk about this.”

Dipper’s heart began pounding again. He’ll be mad. When he sees his coat... “If you want…” Or maybe he won’t be too angry? “Actually, that’s a good idea… yeah. Where do you want to meet up?”

“We could meet in Meadow Park and walk to my house. It’s not that far.”

Would I be able to drive out that far? Dipper decided to throw in his own suggestion, “How about
“Yes, that sounds fine.”

Dipper was a little surprised by his answer, “Alright, when should we meet up?” The sooner the better…

“Whenever is best for you. I’m free for the next couple of…”

“Can we meet up in an hour?” Dipper blurted out, biting his lip. Nice one, idiot. “I know it’s sudden but…”

“Relax Pinetree. That’s fine. I’ll see you soon.”

Dipper put his hand on his chest, feeling his heart racing. “Okay. See you.” He hung up the phone quickly, and exhaled. Why is my heart beating so fast? This isn’t normal… He touched his left shoulder with his right hand, his fingers tracing where the scars lay under his clothes. If this has anything to do with… I have to stop thinking like this.

He reached down and grasped the bottle of bourbon again, taking a long drink, and then reluctantly capped it and put it back in the drawer. He stared at the tailcoat on his desk and picked it up, bringing it over his shoulder before crossing the room and taking Bill’s top hat off the coat rack. A small strand of golden blonde hair lingered on the brim of the hat, which he brushed off before placing it on his own head.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill straightened his black suit jacket as he wandered through the park aimlessly, looking for Dipper. The pavement was already showing signs of rain, little dark spots appearing. I should have brought my umbrella. Bill’s cane clicked against the wet ground, breaking the atmospheric tranquility that came from the nature around him.

Rain finally started coming down steadily minutes after Bill arrived, but he didn’t take refuge under a tree like some people did. After some time, the park appeared quite abandoned, with no one else in sight. Not even Dipper.
Is he here? Maybe he left when it started raining? Bill was soaked at this point and probably looked like a mess. Where is he? He continued down the path a bit further, determined to find the young detective.

When he finally spotted Dipper he could tell something was amiss. Dipper was sitting on one of the older park benches with his head down. He was leaning over the tailcoat and top hat, in an attempt to protect them from the rain while he was completely soaked through to the bone.

Bill approached him relatively quietly, standing a few feet in front of him. He cleared his throat, putting on a smile. “Hey Pinetree.”

Dipper looked up, as if he didn’t hear Bill approach him. His red-rimmed brown eyes were wide and his face was so wet that if he had been crying, Bill wouldn’t have been able to tell.

“Hey Bill.” Dipper looked back down at Bill’s coat and hat, first presenting him with the hat. “I… Here’s your hat.”

The scent of alcohol hit Bill’s nose like a freight train. He’s been drinking a lot. And he hasn’t changed his clothes since Saturday.

Bill took his top hat, twirling it with one of his gloved hands before placing it under his arm. “Thank you, Pinetree.”

“About the coat…” Dipper mumbled, scarcely loud enough to be heard over the now pouring rain. He pulled the coat closer to himself, not meeting Bill’s gaze. “I ripped it last night. I’m really sorry.”

“That’s alright Pinetree. I forgive you.” I can fix it anyway, it’s not a problem. “Seriously, it’s fine.”

Dipper stood up slowly, handing Bill the tailcoat. “Again, I’m sorry for…”

“Pinetree,” Bill put his hand on Dipper’s shoulder. “Seriously kid, its fine. I was dumb.”
“What?” Dipper finally met his gaze, looking up at him. He looked tired, almost traumatized.

“That thing I did with the dart was stupid. I didn’t think about how it might affect you.” It was funny though. “So, I’m sorry I pretended to be dead.”

“Oh.” Dipper bit his lip, shrugging off Bill’s hand. As he spoke he became progressively more excited and on edge. “W-Well now that that’s out of the way we can hang out! Uh-I was-I was thinking we could, you know-uh-maybe go to the bar or something? I could use a drink.” Dipper chuckled nervously, his face was flushed.

Bill raised an eyebrow curiously. “I think you’ve had enough to drink today, Pinetree.”

“What?” Dipper’s eyes widened, “No, Bill I’m fine. I only had a little to drink today.”

“What about yesterday? After I left.” Bill hinted. Don’t lie to me kid. It’s so obvious. Something is bugging you.

Dipper looked away, nibbling on his lip. “I-It’s just work stuff. Things have been getting c-complicated.” He shook his head, speaking shakily. “It’s nothing you need to worry about. I can cope with it.”

Yeah right. If Dipper was already breaking down from these first few deaths, Bill would have to play his cards more carefully. “Hey, if things are getting to you, you could always take a break…”

Dipper interrupted him angrily, staring Bill directly in the eye. “Why does everyone always say that? I’m fine!” He took a breath, looking down. “I can’t just take a break! People are dying because of me.”

Because of you? “Pinetree…” Kid, I’m the one who’s killing people.

Dipper’s breath hitched, “I just… I can’t keep waiting around like this. I should be solving the case.” Dipper exhaled angrily. “Damn it, I’m wasting my time with you. Fuck, people could be dying right now.” He started breathing hard, sounding frantic. “Oh god, it’s all my fault. This is all my fault.” He was shaking, his knees became weak as his breathing quickened.
Bill dropped his things, his cane clattering against the pavement. He put his hands on Dipper’s shoulders, leaning down a little bit so he could look Dipper in the eye. “Pinetree, you aren’t killing anyone. This is out of your control.”

Dipper’s jaw trembled as he tried to control his breathing, his eyes watering. He shook his head as he attempted to respond. “I’m not smart enough. I can’t figure this out!”

*What have I done?* “Pinetree ssssh….” Bill rubbed his shoulder gently as he tried to console the detective. “You’re the smartest detective in town.”

Dipper closed his eyes, fighting back tears as his whole body quivered in panic. “No, I’m not! I’m just a failure.” He let out a shaky sob as his knees wobbled. “The killer, he’s going to get me eventually I know it.”

*What? Where’s he getting that from? What would be the fun in that? Why would he think that? I never said that.* Bill’s arms laced behind Dipper’s back as he pulled the detective into a tight hug, partially to calm him down and partially to support him. “I won’t let anyone hurt you, Pinetree.”

Dipper returned his hug, burying his face in Bill’s shoulder as he shook and sobbed.

Bill kept on rubbing his back and hugging him, gently consoling Dipper with a soft tone. His own heartbeat fluttered slightly against Dipper’s chest. *I have to ease up on this. I’m definitely taking a break for a while. For his sake.*

The rain started to come down lighter as Dipper’s panic subsided and after what seemed like hours Dipper’s grip on Bill loosened, his cries dying down. He pulled away, wiping his eyes. “We should get inside. We’re soaked.”

Bill chuckled, a genuine smile on his face. “Did you just notice that now?”

Dipper smiled lightly, sniffling a little bit. “We’re going to get so sick.”

Bill picked up his coat and hat, placing the hat on his own head and then the coat on Dipper’s shoulders. “This’ll at least help a little bit.” *And it makes you look adorable.*
Dipper’s face flushed and he looked away. “You just don’t want to carry it, do you?”

Bill laughed and picked up his cane. “Was it that obvious?”

“You ass.” Dipper chuckled.

“Well…” Bill looked down at Dipper. “To your place?”

Dipper nodded. “I parked my car not too far from here.”

Bill looked up. “Well either way we’re already drenched.”

Dipper looked up as well. “Yeah. I didn’t think it was going to rain.”

Bill studied Dipper with his right eye as the detective looked up at the sky. “Are you sure you’ll be able to drive?”

“What? Of course!” Dipper looked at him accusingly. “I told you I didn’t drink too much.”

“I meant because of what just happened,” Bill responded.

“Yeah, I’ll be fine.” Dipper chewed on his lip. “Thanks by the way.”

“For what?”

“Not telling me to act like a man,” Dipper mumbled.

“Whoever says that isn’t comfortable with their own masculinity.” Bill ruffled Dipper’s hair affectionately. “Let’s get you home.”
Dipper’s apartment left much to be desired. The furniture was all relatively new, though none of it was particularly lavish. The walls were covered in unattractive wallpaper that must have been there since the 1920s, and were otherwise bare: no art, no pictures. The only thing that looked particularly comfortable was the couch. He didn’t own a TV either, but his radio was pretty decent quality.

Dipper looked up at Bill sheepishly as he put his keys into a little basket that rested on a small table near the door. “I’ll get you some clothes and a towel.” Dipper could clearly see that Bill was not satisfied with his surroundings just by the way he looked at the place.

“Alright.” Bill took off his wet shoes and placed them near the door, avoiding the shag carpeting that started about three feet from the door. “Pinetree, would you mind if I turned on the radio?”

“By all means, feel free.” Dipper gave a weak smile at Bill before he went into his bedroom. His heart was beating quickly again, but it was more nervous than panicked. He still couldn’t believe he freaked out in front of Bill like that. He leaned against the closed door as the radio turned on in the other room.

He sighed before straightening himself out, crossing his small bedroom to his even smaller closet. He could barely fit all of his clothes into it, despite the fact that he only had a week’s worth of outfits. He had three suits, the drenched one he had on, a dark brown one, and a black one, along with three pairs of jeans and a few button up shirts. He kept his towels at the very bottom of this closet as well. He stripped down to his underwear and grabbed one of the towels, drying off his body and toweling his hair a bit before he threw it in his hamper. As he started dressing, pulling on a pair of jeans he started hearing singing.

Frank Sinatra’s “A Foggy Day” was leaking through the thin walls of his apartment, and so was the incredibly charming singing voice that must have been Bill’s. Dipper pulled up his jeans and approached the door, opening it just a crack so he could hear Bill better.

I was a stranger in the city
Out of town were the people I knew
I had that feeling of self-pity
What to do? What to do? What to do?
The outlook was decidedly blue
But as I walked through the foggy streets alone
It turned out to be the luckiest day I've known
Dipper found himself exiting the bedroom, slowly walking to the living room. Bill’s impossibly handsome voice not only harmonized with Frank Sinatra’s incredibly well, it completely overshadowed it. Dipper’s heart fluttered as he was practically hypnotized by Bill.

A foggy day in London Town  
Had me low and had me down  
I viewed the morning with alarm  
The British Museum had lost its charm  
How long, I wondered, could this thing last?  
But the age of miracles hadn’t passed,

Dipper gazed at Bill as he stood in the middle of the living room, nonchalantly singing to himself. Bill opened his right eye and glanced at Dipper, a smooth smile gracing his lips as he continued the verse, approaching Dipper.

For, suddenly, I saw you there  
And through foggy London Town  
The sun was shining everywhere.

Dipper was completely frozen as Bill circled him closely, being practically serenaded by the peculiar fellow. He shivered as one of Bill’s hands gently stroked across his bare shoulders, blushing furiously as his heart fluttered.

Bill grinned deviously as he finished the song, standing directly in front of Dipper. He looked down at Dipper and studied him a little, which made the detective slightly uncomfortable, especially when his eye lingered on four deep scars that were draped over his left shoulder. Bill’s smile faded into a smirk as he looked Dipper in the eye. “You forgot your shirt.”

Dipper sputtered a little bit, looking away from Bill in an attempt to gather his thoughts. “I didn’t know you could sing.”

Bill chuckled, “I couldn’t resist. I do enjoy Frank Sinatra.”

“It was good—you were great, actually. Amazing.” Dipper blushed. “I’m sorry, I should probably get dressed.”

Bill shrugged, “Whatever you want, kid.”
Dipper made his way out of the room once again, shutting the door a bit loudly. *That was dumb. That was so dumb. God, I’m such an idiot.* He sighed, approaching his closet again. *Why did he have to stare at me like that? Ugh, I can’t keep thinking like this.*

He touched his shoulder, his fingers tracing along the scars and digging into them. He winced and bit his lip. The memory flashed through his head in an instant before he pulled his hand away. *I can’t keep doing this to myself. I can’t keep hurting myself like this.* He shook his head and went into the closet, pulling out his only t-shirt and putting it on. He grabbed a clean towel out of the closet along with a warm wool blanket before returning to the living room.

And though he tried to keep it out of his thoughts that memory lingered in the back of his mind for the rest of the rainy day and into the stormy night. Even after Bill had seemingly fallen asleep on the couch and he was in his own bed. That sickening memory stayed there.

The moment he was caught with another boy.

He closed his eyes, trying to sleep and push it out of his mind. He fell asleep quicker than he had expected, and when he opened his eyes again, he found himself in a very familiar ballroom.

Chapter End Notes

I will be posting again later in the week, possibly Thursday or Friday, not entirely sure yet. Also I will hopefully have the companion mix up very soon. <3

Major thanks once again to Maria Albert from fanfiction.net for being my beta.
Jive and Shiv

Chapter Notes

I've got multiple warnings for all of you this time! There is major and brutal gay bashing, use of the F-slur, and a couple of other things that might come off as "AH!". My beta told me I might actually need to change the rating to E, but I didn't think it was bad enough. I'm glad I got this chapter out <3

Also, I'd like to dedicate this chapter to Sam, who is recovering from surgery at the moment! (I AM SO SORRY THIS IS THE CHAPTER I'M DEDICATING TO YOU Q_Q )

Thanks again to my beta Maria Albert from fanfiction.net. Check out my tumblr for updates about the next chapter and news about my company mix! If you have any questions, comments or concerns, feel free to comment below or message me on tumblr <3

The sound of trumpets greeted Dipper as he blinked, finding himself at the center of an all too familiar ballroom. The dim cobalt light from the chandelier cast the entire room and all its occupants in a blue blanket. Men and women danced around Dipper energetically to the swing music that came from the big band toward the north side of the ballroom.

The band was warming up, performing an instrumental version of Glenn Miller’s “Doin’ the Jive”. There was one bassist, one percussionist, two saxophonists, five trumpeters, and two vocalists. Each musician was outfitted in a white suit with a golden button-up shirt and they were arced around a small triangular pedestal that was center stage. The only thing that rested on the pedestal was a classic microphone like something off of a 1940s stage. What is this?

The familiar voice of the pyramid man echoed through the ballroom, “Introducing the debut performance of Billy and the Boys.”

A spotlight beamed down on the pedestal, which glittered gold under the light. As soon as the spotlight appeared, there was a man standing right there. The band grew much louder in that instant, the newly materialized singer tapping his gold-threaded alligator skin shoe, as if he commanded them. His black trousers offset his yellow-brick tailcoat while simultaneously matching his floating top hat and eye patch. His golden cat-eye met Dipper’s stare as he smirked, bring his lips gently to the microphone and chuckling mischievously. Not only was he as ridiculous as Bill, he also wore Bill’s face.

“Bill?” Dipper let out with a near gasp. What’s he doing here? He’s never been in my dreams

"Bill"
Bill’s voice echoed through the ballroom like a choir through a cathedral as he began singing. His left foot tapped in time with the song as he took the microphone in his hands.

You clap your hands
And you swing out wide
Do the Suzy Q
Mix in a step or two
Put ‘em all together
And you're doin the jive

Dipper’s eyes flashed to all of the dancers, finding that they were all following Bill’s instructions.

Oh you stomp your feet
You swing out wide
Mess around awhile
Shake it boogie woogie style
Everybody's swinging when you doin the jive

If you can't play Rummy, or at Bridge you’re a dummy
Don't let it bother you
Cause you'll be the King
When the band begins to swing
You'll be a smarty and the life of the party
If you do a bump
And you swing out wide
Truck a little bit
Beat it out
Make it fit
Everybody's happy when they're doin the jive

As the saxophone began its solo, Bill stepped down from the pedestal and the stage enthusiastically, meeting Dipper. He smiled softly, gazing down at Dipper in a way that made Dipper’s heart skip a beat. “Hey Pinetree.”

“Bill, what are you doing here…?” Dipper was completely awestruck. He had never seen anyone he actually knew in these dreams. Something was different this time. Why would Bill be here?

Bill ignored Dipper’s question, substituting an answer with a question of his own. “Can I have this dance?”
“I don’t really dance…”

He took Dipper’s hand, the fabric of his gloves rubbing softly against Dipper’s skin. “You’ve just never had the right dance partner.” Bill smiled, gently pulling Dipper closer to him. “I’ll even let you lead.” Bill put Dipper’s hand on his hip, trailing his own hand up Dipper’s arm before resting it on his shoulder.

As soon as Bill started dancing with him the music slowed, as if Bill was controlling everything that was going on around them. How is he even here? I mean, I know it’s not him but…

“Relax, Pinetree.” Bill leaned forward a bit, his head resting against Dipper’s as they slowly waltzed. “Just relax, okay?”

Dipper’s heart only began beating faster thanks to the proximity. Why does this always happen when I’m around him? Dipper’s eyes flashed to the silhouettes, all of whom were staring at them as they made their way to the center of the ballroom. “People are staring.”

Bill stopped, parting from Dipper for a moment. “Give us some privacy, won’t you?” He snapped his fingers, a blue flame igniting for a brief moment before they all disappeared. The candlelight suddenly turned orange as well, lighting the room normally. He looked down at Dipper, a smirk spreading across his face as he closed the gap between them once again.

How did he do that? Dipper felt Bill’s arm lacing around his back as Bill brought his hand to Dipper’s lips.

“How did he do that?” His finger brushed along the side of Dipper’s cheek before his thumb brushed over his lips.

“Now it’s just you and me, Pinetree.” Bill’s face was inches away from his, and it was driving Dipper crazy.

“Bill…” Dipper’s eyes were wide, his heart pounding against his ribs, as if he was staring death in the face. He wanted to be relaxed and just stay in Bill’s arms forever, but at the same time he was terrified. Is this going to be like before? I can’t get caught, not again. What if I’m just misinterpreting this? Bill’s queer, that’s obvious, but he’s not…
It was almost like Bill could hear his thoughts, “I like whoever I like Pinetree, it doesn’t matter who they are.” Bill lifted Dipper’s chin gently, leaning over him. His whisper was husky; the sort of voice you would only hear in a bedroom. “And I just so happen to be crazy for you.”

Dipper felt Bill’s soft lips pressing against his in a moment of both pure bliss and complete shock. Bill was kissing him. It was a dream, but at the same time it felt so real. *It’s not real, I know it’s not real.* Dipper pulled back, pushing himself away from Bill, shaking his head. “I can’t do this. I have to stop thinking like this.”

“It doesn’t matter if it’s not real.” Bill put his hand on Dipper’s shoulder.

Dipper pushed it away, burying his face in his hands. He couldn’t bear looking at Bill. He had been trying to suppress it all this time, but he messed up. He knew he liked Bill. But they were friends. They could only be friends. “Of course it matters if it’s not real! It’s wrong!”

“Pinetree, look at me.” Bill’s voice was low again, but not sensual like it was before.

“No!”

“Look. At. Me.” Bill took Dipper’s arms, yanking them down from his face. His gloved hand lifted Dipper’s chin, so even if he had tried to look away, he couldn’t now. “Pinetree, it could be real. You just need to trust me.”

Bill’s pupil elongated, and Dipper could feel his inhibitions fade away as Bill pressed another kiss to his lips. This one was filled with more passion than the last and it actually felt real.

Unfortunately, Dipper still couldn’t believe him.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill woke up to the sound of the front door slamming. He sat up and looked around, still on Dipper’s couch. “Pinetree?” *Did he just leave?* Bill stood up, wandering into Dipper’s bedroom. He had been there the night before, manipulating his dreams. Bill always found it easier to manipulate someone’s dreams the closer he was to them.
Dipper’s room was empty. His closet was open, some of the clothes strewn around the room. He had obviously left in a rush. Why did he go? Bill looked around the room, trying to find a possible explanation. Was it the dreams? Did I do something I shouldn’t have? Come on Bill, think. Where could he have gone? Where would he go?

The only two places that came to mind where the police station and the Bang Bang Bar.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper had to forget about his dream. He had to forget about the day before, his feelings, his emotions. He had to forget about Bill. There was only one way that Dipper knew how to forget.

Bill was making him feel this way. It wasn’t intentional but he knew it.

Dipper stopped in his tracks, wiping his eyes and looking back at his apartment. If only there was some way that his dream could be true. What if people wouldn’t care? What if Bill actually felt that way? He couldn’t though. It’s wrong, everyone knows that. It’s an unspoken rule. Men can’t like other men. Unfortunately, Dipper did like other men, and he liked Bill.

“I can’t just abandon him like that…” Dipper muttered allowed. “I need to tell him we can’t be friends anymore.” If they were going to continue leading normal lives, they were going to have to cut ties. Dipper found the nearest payphone and called his own house phone. If Bill wasn’t there he could try Bill’s phone. Knowing how lavish his house was, he might even have an answering machine.

The house phone picked up within a single ring.

“Uh, hello, Pines residence.” Bill’s voice sounded a bit odd. Is he worried?

“Bill, it’s me.” Dipper gripped the phone, closing his eyes, trying to keep his tears down.

“Pinetree, where are you? Why did you leave?”

“Bill, we can’t be friends anymore.” Dipper bit his lip, his heart was pounding already from stress.

“It’s—it’s not you. It’s me.” Dipper let out a shaky exhalation. “I had a dream and—just listen, I know it’s strange but I just can’t handle myself around you.”

“Pinetree, that doesn’t make any sense! Listen to yourself!” He was definitely angry.

“Goodbye Bill.” Tears streamed down his face as he covered his mouth, trying to fight back a sob.

“Pinetree, listen to me!”

Dipper hung up as quickly as he could. He let his feet whisk him away to the only place where he knew he would be able to forget his problems: the Bang Bang Bar.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Before Bill could leave the apartment, Dipper’s phone rang. He debated not answering it, wanting to get out of the house as soon as possible in hopes of finding Dipper, but the thought of it possibly being Dipper again lingered in his mind enough that he picked up the phone. “Uh, hello, Pines residence.” He couldn’t just say his usual hello, in case it wasn’t Dipper.

“Bill, it’s me,” Dipper’s melancholy voice came from the receiver.

“Pinetree, where are you? Why did you leave?” Bill’s hand wrapped tightly around the receiver, waves of concern crashing over him.

“Bill, we can’t be friends anymore.” Dipper blurted out.

“What? Pinetree, why? What did I do?” Was it the dream? Does Pinetree not actually like me in that way? Or is he feeling something that I can’t figure out? Damn it!
“It’s—it’s not you. It’s me.” Dipper let out a shaky exhalation. “I had a dream and—just listen, I know it’s strange but I just can’t handle myself around you.”

“Pinetree, that doesn’t make any sense! Listen to yourself!” Bill’s frustration with himself was clearly audible.

“Goodbye Bill.” Dipper muttered.

“Pinetree, listen to me!” Bill heard the sickening click from the other end before he could gather his words. He had messed up. Something he did in last night’s dream had started this, and he had to know what it was. He had to find Dipper.

He left the apartment in a rush, grabbing his cane, but forgetting his top hat.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper walked down the street, rubbing his eyes. He had left the house at around 11 AM and had spent the day wandering ever since the phone call. It was nearly sunset now, as he found his way to the bar. The sign of the Bang Bang Bar was a welcome sight, yet at the same time, he knew it would do him no good in the long run.

The sound of clinking glasses welcomed him as he entered, sitting at his usual spot at the bar. Vic, the bartender, came over, a glass in hand. “Can I get you anything, Pines?”

“Whiskey,” he muttered.

“Alright,” Vic smiled. He retrieved the bottle of Dewar’s instead of one of the whiskeys from the rail. He poured it into the glass he had been cleaning and placed it on the bar. “There you go.”

“Thank you.” Dipper took the glass in his hand and drank, the copper liquid leaving the glass as soon as it had been poured.

Vic chuckled as he poured Dipper another glass, “I’ve never seen a happy person down liquor so fast.”
Dipper sighed, taking the glass in hand again. “I’m not exactly happy right now.”

“Penny for your thoughts?” Vic asked.

“No thanks.” Dipper responded, taking another drink. “I didn’t come here to think about my problems.”

Vic sighed, frowning. “Well if you need anything kid, just holler.” He looked around. “Where’s Bill? You two never come here without the other one in tow.”

“That’s why I’m here,” Dipper remarked.

“Oh.” Vic blinked, turning back around, topping off Dipper’s glass. “Consider these on the house, kid.”

“Uh, thanks.” Dipper didn’t quite expect a response like that from Vic. Nor did he expect free drinks.

“What? You’re given free drinks now Vic?” one of the regulars laughed as he approached the bar.

Vic shrugged, cleaning another glass. “The kid’s in a bar on a Monday night. He’s had a bad day.”

“Hey, what’s wrong kid?” the man sat down next to Dipper. He was a bit taller than Bill, and about twice as wide. The scent of liquor was stronger from him than from Dipper’s glass of whiskey.


“I understand that.” The man laughed. He looked toward the other end of the bar, back at some of the other regulars before continuing to speak. “You’re the kid that usually hangs out with that Bill guy, right?”

“Uh yeah, why?” Dipper put down his glass.
“Well, we’ve got a message we’d like you to deliver to him.” The man glanced threateningly at him.

“I’m not exactly friends with him anymore—“ Dipper began, before he felt himself get grabbed from behind. One of the men was restraining and immobilizing both of his arms, lifting him right out of his seat by them.

“Let me go! What are you doing?” Dipper attempted to struggle, but it was made extremely difficult by his position.

Vic saw what was going on, his hand reaching under the counter before he had the barrel of a pistol pressed into his face.

“Stay out of this, Vic, if you know what’s good for you,” the man sneered, his brown eyes brimming with rage, as his friend snatched the bat Vic had been reaching for.

“What are you doing? Just let me go!” Dipper yelped frantically.

“Oh no. That bastard needs to be taught a lesson,” one of the other regulars hissed from behind Dipper’s captor.

Dipper struggled as he was taken out of the bar by the three men and pushed into the alley. He fell to the concrete, immediately trying to gain his footing. He was barely able to turn around when one of the men snatched him by the collar and brought him to his feet before punching him in the face. He let out a yelp before another punch connected with his stomach, leaving him breathless. Then the man dropped him, and his back hitting the pavement with a thud.

He coughed, covering his face and trying to get away before the one that had grabbed him kicked him in the ribs. Dipper tried crawling away, clutching at his chest and stomach as he coughed, but it was in vain.

The men’s feet started flying, kicking him over and over, as they hurled insults at him, enjoying his torment. Dipper begged them to stop as they wailed on him, his entire body searing with pain as his blood splattered across the dirty brick of the alley.
The man who had pointed the gun at Vic grabbed Dipper by the throat and shoved him against the brick wall. Dipper tried desperately to get away, squirming, and struggling helplessly. All he managed to do was grab the man’s arm as he was being asphyxiated. He gasped, tears streaming down his face. He mouthed the word, “Please” as the man laughed.

“Look at you beg,” he remarked, spitting in Dipper’s face. “Pathetic.”

Dipper’s hands slipped from the man’s arm, leaving traces of blood on his sleeve. He had to move. He had to get away. If he didn’t he was going to die. But he couldn’t get away, and his struggles were becoming terrifyingly weaker.

The man who had first grabbed him pulled a knife out of his pocket. “If you survive long enough to see that bastard again, tell him he’s next.” With that, he stabbed Dipper in the stomach, twisting the blade.

Dipper silently screamed as his vision faded, the pain completely overwhelming him as the man’s grip loosened around his neck. He fell to his knees, gripping at his stomach as the men laughed and the knife was yanked free.

Each one spit on him before they left, each making their own remark. Pussy. Faggot. Trash.

Dipper lay there, helpless to retaliate, barely able to breathe.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲  ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill walked down the street, looking up at the sunset. He had been to the police station and the bar already hours before and had been wandering around town ever since, trying to find Dipper. His search had been futile; he’d come up empty-handed. He sighed, gently kicking a can off the sidewalk and into the road.

He kept walking down the street, aimlessly meandering until he heard someone call out to him.

“Hey, Bill!” Laughter followed as a car pulled up beside him. It was the regulars from the Bang Bang Bar.
“Ah, hello boys!” Bill put on a fake smile. “Long time no see!”

“If you’re looking for your Pinetree he’s at the bar.” The driver sneered. “We left a present for you with him.”

Bill frowned. Something was definitely not right. “Oh, thank you so much,” he said cautiously.

The men laughed as they began driving off. One of the men stuck his head out the window. “You might want to check the alley!”

The hairs on the back of Bill’s neck stood up immediately as his heart plummeted. He didn’t look back at the men as he started running toward the bar. The only thing that was on his mind was Dipper’s safety. He had to get to Dipper, and fast.

Cold dread filled him. Don’t be dead. Don’t be dead.

His heels scrapped against the pavement as he stopped at the mouth of the alley. The setting sun lit the alley enough so that he could see the crumpled form of the detective. His eye widened and glowed gold as he ran over to the limp body. As he approached he heard a shaky breath come from Dipper, who lay in a puddle of his own blood.

“Pinetree.” Bill dropped his cane and fell to his knees at Dipper’s side. He placed his hand over Dipper’s injury, trying to get a sense of the damage those monsters had done. He looked at Dipper’s paper white face, which had been beaten brutally.

Dipper’s eyes barely opened as he shivered with fear, tears streaming down his cheeks. “Bill…” It was barely a whisper, but it was there.

“I’m not letting you die.” Bill’s voice was completely calm, hiding his inner fear and rage. They’ll pay for what they’ve done. I’ll kill them. No one hurts my t—no one hurts Pinetree and gets away with it.

“Bill. Those men…” Dipper winced, trying to say more.
“Ssssh… Rest up.” Bill smiled sympathetically, putting his hands over Dipper’s eyes as his eye glowed gold. “Just focus on staying alive, okay?”

Dipper’s muscles relaxed as Bill’s spell fell over him. Once he was unconscious, Bill lifted him up in his arms, blue fire engulfing them as they spirited away.

The demon’s homicidal break was over.
Dipper felt aching pains all over his body as he tried waking up and opened his eyes to a seemingly never ending blackness. He could barely move and breathing was nearly impossible, but he somehow managed to keep going. It was odd, almost as if something from outside his being was keeping him alive.

He attempted to let out a pained groan and was mildly surprised when he actually succeeded. His eyes shifted in their sockets; it was bizarre, how he could actually feel his eyes move so distinctly. He strained to see something, anything, but there was only darkness, emptiness. But then suddenly he could hear something. It was distant, but it was there. He listened closely, and gradually realized it was humming, a throaty sound which somehow began filling him with life and energy.

Now, rather than floating in the blackness, he knew he was lying down. He sat up with a loud gasp, and exhaled just as sharply, a gold light emanating from his breath as it swirled from his mouth. The gold light coalesced around him, producing a human silhouette. Indiscernible mumbles echoed through his mind as he was forced to lay back down by the shadowy figure.

A sharp pain started burning in his abdomen, making Dipper let out a loud yelp as his back arched at the unexpected agony. It hurts so much. Make it stop, please. He was astonished that he could even have coherent thoughts at this point.

A gentle hum hit his ears again, and the silhouette’s left hand stroked his cheek as his right hand circled above his stomach. A blue light began leaving Dipper’s body as the silhouette’s left eye glowed the same eerie yet somehow comforting shade. Dipper focused on the ethereal being, trying to ignore the pain it was seemingly trying to prevent. What’s going on? Who is this? Am I dying? Is that an angel?
The silhouette whispered again. This time, Dipper could tell it was actually saying something, but he
couldn’t figure out what it was trying to convey. Its hand caressed his cheek softly once again before
unexpectedly and horrifyingly thrusting deeply into his abdomen. Dipper screamed and writhed in
pain as the silhouette hummed calmly, effortlessly pinning him down as it did its work. *Will this ever
end? Can I just die? Please just let me die…*

“No.”

The voice was unflinchingly harsh as the being ripped its hand out of Dipper’s abdomen, the pain
quickly disappearing with it. Dipper shivered as the silhouette stared at him with its single glowing
blue eye, an elongated snake-like pupil now clearly visibly to him. His heartbeat started picking up,
beating strongly against his ribcage in a familiar way—the way it was supposed to. He hadn’t
realized it until that moment, but before, it had been so faint, he could somehow actually barely feel
his blood pumping through his veins.

“Pinetree.”

“B-Bill…” Dipper couldn’t hear his own voice as his eyes frantically searched for his friend. *Where
is he? How can I hear him?*

“Pinetree.”

The silhouette’s hand gently stroked against his cheek and then drew closer, pressing what must have
been its mouth against Dipper’s forehead. *Was that… a kiss?* Dipper blinked, realizing that this
creature that he had been hallucinating was in fact Bill… or seemed to be. The silhouette pulled
away, becoming clearer, despite the inky blackness engulfing everything else.

And then, miraculously, Bill was there, leaning over him with an ethereal golden glow, like that of
an ancient god. His usually concealed eye, his left eye, was uncovered, revealing scaly skin and a
bloodshot blue iris. Even with that, and the deep concern in his piercing gaze, Dipper could still not
fathom how someone so handsome could possibly exist.

“Rest now, okay?” The left side of Bill’s mouth curled into a crooked and sad smile.

Few words came to Dipper’s mind as he tried to respond. The ones to escape his lips were a simple
question. “Am I…. am I alive?”
Bill’s smile evened out as he spoke quietly to the detective, “Yeah, Pinetree, and you’re going to be just fine.”

Dipper’s eyes fluttered open, focusing on the familiar ceiling of Bill’s cabin. Why do I keep having these strange dreams? He was having trouble breathing due to a heavy weight on his chest. When he looked down, he could see a mess of blond hair, Bill’s hair, as Bill’s head rested right above his heart. He looked like he was asleep, completely still and flawless, eye patch in place. Dipper contemplated just letting him continue to rest there, but before he could make his decision, Bill’s golden eye opened with a fluid motion.

“Pinetree, you’re awake.” Bill sat up and put his hand on Dipper’s forehead, probably checking for a fever. “How’re you feeling?”

“How did you find me?” Dipper’s voice was a bit horse. He attempted to sit up but winced as sharp pain flooded his stomach. “Ah!”

Bill gently forced him down. “Easy there, Pinetree. You don’t want to open that gash up again.”

“Gash?” Dipper looked down at his abdomen. “I was stabbed! Bill, I was stabbed! You need to take me to a hospital!”

“Pinetree, you’re alright. You weren’t stabbed. It was just a little cut. It bled a bit, but you’re fine now.” Then Bill frowned. “You were beaten up, but I found you in time.”

Dipper shook his head. He wasn’t going to blindly believe Bill over his own memory. “No, I was stabbed. I know I was stabbed.” He lifted up the shirt he was wearing, a tank top that must have been Bill’s, and looked at the bandages on his abdomen. They weren’t as thick or as wide as he expected to see. No, I was stabbed. I was definitely stabbed.

Bill put his hands on Dipper’s and looked at him sharply. “Can’t you just accept the fact that you’re alive and move on?”

“No! We need to track down the bastards that did this to me!” Dipper tried getting out of bed this time, only to be halted by Bill once again. “Goddamn it, Bill, let me go!”
“You can’t do any police work in this state—besides you don’t even have your gun or badge with you. Leave it to the cops, okay?” Bill seemed concerned, but there was something else in his stare, something odd.

“Bill, let me do this! Why are you stopping me?” Dipper pushed against Bill’s hands, glaring at him as he started to sweat. Despite the fact that he was ready to chase those men, his body was protesting.

“I’m worried about you!” Bill shouted, something in his voice changing just enough that Dipper felt his pulse pick up. “They could have taken you away from me!”

Dipper blinked, staring straight at him in shock with a hint of fear. “Bill…”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

“I’m constantly worried about you, you idiot!” Bill’s hands dropped from Dipper’s chest as he looked away. *How can you not see that?* “You overwork yourself daily, you drink until you pass out…” Bill looked back at the detective. He could feel his eye quivering but he didn’t want to overplay his hand by crying, even if he was being a bit melodramatic for the sake of convincing him. “Pinetree, at this rate you’ll kill yourself before any goons do.”

Dipper bit his lip, looking away from Bill. “I can’t stop working. I need to find the killer.”

Bill put his right hand on Dipper’s chest, leaning in and closing the gap between them slightly. “Then let me help you.”

Dipper grabbed Bill’s hand by the wrist, pushing it away. “You can’t. Its police business. I can’t let civilians get involved. Besides, you’d be in danger…”

Bill read the rest of his unvoiced thought easily. *I don’t know what I would do if you got hurt…*

He reached out again, this time his gloved hand caressing Dipper’s cheek. Dipper’s brown eyes met his, heat rising in his cheeks as he blushed lightly. Bill gave him a little smile as he stared at the detective warmly, memorizing ever feature before pulling his chin closer.
“I’m not going anywhere, Pinetree,” Bill muttered softly as his nose brushed against Dipper’s, closing his eye before their lips connected. The kiss was slow and sweet from his end, while completely nonexistent from Dipper’s. He was probably pretty shocked. It wasn’t common for men to go around kissing other men—at least, that’s what society thought. In this era, anyway.

Bill parted from Dipper slowly, opening his eye to see the look on the detective’s face.

Dipper was indeed blatantly perplexed by what had just occurred.

Bill chuckled lightly. “Was that alright?”

“You… you kissed me.” Dipper blinked, pulling away from Bill.

“Yes, I did,” Bill smirked proudly. _For real this time, not just in your dreams._

“You realize I’m a guy, right?” Dipper asked stupidly as he put his hand on his chest, as if showing Bill that he didn’t have breasts.

Bill couldn’t help but laugh at that. “Yes, I do. Although, it wouldn’t make a difference if you were a girl. I like who I like.” Bill leaned toward Dipper again, one hand catching Dipper’s chin while the other glided toward the mattress to assist with balance. “And I like you, Pinetree.”

“I…” Dipper couldn’t even force another word out of his mouth.

“Now before you either freak out or try to run away again, do I have permission to kiss you again?” Bill asked for Dipper’s consent, even though he was sure that Dipper would say yes. His words were meant more as an additional distraction for the detective.

Dipper stared at Bill, obviously trying to process what had happened.

_Did Bill really just kiss me? Am I hallucinating? I’m either dead or dreaming. I have to be. There is no possible way…_
Bill could hear every troubled thought. He leaned in again, this time his lips touching Dipper’s ear. “Can I kiss you again?”

A shiver went down his spine as Bill breathed against his ear. He felt Bill’s nose lightly touch his ear and then his neck. Dipper leaned back more, feeling the mattress against his back.

Bill stayed in the position he had been in, looking down expectantly at Dipper. “I’m not kissing you again until you say yes,” Bill taunted gently.

“Please…” Dipper managed to let out, sighing shakily as he blushed.

Bill cocked his head to the side teasingly, his golden eye fixed on Dipper while a smirk decorated his lips, “Please what?”

“Kiss me again, you ass,” Dipper let out breathlessly. He was visibly nervous.

Bill climbed over Dipper on the bed, leaning down on one arm as he kissed him passionately. His gloved hand stroked Dipper’s hip lovingly. His tongue skirted against Dipper’s bottom lip before he parted from the detective for a moment, allowing Dipper to breathe and a chance to protest again, if he needed to.

“Don’t you want to take off your gloves?” Dipper asked breathlessly.

Of course I want to. Bill wouldn’t take them off though. His hands were as black as coal and that would raise more than a few questions. He could only hide so much of his demonic form, but certain things slipped through his magical cloak. His hands, his covered eye and the area around it were all places that were vulnerable. “I wear them for a reason, you know.” Bill sat up, looking at one gloved hand while still leaning on his other palm.

Dipper sat up, taking Bill’s free hand in his own and lacing his fingers between Bill’s. He brought their hands to his lips and kissed the back of Bill’s hand lightly. “I won’t force you to.”

Bill smiled sadly. “You’re too cute for your own good, you know that?”
Dipper blushed and looked away, still holding Bill’s hand. “You’re cuter.”

“Nuh-uh.” Bill pulled Dipper’s hand toward him, kissing the back of Dipper’s hand in the same way Dipper had done for him. “I’m handsome. You are cute.”

“You’re a cocky ass.” Dipper chuckled.

“Well, you’re not wrong there,” Bill smirked playfully, kissing Dipper again. He slipped his tongue into Dipper’s mouth effortlessly, exhaling in satisfaction.

Dipper sighed, wrapping his arms around Bill’s neck and leaning back onto the bed.

Bill caught himself with one arm before he fell onto Dipper, his other hand skirting up Dipper’s side, gently avoiding the bruises as he caressed him. If Dipper wasn’t in such bad shape he would be having so much more fun.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper quietly moaned into Bill’s kisses until they began moving to his jawline. What’s he doing? He gasped when Bill’s lips began to linger against the base of his neck. He shifted his head, granting Bill better access. Whatever Bill was doing, Dipper liked it a lot.

He could feel Bill’s teeth lightly scrape against his neck as he gently sucked on Dipper’s tender skin before parting from the spot. “One more bruise won’t cause much damage, will it?”

A shaky exhale slipped from Dipper’s lips as he tried to relax, though that was difficult, considering what Bill was doing, especially since he could feel Bill slowly moving toward the scars on his shoulder. “May—Maybe you shouldn’t—should stop…”

Bill parted from his neck, looking into Dipper’s eyes in a way that almost seemed predatory, yet concerned at the same time. “Need a break?”
“Let’s just not move so fast, okay?” Dipper breathed.

Bill shrugged and sat up. “Alright, kid.”

“Sorry.” Dipper felt a pang of guilt. *I mean, it’s not like I could do much anyway, right? I hurt all over.*

“I wasn’t going to do much, I know you’re hurt.” Bill sighed, echoing his thoughts. “I mean, I was the one who fixed you up.”

“I thought so.” Dipper sat up, putting his head on Bill’s shoulder. “Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For saving me.” Dipper’s hand slid into Bill’s, gripping his hand gently.

“And thank you.” Bill’s thumb stroked the back of Dipper’s hand.

“For what?” He looked up at Bill curiously.

“For not dying.” Bill smiled.

Chapter End Notes

So this chapter was supposed to be out last Friday... whoops! Life got in the way again Q_Q more details on Tumblr. Story wise, everything changes from here on out! That means there will probably be a combination of lighter and extremely dark tones. Some chapter will definitely be kind of fluffy but other chapters are going to be like WOAH. I don't quite know when it's all going to end, but I'd say we're about 30% of the way through the story. Lots of angst, murder, family drama, and fun to come. I'd like to thank everyone for continuing to read the story and for commenting. The wait for next chapter might be a little bit again, because my outline for the story kind of has a dead space right at this point, so I'm going to have to figure out a bit more than usual what to do next
haha!

Once again, billions of thanks to my beta, Maria Albert from fanfiction.net
Recovery

Chapter Notes

THAT WAS A REALLY LONG WEEK. Sorry it took so long everyone. School and life got in the way to the extreme--not to mention the holidays! Also I had writer's block and a bunch of work. BUT I HAVE RETURNED! I was going to post this chapter on Friday actually, but edits were finished at 12AM and I needed to wake up at 3AM for a flight to Columbus, Ohio haha! I'll get this next chapter up ASAP, but I won't guarantee the week since I'm on vacation, 2,700+ miles from home.

Why am I in Ohio? I'm hanging out with one of my best friends <3

Dipper had taken the week off while he recovered from his injuries, spending the time reading and getting accustomed with his new relationship with Bill. Bill insisted that Dipper stay over at his place while he was recuperating, and as much as Dipper enjoyed the idea, he knew he couldn’t stay at Bill’s house forever. He had to solve the case and it wasn’t going to get solved if he was lying in the bed of his lover.

Especially when that lover spent most of his day watching over him.

At first, Dipper didn’t mind the attention. He would have been just as watchful if Bill had gotten attacked, but after six days of doing nothing but lying around and being waited on, it was getting monotonous and he was anxious. So on the seventh day he got out of bed and called Ford.

“Commissioner, I’m coming back in today. I’m going to be a bit late though.”

“You sure you’re up for it, Dipper? If you’re still recovering from your accident—”

“Ford, I’ll be fine.” Most of Dipper’s bruises were gone already, and what remained wasn’t nearly as vivid as it used to be. His gash was still in the process of healing, but he figured if he didn’t stretch it he would be alright. “It’s only a few bruises.”

“Only if you’re sure. Dipper, before you go,” Ford cleared his throat. “Your father called. He was asking about you.”
Dipper sighed, “If he calls again, tell him I’m fine.” Dipper hadn’t talked to his dad for four years, mainly because his father had to travel for his government job, but also because they didn’t have much in common. “I’ll see you soon.”

“Goodbye,” Ford said, still sounding a little worried.

Dipper hung up the phone as he felt Bill’s arms lace around his neck. Bill’s body was warmer than the cool air in the cabin, as if he was a thick winter blanket being draped over Dipper’s shoulders. Dipper smiled slightly and closed his eyes, relaxing against him. “Good morning.”

Bill hummed in response, burying his face in Dipper’s messy hair. Over the week, Dipper had observed that Bill wasn’t usually a morning person. And unlike the detective, Bill expressed his affections laconically.

“I’m going to work today,” Dipper opened his eyes, looking up at Bill. He doubted Bill would respond well.

Bill groaned in protest, putting his hands on Dipper’s chest and pulling him into a sort of reverse hug.

“Bill, come on, I don’t have time for this.” Dipper’s brows furrowed in annoyance as he exhaled through his nose.

“You’re still in pain. I can tell.” Bill grumbled into the brunette’s hair.

“That’s not going to stop me from going.” Dipper sighed.

“I know.”

Dipper rolled his eyes, “Then why won’t you let me go?”

“Someone has to look after you,” he muttered into the crook of Dipper’s shoulder. “Since you obviously won’t take care of yourself.”
Dipper exhaled again. He knew Bill was just looking out for him, but it did annoy him just a bit. “I’ll be back after work, okay?”

Bill’s grip loosened as he released the detective. “Mm, I think I’ll see you before then.”

Dipper raised an eyebrow as he turned around, finally facing Bill. “Oh, really now?”

Bill’s blonde hair was a lovely mess of curls since he had just gotten out of bed, and even then his eye patch was still on as neat as usual. His visible eye was half open and his lips were curled into a devious smirk. Dipper tried to ignore his handsome form, particularly his chest, which was bare and tan. Dipper blinked, gazing down at Bill’s hands. They looked perfectly ordinary, which made Dipper wonder why he always insisted on covering them.

“Ever heard of surprises, Pinetree?” Bill stepped closer and put his finger under Dipper’s chin, tilting his head up so he could gaze into Bill’s eye, “I can’t spoil all the fun now, can I?” The texture of his skin was a bit odd, as if there was powder on his hands. Is he wearing makeup?

Dipper blinked as his heart fluttered before Bill pulled away.

“You best get dressed in your suit before I take off your pajamas for you.” Bill teased, flashing a toothy grin.

Dipper smiled, “Next time, honey.”

Bill blinked, “Honey?”

Dipper blushed in embarrassment, “Would you rather I called you my sunflower?” He asked in a slightly mocking tone.

Bill chuckled and kissed him quickly, “Oh hell no.”

Dipper smiled, “Well, I’m going to take a shower.”
Bill smirked and teased, “May I join you?”

Dipper blushed furiously, “Take me out to dinner first, pervert.”

“Oh, I’d rather take you in, Pinetree,” Bill teased.

Sometimes, Bill was almost too annoying for his own good.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper opened the front door to the police station. He didn’t expect to be bombarded by the sound of his family, all of whom were grouped together in the foyer. Mabel, Stan, and Ford were all waiting for him.

“Welcome back, Dipper!” Mabel yelped and ran up to him, hugging him tightly.

“Mabel?” Dipper blinked, wincing a bit as Mabel’s remarkably strong arms wrapped around his torso. He looked up at both his great-uncles. “Stan, Commissioner—”

“It’s okay to drop the formalities Dipper.” Stan laughed, “We’re glad you’re back on the job kid!”

“I’ll admit, the station wasn’t the same without you here.” Ford smiled. “We all missed you.”

“I missed you all too.” Dipper hugged Mabel back so that she would finally release him. He wasn’t used to all of this attention. It felt surreal, making him almost uneasy.

“Stan, get the cake!” Mabel squeaked.

He laughed hardly, “Yes ma’am.”

The welcome back party went by in a haze for the young detective. It didn’t feel right. There was too
much excitement and joy. Nothing had been accomplished. The killer was still out there, and sure he hadn’t killed anyone else yet, but Dipper knew that he would strike again. Dipper scraped the last bite of cake off the plate with his fork and popped it into his mouth as he continued to think, the sweetness of the chocolate practically undetectable to his distracted mind.

The only thing that invaded his thoughts was the deep voice of the Commissioner. “Dipper, we need to talk.”

Dipper swallowed hard, putting the plate down on the table. “Of course, Commissioner.” He looked at Mabel and smiled lightly. “Back to work.”

“Be careful this time, okay?” Mabel smiled sadly at him before beginning to clean up the party favors.

_I wasn’t wearing my badge when I got attacked_, Dipper thought, but aloud he only said, “I will be.” Dipper waved at Stan before following the Commissioner to his dark office.

Ford’s office was similar to Dipper’s office in a few ways. It was cluttered, the walls decorated with newspaper clippings from years of police work that showed off his achievements, along with pictures of the whole family. Stan and Ford as young boys, Ford with his late wife, Stan with his obviously pregnant ex-wife in Vegas on their wedding day… Ford with his arm around Dipper’s father Dennis on the day he graduated the police academy…

Dipper didn’t have issues with his father necessarily, but he didn’t love him or idolize him either. After he got his job in DC, he had moved away from the rest of the family. Sure he would send checks, but after he left he hadn’t even sent a single letter. Ford had been more of a father to Dipper than Dennis had ever been.

Ford moved a pile of papers off his desk before sitting down and groaning lightly, “Your sister does make the best chocolate cake.” He motioned with his hand to the leather chair across from him, “Please Dipper, sit down.”

He sat down, scooting a bit closer to Ford, “What do you need, Commissioner?”

“Well, I was wondering how the code was coming.” Ford looked up at Dipper, adjusting his large glasses, “I know you were working on it while you were out.”
Dipper bit his lip, “I’m a workaholic; I can’t help it.”

“Well?” Ford leaned forward, raising a bushy grey eyebrow.

“I…” He hadn’t solved it. He wasn’t even close to it. He had been so distracted by Bill lately that he hadn’t even had a chance to really sit down and work on it. “I haven’t figured it out.”

Ford sighed, “I’m sure it will come to you. If not, Dennis might be able to help out.”

“That’s the second time you mentioned him today,” Dipper leaned back in the chair and frowned. “Is he coming back here or something?”

Ford bit his lip and confessed, “I contacted Dennis a few days after your incident. There’s a possibility that the FBI might be sending him here.”

“Ford, you can’t be serious!” Dipper stood up. “I can solve this. We don’t need help from the FBI.”

“Yes we do.” Ford stood up too. “Dipper, I know you don’t have the best relationship with him but we need him right now. This isn’t a small town case anymore. People are dying.”

“People have been dying this whole time!” Dipper exclaimed.

“And they’re still dying, Dipper!” Ford slammed his fist on his desk angrily. “You may be our best detective, but god damn it, you’re still a rookie! We need a professional’s help—”

“We are the professionals! You just want to get Dennis involved because you want the family back together!”

“We need Dennis because he’s smarter than you!”

“No, he’s not!” Dipper turned around and stomped out of the office, slamming the door behind him so hard that the frosted window pane cracked. This wasn’t what Dipper wanted. Dipper didn’t need help, much less any help from him.
Just then, Desk Sergeant Corduroy came down the hall. “Oh, Detective Pines, there you are.”

Dipper exhaled, trying to retain his usual demeanor. “Wendy, what’s going on?”

“You have a visitor. He said his name was Bill Caesar.”

“Bill?” What the heck is Bill doing at the station? Has something happened? “Is he waiting at the front desk?”

“Yeah, I told him to wait there while I got you, since I was pretty sure you were with the commissioner.” Wendy glanced at the window pane. “When did that happen?”

“About a minute ago,” Dipper admitted as he walked passed her. “Just tell Bill to come to my office.”

“Uh, alright,” she said, glancing uncertainly from him to the broken window.

Dipper made his way to his office quickly and closed the door behind him. He leaned against the door and exhaled, closing his eyes as they began to sting. God damn it. Can’t I do anything right?

He felt a light knock on the door and he knew it was Bill.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill waited on the other end of the door, his gloved hands holding a small box with Dipper’s lunch, one the demon had special prepared just for him. He could tell something was wrong before he even knocked on the door, as if Dipper’s thoughts were actually leaking out of his head and into the world around him.

“Pinetree, it’s me.” Bill greeted, hoping that the detective would open the door if he knew it was him.
Dipper opened the door and looked up at Bill before grabbing him by the arm and yanking him into the room.

*Well, this isn’t what I expected.* Bill placed the lunch on a stack of books next to the door before gracefully sinking into Dipper’s old arm chair.

“What are you doing here?” Dipper nearly hissed.

“I came to bring you lunch of course. And to make sure my favorite detective was still in working condition.” Bill smiled coyly as he leaned back and stretched out his legs.

Dipper groaned and rolled his eyes, “I don’t have time for this, Bill.”

“Don’t have time for what?” Bill teased, loosening his yellow tie ever so slightly as he stared at Dipper.

“You. Now get out.” Dipper pointed to the door.

“Pinetree, what’s wrong? I thought you’d be happy to see me.”

“Not at work. Now get out.” Dipper glared.

Bill stood up swiftly and frowned. “What do you mean, ‘Not at work’?”

Dipper sighed, “People can’t know about this—about us, okay?”

“What do you mean ‘about us”? Pinetree, they think we’re friends.”

“They’ll catch on, especially with you parading around the way you do.”

“And my parading is a bad thing?” Bill crossed his arms and raised an eyebrow. *That was rude.*
“Y—No, it doesn’t I just—”

Bill felt his pupil elongate as his voice commanded him, “Pinetree, tell me what’s wrong, now.” He probably shouldn’t use his power like this, but this was the quickest way he knew how to get information.

Dipper looked into Bill’s eye and was instantly under his hypnotic spell. His shoulders squared out and his breathing evened out as he spoke, “Dennis might be coming to Gravity Falls.”

“Who the fuck is Dennis?” Bill demanded.

“My father,” Dipper explained.

“And that’s bad?” Bill asked, feeling his pupil dilating back to normal.

“Not really, I just…” Dipper bit his lip, “Look, I need to solve this case and neither Dennis coming back or you being here is going to help with that.”

“Hmm, I’d beg to Dipper,” Bill smirked, tilting Dipper’s chin up.

“Stop it.” Dipper pulled away from Bill. “I don’t have time for this.”

“Then what do you have time for?”

“Solving the case.”

Bill sighed and kissed Dipper on the forehead. “I’ve got work tonight so I can’t babysit you at my house, okay?”

“You still haven’t told me where you work.”
I should probably come up with a better excuse. Bill winked, “I can’t have you just coming into my office whenever you want—I won’t have time for it.”

Dipper sighed and smiled. “I’ll see you tomorrow then.”

“Goodbye, Pinetree.”

“Bye.”

Bill closed the door, his demeanor changing in an instant. Dipper was still hurting, physically and mentally—something that Bill refused to ignore. He was never going to let anyone hurt his Pinetree ever again. He was going to see to it.

Bill started whistling the gang rumble song from West Side Story as he started walking down the hall. It was time for some sweet revenge.
Arthur Henderson woke up in his king-sized bed to a strong clicking sound as someone finished fastening him down with leather, belt-like restraints. His eyes met the almost glowing golden eye of the all too familiar pansy from the Bang Bang Bar. “W-What’re you doing…?” he asked, panic already building in his voice as he tried struggling. *How did I not wake up? I should have heard him!* 

Bill smiled wider than seemed possible for a human, as a deep, dark chuckle filling the room. He crossed to the other side of the bed, leaned down, and picked up a small black bag from the wood floor. He reached into the bag, pulling out what appeared to be an oddly shaped gun and raised the back of it to his lips in an obscene kiss. 

A chill went down Arthur’s spine as he watched the man. “What do you want? I’ll give you whatever you need, just let me go!” He had to distract him, stop him somehow. *Why is he here? What’s he after?* 

“Oh, you’re just where I want you, Arthur.” Bill twirled the gun in his fingers, and then crossed back to the right side of the bed, blocking out the moonlight that shined through the single window. He grabbed Arthur’s arm, forcing it against the nightstand as he pressed the barrel against Arthur’s palm. He pulled the trigger without hesitation, the bullet tearing through flesh, muscle, and bone before entering the wood of the nightstand. 

Arthur let out a sharp groan, clenching his teeth to keep from screaming, as he tried to yank to yank his hand toward his body, but to his horror found that it was somehow fastened to the nightstand. *What kind of bullet was that?* 

“Oh, did that hurt?” Bill teased, playfully twirling the bizzare gun in the moonlight. “Isn’t she a beauty? I bet a guy like you’s never seen a nail gun before, am I right?” he taunted.
Nails? It shoots nails? “Fuck you, psycho!” Arthur spat with false bravado, trying to hide how terrified he was of the grinning lunatic.

Bill let out a quiet laugh as he crossed to the other end of the bed, “That wasn’t very nice, Arthur. You should really be more polite to your guests.” The nail gun went off again, a nail going into his right foot and into the footboard and then again as another nail went through his left foot.

Arthur tried to turn his scream into a roar of pain as he struggled helplessly against his restraints, in spite of the adrenaline pumping through his veins. “Let me go, asshole!”

“You really don’t know how to beg, do you?” Bill’s glare permeated the darkness, his golden eye glowing with something cruel, something evil. Inhuman.

“W-What are you?” Arthur gasped, his eyes widening in horror.

Bill didn’t answer as he pressed the barrel against Arthur’s left hand, nailing it to the headboard without so much as a blink.

Blood was beginning to leak out of the holes in Arthur’s hands and feet, though the nails themselves were keeping the wounds from bleeding too profusely. “Stop! Stop, damn it!” He shut his eyes as he felt another nail go through him, and another, trying to hide the humiliating tears of pain in his eyes from the monster that was torturing him.

The nails kept piercing his skin, making it harder for Arthur to contain his inner screams. Arthur wouldn’t allow Bill to have the satisfaction of hearing him beg or whimper. After the twenty-first nail there was a momentarily lull in his agony, giving him a brief moment of hope as Arthur thought that the psycho had finished. He heard a click and opened his eyes.

Bill was standing over him, the nail gun prepared to push a fifth nail into his left foot, but it had jammed before the job was done. He stood up, looking at the weapon as his brows furrowed. “Well, this simply won’t do.” He tossed the gun back into his bag, a resounding thud echoing through the room.

“You’ll pay for this, you monster!” Arthur shouted, hating how pathetic the threat sounded, as he continued struggling.
“I already paid in full years ago,” Bill commented calmly. He put his right hand to his chin and leaned back slightly, as if trying to figure out what to do now that his toy was broken.

Why the fuck is he after me? I have to get out. I can’t let this sadistic faggot kill me. I need to—at that moment, Arthur belatedly realized exactly what this was about. This is about that Pinetree brat. He wants revenge. Somehow knowing the motive made him feel more in control. Arthur smirked and let out a low chuckle, trying to play it cool.

“What are you laughing about?” Bill asked, raising an eyebrow, his single good eye focusing on Arthur.

“This is about that Pinetree brat, isn’t it?” Arthur challenged with a smile. I’ve got him now. I’ll be able to escape.

Something changed in Bill’s expression as he stepped into the moonlight, approaching the bed once again. This time when he spoke there was an odd reverberation to his voice, like the echo from a fan. “Don’t you dare talk about him.”

I knew it! Arthur’s taunts began falling off his silver tongue like rain from the sky, “You should have heard his begging. ‘Please don’t kill me! Please!’ I can’t believe you could stand that pathetic little brat.”

Arthur paled, belatedly realizing his deadly mistake when Bill’s eye changed again. The pupil elongated vertically, until it looked like a snake, or a cat, as he raised his hand, pulling off his black glove with his now sharpened teeth. His hand was black, like it had been covered with charcoal. He stretched out his hand, pliers suddenly appearing in his grasp, as if materializing from thin air. He wasn’t smiling anymore.

Whatever he was, it wasn’t human.

What the hell is he? Is he a demon? “W-Who are you?” Arthur’s voice finally trembled as the fear of death settled in his bones.

Bill didn’t answer as he ripped Arthur’s left hand away from the nails, tearing through tendon and muscle, the snapping of bone hitting his ears. Arthur screamed, all thought of acting tough vanishing from his mind.
The end of the pliers gripped one of Arthur’s fingernails as Bill began to slowly rip it away. Arthur began begging, he had no idea what he was saying, promising, bargaining, but every scream and word and whimper fell on deaf ears, as the demon pulled of his fingernails one by one, like a child pulling petals off a daisy.

Arthur could barely process the demon’s words, struggling to make sense of them through his haze of shock and pain. He prayed that Bill was agreeing to accept some kind of bargain, whatever it could be. He focused as best as he could, listening as Bill spoke.

A twisted smile spread across Bill’s face as he ripped away at his fingernails. “Pinetree loves me. He loves me not,” as he said the word “not” he ripped away at the nail with vengeance. “Pinetree loves me. He loves me not.” Bill chanted, his tone low and calm, like he was repeating a mantra. “Pinetree loves me. He loves me not.” Again and again, Arthur’s nails were ripped from his fingers. Arthur could feel himself losing focus by the forth nail, his already mutilated fingers going numb.

“Ah, ah, ah, I’m nowhere near done.” Bill accused calmly before continuing his demented game.

“I’m sorry I hurt him! I’ll do anything!” Arthur begged pitifully, “Please, just let me go!”

Even though Bill was running almost entirely on his instincts he stopped, looking up directly into Arthur’s eyes and gave another yank on the final fingernail on his hand with the blood soaked pliers. Arthur cried out once again, trying to pull himself away from the demon.

“How pathetic,” Bill commented, the pliers reforming into a long steak knife.

Arthur’s eyes widened in terror. “Please, no, no more, stop!” Arthur pleaded.

“Remind me Arthur,” Bill cooed coldly, twirling the knife in his fingers before leaning in, putting it to the sniveling human’s neck. “Why would I show you any mercy? You didn’t spare Pinetree, so why should I spare you?”

“Please don’t kill me. I’m so sorry! I shouldn’t have hurt him. You can have all my money, my car, this place, whatever you want! I’ll leave town, I swear! Just don’t kill me, please!” Arthur began sobbing, “Please don’t kill me! Oh god, please!”
“At least try to be more eloquent,” Bill sighed, gazing down at the maggot with nothing but disgust and hatred.

In one swift movement he slit Arthur’s throat with artistic precision, cutting through the muscle, anterior jugular, and cartilage with the razor sharp blade. He grabbed Arthur’s hair and forced his head back in order to get better access to the neck of his victim. He dropped the knife onto the bed spread before reaching up into the opening in his throat, feeling for his tongue. Once it was in his grasp, he pulled it down, ripping it as he went, pulling it through the wound. “A proper necktie for someone like you, wouldn’t you say?”

Arthur merely gargled, the light faded from his eyes as he stared at Bill, vainly trying to let out a final plea or curse.

Bill laughed sadistically, relishing in the gleeful feeling as Arthur choked on his own blood, a large and inhuman smile spread across his twisted face. “Oh come now Arthur. Use your words.”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper woke up to the sound of his telephone ringing. He sat up and stretched in his bed, scratching at the scars on his shoulder before picking up the phone and leaning back. “Pines residence.”

“Dipper, I need you to come to the station immediately.” Ford’s voice came through the line.

_There’s been another murder._ “I’m on my way, Commissioner.” Dipper replied.

“Alright, goodbye.” Ford hung up as soon as he had spoken, which was a bit odd. Ford wasn’t usually so abrupt. Maybe something else was going on at the station as well?

Dipper got dressed in his navy blue suit and black tie, only taking a little time to comb his hair with his fingers and wash his face before he left the apartment. He hadn’t talked to Bill since yesterday’s incident and he felt bad. It was becoming more and more apparent that the stress of the case was not only harming his familial relationships, but it was also hurting their relationship. It had been some time already since the porcupine murder, and Dipper still had yet to solve the cipher. His stress was affecting the actual case. This had to stop.
He drove to the station as fast as the Lincoln and the law would allow and parked, walking briskly inside to meet the commissioner. Ford was waiting for him in the lobby, a cigar between his fingers as he leaned against one of the walls.

“Commissioner.” Dipper approached him, only just now remembering the events of the previous day. Ford might still be mad.

“Thank God,” Ford looked in his direction and moved toward him, picking his overcoat off the coat rack.

“Another murder?” Dipper asked as they exited the station, walking to Ford’s car.

“Yes, but this one is different from the others.” Ford cleared his throat as he opened the car door, dropping his cigar into the ash tray. “There’s no note.”

Dipper buckled in with a confused expression on his face. “There’s always a note.”

“Exactly,” Ford turned the key in the ignition and pulled out of the parking lot. “That means we’re more than likely dealing with a copycat killer.”

Dipper remembered back to his time in the police academy, specifically while he was studying old case files, and thought of the most significant copycat killings he could think of. The Blackout Ripper emulated Jack the Ripper’s style of killing by mutilating his victim’s bodies in a similar fashion. If Ford thought that there was a copycat of the Cipher Case, Dipper could only imagine how grotesque this corpse could be.

The two arrived on the scene, which was cordoned off with police tape. Two other police cars were parked in the driveway and the officers were talking to a few of the neighbors, making sure to keep them away from the house. This had been another at-home murder, just like the Eldorado and Porcupine killings, along with a few of the previously deemed suicides. As Dipper entered the house, following Ford, he could already feel his stomach churning.

Ford opened the bedroom door, the stench of iron and salt hit Dipper as he stared at the pale and blood-soaked corpse. His neck had been sliced open in a grotesque and brutal manner, as the victim’s tongue had been yanked down and through the injury, in what was obviously the cause of death. Hundreds upon hundreds of nails had pierced his flesh, a majority of which had apparently been done posthumously considering the lack of blood around them. His fingernails had been ripped
out, as part of the torture. Yet even the gruesome and gory sight of the victim’s injuries wasn’t the most disturbing thing to Dipper. It was who the victim was.

This had been one of the men who had attacked him. This was the man that came with the man with the gun and the one who restrained him.

“The victim is Arthur Henderson,” Ford started. “We got an anonymous call at the station from a payphone about three blocks away at 4AM, presumably from the killer.”

“And you’re sure there wasn’t a note?” Dipper asked, a small amount of shakiness detectable in his voice.

“No, there isn’t one.” Ford shook his head. “At least, if there is one it hasn’t been found, and they’re usually easy to spot.”

Dipper nodded wordlessly as he approached the corpse apprehensively, putting on a pair of gloves that he kept in his blazer’s pocket. He must have taken the knife that was used to cut open the throat. *I can’t dust the nails for prints either, I wouldn’t get anything conclusive.*

“Any luck with the last cipher?” Ford asked, watching Dipper as he worked.

“Nothing yet,” Dipper replied tersely.

“I see,” Ford replied neutrally.

Dipper was certain he could hear a trace of concealed disappointment in Ford’s voice. “Did Mr. Henderson live with anyone?” Dipper asked abruptly, walking around the corpse and studying it. This victim was different from the others for multiple reasons. The lack of a note and the fact that the killer obviously wanted Arthur Henderson to suffer as much as possible. The killer clearly relished in it. Even after his death, the murderer continued to destroy his body. This wasn’t his usual MO. There was too much emotion, anger and hatred, behind this. This killing was for revenge. *Who would want to kill Arthur Henderson?*

“No, he lived alone,” Ford stated. “According to his neighbors he usually went to work and to the Bang Bang Bar, but other than that he stayed home. Most of his family lives out of state.”
“Have they been contacted?” Dipper asked, hoping he wouldn’t have to be the one to do it.

“Not yet.” Ford admitted with a weary sigh.

There’s another difference with this one. Something’s bugging me, but what is it? “Did he have any friends in the area?”

“He had some drinking buddies at the bar, but other than that we haven’t been able to dig up anything,” Ford replied

“Past criminal activity?”

“He was arrested twice for assault and battery, but he has been involved in a couple of other fights at the bar from what Stan was able to tell me.”

Something still isn’t right. Why would the killer want revenge? Maybe he was attacked by Mr. Henderson… “Something still doesn’t feel right to me. I think this is a revenge kick.”

“Revenge?” Ford asked.

“Henderson did something to the copycat and the copycat wanted to torture him.” But something still doesn’t feel right.

A voice came from behind them that made a shiver go up Dipper’s spine, “Why are you assuming this is a copycat when you know for a fact that the killer’s MO has changed in the past?”

Ford looked behind Dipper. “Oh, I didn’t expect you to arrive so soon, I thought you were coming in next week.”

“I figured it had been long enough between the killings that another one might crop up,” The man put a hand on Dipper’s right shoulder as he passed him. All the hairs on the back of Dipper’s neck stood up as his knees locked. It was him.
“Well, we’re glad you could make it, right Dipper?” Ford gave a small smile.

“You’re still going by that old nickname?” the newcomer asked, not even looking back at the detective. “I thought you would have outgrown it by now.”

Dipper swallowed. “Something’s never change.” You certainly never do.

“I guess not,” he replied. He began to examine the body himself.

It was aggravating watching how he did things. He brushed his graying brown hair back and squinted his blue green eyes as he examined the corpse with a trained precision from years of detective work that Dipper had yet to acquire, but when he knelt down he was almost surely unbalanced. If Dipper shoved him, he would fall right onto the corpse and destroy the evidence.

And the thought of pushing him entertained Dipper’s mind for longer than it should have.

“Dipper, you said that something didn’t feel right?” he asked.

“Yes, but I’m not sure what though.”

He nodded and stood up, “Some of these nails were hammered in posthumously.”

“Brilliant observation, Mr. Holmes, but we figured that out already—” Dipper began impatiently.

He put a hand in front of Dipper’s mouth to silence him. “Let me finish Dipper.” He cleared his throat before continuing. “Some of the nails in his hands and feet are deeper than others, meaning he used two different weapons.”

He pointed to some of the nails closer to Arthur’s wrists and ankles. “See how there is more damage around these than these? I think a majority of these were done with a hammer, as you can see by this broken rib here,” he pointed to a nail that was sticking out of a dent in Arthur’s torso. “But these ones in the feet and hands were done using some other weapon, like a nail gun.”
Unfortunately, his skills of observation could not be matched, even by Dipper. He hadn’t looked close enough at the nail wounds, focusing more on the horrific throat wound, the clear cause of death.

“You never cease to amaze me, Dennis,” Ford commented. “You know, Dipper might someday be as good as you.”

“Might,” he echoed, looking at Dipper for a moment out of the corner of his eye. He put his hands on his knees and stood up. “Ford, can you call the coroner and have this body taken to the hospital. It would be easier to do a full autopsy there.”

“Will do.” Ford exited the room, leaving Dipper alone with the man.

Something else was off, but Dipper knew it didn’t have to do with the actual corpse. It was just a feeling. “So, you don’t think it was a copycat?”

“No, I think this is the same killer. If not, this killer is affiliated with the previous one.” He looked down before tilting his neck just a bit to look up at Dipper. “You’re taller than me.”

“And?” Dipper asked acidly.

“We were the same height before,” Dennis said with a shrug.

“Can we not do this in front of a corpse?” Dipper’s voice gave away his inner frustration.

“It’s just a corpse. You’ve seen them before,” Dennis said dismissively.

“It’s still a body,” Dipper argued. He really didn’t want to have a familial conversation with him.

“Is something on your mind?” Dennis raised an eyebrow curiously.
Dipper sighed, “Yes, obviously. How very astute. Are you going to get a metal for this deduction too?”

“I let the Sherlock Holmes comment slide, but don’t talk to me like that,” Dennis frowned.

“Why shouldn’t I?” Dipper turned around, making way to the door.

“Where are you going?” Dennis questioned impatiently.

“Back to the station, I have a case to solve,” Because he was damned if he was going to let Dennis Pines waltz back into his life and take this case away from him.
The key to the cipher came to him in a dream.

Dipper found himself floating in a sea of blackness, though it was different from his last encounter with never ending darkness. Objects and images from his life floated around him as he looked around: family photos, one of Mabel’s dresses, case files from the last few years, and the very knife that nearly ended his life. The only light came from the objects and from his scars. It was cold and blue, practically lifeless.

He reached out, taking one of the case files and opened it with delicate fingers. Despite his gentle hand, one of the papers cut his thumb, the same dead light coming from the blood that began floating out of his injury. He stared at it in awe until it collided with something. A hand.

His blood started forming runes along a blackened hand as it reached out, wrapping around Dipper’s torso. He gasped silently, the sound of his heartbeat blocking out everything else. Soon he could see an arm, a shoulder, and a body all coming into view. A glowing blue eye stared into him, as if gazing into his very soul and whispered to him, overriding the sound of his own heart beating.

“Do you want to know the key to the cipher?” The runes on its arm morphed into the code and then reiterated its words.

“What?” Dipper gasped, “Who are you?” He asked desperately, his voice barely a whisper.
“You wouldn’t believe me if I told you.” Its breath billowed out of its mouth like an icy wind, “Now, do you want to know the code?”

Dipper bit his lip and shut his eyes for a moment, before staring directly at the mental intruder, “I can figure it out myself.”

A low chuckle came from the dark figure as it reached out, stroking his cheek lightly with its long black fingers, “Always so stubborn.” It looked back with a smile as it snapped its fingers, the same numbers coming into view. “Now, show me you can solve it.”

Dipper blinked, focusing on the numbers as they appeared. It translated into something, he knew it. All he had to do was find a pattern.

“Good luck, detective.” The figure smiled, showing off sharp white fangs as the blue glow from its runes faded.

That’s when he realized it.

*This is the next code. Good luck detective.*

Suddenly Dipper felt like he was falling through his dream, gasping as he awoke in his bed once again. He clutched at his chest, a ringing in his ears as his heart pounded against his ribcage. It all felt so real.

After a few moments it became apparent that the ringing was not only coming from his dazed state, but also from the rotary phone on his nightstand. He reached out, his hand quivering, and picked up the phone, clearing his throat. “Pines residence.”

“Dipper,” Ford’s thick voice came out of the receiver. “We need to talk.”

Dipper’s clutched at the phone as his stomach lurched. “What happened commissioner? Was there another murder?”

“No, I mean we need to—,” Ford cut himself off for a moment. “I’m thinking you need a break.” It
was obvious that Ford wanted Dennis to be on the case now and Dipper hated it.

Dipper groaned, “I told you I can do this, Ford.”

“Did you solve the code?” Ford queried, as if to punctuate that Dipper really needed a break.

“This is the next code. Good luck detective.” Dipper iterated, “I solved it. We don’t need him.”

“Dipper—”

“I’m heading to the office. Goodbye.” Dipper hung up the phone, running his hand through his hair with frustration before going into his bathroom.

He looked as tired as he felt. Deep shadows under his eyes were a sharp contrast against his oddly pale skin. It was hard to keep his eyes open and his chest hurt from stress. It didn’t help that his father was here or that his dreams were odd. The worst part was that for the first time the murders were getting to him. The gore, the blood, the strangeness of it all. Who could have done this? What sick bastard could have done this?

Dipper’s brown eyes flickered to the scars on his shoulder, his fingers gliding across the scratches like the tongs of the weeding fork that had caused them years before.

The telephone rang again, Dipper sighing in aggravation as he exited the bathroom and picked up the phone. “Pines residence.”

“Pinetree,” Bill practically sung into the receiver. “Are you free tonight?”

“I don’t know Bill,” Dipper sighed, wrapping his fingers in the curly cord. “Can I get back to you on that?”

There was a moment of silence before Bill spoke again, “No.”

Dipper frowned, “What do you mean ‘No’?”
“You’re coming over tonight and I’m treating to a home cooked feast whether you like it or not.” Bill said confidently, “We’re going to have a proper date.”

“Bill—”

“Pinetree.” Bill’s voice echoed in an odd way, “You’re going to come to the cabin and you’re going to have the most relaxing night of your life.” It was an order, and even though Dipper knew it was, he felt compelled to abide by Bill’s wish as if it was his sole directive.

“Alright,” Dipper smiled. “See you tonight.”

“I await with batted breath, Pinetree.” Bill sang cheerfully as Dipper hung up.

Dipper untangled himself from the cord before getting dressed, taking a bit more time than usual to make himself presentable. This was going to be his first proper date with Bill.

Dear Detective,

I humbly ask that you give up this case. Those who die have died with purpose, even those of recent murder. After two more deaths I plan to put away my knives, hooks, and other tools, for I have found a greater purpose now. I hope you understand and will let me rest. Quit the case and go to those you love.

Sincerely,

Yours

Bill’s tongue ran along the lip of the envelope, activating the cheap adhesive to close it. To make sure his Pinetree could easily solve the new complex cipher (though he doubted that he would need much help) he inscribed a clue under the address.

Caesar and Atbash may solve your case.

He snapped his fingers, the letter vanishing in a myriad of blue flame. The deed had been done, and he was almost ready to rest. He stood up, humming wistfully as he walked toward his radio, his fingers merely gliding over the dials before music erupted from the speakers. Bill continued
humming. Now in time with the music as he waltzed, alone, and without a care in the world.

The only things to cross his mind until the detective’s arrival were the thoughts of his newly planned murders and the sickeningly sweet plans he had for this evening. He was going to spoil Dipper Pines rotten.

After a few hours, Bill heard a tentative knock on the door and practically flew in order to open it.

Dipper looked tired.

Really tired.

His brown eyes were visibly dull and the dark purple shadows that lingered under them were troubling to say the least. He was paler too, but hopefully that was mostly just the contrast compared to the orange of the autumn leaves. He almost looked thinner too.

It practically broke Bill’s heart.

“Hey Pinetree.” Bill flashed a fake smile and pretended to be his usual cocky self, but deep inside he felt concerned and guilty. What was wrong? *I’m not responsible for this… am I?*

Dipper looked up, his eyes sparkling slightly against the light, a small smile growing on his lips, “I’m glad to see you.” He was quiet, but not in a weak way, it was almost intimate, personal.

Bill pulled Dipper into a strong hug, pressing kisses against his hairline, “You’re too cute for your own good.”

Dipper practically giggled, resting his head against Bill’s chest and wrapping his arms around him. “Geez, you’re really affectionate today.”

“Well, I haven’t seen my boyfriend smile in what seems *forever,*” Bill buried his face into Dipper’s brown locks. “And you really look like you need to relax.”
“I do feel like shit.” Dipper agreed. “ Didn’t help that I saw Dennis in the office today.”

“You went to work?” Bill asked.

“Yeah,” Dipper began, “Dennis was talking to the commissioner when I gave him the solution for the code.” He took in an aggravated breath. “I hate him so much, why is he here?”

“I’ll kill him,” Bill winced, realizing his faux pas. “I mean, he should go back to DC.”

Dipper sighed, “Let’s stop talking about him. I’m with you right now, and you’re supposed to be the only thing I’m thinking about.”

“Actually,” Bill smirked, pulling Dipper inside and closing the door. “I’m only supposed to be thinking about you.” He kissed Dipper’s lips passionately, his hands resting at Dipper’s waist.

Dipper hummed, wrapping his arms around Bill’s neck and closing his eyes, every worry in his body practically disappearing before Bill parted.

“Wow, Pinetree,” Bill’s voice was low and husky. “You really needed that, huh?”

“Mhm,” Dipper nibbled his lip, blushing with some embarrassment.

Bill smirked deviously, kissing along Dipper’s jawline before reaching his ear, whispering slowly, “Is there anything else you need?” Dipper’s skin was starting to become warmer.

“D-Depends on what you mean.” Dipper stuttered.

Bill’s smirk grew into a full on smile as he hummed against his ear, “Oh, I have a few ideas.” He kissed his neck, his lips lingering as he sucked on the skin for a mere moment before he whispered again, “Lots of ideas.”

His breath hitched before he spoke, “H-How about dinner first?” That seemed fair.
Bill withdrew from his neck and ruffled the young detective’s hair with a kind smile, “That sounds fine. What would you like? I’ll do the cooking.”

“I can help,” Dipper offered.

“Don’t worry about it, Pinetree.” Bill insisted. “The chicken’s been in the oven for half an hour anyway.”

“We’re having chicken?” Dipper blinked. He was craving chicken, but he didn’t expect Bill to make a whole chicken just for them.

“Chicken, steamed broccoli, and rice,” Bill smiled. “It’s not lavish but—”

“No, no.” Dipper stood up on his tiptoes and kissed Bill on the lips. “It’s simple. I need simple.”

Bill felt his cheeks grow warm with that, for once actually feeling a bit flustered. God, Pinetree was amazing. More amazing than any other human. Hands down. He kissed Dipper on the forehead again before parting, going into the kitchen. “You can change the radio to whatever station you’d like. Or you can listen to any of my records.”

“Alright,” Dipper called out, walking to the living room. Bill could hear as he started shifting through the records underneath the large phonograph.

Bill snapped his fingers, a partially cooked chicken appearing out of thin air. It was covered in paprika and other spices, an extremely subtle hint of garlic lingered over it. “That simply won’t do.” Bill got rid of the garlic rather quickly and took out a small spice bottle, adding even more paprika to the chicken. He wasn’t terrible great at summoning food, considering he didn’t really need to eat. Well, he didn’t eat what humans ate anyway.

“Are all of your records thirty years old?” Dipper called out in an exasperated tone. “I don’t recognize any of this!”
Bill chuckled, “I’ve got some Frank Sinatra and Elvis in there!”

“And what kind of a system do you use to organize these things? They’re all in a random order!”

“I organized them in the order I got them! It makes sense to me!” Bill slipped the chicken into the oven and started preparing some broccoli absent-mindedly. The broccoli floated into the air and was cut up by a variety of knives before it went into a bowl and was stirred around by a wooden spoon. He opened a cabinet, filled with various vintages of wines, ranging from recent to hundreds of years old. In fact, he had a bottle of wine that was two hundred years older than the United States, but he figured that a 1934 vintage would be just fine for his Pinetree.

“Seriously, Bill how old are you? Some of these are ancient!”

“You’re never supposed to ask a girl her age, Pinetree. Don’t you have any manners?” Bill teased.

“Haha, very funny.” Dipper must have turned down the radio, finding a record he liked. It was Frank Sinatra.

“You know me so well, Pinetree.” After the first song Bill came out of the kitchen, crossing the house and into the living room, leaning against the doorframe.

Dipper looked at Bill with a smile as *Fly Me to the Moon* began playing. He took a few steps toward Bill before looking down, “I’m not much of a dancer but…”

“Pinetree, I would love to.” Bill took his hand and pulled him close. Bill couldn’t resist singing along as he led Dipper.

“*Fly me to the moon,*
And let me play among the stars,
Let me see what spring is like,
On Jupiter and Mars.”

Dipper’s smile grew as they danced slowly and gracefully. Bill made sure to go slow enough so Dipper wouldn’t mess up.
“In other words, hold my hand,” Bill brought their hands to his lips and kissed Dipper’s hand quickly.

“In other words, baby kiss me.” He kissed Dipper’s lips sweetly this time.

Dipper was grinning ear to ear, his brown eyes fixated only on Bill, who was relishing in the warmth of his stare.

What did I do to deserve him? Bill thought for a moment before shrugging it off. He hadn’t done a thing. He didn’t need to have.

“Fill my heart with song and
Let me sing for ever more,
You are all I long for
All I worship and adore.”

“In other words, please be true,” Bill twirled Dipper, pulling him close as he whispered in his ear. “In other words, I love you.”

Dipper’s eyes widened at that, tears welling up in his eyes as he looked at Bill. “Bill…”

Shit, did I say something wrong? Bill wasn’t expecting this kind of reaction at all. Far from it, actually. What had he done? Should I have said that? Should I—

His thought was interrupted from the most passionate kiss he had ever received in his life as Dipper’s body pressed against him. The detective’s arm practically pulled Bill down to Dipper’s level, demanding a closeness that nearly made the pair fall over.

Dipper parted after a few moments, wiping his eyes on his sleeve. “God, I’m sorry.”

“N-No, it’s okay.” Bill chuckled, “I wasn’t quite expecting you to cry. You scared me there.”

Dipper rested his head against Bill’s chest as they swayed to the rest of the song, just listening to Bill’s heartbeat. God, this kid was adorable.
He hated having to pull away, but he could smell that the chicken was done. “It’s time for dinner, Pinetree.”

He led Dipper into the small dining room, which had a table for two already set up. The table was old and intricate, the dark oak wood swirling with a golden lace-like design. Dipper sat down, leaning back comfortably in the chair as Bill brought the food.

Dinner went off without a hitch. Dipper practically began drooling as he tasted the food, which was obviously the best he had ever had in his life. Bill made a note to cook more for the detective.

“Bill, this is amazing.” Dipper complimented, “Where did you learn to cook like this?”

“An old friend taught me,” Bill reminisced. He didn’t say much more, since not only was she did to him on a personal level, she was also quite dead.

Dipper also enjoyed the wine, though Bill made sure that he didn’t drink more than two glasses. The kid didn’t need to be blackout drunk, especially on their date. Once Dipper had finished the wine and the meal, Bill cleared the table.

“When should I go?” Dipper asked. “Since we both have work tomorrow.”

“Oh, I don’t have work tomorrow.” Bill stated.

“Oh,” Dipper bit his lip. “Then when do you need me to go?”

“Actually,” Bill said, bringing Dipper to his feet. “I was thinking you could stay the night.”

Dipper gulped, his mind obviously going straight to the gutter, judging by the how his cheeks flushed.

Bill laughed heartily, “We don’t have to do anything like that Pinetree. I can wait.”
Dipper bit his lip, “Thanks.”

Bill kissed him on the forehead again, burying his face in his hair.

“Bill…”

“Mhm?”

“I love you too.”

Chapter End Notes

I've had this chapter done for days and even though my beta hasn't edited it I had to publish it. I feel really bad for making you all wait this long. My life literally is dissolving but damn it, I'm going to keep writing this fic if it's the last thing I do. I really hope you all enjoyed it!

NOW ABOUT NEXT CHAPTER...

Next chapter is going to, umm, it's gonna be a bit special (ifyouknowwhatImean) *coughs*. We'll have a regular chapter again for chapter 15, no worries! (AND I'LL GET IT OUT AT A REASONABLE TIME, FORGIVE ME.)
Chapter Notes

Thanks to my spectacular beta, Humaira, for editing this special chapter. As the title suggests, this chapter is almost entirely sin, so be warned. This took really long to write for that very reason.

Trigger Warnings: Bondage, sensory deprivation, and sexy times.

Dedicating this chapter to Fear, Katie, Waffles, and Michael--the kinky bastards who gave me enough motivation to write this. ILY <3

Dipper breathed in steam as his muscles slowly relaxed in the bath. His head rested against the intricate bathroom tile, forgetting his worries for a few moments as he breathed in the sweet smell of honey and Bill’s soap which permeated the air. Tonight had been amazing for him. He had danced with Bill, eaten the most delectable meal, and Bill had said…

Bill had said he loved him. And he said he loved him too. Dipper blushed just thinking about it. Bill loved him. No one had ever said that before, aside from his family of course.

At that moment the bathroom door opened, causing Dipper to yelp and covered himself. “Bill!”

Bill stood in the doorway with a shit eating grin on his face. His black tie was loose around his neck and his dress shirt was quite unbuttoned, showing off his tan skin. Something was different about his eye, a look of lust lingering there. He crossed to the bathtub and despite his fancy dress pants still being on his person, he slid into the bathtub, forcing Dipper to lean back as he whispered in the detective’s ear. “Pinetree.”

That whisper was practically an aphrodisiac for Dipper, as he felt goose bumps forming on his skin. His arms retreated to the sides of the tub in anticipation of his lover’s next move.

Bill’s right hand stroked against Dipper’s thigh, causing his breath to hitch. Bill’s grin expanded before he began kissing Dipper passionately.

Dipper felt Bill’s tongue pushed into his mouth, causing him to moan into the kiss. He could feel Bill’s other hand travel down his body, his back arching as Bill’s hand glided passed his belly button. Bill parted for a moment, allowing Dipper to let out a gasp.

“Did you like that?” Bill whispered huskily, obviously knowing the answer to his question.

“Who wouldn’t?” Dipper’s eyes were fixed on Bill, trying to figure out whether Bill was seriously intending to get him off right then and there.

Bill chuckled, leaning in and teasing Dipper’s neck with kisses and teeth.

Dipper sighed, tilting his head to give Bill better access. He could feel Bill’s hand reaching lowering until he—“Christ!” Dipper moaned, his back arching immediately.

Bill ceased his ministrations, looking down at the detective.
“You’re so cute when you blush.”

“You’re such a tease.” Dipper gasped lightly.

“Once you’re out of the bath,” Bill leaned back, getting out of the tub, “There’s more where that came from.”

“You’re terrible,” Dipper practically whined.

“The worst,” Bill concurred, stepping out of the bathroom.

Dipper proceeded to take the shortest bath of his life, though in reality it felt like the longest. He towed himself off, wrapping the white towel around his waist before opening the bathroom door, expecting to see Bill waiting for him. Much to his chagrin however, Bill was absent. “Bill?”

There was no answer to his call.

Dipper walked out into the hall, slowly moving forward. “Bill?” He reached the living room, stopping and calling out once again. “Bill!”

At that moment Dipper’s vision went black, silk was pulled over his eyes, feeling familiar strong arms around him. He yelped, his heart instantly pounding against his chest until the honey-like voice of Bill soothed him.

“Pinetree, you look ravishing.” Bill’s voice felt so thick and warm, yet at the same time, it felt dangerous.

“Jesus Christ, Bill.” Dipper breathed. “You nearly scared me to death.”

Bill tied the blindfold and kissed the back of Dipper’s neck sweetly. “I hope you don’t mind.” His bare fingers skirted along Dipper’s skin, his nails digging lightly into his back.

He’s not wearing his gloves. Dipper’s muscles tensed at Bill’s touch. He couldn’t help but wonder if he wasn’t wearing his eyepatch either. “N-Not at all.”

Bill’s foreplay ceased, as if he could hear the hint of the lie in his voice. “We don’t have to…”

“No, I want to,” Dipper swallowed. “I’ve just… I’ve never done this before. Especially like this.”

He felt Bill cross in front of him, and then slowly tilt his head up. “We can stop whenever you need me to.” His thumb stroked lovingly along Dipper’s chin. He could feel his cool, almost icy breath against his lips.

Dipper leaned forward, pressing his lips against Bill’s in a slow and soft manner, reaching up to cup his face in his palms. Most of his skin was as soft as the silk blindfold, but he felt a stony sort of roughness where Bill’s eye patch usually rested, like a combination of brick and crocodile scales.

“You’re not the only one with scars, Pinetree.” Bill muttered. Something lingered in his voice. It wasn’t the pain or fear or sadness that Dipper felt, but rather a lack thereof. “They’re just pieces of our past that linger on our skin.” His face moved to the scars on Dipper’s shoulder, his teeth grinding delicately against the rough patches of pale skin, causing Dipper to bite his lip in order to suppress a groan.

Dipper felt Bill’s smirk against his shoulder before he moved his lips again, down to his collarbone.
Bill began sucking on that sweet spot as his arms slowly moved down Dipper’s body. Dipper gasped, feeling his knees grow weaker.

As if Bill could read his mind, he parted for a brief moment, picking up the detective. “Can’t just do this standing up now, can we? Well, I could but I doubt you want to.”

“You’re just as cocky as ever.” Dipper smiled. He rested his head against Bill’s chest, enjoying the warmth of his body and the feeling of his fluttering heartbeat.

Bill’s bedroom door opened with a quick flourish of magic, allowing him to move quickly to the bed, placing Dipper down on it with ease. He didn’t climb on top of him just yet, simply letting his fingers ghost across Dipper’s abdomen, causing him to shiver. The small scar from the stabbing still lingered there, but Bill knew that within a few months it would fade into distant memory.

Bill brushed his hair back as he simply stared at Dipper, trying to figure out how exactly he should pleasure his detective. He climbed onto the bed and straddled Dipper, taking the detective’s wrists in his hands before leaning down to whisper unrepeatable things into his ear.

Dipper blushed furiously at his words, biting his lip.

Bill grinned, nipping gently at Dipper’s ear with his demonic sharp teeth before they skirted down his neck. He peppered kisses along Dipper’s shoulder before he began gently nipping and sucking the scarred skin.

Dipper exhaled in relaxation, his jaw quivering slightly. “Bill…”

Bill sucked on Dipper’s shoulder more, leaving a few bruises on his fragile skin. It took everything in him to not be rougher with him, but he knew that Dipper wasn’t ready for anything like that just yet. He shifted slightly, pulling Dipper’s arms away from his sides as he moved lower, kissing his collarbone.

Dipper moaned, biting his lip. Bill could feel Dipper’s heart rate increasing and before he shifted again, grinding roughly against his pelvis.

“Shit.” Dipper hissed.

He chuckled darkly, “God, Pinetree, you’re so red right now.”

"F-fuck off." Dipper stuttered, the increasing pleasure making talking more difficult.

“That’s the idea, kid.” Bill released Dipper’s left wrist and snapped his fingers, glowing blue chains restraining Dipper’s arm. Bill’s now free hand moved up Dipper’s arm before skirting down his chest, his nails lightly digging into his soft flesh. His thumb flicked over Dipper’s left nipple as his tongue did the same with his right, heightening the detective’s arousal. Bill wasted no time as he shifted again, his head and hand descending lower until he reached Dipper’s pelvis, leaving a trail of scratches and bruises in his wake.

Dipper shivered in anticipation, probably knowing exactly what Bill was going to do next.
Bill’s eyes glowed as he slowly stroked the human’s erect member, goosebumps visibly appearing on his pelvis.

Dipper moaned Bill’s name, his back arching off the expensive mattress.

He was absolutely perfect. From his movements to his reactions, Dipper Pines was the single greatest human Bill had ever met. He was perfect and Bill loved him more than anything else.

His thumb stroked along Dipper’s tip, causing him to cry out in agonizing bliss. “Bill! Ah! D-Don’t stop!”

The demon chuckled, bringing his lips close to Dipper’s tip. “Wasn’t planning on it, Pinetree.” He kissed the tip lovingly as he continued his ministrations before bringing the detective into his mouth in a slow and tantalizing manner.

Dipper’s chained hand grabbed the bed’s satin sheets as he groaned, throwing his head back.

Bill’s nails lightly dug down Dipper’s shaft, causing him to quiver and gasp, unintentionally struggling in his euphoria. The demon dipped his head down, taking in the detective as his tongue began working its magic.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Up and down. In and out. He could feel Bill’s teeth graze his skin as he was practically tortured with complete bliss. He threw his head back, gasping and moaning Bill’s name, making as much noise as humanly possible without screaming. He couldn’t control his hips as he bucked into Bill’s mouth, needing him and needing these feelings to continue forever.

Words could not express the amount of lust he was feeling. He loved it. He loved Bill. Fuck, he loved Bill. Especially now.

Bill’s grip tightened on his hip as he brought himself back up, kissing Dipper deeply and biting his lower lip. Dipper’s breath caught in his throat as Bill growled, pulling back slightly. “Pinetree.”

“Bill.” Dipper gasped, needing more. “Keep going—oh God, please.”

Bill chuckled and whispered huskily, “It’d be easier if you weren’t working me up so much.”

_I wish I could see his face._ He could only imagine what Bill looked like; he was probably completely icy and collected—or maybe Bill was just as flustered as he was, with a light amount of sweat dripping from his brow. Dipper bucked his hips roughly, causing his lover to groan. “Just keep going.” It almost sounded like an order, like something Bill would say.

“Relax, Pinetree.” Bill’s hands came to his cheeks, releasing his unchained hand, undulating his hips again. “I’ll have you squirming underneath me before you know it.”

Dipper’s hand reached up to the hem of Bill’s belt, unbuckling it with his one unchained hand. He sat up, meeting Bill’s lips with a kiss just as deep. He distracted Bill long enough to slip his hand down his trousers, cupping the growing bulge through his boxers. “Then make me squirm.”

Bill gasped quietly before pushing Dipper back down onto his back, taking his right hand again and
sucking on his neck. He felt when Bill’s hand was replaced with the same mildly warm chains as what restrained his left hand. Both of Bill’s hands started roaming up and down his body, digging into his skin in a rougher manner.

His teeth felt sharper than before and he was definitely more aggressive. Dipper knew this was going to hurt in the morning and he didn’t care. He wanted these scratches, these bruises. He needed them. It proved that someone could love him. It wasn’t painful, it was exhilarating.

“Bill!”

Bill’s right hand went back down to the detective’s shaft, pumping it up and down as he continued biting and sucking on Dipper’s shoulder and neck.

Dipper winced as his back arched, his ass rubbing up against the sheets and against Bill’s thighs. Both of them groaned in unison, needing each other in that moment.

Suddenly the chains were off. Dipper’s hands flew to Bill’s hair, kissing and biting at his lips. Bill’s free hand stroked along Dipper’s spine while his other hand continued working its magic on his member. Dipper tugged on his hair, breathing hard as he felt himself getting close to the edge. His lips parted from Bill’s as he moaned, throwing his head back again.

Bill took this opportunity to attack his neck as he finished off the detective. Dipper practically sang Bill’s name as he came, probably ruining the satin sheets and making an absolute mess of himself.

“God, you’re beautiful.” Bill breathed, gently pushing Dipper back down onto the bed and trailing kisses down his body. As he went down, he cleaned off some of the detective’s cum. “And you taste amazing too.”

*He’s amazing. He’s absolutely amazing.* Dipper’s breathing evened out, his words slipping out in a whisper, “I fucking love you.”

Bill chuckled and started kissing back up his body, following the trail of bruises he left. “You’re not done yet, are you?”

“You still need to…” Dipper blushed just thinking about it.

Bill’s thumb stroked his cheek, “You’re too adorable.” He kissed Dipper’s ear lightly. “Turn around.”

Dipper could feel his blush engulf his entire face as he turned around, his stomach resting against the sheets. “Be gentler this time, okay?”

Bill kissed the back of his neck sweetly, “Of course.” He stopped for a moment, concern lingering in his voice. “I wasn’t too rough, was I? I thought—”

“No, no.” Dipper interrupted. “It was amazing, trust me, I just—” Dipper bit his sore lip. “This is all very new to me.”

Bill’s smile pressed against his neck and he sighed with relief, “I just needed to make sure.” He chuckled, “I’ll make sure to take it nice and slow.”

Dipper whined, “You’re a sadist.”

“Next time we do this, I’ll let you have your way with me, okay?” He whispered huskily and kissed Dipper’s neck and distracting him from where his hand was going. “I’ll let you do whatever you
Dipper whined as he felt a finger push into him. “A-Anything?”

“Mhm,” Bill hummed, kissing the back of his neck sweetly and passionately. He removed his finger before inserting it in again, this time it went in easier and felt slippery, probably from lubrication. “Absolutely anything.”

“Could I,” Dipper’s breath hitched as he moaned. “N-Next time, c-could I—ah!” Another one of Bill’s fingers entered him, “C-Could I not wear the blindfold?”

“I said you could do whatever you want,” Bill breathed, continuing his agonizing foreplay. “That means you could even put me in the blindfold.”

Dipper cried out again, a wave pleasure hitting him as Bill’s fingers reached something he didn’t know was there. “Bill, please don’t stop, oh god!”

Bill laughed kissing down Dipper’s spine, “Enjoying yourself, aren’t you?”

“Ah!” Dipper sang, feeling Bill slowly pulling back.

He heard something shuffling, Bill’s pants being unbuttoned and pulled down. “Bill…”

“Give me a second, Pinetree.” Bill’s tone was a little odd, but Dipper paid no mind to it as Bill’s grip returned to his hips and Bill prepped himself at the detective’s entrance.

This is actually happening. Dipper exhaled, preparing himself for the euphoria. He instinctively looked back at Bill, even though with the blindfold he couldn’t see him.

And Dipper smiled.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill’s hand kept running through Dipper’s hair, even though he had long since fallen asleep, his head resting on Bill’s chest and his arms wrapped around him. He loved him. He really did. For once in his inhumanly long life, he would gladly give up everything just for his Pinetree and he was sure that Dipper felt the same way.

He smiled slightly looking down at the sleeping detective, wishing him sweet dreams before he closed his eyes.
Bloody Jacket

Chapter Notes

A couple of notes before you begin!
I'm currently running this with guest editors, because I am no longer working with my previous beta ^_^ Even though I had this chapter finished two weeks ago, I wasn't able to get someone to edit it until tonight! Feel free to message me on tumblr (same username) if you would be interested in being a guest editor until I can find a new permanent beta. :) I have also removed the weekly updates tag until further notice, because I don't want to keep up with false promises TT_TT The update schedule will not be effected by this, I'll keep trying to get out chapters as soon as humanly possible!

BUT COOL STUFF NOW!
Phius-art on tumblr made some AMAZING fan art for my birthday which you should all TOTALLY CHECK OUT! It also happens to be the cover of the companion mix that I'm releasing to go with the fic, which you can find here:
http://8tracks.com/trollfishprince/serial-a-companion-mix

IF YOU READ INTO THE FINAL FEW SONGS TOO MUCH YOU MIGHT FIND SPOILERS, JUST A WARNING. I'll be updating the mix with new tracks in case I find more songs.

ALSO, I HIGHLY SUGGEST GOING AND RE-READING CHAPTER 3 (also maybe 4). THAT STUFF IS FINALLY COMING INTO PLAY.

The overcast sky was visible from the hole in the decayed roof of the burnt out library, a structure that had disappeared with the ravaging of time, but had remained in the mind of Bill Cipher. Dead leaves and burnt pages from books long destroyed were scattered on the scorched marble floor, shifting and crinkling in the gentle and lifeless wind.

Bill’s single eye on his pyramid head surveyed the dreamscape, trying to figure out why he was there. What is this?

“Enjoying yourself, aren’t you William?” The voice of an all too familiar women grated his ears like nails on a chalkboard, echoing through the dream.

Bill’s single eye widened, shifting around in its lone socket, trying to find the source of her voice. “What are you doing here? I killed you.” His voice echoed the same way her voice had, ringing against the dream in the same way that their lives had once met each other. The slightest hint of fear would have been detectable to the trained ear.

She cackled, “Oh Cipher, you are hilarious! Just like that Pinetree of yours. You two are so alike.”
She paused for a moment. “Well, you were like him—back in the day.”

A woman appeared from behind one of the ash covered stone pillars, wearing the face of one of Bill’s previous victims, Doris Hemmingway. Her eyes glowed an icy blue, a particular blue that was all too familiar to Bill, the same blue as his damaged eye. A cold, fake smile rested on her ruby red lips. “Man kills God, imagine that.”

“You’re not a God.” Bill hissed.

“And you’re not a man.” She spat, a strong glare now decorated her face, a glare that could kill mortal men. “You’re a parasite and have always been one.”

“It was your fault actually,” Bill relaxed. “You got intrigued and let me latch onto you—”

“Like a leech.”

“Hey, you gave me some of that power—I didn’t have to steal all of it.” Bill taunted, walking closer to her.

“You didn’t steal all of it.” She growled, looking up at him as he grew closer, only a few feet away now.

“Obviously not,” Bill’s piercing eye stared down at her with a realization. “You were the one who put that nasty warning into Pinetree’s head, weren’t you?”

“Yes, I did.” She stated coolly.

“Why?” Bill’s voice reverberated loudly, blue fire erupting around them.

She spoke in a low tone, “Because I wanted to keep him away from you. That obviously didn’t work.”

“But why?” Bill demanded angrily, the fire burned hotter and the wind picked up, making a cyclone
of flame around them.

Her blue eyes glanced at the fire around them, then back up at Bill as she twisted the conversation in her favor. “You’re practically fulfilling your own prophecy.” A smile spread across her lips. “Everything seems to go downhill once the fire starts burning.” She chuckled cruelly, “First the camp, then the manor—that ballroom in his dreams.”

“Shut up.” He clenched his fists tightly.

“A forest fire is coming, Bill, and that fire is going to snuff out that Pinetree of yours.” Her laugh echoed throughout the dream as the fire engulfed her, turning her into a burnt out crisp, then to ghostly ashes.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Bill sat up, his left eye burning and itching in its socket, as if to tell him that that dream was more than just a nightmare. “Damn it.” He cursed, snapping his fingers, the eye patch suddenly appearing over his eye. A dream demon having a nightmare, how ironic. His healthy eye gazed down at the sleeping beauty that lied next to him. Dipper had probably never slept this well in his life. His expression reflected that. His features were relaxed, the usual stress that lingered on his face was completely gone. The long, quiet breaths that escaped his lips meant that he was also sleeping soundly, which was definitely a first for the young detective. Even the dark shadows under his eyes had faded.

Bill’s hand reached out to caress the detective’s cheek, but he stopped before his hand made contact. His hands were still as black as coal, like dust that could never be washed away. He slowly got out of bed, as to not wake Dipper and went into the bathroom, tearing off the eye patch. He pressed his forehead right up against the broken ornate mirror, staring at himself with his mismatched eyes.

The pupil in his yellow eye elongated like a snake’s as he stared at himself—another reminder of the truth. Bill was a monster. He knew he was a monster. He became this way because he wanted to and he didn’t regret any of it. He didn’t regret the deals he made, the people he killed, eating the heart of a goddess and stealing her power—coming to this unremarkable town and meeting the most remarkable human he had would ever.

Unfortunately, he doubted that Dipper would feel the same.
Bill had been rotten to the core since the beginning, but Dipper had goodness in him. Good people didn’t usually do well around demons.

The demon closed his eyes as he felt them start stinging and pulled back from the mirror, snatching his eye patch off the countering and tying it back in place. He opened his snake eye again, exhaling once and collecting himself. “You have work to do.” It was a brutal, honest statement, just like the brutal revenge he still sought after.

Two men needed to die.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper’s brown eyes fluttered open, realizing in that instant that he was alone in Bill’s bed. He sat up, his eyes flicking about the room before he got up. “Bill, are you home?” He called out as he opened the bedroom door.

There wasn’t an answer. The quaint cabin was still and silent.

Dipper sighed, “So much for a good morning.” He reluctant walked over to the closet and opened the door, walking in. He browsed through the dress shirts and trousers, picking a simple white button up and black slacks. He turned and began thumbing through Bill’s collection of suit jackets. Most of them were completely unwearable, especially in a police setting. He pulled a black suit jacket off the rack and promptly stepped back, his heart rate elevating in an instant.

Normal, he wouldn’t have batted an eye at a yellow suit jacket inside Bill’s closet, but this wasn’t any ordinary suit jacket. The sleeves appeared entirely normal, up until the point at where Bill’s elbow would be. The rest of that was splattered with a reddish brown stain, a shade that was characteristic to only one thing. Blood.

Dipper closed his eyes tightly and walked out of the closet, holding the black suit jacket and the other clothes. He opened his eyes and tossed the clothes onto the unmade bed before turning back to the closet, reaching out and taking the knob, nearly slamming the door before he stopped. He could practically hear Bill’s voice in his head, imagining what he would say if he interrogated him. “It’s a fashion statement, Pinetree. Relax.”

The detective bit his lip, opening the closet door again, walking back into the closet and taking the
bloody yellow suit jacket. He practically ripped it off the hangar and brought it into the light of the bedroom, tossing it onto the bed as well. “Relax, Pinetree. It’s not what you think.”

He shook his head, trying to regain his senses as he approached the bed again, examining the suit jacket with a close eye. The stains were old and browner in the light than they had been in darkness of the closet. However, the stains themselves were obviously blood, despite their age. Dipper swallowed and let out a shaky exhale. What is this? Why would Bill have something like this?

His hand ran through his messy brown hair as he closed his eyes again, cursing quietly. He was too worked up to stay here until Bill got back. He had to go to the office and do something. He needed to be busy. Dipper grabbed the other clothes that he had thrown onto the bed and put them on in a rush, not even grabbing a tie as he left the bedroom. He put on his black dress shoes and grabbed the tan trench coat off the coat rack before hastily leaving the cabin.

Dipper drove to the police station quickly, keeping his mind clear of absolutely everything. He knew he was overreacting. That blood could have come from anywhere. He was just stressing himself out. His hands clutched the steering wheel as he parked, trying to get his heart rate down to reasonable levels before entering the station. He turned the key, locked the car, and entered the station unceremoniously, not even greeting the desk sergeant as he walked to his office.

He turned the corner and opened the door, only to find Dennis standing near his desk. His heart picked up again and his eyebrows pressed together, forming a sharp glare, “What are you doing in my office?”

“You need to clean this place up, it’s a wreck,” Dennis gazed around, his nose ever so slightly turned up at the sight of things. “You’re late, by the way.”

“Dennis, this is my office.”

“You can drop the formalities, son. Dad is just fine.” His eyes met Dipper’s, the blue-green color seeming even more lifeless and unaffectionate than usual.

“Get out of my office.” Dipper took a few steps, not even taking his coat off.

“There was a letter on your desk,” Dennis held it out to him, staring at him, as if studying his movements. “You should really keep your office locked if you don’t want people coming in.”
“Give me that.” Dipper snatched the letter from his father before crossing the room and sitting in his desk chair.

The envelope was cheap and slightly yellowed, the name Detective Pines was inscribed on the back. He flipped it over to open it, seeing the words written on the lip. Caesar and Atbash may solve your case.

Dipper’s eyes widened as he ripped open the letter, immediately trying to decipher the garbled message. He didn’t hear Dennis leave, nor did he hear the door close. The only thing he could process was the letter.

TSWF TSDSUDOBS,

O PCKVLY WEM DPWD YIC QOBS CH DPOE UWES. DPIES API TOS PWBS TOST AODP HCFHIES, SBSJ DPIES IR FSUSJD KCFTSF. WRDSF DAI KIFS TSWDPE O HLWJ DI HCD WAWY KY MJOBSE, PIIME, WJT IDPSF DIILE, RIF O PWBS RICJT W QFSWDSF HCFHIES JIA. O PIHS YIC CJTSFEDWJT WJT AOLL LSD KS FSOD. GCOD DPS UWES WJT QI DI DPIES YIC LIBS.

EOJUSFLY, YICFE

It was just like the hint said. First, Dipper reversed the order of the letters, taking out the added layer of the Atbash cipher before dealing with the Caesar cipher.

Ghdu Ghwhfwlyh,


Vlqfhuhob, Brxuv

It was almost too easy, since it was the same Caesar cipher as the first codes he had solved for the case. When the note had been transcribed into readable English, Dennis’ hand snatched up the letter. He hadn’t left like Dipper hoped he would have, but rather he was now over his shoulder and had been watching as he decoded the message.
“Dear Detective,” Dennis began. “I humbly ask that you give up this case. Those who die have died with purpose, even those of recent murder. After two more deaths I plan to put away my knives, hooks, and other tools, for I have found a greater purpose now.” Dennis frowned at that, walking around the desk and finishing the letter. “I hope you understand and will let me rest. Quit the case and go to those you love.” He particularly enunciated the last sentence, his eyes flicking up to meet Dipper’s as he put the letter down. “Interesting letter.”

Dipper gulped, looking down at the letter. “It must have been from him. The murderer.” Dipper couldn’t believe this. Not only had the murderer left him a letter, he had threatened Bill. The murderer not only knew who he was and where his office was, he knew about Bill. He looked up at Dennis, trying to read his expression.

Something was off in the way Dennis gazed at him, more than usual. “A threat to the family, now isn’t that interesting.”

Dipper averted his eyes from Dennis’ cold stare. “This is too much, he’s insane.” Dennis didn’t need to know about the real threat that was hidden in the letter. Especially after last time.

“On the contrary, he’s strategic.” Dennis stood up, adding onto his statement out loud. “He appears to know your weaknesses more than I do.”

Dipper blinked, looking up at Dennis from his chair. “What?”

Dennis’ brows furrowed, “I thought that after last time you wouldn’t go prancing around anymore, but it looks like you didn’t retain that lesson.”

Dipper looked at his father in silence, his face looking as expressionless as he could possibly make it. He couldn’t react outwardly, that would give it away.

“What’s his name?” Dennis interrogated coolly.

“You’re mistaken.” Dipper looked away. “There isn’t another one, I’m not like that anymore.”

Dennis put his hands on the desk and leaned down, “Don’t lie to me, Dipper. I’ve heard things
around town. You’ve gotten awfully close with someone over the last couple of months.”

“Am I not allowed to have friends?” Dipper challenged, somehow finding the courage to look his dad in the eye.

Dennis’ eyes betrayed a small amount of surprise, “You’ve gotten bolder.”

“A lot has changed.” Dipper stood up, looking down at Dennis, taking the letter. “Including the fact that I’m not listening to everything you say anymore.” Dipper crossed around the desk, heading toward the door to his office, “Now, if you will excuse me, Mr. Pines, I have a case to solve.” He turned around, presenting the door to Dennis. “If you would be so kind as to leave.”

Dennis stood up straight, adjusting his suit jacket and brushing back his peppered brown hair before walking to the door. “Just remember, son,” He put his hand on Dipper’s left shoulder, spreading his fingers out just a little bit. “Those scars on your shoulder are there for a reason. Don’t forget that.”

Dipper’s false composure faded in a fraction of a second, his heart beating fast with fear as the memory flashed by in his head.

Dennis smiled, “Can’t wait to hear what progress you make on the case.” And with that he closed the door.

Dipper’s jaw quivered as he stood alone in his office. He immediately walked over to his desk and sat in the chair, opening up the lower drawer, taking out the half empty bottle of bourbon. He shuttered as he opened the bottle, taking a long drink before putting it down. His hands brushed through his hair as he whimpered quietly, closing his eyes tightly, trying to suppress the memory of that day.
Because I Love You

Chapter Notes

I'm posting this as a bit of a special chapter, since this chapter is particularly hard to write and I need to figure out how I'm going to get to a certain point in the story. I've decided on how it's going to end, which is good, and I also might post an epilogue to the story too, so that's also cool!

In the meantime, I hope you all enjoy this tragedy.

Trigger Warnings: Lots of period typical homophobia, child abuse, and Dennis.

Dipper peddled as fast as he could up the steep hill, the metal of his bicycle hot to the touch, occasionally burning his bare legs when they scraped against it. The summer heat caused him to pant hard as he rode, his brow dripping with sweat. He reached the crest of the hill, staring down on the farm below lovingly. The golden wheat fields rolled in the burning yet gentle wind, and the tiny red barn promised a little more than just nice relaxing shade. It promised the sixteen year old an opportunity that could not be taken anywhere else in the world.

He got back on his bike, slowly pushing off the asphalt and speeding down the hill, his cheeks turning red despite the minor amount of wind chill. His mind was on a certain boy again. He was going to see Jonathan Cassidy.

Dipper had never met anyone quite like Jonathan. They didn’t go to the same high school, which was a tragedy, because the school would be honored to be blessed with someone as beautiful as him. His dark hair was exceptionally thick and curly compared to Dipper’s, but in reality it was quite normal for someone with skin that was as dark as his. Jonathan frequented the same secluded spot in the pine forest as he did and one day they met, locking eyes as soon as Dipper had stepped in a circle of mushrooms.

A smile spread across his face as he approached the bottom of the hill, knowing that with every second he got closer to see Jonathan’s smile.

He was sweet and charming and his smile was the brightest thing that Dipper had ever seen. They became quick friends, meeting within the secret spot in the pine forest, through the foundation of a building long gone, a hop over a stream, and down the trunk of a tree that had fallen over a few years before. Sometimes Jonathan would bring his harmonica or his guitar and sometimes Dipper would bring his journal or a picnic basket.
It was Dipper who had kissed him first. He knew it was wrong, but he wanted to—he had to. He hadn’t expected Jonathan to kiss him back.

That was when it all started.

Dipper turned left, practically hopping off the bike when he reached the barn. He didn’t even make sure the kickstand was down, and he didn’t care as he heard the clatter of his bike on the asphalt. He just wanted to see Jonathan.

The barn door swung open, Jonathan’s inviting arms outstretched and ready for Dipper’s embrace. Dipper collided with Jonathan, giving him a tight embrace as he pressed his face against the tall man’s chest. His shirt smelled like wheat and sweat, something that Dipper had gradually grown to love as their secret meetings had turned into secret dates. He felt Jonathan’s nose get buried in his brown hair and heard Jonathan’s buttermilk voice, “Miss me?”

“More than you can imagine,” Dipper looked up into his kind brown eyes before closing his eyes and standing on his tip toes, giving Jonathan a gentle kiss.

Jonathan’s exhale caressed Dipper’s face the same way as his hands slipped gently down Dipper’s back. He pulled back, lightly tugging at Dipper’s shirt as he invited him into the seclusion of the barn.

In a matter of minutes Dipper’s shirt was off and he was receiving a third hickey on his left shoulder, his hands grasping Jonathan’s shoulders as he tangled his legs around Jonathan’s. There was a rush and an aching sensation, he wanted to be with Jonathan forever.

But everything ended in an instant.

The barn door slammed open, beginning a flurry of ruckus and screaming that Dipper could barely remember. Jonathan’s parents were screaming, then men came in, white men. Everything began to blur in Dipper’s mind—the men prying them apart as he shook with fear, Jonathan punching someone—it all happened so fast. Adrenaline pumped through his veins as Jonathan grabbed his hand. The next thing he knew they were running through the wheat field. Everything kept happening so quickly that he couldn’t process it.

Jonathan looked at Dipper, pulling him back into reality. “Dipper, I’ll distract them, you get out of here!”
“No!” Dipper begged, clutching Jonathan’s hand. “They’ll kill you!”

“I know.” Jonathan yanked his hand out of Dipper’s grip, staring into his eyes one last time before he ran away.

Dipper choked back tears as he ran in the opposite direction, toward the hill but through the cover of the field. He could hear the shouting of people fading into the distance but he kept running, his bare chest getting wiped by the stalks. He didn’t stop and look back until he reached the edge of the forest, close to the top of the hill.

He couldn’t see anything but the golden wheat field and the barn, which was now burning. The Cassidy farm was going to burn and it was his fault. He fell to his knees and let out a loud sob, wiping his eyes with his sweaty palms.

Jonathan was either dead or gone. The Cassidys were probably going to be chased out of town. He had done this. He knew the consequences of them being caught together and he had done it anyway.

He had more than likely killed Jonathan Cassidy.

Dipper opened his eyes when he heard yelling coming in his direction and stood up abruptly like a deer in the headlights. There were two of them, one was a man he didn’t recognize with a pitchfork, and the other was a very familiar face. He immediately turned away and ran into the forest, knowing that if he didn’t escape now Jonathan’s sacrifice would be in vain.

His sneaker caught on a rock, though he was able to catch himself on a jagged boulder, but not without injury. A long, deep cut was now in his left arm, which would definitely leave a scar. Dipper got right up and kept running, ignoring every scratch and cut from stray branches as he went. He was running because his life depended on it.

The all-too familiar man caught up to him, a three-pronged garden hoe digging into his left shoulder, right above his collarbone as he was grabbed by his other arm. “Dipper, stop!” The rough and commanding words of his father practically lashing at his ears.

“I didn’t do anything, I swear!” Dipper begged, struggling against his father’s grip.
Dipper’s father shoved him forward as he cursed, the garden hoe tearing three deep cuts into his shoulder. Dipper yelped as he fell to the ground, gripping his shoulder as blood began oozing out of his new injuries. He sobbed. “I’m so sorry, it’ll never happen again!”

“You’re tarnishing the Pines family name.” He barked, kicking Dipper’s shoulder coldly.

Dipper cried out, trying to get up. “It’ll never happen again, I swear!”

“Don’t lie to me.” His foot dug into the wound as he forced him back down into the dirt.

Pain tore into shoulder and Dipper sobbed. “I’m sorry!”

“You should be grateful.” He hissed, “The Cassidys didn’t tell anyone else but me.” His foot pressed harder against Dipper’s shoulder. “You’re lucky that this is all you have to go through.”

“Why do I have to go through anything?” Dipper asked, turning his face in the dirt so he could face the burning eyes of his father.

His eyes were cold and dark. He didn’t view Dipper as a son anymore. The loving look that his father usually had was gone now but at the same time Dipper knew exactly what Dennis didn’t say. His boot lifted off of Dipper’s shoulder and he pulled Dipper up by his hair before kicking him again.
Walter felt uneasy as he started his walk to the liquor store. There was a pit in his stomach that churned and the tension in his nerves was much higher than usual. His hand was in his pocket, clutching his dad’s old pocket knife. His heart was beating fast, as if he was being chased, but he was just walking down the street. He knew liquor would relax him, but the Bang Bang Bar had been closed for an hour already and even if it wasn’t, he wouldn’t go back there any time soon.

After his buddies, Arthur and Joseph had beat up that Pinetree brat they hadn’t been back to the Bang Bang Bar. They were going to go back a few weeks ago, but the night before Arthur had been killed. Whether it was divine intervention or not, Walter wanted to just forget about all of it.

Just thinking about it made Walter shiver. He had heard from his buddies on the force that Arthur had been practically unrecognizable. Walter rubbed his neck and gulped, stopping under a streetlamp and pulling out a pack of cigarettes. He let go of the knife in his pocket and reached for his lighter, taking it and lighting up as he gazed up at the sky.

The full moon was a rusty red color, just like the paper said it was going to be. I wonder how many people are looking at it too… He breathed in, inhaling the smoke before breathing it out in a long stream. It was cold out tonight, the gentle autumn wind blowing a couple of dead leaves as the eerie desolation of night surrounded him.

The light of the streetlamp flickered for a moment, causing him to look around and his gut to stiffen. “Damn electricity.” He cursed under his breath, taking another puff of his cigarette. He exhaled shakily into the night, gazing back up at the moon.

A cold presence hit his back. He watched as his vision was obstructed by a pair of black hands with long sharp fingernails. He tried moving but was completely petrified with sudden terror. He tried to inhale and to no avail, as if even his breath had been frozen by the fear.

A quiet, low chuckle tickled the back of his neck before moving to his left ear, the psychotic nature of it becoming more apparent. He felt hot air caress his ear as the stranger whispered, “I was wondering when you’d come out of your hovel.” The voice was grating and terrifying, the sound of its teeth clicking as it spoke.

What is this? Walter thought. Why can’t I move? He felt consciousness fading as his heart pounded against his chest like a scared rabbit. What was going to happen? Who was this?

“It’ll all be over soon.” The stranger whispered as he began dragging Walter out from under the light of the streetlamp.
His blue-green eyes scanned over the papers that littered the oak dining table. Instead of sleeping, he had decided to continue working on the case, in an attempt to find something that his son had skipped over. He had taken some of the files from the police station to look over, along with the letter that had been sent to Dipper’s office.

He brushed his graying hair back, humming as he looked over the translated letter again.

_I humbly ask that you give up this case. Those who die have died with purpose, even those of recent murder. After two more deaths I plan to put away my knives, hooks, and other tools, for I have found a greater purpose now. I hope you understand and will let me rest. Quit the case and go to those you love._

_The murderer wants to end things, but why? Dennis’ fingers drummed against the table rhythmically as he analyzed the letter. What does he mean by greater purpose?_

The last line echoed in Dennis’ mind. _Quit the case and go to those you love._ That wasn’t just a note to Dipper. That was a note to everyone who was working on this case and words to the murderer themselves. _Quit the killing and go to those you love—but who do you love?_ Dennis frowned, looking at the photographs of the bodies before snatching the letter up again.

The letter had been signed in an odd way, simply ending with _Sincerely, Yours_. That meant something. The murderer was in love with Dipper—that part was obvious, but who was the murderer? Was it an unrequited love? A past fling? Dipper hadn’t had any relations since that Cassidy boy and Dennis had made sure that he wouldn’t come to town ever again.

Who could the murderer be?

A thought lingered in his head as his mind wandered, thinking about what he had missed in the years he had been gone. He had missed Dipper going into law enforcement, as well as his graduation. He had missed becoming a grandfather, now that Mabel had a few kids. He really missed getting to see Dipper become a man, and become as bold as he was now…

Dipper had done some odd things while Dennis was in Washington DC. He had cut off ties with his high school friends and had moved into a secluded apartment on the opposite side of town, barely talking to anyone else in the family except for Ford and Mabel. The boy barely spoke to his own mother.

_Isolationism…_ Dennis pulled out the box of cigarettes he kept in his trouser pockets and lit one. He took in a deep breath as he continued thinking, exhaling smoke as his mind followed his train of thought into a dark tunnel.

Dipper had definitely picked up Stan’s alcoholism, which was obvious by the amount of times he visited the bar, not to mention from what he kept in his desk at work. _Alcoholism and isolationism._ Dennis inhaled again, thinking back to that summer night that was nearly a decade ago.

_Homosexuality, isolationism, alcoholism._ All of those proved that Dipper was not neurologically typical to say the least.

Dipper was also the only one who had been able to solve the codes with ease.

Dennis frowned as he discarded the cigarette in the ashtray and cleaned up the files and pictures. His wife didn’t need to see all of this. He put it all into his leather briefcase before pouring himself a glass of scotch.
Bill’s breathing was rough, his blackened hands shaking and covered in blood. He didn’t remember anything from the last few hours, much less why his hands and face were covered in blood. He could taste the salty iron against his sharp teeth, as if he had bitten into someone. Bill’s left eye was burning and it was uncovered, probably looking as demonic as his golden eye. His hand lifted, covering his left eye, hissing quietly at the pain. A few drops hit the back of his neck, causing him to look up slowly. Above his head dangled a work of twisted art that he must have created in his blacked out state.

The man was suspended in midair, large iron hooks had been driven into the skin on his back and through his wrists, leaving him gently swaying from a large tree branch in the middle of the woods. He was very dead, as his abdomen had been ripped open, and his intestines were trailing down from where he hang like streamers. The end of the victim’s intestines dangled mere inches above Bill’s blonde head.

Bill recognized the victim as Walter Jacobson, the next on his hit list. He had been one of the men who went after Dipper.

“Shit,” Bill muttered. He rubbed his head and stepped back, getting a better view of the mess.

The victim’s intestines were quite apparently not complete either. What remained was virtually untouched, but it hinted at where the rest had gone. The remaining intestines were cut off by a chewed up end. A bite.

Bill stumbled back, clutching his stomach. He shook his head and looked back up at Walter’s corpse. Get a hold of yourself, he thought to himself, calming himself down almost instantly. This wasn’t the first time he had lost control like this, blinded by vengeance to the degree where he lost consciousness. This had happened a number of times, back when he first became a demon. His emotions had run wild back then….. but it hadn’t happened recently, and he had doubted that it could happen again.

Obviously, that doubt was falsely placed.

The dawn sun warmed Bill as he stared at the corpse, trying to figure out what exactly to write with it. He had to leave a message, even if it was something vague. There had to be intention behind this, otherwise it would look like a copycat killer. He started humming a familiar waltz in an attempt to keep his head on his shoulders whilst he looked for a way to leave the message.

A few yards away from him was a long, broken log from a tree that must have fallen some years before. It was at least three hundred pounds judging by its size, but that was of no consequence for Bill. He pranced over to the log, hoisting it up and placing it underneath the body. He then conjured a black dagger with a flick of his wrist and narrowed his eye, trying to think of a message that would suit the crime. All the forest sounds disappeared around him as he thought to himself.

Suddenly, he heard the crunch of twigs from a hundred yards away, derailing his train of thought in an instant.

“We heard the screaming a few hours ago, but we couldn’t find anything. It was weird, almost like it was coming from nowhere.” An older man said.

“Not to worry sir,” a gruff voice that sounded somewhat similar to Stan’s responded, probably his twin brother, Commissioner Ford. “We’ll figure out what it is, probably just a dying animal or something.”
“Thank you.”

They were coming close quickly, Bill knew that. He turned his attention back to the log, carving out the first thing that came to mind before he disappeared deeper into the forest.

_One more to go._
Forest Fire

Chapter Notes

I totally jinxed myself with that last author's note, my computer broke down halfway through writing this chapter so I had to wait for it to get fixed. Every possible delay that could have happened, happened! Hopefully that won't happen again with the next chapter. XD

Once again, very special thanks to my wonderful beta TheAverageRavenclaw <3 Couldn't have done this without you buddy!

On a less exciting and more depressing note, I'm dedicating this to one of my high school classmates. Kera, though I never actually met you I hope that you rest in peace <3

The detective picked up the receiver, placing it to his ear as he answered distractedly, “Detective Pines’ office.” His elbow rested on the desk, as he stifled a yawn, his eyes still focused on the case files that he was examining.

“Dipper, I need you and Dennis to come down to the park ranger’s office on the west side of town. There was a body found in the woods.” It was the Commissioner, his voice was a little shaky.

“Oh-Of course,” Dipper responded, straightening up in his chair and adjusting his tie. “I'll see you soon.”

“Actually you won’t,” The Commissioner replied. “I have a couple of meetings down at city hall that I can’t miss, even for a case as big as this one.”

Dipper sighed, “Alright, good luck great-uncle Ford.”

“Good luck, Dipper.”

He hung up the phone and stood up, stretching and yawning one more time before he left his office, heading down the hall to the temporary office that they had set up for his father while he was in town. His steps echoed on the linoleum floor and just as he stopped in front of the door, it opened.

Dennis looked about as tired as Dipper did, something lingering in his blue-green stare that was different than usual. “Another murder?”

Dipper nodded, “How’d you guess?”

“Why else would you knock on my door?” Dennis replied coldly, brushing past him. “We’ll take one of the police cars.”

“Why not just take my car?” Dipper muttered, rolling his eyes and following his father.

“I’m driving, that’s why.” Dennis looked back at him, raising an eyebrow antagonistically. “Do you have a problem with that?” He was being more aggressive than usual, or rather, he was less subtle about it.
Dipper didn’t respond for a moment and looked down, “No, sir.”

“Good,” Dennis’s tone changed to a much friendlier one. “Now, where’s the body this time?”

“The Pine forest to the west of town I’d assume. The Commissioner said to go to the park ranger’s office, so I assume they’ll lead us to the body.” Dipper put his hands in his pockets as they walked, staying close enough behind, but also keeping his distance.

“Near the hill,” Dennis remarked. “Isn’t that near the old Cassidy barn?”

Dipper tensed up as he heard that name. “I mean, the barn was also on the west end, but…”

Dennis hummed, looking up at the sky as they exited the police station. “You smell that?”

“Smell what?” He took in a deep breath.

“Smoke.” Dennis sniffed.

“I don’t smell anything,” Dipper replied.

“Odd.” Dennis mumbled.

They both got into the police car and began their journey west along the main roads, which gradually lost lanes until they reached the edge of town, where the street became a one lane dirt trail.

Dipper spent most of the trip staring out the window, feeling a little uneasy. He didn’t like being in such close proximity to Dennis, much less being alone in a car with him. Why did he insist on taking the police car? This is really weird.

Dennis broke the eerie silence with an unusual question—it wasn’t unusual in nature, but more that he was asking Dipper at all. “Do anything fun last night?”

“Oh, no not really.” Dipper replied. “Just worked on some stuff for the case and watched the eclipse for a little while.” He nibbled on his lip as he asked Dennis, more out of courtesy rather than curiosity. “What about you?”

“I worked on the case too,” Dennis replied. “I think I found some clues that you missed.” His gaze fell on Dipper for a moment, as if he was studying him.

“That’s… great.” Dipper remarked, the feeling of unease growing. “What did you find?”

“I’ll tell you back at the station.” Dennis’s eyes flitted back to the road.

Dipper looked out the window again and up at the sky, which was cloudy now. A trail of clouds lingered in the sky that were darker than the others that almost looked like they were billowing up from the distance.

The car stopped abruptly, Dennis immediately reaching for the police radio. “Dennis Pines to Dispatch, are you receiving?”

A few moments later the Dispatch officer responded, “Dispatch receiving loud and clear Dennis Pines. Are you receiving?”

“Dennis Pines receiving loud and clear.”

“Go ahead, Pines.”
“Detective Pines and I are enroute to the 187 in the West Pine forest. Copy.”

“Roger, Pines.”

“Are there reports of a fire in the area?”

“Roger that, Pines. There is a report of a fire in the area, sir. Roads are being closed for public safety north of the Willow Trail.”

shit. Dipper thought. “That’s only a mile up from the park ranger’s office.”

“Copy that. We are still enroute to the 187.”

“Roger that.”

Dennis immediately began driving again, speeding down the dirt road. Dipper’s heart began beating quickly as the situation escalated. A forest fire meant that the body might not be recoverable, which meant that they would have to work fast.

“We’ll take photos and then leave, take any prints if we—” Dipper was cut off by his father.

“We’ll have plenty of time, there’s no need to rush into a panic.” Dennis cut in coolly. Despite the high pressure situation Dennis was eerily calm. He was always able to do that, in fact, Dipper could easily count how many times he had been worked up. It only made Dennis less relatable, but he doubted that his father really cared about relatability.

As they got closer to the crime scene the sky became more and more clouded, smoke covering the sun. The heat from the fire was close, but still far enough away that they could definitely make it out. They passed by the park ranger’s office and slowly started driving up the winding trail to the crime scene until the trail wasn’t wide enough for the police car anymore. Dennis took the keys and opened the door, slamming it shut without a word.

Dipper followed him, but as they got closer and closer to the crime scene he felt an eerie sense of familiarity creeping up on him. His heart fluttered with anxiety as they hiked, Dipper forcing himself with each step. What was this feeling? Not only was it anxiety but also a deep fear, like an animal as it realizes that a predator is nearby. Where they being watched?

“My God…” Dennis stopped, looking up as they entered the clearing.

Dipper followed his father’s eyes, his heart rate accelerating in horror as he gazed up at the victim.

Hooks had been driven through the victim’s wrists and back, suspending him up in a tree, about nine feet off the ground at the lowest point. He had been disemboweled, his intestines—or what was left of them, dangling mere inches above their heads. Dipper felt like he should be gagging, but didn’t have an overtly physical reaction to the corpse, until he realized who it was.

Dipper stepped back and covered his mouth, realizing that it was another one of the men that had attacked him. “Oh my God…”

Dennis’s eyes narrowed as he studied the way Dipper had reacted before he seemingly turned his attention back to the scene. “That log,” he pointed to a log that was a few yards away from the body.
There’s something carved into it.”

Dipper didn’t move, just staring up at the corpse. This was the second time that the murderer attacked someone who had something to do with Dipper, worst of all, it was someone who had hurt him. Dipper was slowly coming to the realization that the killer was close to him, the killer had to be someone who knew him. But who knew about the incident at the bar? Dad doesn’t know—oh god, if he knew that means he would know about Bill too. Dipper couldn’t see another person he loved die because of his father. He wouldn’t let that happen again.

“Dipper,” Dennis’s voice seemed distant, as if he was far away, despite standing relatively close to him. “The code on the log, what does it say?”

Dipper didn’t move, he just kept thinking. Who could possibly be next? Would it be Bill? Someone in the family… Mabel, mom…. No, that wouldn’t make sense. He hasn’t targeted anyone in the family yet. He went after the guys who hurt me though, he’s killed two of them already—but why? Why would he do that? There’s only one left now, will he stop after that last one? Is there only…. “One more to go.”

The next sound Dipper heard was the click of a pistol being cocked. His eyes immediately focused on the silver pistol, then Dennis’s arm, and finally the cold and cool eyes of his father. “Dad, what are you doing?”

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

The code on the log was one of the killer’s older ones, making it easy to decipher. Dennis was sure that his hypothesis was true at this point, especially when he heard the same words echo out of his son’s mouth.

Dipper Pines was the serial killer.

He had been blind to it this whole time. The distant nature of his son ever since he came back, the isolationism, the homosexuality, and now this. His mannerisms alone had pointed to his conviction the whole time.

Dennis kept himself calm, cool, and collected as he pulled out his standard issue pistol and aimed it at the back of Dipper’s head. He cocked the gun, the click echoing through the quiet meadow like a fallen tree. His son turned around, confusion and fear evident in his expression. “Dad, what are you doing?”

Smoky wind blew through the trees as they stood there, eyes locked. Dennis’s heartbeat was steady and slow from years of training and conditioning. It was like a wolf staring into the eyes of a rabbit.

When he spoke, his voice was just as collected as the rest of him, not betraying any inner turmoil that was happening in his thoughts. “Dipper Pines, you’re under arrest.”

“D-Dad, I don’t understand…” Dipper took a step back, his eyes watering in fear. “I’m not the killer!”

“How am I supposed to believe that when the evidence is so obvious?” Dennis asked, his expression becoming even more closed off. “Everything points to you. You’ve been obsessed with the case since it began, doing everything to keep your hands on it.”

“I was the only one who could solve it!” Dipper’s voice quivered, he was already breaking down under the pressure.
“Until I came along,” Dennis rebutted. “That was why you wanted me to leave so much. You couldn’t have anyone finding out it was you.”

Dennis watched as Dipper was breaking down, becoming more panicked and incoherent as the accusation set in. It was more obvious now than it had been mere minutes before.

Tears streamed down Dipper’s face, his breathing was uneven as his voice quivered. “Dad, I’m not the killer…”

“Then come quietly and prove it in court.” Dennis’s pistol lowered slightly, pointing to Dipper’s chest rather than his head, in an attempt to show any remorse, hoping that it would make Dipper to surrender. Just come quietly, don’t make this any harder on yourself.

The dead leaves shifted under Dipper’s feet and he took a few steps forward, looking down. His steps were slow and methodical before he suddenly turned around and began sprinting deeper into the woods.

“Damn it!” Dennis pulled the trigger and pulled the gun up, intending to get shoot his son in the shoulder, however, the bullet curved to the left, barely missing his head.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

“Get out of here!” he heard Jonathan’s words echo in his head.

Multiple memories were playing in his mind as he stepped towards his father, each step lasting longer than an eternity. The trees smelled the same, the crunch of the leaves under his feet, the sickening pit of panic that twisted his stomach, and the judgmental, cold stare from Dennis’s eyes that practically stabbed him like a knife.

“I didn’t do anything, I swear!” he heard his sixteen-year-old voice scream in the back of his head.

“You’re tarnishing the Pines family name.”

Dipper felt his fists clench, his mind shutting down as the memories of the beating took over, the scars on his shoulder practically burning as he relived the pain. “Please stop! Don’t do this… Please…” He felt every punch, every kick, every word that Dennis had thrown at him.

“Get out of here.” Jonathan’s voice echoed again.

Dipper’s chest tightened as his instincts took over and he turned around, the world moving in slow motion as he ran away as fast as he could. He shouldn’t be running; it would only make things worse. He knew that, but he kept running. he had to keep running. Dennis would kill him if he caught him.

Dipper felt the first bullet whiz past his head as he darted into the trees, dodging between the trees as randomly and sporadically as he could in an attempt to lose Dennis. I have to get out of here. I have to go. I didn’t do it; I didn’t do it.

He saw a cloud of smoke, immediately running for that. He could lose Dennis in it, thinking only of escaping the immediate danger and not of what lay within the smoke. He could distinctly see the soft glow from the embers that permeated the smoke, which would hopefully throw off Dennis from chasing him further.

Another bullet whizzed passed him, just barely cutting into the leg of his trousers. Dipper yelped in a panic and ran into the smoke.
I have to get out, I have to get out of here. His life flashing before his eyes as he inhaled the smoke, coughing as he ran. He went as far as he could until his foot caught on a root, causing him to fall to the ground, knocking the wind out of him. Dipper gagged as he tried to inhale clean air and struggled to get up. *Am I going to die? I can’t… Dad will tell Ford and Mabel—they’ll think I was the murderer… I’ve got to…* His vision began to blur as he continued to cough, the flickering golden flames reminding him of Bill’s hair. *Bill… He’ll never know…*

As Dipper’s vision faded he could’ve sworn that the flames around him turned blue.
The Angel

Chapter Notes

This is chapter is unedited--I finished it today and was too anxious to wait for my beta so I decided to post it anyway. o__e

This chapter is pretty gory, strong trigger warning for body horror. You've been warned.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Orange flames danced around Bill as he trudged through the burning forest. His clothes were slowly burning away with each step and his lungs filled with so much smoke that they were likely black. His eyepatch fell as the string deteriorated into ashes. He hadn’t started the fire; it was all just a funny coincidence caused from a lit cigarette.

Aside from the smoke, there was something else in the air. Bill tensed up as he looked around, feeling something odd. It was sort of like a weight on his mind, pulling him in one direction. A strange form of anxiety rushed through his veins, as if he was in danger… or someone else…

He heard the sound of gunfire as it echoed through the burning air. It was far off, a sound far too quiet for humans to perceive, but it was there. What was going on? He felt his form shift closer to his true form, growing a few feet taller as the blackness around his hands and feet rose to his elbows and knees, his pupils both elongating sinisterly as his ears and teeth sharpened to points.

Bill stared in the direction of the gunshot, hearing another one, followed by a quiet yelp. What’s going on? He began walking in long strides at a speed that would have been quite a run for a human. The force that pulled him toward the gunshots felt stronger and warmer now. The fire under Bill’s feet began turning blue, leaving a small trail of blue flame as he went.

A pitiful little voice forced its way into his mind. Am I going to die? It was the voice of someone who was betrayed and broken. It made Bill stop in his tracks, feeling his eyes sting.

What the hell? What is this? Bill’s brow furrowed as he rubbed his eyes, his elongated fingernails brushing into his hair. Who’s in my head? Bill felt as the voice pushed further into his head, as if it was reaching out, trying to clutch at his soul for dear life.

I’ve got to… The voice practically sobbed as it faded, dimming like a lightbulb. Bill…
The flames around him swelled, the flickering orange light being replaced with a constant and fierce blue. *Pinetree!* Bill’s body shifted into its true form, a horror reserved for ancient tales and campfire stories. Four ashen wings sprouting from his back, crackling like the fire around them as they stretched out, becoming bigger while parts of them simultaneously crumbled to cinder. As he grew taller in order to accommodate for his wings, two additional sets of arms split from the first set, each having a unique pattern of glowing blue tattoos, however, the middle set of arms had tattoos that glowed gold, much like his hair. His lips split as they grew, his mouth now stretching to the far corners of his eyes in order to accommodate for more teeth.

The tattoos quickly wrapped around his body like chains, interlinking and crossing over each other as the uncovered skin turned as black as soot. From head to toe he now stood at an inhuman height, eleven feet, not accounting for his charcoal wings.

The demon moved swiftly, stepping off of the ground, his wings stretching behind him as he blew through the burning trees. He trained his ears to every sound in the forest, hearing the screams and cries of deer, the heavy footprints of a man, and the soft, shallow breaths of his Pinetree.

As Bill found him, he could feel Dipper’s soul, a tiny little ember among the ashes and smoke around him. His body lay limp on the ground, face down in the dirt and dead leaves. The voice was gone now and Dipper was nearly…

Bill approached his body, dropping to his knees as if he was in front of an altar. He reached out, taking Dipper in his arms as his wings surrounded them. The light of the fire disappeared behind his wings, letting his natural glow illuminate them. Bill’s eyes stung as he dusted the detective’s clothes, listening to his weak heartbeat and light breaths. His voice shook as it left his mouth, his jaw quivering, “J-Jeez Pinetree, got yourself into another messy situation, haven’t you?”

He tried to smile as he cradled Dipper, one of his hands lightly touching Dipper’s chest, feeling pitiful, forced breaths and his ever-softening heartbeat. “You don’t have to rely on yourself anymore, you know,” Bill whispered to him. “I’ve got you now.” He kissed Dipper’s forehead as he visualized the detective’s soul, reaching out and holding it in his hands.

Dipper’s soul was barely the size of a marble in Bill’s hands, flickering as he hung on every breath. Golden energy dripped down his arms like paint, slowly covering the detective’s soul in golden light. There was then a burst of energy, Dipper’s soul roaring to life in a cascade of white.

Bill opened his eyes, watching as the color returned to Dipper’s face. “Nothing bad is going to happen to you ever again, I promise.”
His demeanor changed from soft and loving to bloodthirsty as soon as he heard the footsteps of his Pinetree’s pursuer. The smile left his face, being replaced with an intense glare in the direction of him. “Two to go,” he hissed threateningly as the hair stood up on the back of his neck. He lowered Dipper’s body, taking time as he let go before parting his wings.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

He saw something surround Dipper through the smoke as he made his way toward his son. His forehead was coated in sweat from the heat of the burning forest, dripping down his brow as he slowly approached. The grip on his pistol tightened, his finger ready to pull on the trigger the second he got close enough to fire at whatever was near Dipper. He had to turn him in, he couldn’t let something else take Dipper before he had a proper trial.

As Dennis got closer he lowered his gun, not believing his eyes. Before him were four ashen wings that covered, presumably, Dipper. What is that? The grip on his pistol loosened as the leaves crunched under his feet. Is that... Is that an angel? How? Something in him wanted to run, telling him that this wasn’t an angel. He heard it say something, but he wasn’t sure what it was, for its voice echoed in an unnatural way.

The wings opened up, expanding and crumbling as they spread out behind the thing. It stood on two legs like a man, but it was far too tall and had six arms. It stared down at Dennis with petrifying glowing eyes, staring into his very soul as it spread its lips, revealing sharp yellow teeth.

A fallen angel—a demon? Dennis scrambled back, the sight of the creature practically driving him insane. “What are you? Who are you?” He pointed the pistol up at the creature’s black chest, threatening it.

The creature merely laughed, “You really messed up.” It took a step forward, over Dipper’s unconscious form. “And you’re wrong,” Its head cocked to the left as his body leaned more to the right, looking more inhuman. “You are the demon, Dennis Pines. Not me.”

“How did you...” Dennis quivered as it leaned closer.

“You’re practically screaming it,” It hissed. “I can hear your thoughts,” one of its long fingers tapped the side of his head. “and I’ve seen you in Pinetree’s dreams.” He motioned behind him.
“Pinetree… Dipper?” Dipper knew this thing… Dennis pressed the pistol to its chest. “Who are you?”

It looked down at the pistol, “Try it. Shoot me.” It leaned forward more, its face barely an inch from Dennis’s. “I dare you.”

In his fear, Dennis pulled the trigger, the gun immediately backfiring and practically blowing up in his hand. He let out a yelp as he fell back, holding onto his mangled hand.

The demon’s laughter echoed through the forest, throwing its head back.

“Bastard!” Dennis shouted at the creature, blood dripping between his fingers as he held onto his mutilated hand. Three of his fingers were bent backwards, bone being exposed as his index finger practically dangled by ligaments. He tried not to show weakness, though his face contorted and a pained groan escaped his lips.

“Here let me help you with that,” The demon reached out, yanking off his index finger effortlessly, leaving the broken bone fully exposed as it tossed his finger away.

Dennis screamed, trying to squeeze the stump of his finger so it wouldn’t bleed as much.

The demon cackled again before grabbing Dennis by the collar of his shirt and hoisting him up into the air, “I’m going to make you suffer for what you did to him.”

He could feel its breath on his face as he struggled to breath. “He’s the killer.” At this point Dennis didn’t even believe his own words. This couldn’t be real. A demon, standing before him, a terrifying creature, like a panther compared to him, a mouse.

The creature’s pupils dilated and it hissed, “I’m the killer.” The demon’s claws slipped up to Dennis’s neck, its grip was tight and painful. One set of arms reached for his chest, a ball of light in the demon’s palms. Its hands pressed against Dennis’s chest, a sudden rush of energy rampaging through his veins. Dennis screamed, feeling as if his insides were being torn apart, his heart burning as if it was on fire.

“This should keep you alive for a little while,” The demon growled. What did it mean by that? Alive, didn’t it want him dead?
Dennis struggled in the demon’s grip, barely moving the statue-like demon as another set of arms reached around his back. The demon’s claws tore through Dennis’s shirt with a single touch, burning claws ripping into the skin of his lower back and reaching through the muscle. The first thing Dennis heard were two sets of very distinct cracks, as his lowest set of ribs separated from the cartilage that attached them to his sternum. The second set of cracks was as they were bent back, partially separating from his spine as they ripped through his skin.

Not only did this seem impossible, both the pain and the act thereof, but this should have killed him from the shock alone. “How?” his mind screamed while his vocal cords let out a wail that would rival that of a banshee.

“You’re going to stay alive until I say so,” The demon hissed, starting on the second set of ribs.

The cracking of his ribs matched the unnatural rhythm of the crackling wood amongst the blue flames, all five of Dennis’s senses driving him to incurable madness as he shrieked.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dennis’s wailing was practically music to Bill’s ears as he worked, spreading the human’s ribs out like the fingers of a bat. He marveled at how strong his magic was, somehow keeping Dennis alive as his torso was practically ripped apart by his masterful idea. He watched as Dennis’s torso slowly caved in without the support of his ribs, practically emptying like a spilled sack of potatoes, folding in on itself like fabric.

The screams stopped after a while, becoming gasps for air as Dennis’s lungs collapsed, allowing Bill to continue with the second part of his masterpiece. His third set of hands reached into Dennis’s back, taking his lungs and pulling them out. He used his hands to run through Dennis’s lungs in multiple places, stringing them onto the ribs like the skin of a bat’s wing. Bill chuckled as he marveled at his work of art, realizing how absurd it was.

He had practically transformed Dennis into an angel, giving him a pair of figurative wings. They were nothing like the real thing, which spread behind Bill. He lifted up Dennis, his charcoal wings lifting them both to a thick tree branch. He used his momentum to run the branch through Dennis, making sure it could support his weight as he let go of the human.

Dennis’s eyes were fixed on him, red and dry as he continued gasping for air that would never come. Bill met the old man’s stare as his finger touched the man’s chest, tearing through the skin and
reaching for his glowing heart, Bill’s blazing golden energy keeping it beating. Bill’s claws wrapped around it, slowly ripping it from Dennis’s skin, all of the valves stretching, a few snapping as Bill brought his heart to his lips.

A small smile spread before Bill’s teeth ripped into it, blood pouring down his face and gushing into his mouth as he tasted the man’s flesh. He felt the golden energy he had leant Dennis be returned to him, as well as the man’s soul become his. Bill savored the man’s soul as well as his heart, feeling the last drips of pain as Dennis Pines became nothing more than a bad memory.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

What’s that? A blurry scene filled his vision, blue light flickering around him as he lay on the warm ground. He could see something in the distance; a shadow perhaps? A multi-armed form gently coming down to earth. An angel? His eyes flicked up, seeing another, stagnant angel in the trees.

The scene darkened, his vision fading as he focused on the angel that came toward him. He had never imagined one to look as this one did, at least that’s not how he had seen them portrayed. In fact, this one looked more like…

Chapter End Notes

trollfishprince.tumblr.com
Dipper woke with a start, clutching his chest, sweat dripping from his skin. The smoky smell of the fire lingered on his clothes and hair, but he was back in his dank apartment, as if the previous events never happened. However, something haunted his mind, keeping him from calming down.

He could see a distinct pair of eyes staring at him and hear the haunting crackle of fire in his ears, as if it was all still there, and yet, despite how real the sounds and sights were, the whole of reality felt off somehow. It all seemed like a dream, as if he was weightless, but at the same time he felt like he was weighed down with iron.

“Who are you?” he asked aloud to his empty room. His terrified brown eyes stared at the pair of eyes, one yellow and snake-like, the other one grotesque and blue.

The eyes continued staring at him, unmoving, unblinking as the crackle of the fire died down in his ears. He hadn’t realized it until now, but the sounds of the fire must have been connected to some sort of blue glow, as his room became warmer in color as it quieted. However, the eyes remained, fixed on him.

As soon as Dipper blinked the eyes disappeared, leaving him alone in bed. He ran his hands threw his hair and let out an exasperated sigh, trying to keep his mind from wandering. *How did I get back home? The last thing I remember was…* His heart rate sped up as he remembered what had occurred prior to him waking, how Dennis had thought that of all people, *he* was the serial killer. The gunshots rang in his head as his hand immediately went to where his injury should have been, but his fingertips were met with uninjured skin.

*What? No, that’s not right.* He probed his skin with his fingers, prodding and trying to find his injuries from the night before, but found nothing. *It couldn’t have been a dream.* “That wasn’t a dream,” he told himself, getting out of bed and running his hands through his hair again. “You’re not
crazy."

He made his way to the small bathroom, his eyes scanning the room in a paranoid fashion. The room practically spun as he walked, his stomach lurching as he felt dizzy. His hand nearly hit the door knob as he pushed the bathroom door open, leaving it ajar as he rested his hands on the counter, breathing hard. It felt as if adrenaline was flowing through his veins rather than blood.

Dipper’s stomach couldn’t hold out any longer, its contents thrust up into his esophagus before erupting from his mouth and into the bathroom sink. It was all rather watery, mostly bile, aside from minimal traces of red. He exhaled, his breath smelled like acid and his teeth felt fragile.

The blood wasn’t what frightened him however, for as he looked up at his reflection in the mirror he saw the same glowing eyes staring back at him in his own eye sockets. He let out a scream that would have rivaled that of a banshee as he stumbled back in fear, falling on his back. *No, no, no, that’s impossible.* His heart raced as he scrambled to his feet, staring at his reflection once again, only to find his own brown eyes staring back.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Half the sky was still blanketed in smoke from the forest fire, though it was under control now. Mabel usually kept the windows open, since she enjoyed the breeze, but had decided that the smoky air might leave an unpleasant scent in the home. Instead the house was filled with the smell of baked chicken covered in paprika with a dash of garlic—a recipe she had learned from her grandmother. She was expecting her father to come for lunch any minute, just as he arranged with her two days ago.

The situation was a little odd, considering he wasn’t the most social person. She figured it would do some good if she cooked for him, rather than going to the local diner. It sounded like he had something he wanted to tell her, and she knew it had to be about Dipper. He was constantly poking his nose into Dipper’s business, especially after what had happened nearly a decade ago…

She let out a sigh, pushing the thought out of her mind. Whenever she thought about that day, she always became cross, which wouldn’t be a good way to start lunch. He had taken it too far; Dipper didn’t need to suffer like that.

Mabel checked the time, a little pout forming on her lip as she realized that her father was now late to their lunch. She absolutely hated when anyone was late, unless it was Dipper. He always had a legitimate excuse, but her father never did. Dipper would get absorbed in his work, but he was always apologetic, but Dennis never truly apologized. To be frank, she knew her father had a hero
complex, as well as a narcissism complex—she wouldn’t outright admit it ever of course, it wasn’t her place to.

The telephone ringing took her out of her thoughts, splitting the stillness of the house. She shook her and put on a smile, brushing her hands on her frilly apron before she picked up the phone.

“Pines residence, this is Mabel,” she answered, her tone was light and perky.

“Mabel,” Great-uncle Ford’s voice was somber. “How are you?”

“I’m doing well,” she responded, a small frown forming on her brow. “Ford, is something wrong?”

“Are you sitting down?”

“Yes,” she lied and leaned against the back of the couch, her hand resting on it. “Ford, what’s wrong?”

His voice was low as if he was forcing himself to speak, the words obviously not coming easily to him. “Yesterday I sent Dipper and Dennis to go investigate a murder and…” He exhaled into the receiver.

“Ford…”

“The body was in the forest, near where the fire started. We’ve identified one body as the victim’s but we found another one close to the scene and I haven’t heard from either of them—”

There was a clatter as the phone slipped from Mabel’s fingers, the wire being yanked out of the phone as it crashed onto the wooden floor. One of her hands was resting over her mouth as tears poured down her face. No, no, no, please God. She dropped to her knees before she had a chance to process the situation. Dipper, Dad, oh God.
There was an unexplainable aura that lingered over the Pines family over the next week. Nothing would be the same for any of them. Mabel stayed strong in the public eye, but the second a door closed she shed enough tears to fill an ocean. Her mother stayed with her family, barely refusing to speak and eat, much less leave the house. “I always expected to get a call someday that said something, I just,” she would take a breath. “I just never thought he’d be in danger here, home.”

In contrast, Dipper looked frail compared to his sister. His skin had paled, his eyes always seemed to be focused on something in the distance. Dark circles lingered under his eyes like deep bruises, as if he hadn’t slept in weeks, which was almost believable considering how much more focused he was on his work. Just like his mother, he barely spoke over the next week, but he had different reasons.

He was going to catch the killer and he was going to find out exactly what the killer was.

Bill had presumably tried to call him a few times over the week, but he never picked up the phone when it rang. He didn’t need another disembodied voice haunting him.

Anyone could see that something was missing, or perhaps broken, in regards to the young detective. He was unresponsive socially and reclusive, excluding himself from any and all social interaction. Some might say that he was simply mourning in his own way, but those closest to him would have been able to see that it was far more than that.

However, Bill wasn’t there.

One might say that he was “in hiding”, but he was in plain sight, they just had to know where to look.

There was only one bar in town that no longer had any regulars.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

There was nothing but smoke and voices, his lungs filled with the tainted air as he hyperventilated. His whole body shook with violent tremors, his eyes darted all around him as he tried to find something familiar, something normal, but to no avail.

“Dad, why are you doing this?” His own voice, cracked like timber.
“I just can’t believe his gone. Why did he have to go?” His sister’s voice, the whine as water evaporated from the wood.

“I know he wasn’t your favorite person,” Ford, like a falling tree. “But we would all appreciate it if you would speak at the funeral.”

His jaw quivered as his eyes stung, his blood boiled like the heat around him. He wanted to cry, to let out a mighty sound, but the only thing that could escape his lips was nothing more than a whimper.

“Nothing bad is going to happen to you ever again, I promise.” The words burned his ears like fire, but warmed his heart in a way that nothing else could.

Hands wrapped around him, one on his cheek, one under his chin, and many more around his body. He dares not open his eyes, knowing that an abomination owned that gentle voice and those kind arms. The smoke left his lungs and was replaced with the scent of honey and vanilla as a pair of lips grazed his neck, tracing a line up to one of his ears.

“My Pinetree…”

His eyes shot open as the scene twisted once again, blue flame cover himself as he began burning again. A dream, no, an illusion—no… Reality? He couldn’t distinguish between all of them as he was finally graced with the ability to scream once more.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Practically every police officer in the county came to Dennis’s funeral, or at least that’s what it felt like. Clouds blanketed the sun gradually, as if the light was fading from Earth. The closed casket ceremony seemed to last forever, but the drive to the cemetery was impossibly infinite. Ford drove Mabel and her mother to the cemetery, followed by Dipper and Stan in Dipper’s Lincoln.

Dipper’s car was eerily silent, as Stan wasn’t much for discussing his feelings, which considering the situation was perfectly acceptable. Dipper had yet to cry, his eyes remaining dry in his apathy. One could say it was solely from the abuse he had suffered ten years ago, but in reality there were countless factors.
He knew he would be asked to speak, but he had nothing warm to say. Should he tell the truth? Should he say that he was glad that Dennis was gone? Should he admit that he almost felt thankful?

The secret and silent thought had been lingering since he heard of Dennis’s passing that he could barely admit to himself. He was relieved that Dennis was gone. Not only because he wouldn’t have to worry about being watched anymore, but because he was going to have full control over the case once again.

Part of him was oddly thankful too. He bit his lip, exhaling as he squeezed the steering wheel. He was almost thankful that the murderer had killed Dennis and that grim thought frightened him the most.

As they pulled into the parking lot, Stan put his hand on Dipper’s shoulder, making him nearly jump. He turned to Stan, a slight furrow in his dark brows.

Stan cleared his throat, pulling away from Dipper sheepishly. “How’re you holding up?”

“I’m fine,” Dipper responded, unbuckling his seatbelt. He wasn’t going to have this conversation, especially now.

“Kid, it’s okay to cry.” Stan replied. His voice cracked under the weight of his emotions, letting a few tears get passed his iron-will. “We’re all going to miss him.”

Dipper didn’t speak as he opened the car door and exited the vehicle, slamming it as he practically marched to the burial site. *Just get this over with and go.*

The entire ceremony had been a complete haze of tears and the burial was no different. Dipper’s eyes remained dry, even as all eyes fixed on him, waiting for him to speak about how great of a father Dennis was.

Something inside Dipper wanted to tell the truth, but of course he had to restrain himself. He looked out at the wet faces around him, looking them all in the eyes before he closed his eyes and spoke.

“Dennis wasn’t always the most loving father,” he started. An exhale escaped through his nose
before he continued, “But he was determined to keep the peace. He truly cared about justice and the safety of not only our family, but this community.” He opened his eyes, continuing the eulogy, like a false prophet dictating the words of God to humbled followers. “He was the most magnificent man I’ve ever known, and I’m so glad that I got to call him my dad,” he choked on the last sentence, averting his eyes, instantly feeling nauseous from his own words. He could feel everyone’s sympathy as Ford approached him, putting a hand on his shoulder.

*Don’t touch me, he thought. I don’t want this.*

The priest cleared his throat, stepping up next to Dipper and placing his hand on Dipper’s other shoulder. Dipper pulled away from both of the men and made his way to take his place next to Mabel.

Stan and Ford started passing out flowers as the priest began speaking, quoting the bible as the casket was lowered.

“As much as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”

Mabel took Dipper’s hand, her fingers quivering as she shut her eyes. He held her hand tight, his eyes beginning to sting from the tears that were finally coming.

~ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ~

His yellow eye watched as the ceremony came to a close, a few people still lingering after the casket had been lowered and the flowers had been tossed. Once most of the remaining people left, he began his approach, a beautiful yellow rose bouquet under his arm, contrasting against his black suit.

Bill’s final victim had committed suicide before he could get to him, making Dennis Pines his last murder. This was the end of his homicidal escapade. It was a bit of a relief, the fact that he no longer had to try and hide from Dipper. He could be free of that burden.

As he approached, most of the remaining people left, except for two. Two brunettes, a man and a woman. The man had his arm around the woman’s shoulder, holding her tight as she wiped her remaining tears away. It was Dipper and his sister, Mabel. Bill made sure to keep his eyes down as he came up to them, lingering behind them for a moment before Dipper turned around.
Something was off about Dipper’s stare, no joy or sparkle like there once was. His brown eyes were dull and bloodshot, the same dead eyes that he had seen for too long. Bill’s golden eye barely met his thousand-yard stare before he looked back down. “I came to pay my respects,” his voice was quiet, like the light breeze.

“You didn’t even know him,” Dipper replied coldly. That wasn’t the tone Bill wanted to hear. Shouldn’t Dipper be happy? The biggest obstacle in his life was now gone, he could do what he pleased.

“Whether I knew him or not doesn’t matter.” In truth, Bill wasn’t paying his respects to Dennis, rather he was paying his respects to his past life. Everything would change from this point on. The demon knelt down, placing the bouquet down on the fresh grave with gloved hands. His fingers interlocked as he closed his eyes, mimicking a prayer.

“Do you know him, Dipper?” Mabel asked sheepishly.

“Yes, he’s an acquaintance—” Dipper was interrupted.

“We’re old friends,” Bill replied with a somewhat sad smile, his gold eye glancing at Dipper. “My name is Bill. It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance…” He held out his hand for her to shake.

She returned his smile, her eyes still glittering with tears like stars. *A Shooting Star.* “I’m Mabel.” She shook his hand gently and let go.

Dipper put his hand on Bill’s shoulder, his grip slightly tighter than Bill would have expected. “Mabel, I’ll catch up with you later. I need to have a talk with Bill here.” There was a tension in his voice and grip that made Bill somewhat uneasy, yet he played it off.

Mabel nodded, smiling meekly. “Alright, it was nice to meet you Bill.”

“Likewise, Shooting Star,” Bill replied, miming a tip of an invisible hat.

As soon as Mabel was out of earshot Dipper’s grip only tightened. “What are you doing here?” he asked harshly. “What if people saw you? What if they asked questions?”
Bill resisted the urge to roll his eyes, “That’s why I stayed out of the way until after the funeral was over—”

“You were here the whole time?” Dipper asked with exasperation. “I can’t believe this.”

Bill turned to him, looking him in the eye, one of his gloved hands reaching out and taking Dipper’s shaky hand from his shoulder. “Relax, Pinetree—”

Unbeknownst to Bill, Dipper heard an echo from that fateful night, “My Pinetree.”

“No!” he tore his hand away from Bill. “Stop it! Don’t call me that.” His jaw quivered, his eyes dampening.

Bill felt a pang in his chest, a sudden pain, hurt by his lover’s reaction. “What? Why wouldn’t you…”

Dipper took a step back, his hand nervously rising to his own shoulder as he looked away from Bill. His pale fingers rested over where the scars were on his shoulder, a nervous habit. “D-Don’t call me Pinetree. Actually don’t talk to me. I just—I can’t do this anymore.”

Bill blinked, almost to shocked to speak. This wasn’t happening. He must have been misunderstanding the situation. The words stung his chest like daggers, Dipper could have literally ripped his heart out and it would have been less painful than those words. “W-What do you mean?” It had been many years since his voice had been that quiet, his words stumbling out much like Dipper’s would.

The detective’s demeanor changed, his face going from panicked to a much softer expression. There was guilt in his eyes. “Bill, I—” he reached out for a moment, but dropped his hand, unable to even look at him as tears began to form. “He killed my dad, Bill. I have to find him. I have to find it.”

“Please,” Bill whispered, closing his eyes. “Please just stop.”

“Bill…” he heard Dipper take a step toward him.
“After all we’ve been through,” Bill’s voice shook. “After everything that’s happened, please don’t just end this now.” He had vowed off his old life; he had changed everything for Dipper. The detective couldn’t end things here.

“Bill, I have to,” Dipper’s hand touched his shoulder. “I don’t want you getting hurt—if the killer knew about you—”

His eyes stung like frostbite, his blonde eyelashes fluttering open as salty tears escaped, something that he thought he was incapable of after all these centuries. The old Bill would have laughed. “I can protect myself.”

“You don’t understand—”

“No, I understand,” Bill looked down at Dipper, his sadness turning slowly turning red. “I understand more than you ever could.”

“No, you don’t!” Dipper’s hands were both on Bill’s arms now, pulling him close as he shook Bill lightly. “He’s not human, Bill. There’s no way he can be—I know it sounds crazy but—”

“Good news, Pinetree!” Bill responded almost hysterically, pulling away from Dipper. “Neither am I!”

Dipper froze, the tension in his hands immediately releasing as something in him broke. The detective took a step back from his love, his hands falling to his sides as he stared up at him. His lips moved, as if he wanted to speak, but nothing left them, completely muted with shock.

The wind howled as it blew passed them, dividing them with a violent gust.

Chapter End Notes

forgive me
Every hair on the back of Dipper’s neck stood up with the chill of the wind as he stared at the demon. The crackle of the fire reawakened in his ears, his heartbeat echoing through his body as he took a step back. His gaze flickered to his periphery for a split second, looking around himself at the sudden dull desolation that surrounded them. Reality was warping once again for the young detective as something in him snapped. There was no voice in his head to convince him that he was safe, all he could hear was the fire as it burned in his mind.

Bill’s golden eye quivered, his pupil elongating. “There, I said it! I’m not human!” He looked down, his lip quivering as he continued, his voice was harsh, echoing only for the detective’s ears. “I’m not as fragile as you are, I can survive without your protection.” He looked back up at Dipper, taking a step forward, “In fact, I’m the one who’s always saving you. You sure know how to get into trouble Pinetree, did you know that?”

Dipper’s lip quivered, his knees wobbling as his mind went blank. He had fallen apart like Rome, the structure still standing but the civilization long gone. Disassociation took over as he listened to the crackle of the fire and watched his lover turn into something he feared.

The demon’s teeth seemed sharper as he continued to yell at the detective, taking more steps as he became more riled up. “After you were beaten up at the bar, do you know who found you bleeding to death? Me! You wouldn’t have made it out of that alive if it wasn’t for me!” He pointed at himself, his gloved hands seeming more dangerous now, like they could turn on Dipper any second.

He continued to stand there, petrified. That golden eye that had haunted his dreams, the figure—that was all Bill. When he had thought he was stabbed… Was he actually stabbed? Was any of this true? If Bill wasn’t human, then what was he? A prophet? An angel? A demon…

*There was no way that he could be—could he be the killer?*

Bill yelled inaudibly, his sharp voice muffled by the hiss of the invisible flames. Dipper’s lungs filled with smoke, breathing becoming progressively harder until he was so terrified that Bill would rip out his throat if he continued to breath. That predatory gaze that he had thought was appealing was now one of the most horrifying things he had ever seen.

Dipper watched as his vision began to blur, Bill’s devious form shifting to his old human-looking
one. The hissing and crackling silenced as he heard Bill call out to him before his knees gave out from underneath him.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

“After you were beaten up at the bar, do you know who found you bleeding to death? Me! You wouldn’t have made it out of that alive if it wasn’t for me!” he pointed at himself. Tears escaped Bill’s eyes as he yelled at his lover, his emotions consuming him. His voice hitched, almost sounding like a sob, “I don’t know what I would have done if I had lost you!” He quivered, taking a step closer to the detective. “So please, don’t do this. I’ve done everything—everything that I’ve done has been for your sake.” His eyes met the blank stare of the detective.

Dipper’s eyes looked glossy as his knees wobbled, his body gave out from underneath him. Bill shifted quickly, his human form catching the fragile detective. “Pinetree,” he spoke as his hand caressed his cheek. He had gone too far; he was hurting Dipper.

The demon lifted his lover as he stood, disappearing and reappearing in his cabin within the blink of an eye. He felt the familiar sting of his blue eye as he set Dipper down on his bed. He put his leather gloves to his teeth, yanking both off before he ran his slender black fingers through Dipper’s wavy brown locks.

Bill could feel something in his heart, a deep pain as his eyes stung with tears. Dipper didn’t deserve to feel like this, he didn’t want to hurt Dipper anymore. Thousands of emotions ran through his head as he waited for the detective to wake. Part of him knew that Dipper would be better off without him, but another part knew that Dipper wouldn’t live long enough to be happy again. What do I do? I can’t just run away, but I don’t want to say goodbye. Maybe I can fix this; I have to fix this. He almost felt human again, his heart was fragile and close to breaking.

The detective stirred, his eyes shifting under his eyelids as he fisted the golden bedsheets. Bill pulled away, his hand leaving his hair, afraid of what possible rejection might ensue.

Dipper’s eyes flickered open, seeming unfocused as he came to.

“Pinetree…” Bill mumbled the pet name under his breath, his black hands wanting to embrace him more than anything else.

The detective sat up, his hollow gaze looking down as his right hand absentmindedly touched his left
“Say something,” Bill’s voice didn’t shake this time, staying strong, yet uncharacteristically quiet.

Dipper closed his eyes, his lips parting before he granted Bill a few words. His voice was low and tired, withered and beaten. “Get out.”

“What?” Bill’s brow furrowed with concern.

“You heard what I said,” Dipper’s voice shook violently and suddenly. “Leave town, don’t look back. I never want to see you again.”

Bill stood up, taking a step back, “Pinetree, why?” This wasn’t the reaction he was expecting. He knew he should leave, but Dipper wouldn’t have wanted him to. What changed? He prodded at Dipper’s thoughts and took another step back as he was met with a burning forest. *The forest fire...*

Dipper’s mind was complete and utter chaos, pulling Bill into it aggressively. The fire mixed with different memories simultaneously, forming a great nightmare. The sound of burning and screaming wood flooded his ears, a young Dipper begging his father to stop hurting him—a completely all-consuming wall of sound that was met with no solace.

He watched helplessly as Dennis’s image terrorized Dipper’s mind, years of abuse that had been kept hidden finally revealing itself to Bill with absolutely no filter. The anger, the fear, the scars... The fire roared and corrupted Dennis’s form, suddenly becoming him.

Bill felt impossibly small as he looked up at the towering version of himself, his demon form that had burned itself into Dipper’s subconscious. His thoughts suddenly felt less coherent than before, his own image corrupting the young detective.

*I did this—no, I can’t have done this. There’s no way I...* He couldn’t have hurt Dipper this much. Was he really what Dipper had seen? Was he really a monster?

He was. Bill was a demon. Why should he push this side of himself away? Dipper should accept it. If Dipper really loved him then he would accept it.
These images, these thoughts were not acceptance. They were horrifying. Dipper was terrified of him.

Bill came to and was finally was able to pull himself out of Dipper’s thoughts, backing into his bedroom wall. He didn’t want to look up and see the fear in the detective’s eyes. His black hand moved up, clutching his own chest as he breathed the clean air. “Pinetree…” His voice was cracked like his heart.

~ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ~

Dipper stood up, his eyes lingering on the bedroom door. He remembered when this place made him feel secure, when it was a home, but now it felt like a prison. Bill had kept so much from him and now that it was all coming out his strangeness made sense. The old clothes, the centuries old artifacts, his carefree nature… he wasn’t human.

Once Bill left his mind the thoughts became more muted, allowing him to think clearer. His previous decision still stood—Bill had to leave town. He could never see him again. Bill was morally wrong and if he was the killer… “Bill, you have to go.”

“I have nowhere to go,” Bill replied solemnly.

Dipper’s brow furrowed as he looked at the demon, “Well you don’t belong here anymore.”

Bill finally looked up, his golden eye was red from the sting of tears. “We can still…” He looked so uncharacteristically fragile in that moment.

The detective closed his eyes and shook his head, “Tell me one thing,” Before you go… Dipper’s exhale was shaky and broken. “Are you the killer? Did you… did you murder all those people?”

There was an unshakeable, unmistakable silence that followed that question. It lasted for an eternity, Dipper’s heart dropping. The last string of hope he had slowly frayed and broke, his jaw quivered as he sucked back tears.

The detective stood up, averting his gaze from his lover—if one could refer to Bill as such. He took a step before stopping again. “If I—” his voice shook, “If I ever see you in this town again, you’re going to prison.”
He should be arresting Bill on the spot. He knew it, but something in him wouldn’t allow it. Images flickered in his mind, voices mumbling, conflicting with each other and himself.

‘Turn him in! What are you doing?’

‘I thought you wanted to be a detective, Dipper. He killed me. He needs to be brought to justice.’

‘He saved your life, isn’t there any merit in that?’

‘Pine tree’

Dipper ran his hand through his hair, turning around. “Don’t come back, you hear me?” He took in a breath, pointing to the door. “As soon as I’m out that door, I NEVER want to see you again!” Tears streamed down his face, his cheeks and nose red as his voice cracked under the pressure. “I trusted you, I LOVED you!”

Bill’s gaze met Dipper’s in that moment, and something changed in him. He closed his golden eye and simply bowed his head. He let out a breath, his voice still. “I loved you too.”

Dipper shook his head and turned back around, once again facing the door. He forced his feet forward, each step breaking both his heart and his moral compass. He was letting a murderer walk free because he loved him.

“Goodbye,” he heard as he crossed the doorway.

Dipper clenched his fists and turned around again, ready to yell some more, but his eyes met no one.

Bill was gone.

Chapter End Notes
Sorry this chapter was so short, I consulted my beta and they thought it would be good to end it here rather than trying to force myself to write more. More coming soon hopefully, sorry I kept you all waiting, I didn't mean for it to be so long. Nag me for updates on my tumblr and twitter: @trollfishprince

Also sorry this chapter was so sad. I leave an equally sad song recommendation: Epilogue by The Antlers.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!