Gravitational Phantoms
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Gravitational Phantoms
by orphan_account

Summary

Danny didn't know what to expect when he accidentally teleported away from the Guys in White and the monsters that he once called parents. But it certainly wasn't to be found bleeding out in the woods by a strange pair of twins

The demonic dream dorito that was trying to take over the world was rather unexpected too.

Notes

Let's do this!
Chapter One

Teleporting had been an accident. One minute Danny was screaming, begging, crying, and the next he was free from the cuffs that sealed him to the cold, metal table. Then Danny focused as hard as he could on escaping, thrashing and screaming until a powerful wail ripped from his throat. Then Danny concentrated as hard as he could, before he suddenly found himself in the middle of the woods.

The problem was that he didn't know where he was. Danny had never been particularly good at geography, and there were no landmarks nearby to help him. There was also the small matter of the copious amounts of blood spilling from his chest and abdomen, as well as the burning, stabbing pain that erupted from it.

Danny stumbled, clasping a hand to one of the wounds in an attempt to halt the bleeding. The earth and trees swayed around him for a moment, and then everything became lost in a sea of pain and darkness.

Danny crouched on the edge of a building, watching the stars. He reached up a hand and traced the familiar constellations, murmuring their names under his breath. A warm breeze wrapped around him, messing up his already spiky hair.

Suddenly, a piercing scream rang through the silence. Danny's head whipped around, and he floated up from his seat. Turning invisible and intangible, he slipped through the wall and looked around until he found the source. A woman was pushed up against the wall of an alley, clutching her shoulder with one hand. A man with blond hair was pinning her in place, a gleaming knife in his hand.

Danny swooped forwards, dropping his invisibility. He pushed the man away whisper for the woman to run as he did so. He swung around to face the man, and was stabbed in the ribs. Letting put a cry of surprise and pain, he fired an ectoblast at his opponent. The man artfully dodged, and Danny felt a sharp sting in the side of his neck.

Sinking to the ground, Danny looked up to see the woman advancing towards him, a dart gun in her hand. There was no sign of a wound on her shoulder. She smirked.

"Oh, Phantom," she sighed. "You are more predictable than you think."

Speaking into the radio in her hand, the unknown woman said, "This is Agent W to headquarters. We have secured the ghost menace."

Then a fuzzy darkness overtook him and Danny knew no more.

Danny sat bolt upright, vaguely aware that he was in an unfamiliar place. Pain lanced through his abdomen, and he let out a yelp. Someone set their hands on his shoulders and eased him back down.

"You really shouldn't do that, man," a strange female voice said. "You might pull your stitches out."

Blinking against the light, Danny realized that he was in a bed. It was pretty comfortable, because even though the mattress beneath him was rather stiff, it was better than being in a lab. Several blankets were wrapped around him, and there was a pillow beneath his head.

The room was small, and there was another bed across from the one that he was in. It had papers strewn around it, and there was a large corkboard face down at the foot. A large window that had an odd design that looked like the eye of providence was in between the beds, above a nightstand-
type thing.

Danny also got a good look at the person who had spoken. She had long, bright red hair that didn't even remotely pretend to be orange like-no don't think about that.

There were some freckles across her nose, but not very many. Her green eyes were sharp and intelligent, but they looked worried. The girl couldn't have been more than two years older than him, probably less.

Danny analyzed all of that in a second, before he registered that oh god there's a person here oh no are they going to hurt me?

Danny shrank back into the covers with a squeak of fear, bright blue eyes wide with terror. His thin frame shook slightly.

"It's okay," the girl said softly. "We aren't going to hurt you. I just didn't want you to ruin any of my hard work."

She sounded like she was telling the truth, but Danny didn't know for sure. What if she decided to hurt him? What if she called the agents? Or his parents? Danny let out a small whimper. The girl backed up a little bit, raising her hands slightly until he flinched sharply. She frowned. "Can you tell me your name?"

Oh no, now she was asking a question and Danny didn't want to say anything but he also didn't want to get in trouble for not saying anything when she clearly wanted to because what if she hit him and-

Danny's gaze snapped up to meet the stranger's.

"D-Danny."

She grinned. "It's nice to meet you, Danny." When he winced at the volume she lowered her voice. "My name is Wendy, in case you were wondering."

She-Wendy-paused for a moment, before she reached over to the table-thing that Danny had noticed earlier and grabbed a glass of water. She held it out to him. "Here."

Danny eyed it warily for a minute, wondering if it was some kind of trick. When nothing happened, he reached towards it hesitantly. Wendy made no moves to attack him, so Danny drank the entire glass. He couldn't remember the last time that he had a drink of water without it being full of some sort of chemical or poison. It was kind of... nice.

Wendy took the empty cup back once he was done, wincing slightly at the way he leaned away from her outstretched hand. She cleared her throat slightly.

"Well...I'm gonna go. The others will want to know that your awake."

Danny stiffened. "O-Others?"

Wendy nodded. "Yeah, others. Don't worry, there aren't very many of them. The twins are the ones who found you."

"T-Twins?"

"Yeah. Dipper and Mabel Pines. They're the reason that you didn't bleed to death, you know."

Danny flinched. Had they found him before or after he changed back? Did they notice anything off about his blood? Would they think that he was a freak? What if they tried to hurt him?
The sound of a door closing snapped him from his thoughts. Wendy was gone, and he could hear her footsteps creaking down the hall. Danny wrapped his arms around his chest. It had been bandaged, and Wendy had said that she had stitched it. Some of the other cuts and abrasions looked as if they had been cleaned as well, which always accelerated his already fast healing.

Danny shivered. It wasn't very cold, but his body always acted funny in the heat. The agents had discovered that pretty quickly, as well as his aversion to electricity—but he shouldn't think about that, not when he was momentarily safe.

The door opened rather noisily, and several heads poked through the door. Danny tensed as a group of people entered the room. Wendy was at the front, next to two short kids that he guessed were Dipper and Mabel, if their looked were anything to go by.

Wendy nodded. "So, care for some introductions?"
Chapter Two

When the twins brought the teen back after literally stumbling over him in the woods, the strange glow and green-swirled blood had identified him as a ghost. But after a pure white ring formed around his waist and changed his appearance, they quickly changed that assessment to Halfa.

It hadn’t taken them very long to recognize the gruesome scars that decorated the stranger’s chest and stomach. Most of them seemed random, but the enormous ‘Y’ shaped mark was definitely deliberate.

Once he had been bandaged and stitched, the boy had been carried by Wendy up to the attic room, an impromptu meeting was held in the living/TV/everything room. None of them wanted to abandon the boy, but it was obvious that just by being a member of the Halfa species he was dangerous. But whatever had given him the wounds was arguably more so.

Stanley sighed. He had always had a soft spot for kids, especially abused ones. And this particular kid looked as if he had been through Hell and back. Stanley knew that creatures like Halfas were dangerous, but he doubted that the poor teenager could defeat a newborn kitten in the shape that he was in.

Soos was confused. He knew what had happened to the kid, or at the very least had a general idea, but he couldn't understand why anybody would do it. Hurting a living being like that? That was messed up, dude.

Wendy was scared. The little guy (okay, he wasn't much younger than she was) was so skinny, she didn't know if he would be strong enough to heal. It was really hard to think of the frail body in her arms as an actual human. Or maybe Wendy was just blocking out the fact that if this had happened to a teen her age than it might happen to her. Sure, this boy was some kind of supernatural ghostie-thing, but that was no excuse.

Dipper felt sick. That kid (they didn't even know his name for crying out loud!) had been dissected, like he was some kind of sick science project. He was Wendy's age! How could somebody let this happen, much less do that to anybody?! Dipper had never felt sorry for the dead animals that they used in science class, but now he swore that he would never touch a scalpel again.

Stanford was angry. He didn't care that Halfas weren't supposed to exist, he didn't care that they were supposed to be pure evil by definition. All that Stanford Pines cared about was that somebody had tortured an innocent child. He knew that those bloody lash marks on his back were from a whip, probably laced with ectoradium. He'd had some experiences with the ore in the past, not all of it good.

Mabel was sad. It wasn't and emotion that was often adopted by the brunette girl, but it certainly fit now. Her mind was just having trouble registering what had happened to the poor teen. It was terrifying. Mabel hoped that he would be okay, because she didn't think that her sweaters could handle this much emergency snuggling. Oh! She should make the boy a sweater! Maybe Dipper and Ford could do a magic thing and make it extra special.

To keep themselves distracted from the beaten teen upstairs, Stanford gave all of the people who were in the everything room a crash course on Halfas. Dipper wrote everything down for his own journals, which he had been encouraged to write because the old ones were slightly outdated.

Mabel started to stress knit, which she did sometimes when she was nervous. She was using black yarn for the base, which she rarely did out of her love for colors. She added neon green and white,
making strange designs as her fingers flew. Sometimes her family wondered if she had selective super-speed that only worked on knitting projects. Dipper started to click the end of his pen, making the sound that Mabel despised. Her brother started to chew on the writing utensil, until it exploded in his mouth and he tossed it into corner.

Stan and Ford began to pace back and forth, weaving around each other. Soos nibbled on a piece of pizza. Dipper glanced at the ceiling, eyebrows creasing. "It shouldn't take this long to get him set up in a bed," he mumbled.

"Maybe she got distracted," his sister suggested. "Or she saw a faerie!"

"Mabel, be serious for a second."

"I was! Remember, we were looking at faeries and then they all flew away and we couldn't figure out why?"

"Mabel, if they all flew away than they wouldn't be back so quickly especially if we had a Halfa-oh!"

"What?"

"Thats probably why they flew off in the first place! They could sense him!"

Mabel wrinkled her nose. "Is that a bad thing?"

"I don't think so. That guy couldn't fight of a tissue..." his voice trailed off at the reminder that there was a broken boy upstairs. At that exact moment, Wendy walked through the doorway. There was a small smile on her face.

"He's awake," she announced. "He managed to tell me that his name was Danny."

"That's a nice name," Mabel said.

"I gave him some water and said that I was going to get you guys. I told him that you two"-she nodded to Dipper and Mabel-"were the ones to find him." Wendy paused for a moment. "There's something off about him. He's so scared to say anything, and he looked like he was terrified that I was going to start hitting him at any time."

"Tortured." Stanford spoke up. "The marks on his back came from a whip. And there were older scars beneath it. My guess is that they attached ectoradium to it, because that would burn his skin as well as negate his naturally enhanced healing."

Everybody stared at him. Mabel and Dipper's eyes were as wide as dinner plates.

"That's messed up, dude." Soos stated, echoing how they all felt. Wendy coughed. "Well, I did say that you guys were going to come up there to meet him, so..."

Forming a single-file line up the stairs, they made their way to the bedroom where the twins slept. Pushing open the door, Wendy revealed the frail body in Mabel's bed. He was sort of halfway sitting up, watching them with nervous bright blue eyes. Everybody stood awkwardly just inside the bedroom for a second, before Wendy cleared her throat. "So, care for some introductions?"
Chapter Three

Chapter Summary

Danny meets the Pines family, plus Soos,

Danny shrank back into the pillow behind him, shaking slightly. There were just so many people! What if they tried to hurt him? The girl with long brown hair that he had guessed was Mabel hopped forward and gave him a small smile.

"I'm Mabel," she said happily, confirming Danny's suspicions about her name. "And this dork is my younger-by-five-minutes brother Dipper."

The younger, fatter man with buck teeth waved. "I'm Soos."

The two final people other than Wendy spoke. "I'm Stanley, but Stan is fine," the slightly shorter one said. The other one studied Danny for a moment longer, and he trembled underneath his gaze.

"I'm Stanford. But Ford is less confusing."

Danny nodded, only moving his head a fraction.

"I-I'm Danny," he said softly.

Mabel grinned, showing off her blue-and-silver braces. "Wendy told us. Are you hungry?"

Danny blinked. Why did all of these people want his opinion? He was just a no-good freak, who got what he deserved. Realizing that Mabel was still waiting for an answer, he moved his shoulders in a small shrug. Danny was hungry, and he couldn't remember the last time that he had eaten something. But he didn't want them to see him eat. They hardly knew him, so why were they being so nice?

"Awesome! I'll go make you something right now!" Mabel left, mumbling to herself about what she was going to make.

Dipper sighed. "I'll go make sure she doesn't put anything inedible or glittery in it."

He followed after his sister. Danny's shoulders relaxed ever-so-slightly. He was far more comfortable around people younger than him, but there were just too many humans in the room. Wendy noticed his discomfort and made a flicking motion with her hand.

"Shoo," she told the buck-toothed guy (Soos, right?). "There's too many people in here."

He nodded backed out the door. Wendy nodded in satisfaction before turning back to Danny. "I've gotta go now, or my dad will accidentally break my house." The redhead waved to the remaining men in the room. "See you two tomorrow."

When she was gone, Danny stiffened again. He was glad that there were less people in the room, but now he was alone with a pair of men that he didn't know anything about. The shorter one, Stanley, coughed. "Well, this is getting weird."
He walked over to the table-thing and leaned on it, followed by his brother. Danny tensed even more, because now they were uncomfortably close. Stanford elbowed the other man.

"You're scaring him." Stanford backed up. "Sorry."

They stayed that way rather awkwardly for another few minutes. Danny did not relax, because he didn't know if they were just trying to get him to lower his guard before they attacked. Suddenly, there was a loud crash from the hallway. Danny jumped up with a yelp of surprise, falling onto the floor. The Halfa let out a small cry as pain shot through his entire body.

"Whoa there, kid! Be careful!"

Danny felt a hand on his shoulder, and immediately scrambled away into the closest corner. He rocked back and forth, eyes wide as his heart pounded. The ghost boy started to hyperventilate, irises flickering from blue to green and back again.

He was in the lab.

No, he was in an attic room with people who had helped him.

The agents were circling closer and closer, cruel expressions on their faces.

Stanley and Stanford both crouched down, slowly moving closer so that they could calm the hybrid down.

The sea of white coats parted, revealing a pair of familiar outfits.

Danny was trembling now, eyes squeezed shut as several stray tears leaked from them.

Someone slapped him across the face hard enough to send him tumbling to the cold concrete floor.

Dipper and Mabel stuck their heads through the halfway open door.

"Sorry about that," Mabel said sheepishly. "Just a slight miscalculation."

"What happened to Danny?" Dipper asked.

Stanley shook his head. "He got startled and fell, then got scared when we tried to help him up. Now..." he hesitated. "Now I think he's having a flashback."

"That's not good," Dipper gulped. He had done a report about World War II in sixth grade, and knew quite a bit about PTSD.

The whip snapped against Danny's skin, the ectoradium scorching his flesh. He screamed in pain, dark spots dancing across his vision. Just when he thought he might be able to succumb to unconsciousness, a splash of freezing water woke him up.

Mabel tried to get closer, but Stanford held her back.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," he said grimly. "He's stuck in the past. If something happens to him right now, he might lash out and hurt you."

Danny howled in pain, trying to break free of his bonds as electricity coiled around him.

"Scream all you want, freak." Maddie sneered. "Everyone knows that ghosts can't feel pain like humans can."
The four members of the Pines family watched as Danny twitched and muttered, sweat coating his body. Mabel frowned.

"Isn't there anything that we can do?" She murmured sadly, watching the teen.

Stanley shook his head. "Usually there would, but the kid doesn't trust us yet. We might make it worse if we try to help him out of it."

Finally, after what seemed like forever, Danny's eyes cleared. He winced in pain, touching his chest gently. Dipper ran out of the room at top speed, charging back in with a bottle of pain pills.

"Here. You should probably take..." he checked the label. "About two, maybe three."

Dipper extended his hand. Danny flinched back, looking at the younger boy warily.

"It's okay," Dipper assured him. "I won't hurt you."

The raven-haired teen reached out hesitantly and took the bottle. He opened it and tapped out two capsules, then slowly handed the orange container back. Dipper picked up the glass of water that Danny drank out of earlier, and the older teen swallowed the pain pills.

"There's some soup downstairs for when you're hungry. I even watched Mabel while she made it; one hundred percent safe to ingest." Danny nodded slowly. He felt a bit safer around the brunette twins than the others, except maybe for Wendy. They were smaller than he was, so they simply scared him less. Mabel moved up beside her brother and stretched out her hand, moving slower when he flinched.

"Come on," the girl said quietly, which was no easy feat. "Let's get you back into the bed."

Danny warily accepted her hand, still untrusting of kindness. Mabel lifted him to his feet, showing off surprising strength for a twelve-year-old. Her brother ducked under Danny's other arm for support, and the hybrid froze. But the boy made no move to attack him, and he relaxed as much as he dared. The older pair of twins moved out of the way, and their younger counterparts set Danny on Mabel's bed. The ghost boy curled up beneath the blankets, noticing just how tired he really was. The agents never let him get very much sleep, and when he did it was punctuated with awful nightmares. Just before the others left the room, Mabel grabbed one of her many stuffed animals (the tiger that she'd had since she was five) and held it out to Danny.

"He'll protect you from monsters," she said earnestly. Danny looked at the tiger for a moment before taking it. Mabel beamed.

"Goodnight Danny," she chirped, before skipping off down the hall.
Maddie and Jack entered, followed by several of the agents. The woman who had raised him lifted a gleaming ectoradium scalpel, a cruel expression on her face. Danny was tied to a cold metal table, his arms and legs secured with glowing green straps. He struggled weakly to escape, but his efforts were fruitless. The door to the lab room creaked open.

She set it against the already created mark and began to slice. Danny's back arched off the table as he screamed.

"No-nonononono please stopstopstop I'm your son! Please! I'm your son! Your son! Stopstop!"

Danny screeched in agony as the green blade ripped his abdomen apart.

A fist slammed into the side of his head as black encroached on the edges of his vision.

"Quiet!" Jack bellowed. "You're not my son! You're just a worthless ghost freak."

"I swear!" Danny sobbed hysterically. "I swear I'm your son! I swear IswearIswearIswear! Stop Stop Stop Stop! Please!" Danny thrashed and shrieked, but nobody moved to assist him.

Instead, electricity arced down the straps and onto his body. The white ring formed around the Halfas waist. It split in two, and Danny changed back into his human form. More pain raked throughout his entire body. Danny struggled to break free from his restraints.

"-ny! Danny! Wake up! It's just a dream!"

Somebody was shaking him and shouting. Danny shot up with a howl of pain and fear. For a moment he had no idea where he was, and terror overwhelmed his senses. Danny sprang from his position as jumped back into the corner. Burning erupted from his spine, and Danny whimpered in distress and surprise.

The lamp clicked on, and Danny squinted his eyes against the bright light. Dipper was crouching in front of him, a worried expression on the boy's face. There was a pounding sound outside of the door, and it slammed open. Stan and Ford ran into the attic with Mabel on their heels.

"What's going on here?" Stan asked. "We heard screaming. Is everyone okay?"

Danny curled into as small a ball as he could. Dipper stood up.

"We're fine. Danny was having a bad nightmare, and that was the screaming you heard."

"Must've been a really bad nightmare," Stan muttered.

"N-not really," Danny stuttered. "I-I've had worse."
They turned to look at him, all surprised that he had spoken without prompting. Uncomfortable with
the attention, Danny ducked his head back down.

"Do you want something to eat?" Mabel asked. Her family members all blinked at her. The twelve-
year-old shrugged. "What? Sometimes I get nightmares when I don't eat dinner."

Danny lifted his shoulders slightly in a half shrug. "I-I guess I could eat so-something."

Mabel beamed. "I'll go heat up the soup!"

She bounced off down the hallway.

Dipper glanced at his stomach. "I heard you yelp. Did your stitches break or something?"

"J-just bumped my back a l-little bit," Danny answered nervously.

"Well, it's been long enough since you took the first two for you to take some more pain pills if you
need them. Are you sure that you're okay? Does anything hurt?"

Danny stiffened. The last time that he had heard those words...

"Does that hurt, Phantom?" Agent G asked, snapping the whip down across his spine.

Danny whimpered as a reply. The whip cracked down even more harshly this time.

"Liar!" The agent growled. "You can't feel pain! You're just an ectoplasmic cluster of post-human
consciousness! Nobody would ever care about something like you!"

Danny shook his head quickly. "N-no. I'm fine."

Mabel bounced through the door, carrying a bowl. "I brought you some food! It's still kind of cold,
but that's okay!"

She held it out. Danny tentatively took it from the brunette, flinching a bit as she handed him a
spoon.

Danny took a small bite. It was still a bit cool, but it made it a little easier to eat; with his core in the
dangerous condition that it was there was no telling what too-hot food could do to it.

The soup was pretty good, actually, and Danny ate slowly. Not just because it tasted nice, but also
because the Pines family was watching him.

When the bowl was empty, Mabel snatched it from his hands and charged back out of the room. She
grabbed Stan and Ford, somehow managing to drag them out of the room. Dipper helped Danny to
his feet, the hybrid only trembling slightly when Dipper's hand grazed the edge of one of the cuts on
his side.

Danny lay beneath the sheets, listening to the crickets and night animals outside of the house.

It suddenly occured to him that he had no idea where he was. Another part Illinois other than Amity
Park? Danny didn't know if the lab had even been in Amity, much less how far it was from where he
was now. Maybe he could ask in the morning.

From across the room, Danny noticed a faint glow. Dipper had lifted the covers up over his head,
and they were thin enough to show that something was gleaming beneath it. Maybe some kind of
flashlight? Although it was a little bit too purple-white-blue for that.
Danny closed his eyes and sank off into sleep, where hopefully he wouldn't have a nightmare for once.

The world around him was bright green, with violet dancing across it. Danny was standing on a floating island, the bottom breaking off into a deep chasm. Just ahead of him, the green sky met an expanse of grey, white, and black. The colors blended strangely, not actually mixing.

The strange grey was full of doorways and windows, that Danny somehow knew not to touch. Strange blue light began to creep toward him, undulating and gleaming.

It grabbed at the green and purple, dragging it into the grey. They two colors were swallowed up, and Danny realized that it was being eaten, destroyed by the parasitic grey light.

A voice whispered and echoed across the gloom, growing louder and stronger until it boomed from all directions:

"A darkness approaches. A day will come in the future when everything you care about will change. Beware the flames, young Halfa, and do not succumb to the demons, despite how tempting they may seem."

An eerie laugh began to grate across Danny's ears, and he clapped his hands over them. A bright white ring of symbols appeared around him, scorching its way into his retinas. Somebody else was talking now, saying something to him. Straining his ears, Danny managed to hear what it was saying.

"So, DP, what are you going to do?"

Danny awoke to the sound of screaming.
Chapter Five

Chapter Summary

Welcome to Gravity Falls.

Danny spun around, looking for the source of the noise. Realizing that it was coming from downstairs, the Halfa turned to look at Dipper. The twelve-year-old boy was already out of bed, running for the hallway. The brunette sent Danny an urgent look.

"Stay here, okay?" He said, biting his lip. "I'll go see what's going on."

Then he was gone, scrambling out the door. Danny wrapped his arms around his knees and waited. Worry wormed its way through his chest. What if they were hurt? Or what if the agents found him? Danny didn't want the people who had saved his half-life to be injured if they managed to track him down. Luckily, Dipper chose that moment to stick his head through the door.

"It's fine," he said. "Mabel just got startled by a, uh, moth. Yeah. A moth."

Danny blinked. "Um, o-okay?"

"Do you want to come downstairs? You don't have to go into the gift shop, but you can hang out in the living room."

Danny gave a small nod. Dipper beamed. "Awesome! I think that Mabel made you a sweater, so if she gives it to you just take it."

Danny was helped up from the bed, ducking away slightly when Dipper reached for him. The hybrid was was still wary of kindness, because the last people that he had trusted tied him down to a lab table. Dipper led the ghost boy through the house, leading him down the stairs and into a comfortable-looking room. There was a yellow chair that somebody had put a pillow, a blanket, and several stuffed animals on, and Danny guessed that this was where Mabel had slept. The girl in question was sitting at a table, finishing up what looked like a complicated knitting project. She was wearing purple pajamas with a puppy on the chest, and there was a glass of orange juice next to her.

Mabel beamed. "Hi Danny! Sorry if I woke you up, we just had a little problem."

"Right," Dipper said. "With the moth."

Danny glanced around and noticed that quite a few items were tossed around, as if somebody had thrown them at something else as a weapon.

"Are you hungry? Because Stan made bacon. I already had some, but I saved a few pieces for you."

"Aw, what?" Dipper complained. "Do I get any bacon?"

"Nope," Mabel said gleefully. She turned her attention back to the Halfa. "So do you want some?"

"O-okay."
"Great! What else do you like to eat, for future reference?"

"A-anything o-other than toast," Danny mumbled.

"Awesome! Here," she produced a plate of bacon seemingly from nowhere.

Mabel slid it across the table, and Danny hesitantly took a piece. He nibbled on one edge. Man, Danny hadn't had bacon in forever. Stan walked in, wearing only an undershirt and boxers, which was interesting to say the least.

"Did you take care of the-"

"Moth?" Dipper said hurriedly. "Yeah, we did. Its gone."

Stan frowned. "Um, okay then. Ford found another one in the closet, just so you know."

"What did you do with it?"

"Threatened it with the leafblower and chased it out the window."

Danny tilted his head. Somehow he really doubted that they were talking about moths.

Mabel groaned. "Why can't they take a hint?"

"They are pretty determined to have you as their queen. You gotta give them props for persistence, at the very least." Dipper shrugged.

Okay, now Danny knew that the weren't talking about moths. He took another piece of bacon. His body started to relax, and he started to feel safer. Until something bumped into his leg. Danny yelped and jumped into the air, rocketing over to the chair. He stared at the thing that had nudged him.

Mabel giggled at Danny's face. "That's just Waddles. He's my pet pig."

There was indeed a small, fat, pink pig chewing on Danny's dropped bacon. Stan frowned at him.

"Cannibal," he muttered.

Waddles the pig oinked. He tottered over to Danny and started to chew on the bottom of his pants. Dipper made a shooing motion with his hand.

"No! Don't eat the only pair of pants that Danny has!" Dipper's eyes widened. "Oh man! We need to get you more clothes!"

Mabel rubbed her hands together and smiled. "I can get you some of you tell me your size." Her brother shook his head. "No! You are not aloud to get Danny any new clothes without somebody there to supervise."

Mabel blew a raspberry. "Boo!"

Waddles bumped his face against his owner's chair. The brunette girl scooped him up. She made him wave his tiny arms in Danny's direction. The hybrid had to admit that it was pretty cute. There was a small sound from behind Danny's spot. He looked towards it with his brows furrowed. Stan leaned over his shoulder, and Danny let out a small squeak. The older man backed up a little bit. He leaned towards the twins.

"Get the clubs."
In a flash, the twins had a pair of golf clubs lifted up and at the ready. The ghost boy stiffened in fear. Stan gestured at Danny to get out of the way. The Halfa complied nervously. Stan crept up to the armchair. He raised a hand and counted down from three. When he got to one, Stan wrenched the seat aside. Something large scuttled out from beneath it, running towards Mabel. The twelve-year-old snapped her club down, hitting a solid blow to whatever it was. It landed at Danny's feet, and he got his first good look.

The creature appeared to be a tiny man, with a brown beard, a red hat, and short limbs. It lay still for a second, before trying to escape. Dipper picked it up by the back of it's shirt and carried it over to the window. Mabel opened it. Dipper dropped it out of the opening.

Mabel stuck her head out after it. "And stay out, Jeff!"

Danny pointed. "W-what even was t-that thing?"

"A gnome. They're mostly harmless on their own, but when they work together they can be pretty vicious." Dipper explained.

Danny blinked. "I-is that normal?"

Dipper laughed. "Welcome to Gravity Falls."
Chapter Summary

Flashbacks and sunshine.

Chapter Notes

I would like to remind everyone that this is an AU where none of the episodes after The Stanchurian Candidate happened. That's a very important part of the story.

*Gravity Falls.* So that's where Danny was. Of course, he had no idea what state that was in, how big it was, or if it was far enough away from the lab to be safe. And apparently, gnomes were a common occurrence. That was a little bit strange.

But who was he to judge? Amity had ghosts, Gravity Falls had gnomes.

"You're taking this surprisingly well," Dipper commented.

Danny shrugged slightly. "I-I guess it's not that hard to believe if you've s-seen ghosts."

Immediately, Danny wanted to take that back. Why would he admit that? Maybe they wouldn't think ghosts were real. But what if they did, and would want to do experiments on them?

"Oh yeah, I forgot about that." Dipper mumbled to himself. Raising his voice to a normal level, he said, "Well, I hope that your prepared to see some more weird stuff, because there are a lot worse things than just the gnomes in this town."

"L-like what?" Danny asked nervously.

"Oh, just some werewolves, vampires, aliens, and Gremloblins. You know, the usual," Mabel said, waving her hand flippantly.

"W-what's a Gremloblin?"

Mabel wrinkled her nose. "Part gremlin, part goblin. You see your worse nightmare if you look into its eyes. Don't thow water on them or they get even worse."

"Nasty customer," Stan agreed. He glanced around at the objects strewn all over the floor. "Alright who's going to clean this up?"

"Not it!" The twins chorused in unison. Stan frowned and pointed at Mabel.

"Eeny, meeny, miny...you."

"Aww, boo." She complained. "No fair."
"Haha, yes! Finally!" Dipper cheered. Danny flinched at the noise.

"If those guys are going to make a big mess trying to marry you, than you're going to be the one to clean it up."

Mabel scowled for a second before the expression melted off of her face. "Can I give Danny his sweater first?"

"Sure, but make it quick," Stan left the room, hopefully to change clothes.

Mabel beamed and pulled out the knitting project that she had been working on. Danny realized that it was a large black sweater, with nice white and green flame-like designs on it. He took it from the long-haired girl carefully, running his fingers over the soft fibers. Despite the fact that it was really hot outside, the sweater actually seemed to radiate coolness.

At Mabel's expectant look, he put it on.

Instead of being overheated, Danny felt as if he were being wrapped in a cocoon of snow. His core shivered, and he felt as he could run/fly for miles without getting tired.

"So, do you like it?" Mabel asked, starting to pick up a cushion that had somehow ended up behind the TV.

Danny nodded and snuggled down into it. Mabel grinned.

"That's great! Because I wasn't sure that the thing in the journal was going to work."

"You weren't sure that what was going to work?" Dipper asked.

Mabel tugged on her collar. "Well..."

"Danny, can I touch your sweater for a second?"

"Um, okay?"

Dipper gently rested the back of his hand on Danny's chest, then narrowed his eyes.

"Mabel, why is it so cold?"

She chuckled nervously. "Funny story..."

Mabel grabbed her brother and pulled him out of the room. Danny slowly sat back down in the yellow chair. He still didn't know how far away he was from his former home. Maybe there was a computer that he could use. Or a PDA. Tucker.

Had they held a funeral for him? Did his parents think that it was Phantom's fault? What about Sam's family? Was Jazz okay? The last that he had seen of her had been-

Danny thrashed around in the ghost proof net, trying to escape as his parents moved forward. They pointed a thermos at him, and Danny let out one final scream as he was sucked in.

When he was freed, Danny was in an ectoradium cage, the walls burning at his skin. His parents were watching him, glares on their faces.

"We've got some questions for you, ghost scum," his dad growled. Danny nodded, eyes wide.
His mother opened her mouth, but before she could say anything somebody called out from upstairs.

"Mom, dad? Where are you?"

"We're in the lab, sweetie." Danny's mother answered.

The door opened, and a ginger head poked through.

"Have you seen-DANNY!"

Jazz rushed to the front of the cage.

"Are you okay?" She asked. Maddie snorted.

"Why wouldn't he be? It's just a filthy ghost."

"Filthy ghost?" Jazz shrieked. "That's your son!"

Jack laughed. "That's ridiculous, Jazzypants. Danny isn't a ghost."

The Halfa pressed himself up against the bars, heedless of the searing pain.

"It's true," he said, allowing the transformation to take over him. "I am."

His mom and dad stared at him for a moment. Then Jack scowled. "You're no son of ours, freak."

Danny and Jazz gaped at him.

"W-what?" Danny gasped. Maddie narrowed her eyes.

"You aren't our Danny. You are just an ectoplasmic cluster of post-human consciousness." She picked up a scalpel. "And we're going to figure what makes you tick."

Somebody rested their hand on Danny's shoulder.

"Dude, you okay?"

Danny jumped, curling into the chair cushion.

The guy from yesterday, the one with buck teeth, was standing next to him.

"You were kinda shaking and twitching, so I figured that maybe you needed help? Are you okay?"

Danny nodded, body tensed. He didn't know this person and oh no what if they tried to hurt him and he was all alone and this was really badbadbad.

"Danny!" Mabel suddenly appeared next to him. "Do you want to go up to the roof? It's really cool, and I also need to hide from Dipper. Oh hey, Soos! Don't tell Dip where I went, okay?"

She grabbed Danny's hand and dragged him up to a weird room full of funny-looking creatures and objects, then up a ladder. It was less like she was kidnapping him and more as if she really, really wanted to show him something. That made it a little bit easier to be unafraid, because the agents had always dragged him places while he screamed and fought. That didn't stop the tremors of fear that danced up his spine.

When they stopped, it was on top of the roof. Danny could see the forest that surrounded the house. There was a totem pole nearby, that looked as if it had been broken and then put back together.
Recently.

On the roof with them was a cooler and a couple of chairs that Mabel happily plopped down on top of. Danny sat cross-legged on the warm wood, enjoying the sunshine. Down beneath him, Stan was leading a group of strange people around. He was wearing a suit and eyepatch, which Danny was pretty sure that he didn't need. Stan was carrying a cane with an eight-ball on the end.

"He's leading tours," Mabel explained. "Beneath us is the Mystery Shack, which is basically a tourist trap that he runs. Wendy, Soos, Dips, and I all work there. It's kind of funny, because they could see real stuff if they just looked into the woods."

"D-do you live in Gravity Falls?"

Mabel shook her head. "Naw. We live in Piedmont, California, but our parents sent us up here for the summer."

"D-do you like it here?"

"Oh, yes. I still haven't really had an epic summer romance, but I have had a lot of fun. I don't think that I would change it for anything, not even a boyfriend." She paused for a moment. "Do you have a girlfriend? Or a boyfriend, whichever."

Danny shook his head. "No. I d-did have a c-crush on my best f-friend Sam, but she..." Danny's eyes filled with tears. "She died b-before I could t-tell her."

Arms wrapped around Danny's waist. At first he tensed up, but then he relaxed when he realized that Mabel wasn't attacking. Danny smiled through his tears. It had been a long time since he had been hugged.

"I'm sorry," Mabel mumbled into his back. "That's really sad."

Danny reached behind him and pulled her around to the front of his body. Then he curled up around her, sobbing quietly. When his tears dried up, they stayed that way for a while longer, enjoying the sunshine. That was the way that Dipper found them an hour later.
Danny peered up at the younger boy, who had gotten dressed like his sister. Dipper was smiling, mostly because of the fact that he could hardly tell which limbs belonged to Danny and which were attached to his sister. Mabel squirmed around beneath Danny's stomach.

"Get off of me, you big lump," she grumbled.

Danny moved aside to allow her access to the rest of the roof. Mabel threw her hands up and cheered.

"Fresh air at last," the girl cried dramatically. Her brother snickered.

"You sound as if you've been buried alive," Dipper said. Danny smiled slightly.

"M-maybe she was suffocating in h-her sweater," he suggested. Dipper looked at him in surprise before a huge grin spread across his face.

"Yeah, that thing could probably be used as a murder weapon," he agreed.

"You're right," Mabel chirped. "It is a murder weapon!"

She pounced on her brother, pulling off the fluorescent pink garment and yanking it over his head.

"They'll never find you now," she shouted gleefully.

Danny watched as the two wrestled across the top of the roof, shouting strange battle cries and weird insults.

"Danny, help me!" Dipper yelled, shoving his sister towards the Halfa. Danny complied, scooping up the brunette and pinning her arms to her sides. Dipper lunged, tickling the other twelve-year-old mercilessly.

When her thrashing became too much, Danny released Mabel and watched as she attacked her brother. The two of them rolled around, getting dangerously close to the edge. Just as they were about to tumble off, Danny grabbed the back of Mabel's shirt and Dipper's vest, pulling them backward to safety.

"B-be careful!" Danny warned. Mabel mock saluted.

"Yes sir captain Danny. We shall uphold the law of the rooftop pirates." She wiggled free and landed in a ninja pose.

"But, are you ready for my..." Mabel paused for affect. "GRAPPLING HOOK?!"
She whipped a black grappling hook from out of nowhere. Danny blinked.

"Uhhh..."

The long-haired girl pointed it at a tall cedar tree across from where the trio stood. Mabel pulled the trigger, and the hooked end shot out over the yard and wrapped around a sturdy branch.

"Um, Mabel?" Dipper asked. "Are you sure that this is a good idea?"

"All ideas are good ideas!" His sister crowed. She pressed the other end of the grappling hook into Danny's hand. "Here, hold this."

Reaching down to pick up something that kind of looked like a broken coat hanger (where did they keep all of this stuff?), Mabel crouched on the edge of the building. She put the crooked part of the metal thing against the wire part of the grappling hook, the jumped.

Danny gasped as she whizzed over the heads of several people below her, landing neatly in the tree. Mabel beamed and waved to Danny and her twin.

"Now you try!"

Danny shook his head. "I-I'll pass, th-thanks."

"He really shouldn't, Mabel. His stitches might tear open," Dipper said in agreement with the hybrid.

"Fine," she said, pouting. "I'm gonna come back over, 'kay?"

She swung back across and halted at Danny's feet.

Dipper turned to the ghost boy. "That reminds me. We should probably change your bandages soon. Wendy's better at that than we are, so we'll have to wait until she's free."

Danny hugged his shoulders. "O-okay."

"Do you wanna watch a movie?" Mabel asked. "We have a lot of old ones that we can make fun of!"


"I'll go set that up," she took off down the ladder.

Dipper shrugged. "If it's full of glitter and sprinkles it's not my fault."

Danny felt something bubble up from inside of him. All of the strange, funny, and just plain weird things that had happened today caught up with him, and he started to laugh. It was slightly tinged with hysteria, because he couldn't remember the last time that something had been this funny to him. Danny sputtered for breath, trying to stop the flood of laughter that spilled from his mouth. Somebody set their hand on his shoulder as he sank to his knees.

"Breath, Danny. Remember to breath."

Eventually it stopped, and Danny gasped for oxygen.

"You okay?" Dipper asked, crouched beside him. Danny nodded, breath ragged.

"I-I think I'm okay now," he answered. The Halfa stood up.
"Let's go watch that movie," Dipper said softly. The twelve-year-old led Danny down the ladder, then into the same room as before.

Mabel was already perched on the yellow striped chair, with several cans of something called Pitt Cola, some bags of candy, and a large tub of popcorn. It seemed suspiciously sparkly, and Danny heard Dipper sigh in annoyance.

"Mabel, why did you put glitter in our food?"

"To make it extra special!" She replied. "Now come on, I put in the first Dead Teacher movie."

Dipper hopped up beside her, making room for Danny next to them. The Halfa sat down, accepting the can of Pitt Cola that Mabel offered.

"Be careful, there's an actual pit somewhere in there," she warned.

"T-that's kind o-of weird," Danny mumbled.

"I know, right? Only in Gravity Falls. They don't even have this stuff back home in Piedmont."

The movie started, and for a minute Danny could pretend that he was at Tucker's house, with his best friends next to him. But then the illusion faded, and he was back with the twins. And it was kind of nice, to have somebody near him who dealt with the supernatural with the same mundane attitude as the people in Amity Park.

When had he stopped thinking of it as home? When he was captured? He didn't even know if the lab had been in Amity, so why was it now in the same category as Wisconsin? Wisconsin. Vlad! What is if Vlad came for him? He wouldn't stoop as low as to hurt the twins, would he? Oh, who was Danny kidding. Of course he would hurt them. If they stood in the way of getting Danny as his son/evil apprentice, he might even kill them! This was bad, really, really bad!

"Are you alright?" Mabel asked. "You've got a funny look on your face."

"I-I'm fine."

"Great, 'cause you can totally see where they're putting the fake guts for that guy's intestines."

"What about where you can totally see that they replaced the guy with a dummy?" Her brother countered.

"O-or the b-bucket they used for the fake bl-blood?" Danny contributed.

"These movies are definitely some of the few that got better with their sequels," Dipper observed.

"They're way less scary when you've had multiple near-death experiences," Mabel said, sounding surprisingly cheerful.

"I know, right?" The male twin agreed.

Danny closed his eyes for a second, and momentarily forgot everything that had gone wrong in his life. He was safe with his friends and family, before he had received ghost powers and started to protect his town.

For a moment, Danny was content.
Chapter End Notes

To everybody who was asking about when in the DP canon this is happening: after D-Stabilized (Dani will appear in the sequel) but before Phantom Planet.

To Molelin: I FEEL YOUR PAIN. BILL CYpher (NOT Cipher) AND GRUNCLE STAN (INSTEAD OF GRUNKLE) ARE ALSO AWFUL.

The Good Witch of Babble: *cackles evilly*
"Hey, watcha watching there?" A voice asked, and somebody leaned over the back of the chair. "Ooh, the first Dead Teacher. Oh, hey Danny! Nice to see you feeling a little better."

Danny looked up, straight into Wendy's eyes. She grinned.

"My shift is over, so I figured that I would come see what these little nutjobs have been up to." She rubbed the top of Dipper and Mabel's heads.

"We were just making fun of bad movies together," Mabel explained.

"Before we forget," Dipper said. "You need to change Danny's bandages."

"Why can't Stan or Ford do it?" The redhead asked.

"They're both busy."

Wendy sighed. "Fine, but you have to get the supplies."

Mabel led Danny to the bathroom, and had him sit on the floor while she rooted through the cabinets under the sink. Wendy sat beside the young hybrid, with Dipper next to her.

When Mabel finally produced the bandages, she was also brandishing a pair of scissors that gleamed in the light. Danny flinched away.

"It's okay," Wendy reassured him. "It's just to cut off the knot I made."

Danny backed up as far as he could, spine pressed against the wall of the bathtub. He was shaking visibly.

"I don't-hurt-please-I can't-I don't want to-," he stammered, trying to form a coherent sentence.

"It won't hurt," Mabel said quietly.

"Don't worry, Phantom," Agent X spat. "This won't hurt."

_The saw broke through Danny's rib, and he screamed in agony. There were hands reaching into his body, fingers probing through his organs._

_His back arched in pain, and Danny wished that he would die._

Wendy gently set her hand on Danny's arm, removing it when he curled away.

"You don't have to watch," Dipper told him. "It'll just take a second."

Danny shivered and coward away, eyes flickering neon green. Dipper's own eyes went wide with
excitement for a moment, before he decided that now was not the time to ask about the Halfa's iris color.

Wendy carefully hooked her fingers underneath the hem of Danny's shirt, and by extension the sweater on top of it. The hybrid froze in terror.

"It's all right," Wendy whispered. "I'm not going to hurt you. I just need to take your shirt off. Is that okay? Nothing is going to hurt you, I promise."

"P-promise?" Danny whimpered.

"Yes."

The ghost boy relaxed slightly, and allowed the redhead to remove his shirt. He stiffened again when Wendy took the scissors from Mabel and brought them closer to his skin. Danny let out a small squeak of fright and clenched his jaw tightly, but he didn't make a move to escape, even when the older girl snipped the blades against the knotted white cloth.

Wendy slowly unwound his bandages, taking the fresh ones from Dipper and re-wrapping the Halfa's torso. When it was done, Mabel grinned.

"See? All done!"

Dipper studied Danny's face for a second. Why had he calmed down when Wendy had promised not to hurt him? There must have been a story behind that. Maybe when Danny was better he could ask.

Mabel helped the teenager to his feet.

"Come on," she said. "Let's go finish our movie."

The brunette led Danny from the room, leaving Dipper and Wendy alone in the bathroom. The two packed the medical supplies away in comfortable silence, until Wendy broke it.

"Does Danny know that we know about him being a Halfa?" Wendy asked.

"I don't think so. The last people that found out are probably the ones that cut him open," the male twin answered.

"We should tell him soon. It might make him feel a little bit better about trusting us."

"But it might actually do the opposite," Dipper pointed out. "If we tell somebody else, they might try to hurt him. One wrong word to the wrong person and *bam,* he mimed an explosion with his hand. "His whole life could be over."

"True," Wendy agreed. "Do you think we should go save him from your sister?"

"It's probably in our best interests. We don't need her corrupting him."

As it turned out, they did sort of need to hold an intervention. Mabel was draped across Danny's back, chattering on about something random while the hybrid listened in confusion. The twelve-year-old seemed oblivious to the fact that her friend was completely lost in the one-sided conversation.

Dipper laughed. "What are you even talking about?"

His sister beamed. "I was just telling Danny about how I won Waddles at the fair!"
Dipper gaped at her. "Um, are you sure that that's a good idea?"

"Don't worry," Mabel assured him. "I didn't say anything about Blendin."

Wendy gave him a look out of the corner of her eye. "Blendin?"

"Uh, nothing! Blendin is just this weird bald guy that we met."

Danny frowned. These people had a lot of secrets, even though they were so nice. And didn't they trust Wendy? Why wouldn't they tell her who this Blendin guy was? And how was Mabel so heavy?

Danny tried to push her off, but the kid clung to him like a mussel. Or a starfish.

Somebody marched into the room. Danny looked up and leaned away slightly. He didn't like people to be too high above him. Especially when they were probably stronger than they looked.

"Dipper, there's a person here to see you," Stan announced.

"Who?" The brunet asked, puzzled.

"Northwest," Stan grumbled. "Don't ask me why. She's just lucky I haven't decided to throw her out yet."

Dipper glanced at Danny.

"Are you ready to meet another person? She might insult you, we're still working on manners to people that aren't rich."

"H-how old is sh-she?"

"Dipper and I's age," Mabel spoke up. "Her name's Pacifica. Pacifica Northwest. Her whole entire family is a bunch of jerks. She used to be one, but only because her parents made her treat everyone like dirt."

"Yeah, and she's waiting outside like some kind of lost puppy." Stan said. "Either let her in or tell her to go away. I vote go away."

Wendy raised her hand. "I second the motion."

"Come on, she's not that terrible. Well, not anymore." said Dipper.

"Only because she totally has a crush on you!" Mabel sang. Her brother blushed scarlet.

"Oh, come on. That's not true," he protested.

"She loves you! Love love love love!" Mabel bounced off of Danny's back and pointed at her brother.

"Seriously?" Dipper huffed.

"I have to agree with Dipper on this one," Stan said. "There is no way on earth that anyone would have a crush on any of that." He pointed at his great-nephew.

"Thank you! Wait a minute," he glared as the rest of what Stan had said sunk in.
"Yeah, you're way too much of a nerd. Anybody who dated you would have to put up with you reading from that dumb book and reading all of your science stuff," a new voice said. Danny's head snapped up.

There was a girl with golden blond hair and blue eyes standing in the doorway. She wore nice clothes and had shoes that looked like the kind a person who spent most of their time at a party would wear. Her voice kind of sounded like a stereotypical valley girl's, and one of her hands was on her hip. All in all, she looked like the anti-Sam.

Soos stuck his head around the edge of the doorframe.

"Uh, Pacifica was just standing outside the door, so I let her in. Should I have done that?"
Chapter Nine

Chapter Summary

Boxy is a nuisance and a chore to deal with.

Danny scrambled backwards. There were way too many people in here, and three of them were bigger than he was. Although Wendy and Stan had mysteriously disappeared when Pacifica walked in.

The girl in question was regarding him. Her face seemed like a mixture of disgust and curiosity, but it looked like more of a default setting than an actual judgment.

"Who's this?" Pacifica asked.

"That's Danny. He's going to be staying here for...a little while." Dipper responded.

"Why?" The blond eyed Danny.

"Personal issues," Dipper said shortly.

Pacifica kept looking at the hybrid.

"You seem...familiar," she said thoughtfully. "Is your family rich?"

"N-no." Danny mumbled.

The girl snapped her figures. "You were at a gala my parents hosted a little while back! With your friend, Samantha Manson."

"S-Sam," Danny said quietly. "J-just Sam."

Mabel sucked in a breath. The twelve-year-old remembered Sam's name from their rooftop conversation earlier.

"So why are you here, anyway?" Dipper tried to steer the conversation away from Danny's personal life, for obvious reasons.

"We're having a small problem, and my parents are refusing to get help. Again," Pacifica sent a cautious glance at Danny.

"Okay, what kind of problem?"

"A box problem," she said, putting extra emphasis on the word 'box.' Danny's ears pricked up.

Dipper groaned. "Again? We just helped you with that guy last week."

Pacifica huffed. "Well, he's back. And he won't leave me alone!"

"D-does he look l-like a fl-floating b-blue man in o-overalls?" Danny piped up.
Dipper smiled. "I see that you've met the Box Ghost, master of all things cardboard and square."

"Y-Yeah, he w-was a h-huge pro-problem back where I'm fr-fr-from."

"Was he an actual threat?" Mabel asked. "Because he's more of an annoying chore to deal with."

"H-he used to wa-wake me up in the m-middle of the n-night for no r-reason."

"That sounds like something that he would do," Mabel giggled.

"So, we'll go do that while you stay here," Dipper said. "Or you can come with us."

"I-I'll come," Danny answered nervously.

Mabel grinned. "Awesome! To the Mystery Mobile!"

She dashed out the door at top speed. Dipper glanced at Danny. "She means the golf cart."

"Oh." Danny and Pacifica said in unison.

They left the Shack, and Danny saw that Mabel was already waiting for them in a beat-up golf cart that looked as if it had seen better days. She had the golf club bag swung over her shoulder, and there were several other miscellaneous objects in her hands. Mabel slammed her hand down on the horn, making Danny jump about a foot in the air.

"C'mon, slowpokes! Let's go bust ourselves a ghost!"

Dipper and Pacifica hopped into the front with Mabel, while Danny sat in the back. He had just gotten settled when the brunette girl floored the gas and they shot off down the dirt path and into the forest.

Mabel was a either a very bad driver or an exceptional one, depending in how you looked at it. She dodged every obstacle at top speed, launching off the top of rocks and turning Danny's stomach. Dipper didn't appear to mind it much, although Pacifica was turning the same shade of green that Danny felt.

They drove through a small town that seemed full of weird characters, like a woman with bad make-up and one eye constantly closed. Or a man with enormous muscles, gap teeth, and red hair that looked like he might have been related to Wendy.

Mabel swerved and spun the wheel, shouting at the people who were actually supposed to be on the road. A man with a strange beard (and were those actual cat whiskers?) shouted something about sore knees, Mabel yelled at two policemen about being lame.

Danny leaned forward.

"Is s-she always li-like this on the r-road?" He asked Dipper.

"Sometimes," he answered. "Other days she just glares at everything and anyone in her way."

"Her driving is somehow worse than her fashion sense," Pacifica growled. Dipper reached down from nowhere and picked up a spray bottle.

"Bad. Bad Pacifica, bad," he said, squirting her. "No insulting my sister. Bad."

Pacifica yelped and tried to shelter herself.
"Not the hair!" She shrieked.

Finally, they pulled up to a huge, ornate gate. It swung open, revealing a truly giant mansion. Mabel parked the golf cart next to a hedge, then grabbed a peacock and set it on the top.

"Guard it with your life," she told the bird seriously.

Pacifica led the twins and the hybrid into her house, ducking around a vase.

"My parents don't know that you're here, so be quiet," the blond girl whispered.

"Will do," Dipper said, giving a thumbs up. "So where is he?"

A puff of blue mist floated out of Danny's mouth.

"I AM THE BOX GHOST!" A voice bellowed. "BEWARE!"

"Found him!" Mabel chirped.

The four turned around and saw a floating blue man wearing overalls wiggling his fingers like he had just finished telling a scary story. He gaped at Danny.

"Phantom! You-you're alive!" Then he puffed up his chest. "No matter! You shall not defeat me with your cylindrical container!"

"Seriously man?" Dipper sighed. "You might as well give up now."

"Never! For I am the BOX-" his voice cut of as something splashed onto his body. Boxy flopped out of the air and landed at their feet. Danny turned around and looked at the twins.

Mabel shrugged and swirled the bottle full of liquid that she was holding. "What? He was gonna go on all night if I didn't do anything."

Dipper shook his head. "Never mind that. Do you have the vial?"

His sister tossed him something, and the brunette boy pointed it at the blue ghost. A light came from the mouth, and Danny was reminded of the Fenton Thermos. Even more so when it sucked Boxy in and trapped him there.

"Why did he call you 'Phantom'?” Pacifica asked. Danny froze.

"N-no r-reason."

"Doesn't Phantom mean ghost?” Mabel mused, tilting her head. Dipper sucked in a breath.

"Yeah," he said quickly. "It does! Maybe...maybe Danny looks like a ghost! Named Phantom! Yes! That's it."

Pacifica snorted even as she gave the Halfa a suspicious glance. "Whatever. i don't believe you, but thanks for getting rid of him anyway."

Dipper saluted. "Yep. Now we have to go. To a, uh, thing. Yeah. An important thing. C'mon Danny, Mabel. Let's go."

He grabbed their hands and took off back towards the golfcart.
"That was close," Dipper muttered. "Didn't occur to me that ghosts would know."

Danny felt his insides turn to mush.

"Kn-know ab-about w-what?" He stuttered. Dipper sighed.

"Get in the cart. We'll explain when we get back to the Shack."

Danny's entire body was shaking with fear. What was going on? Did they...know? Would they hurt him? Sell him to the agents?

Mabel drove unusually slowly, or at least that was what Danny thought. He really didn't have the best judge of her driving skills.

Mabel helped the ghost boy out of the golfcart, wincing when he flinched away from her outstretched hand.

The three headed to the living room, Danny's heart pounding with anxiety.

Dipper hopped up on the yellow chair. The twelve-year-old clapped his hands softly. "Well," he said. "Let's just get the big one out of the way first."

He hesitated for a second before clearing his throat.

"We know you're a Halfa."
Chapter Ten

Danny's whole world started to crumble and shake. He unconsciously backed up until he hit the wall behind him. Two worlds repeated like a mantra in his head. *They know. They know. They know.*

"H-how lo-long?" Danny asked tentatively, shaking visibly. The twins slowly crouched down to his level.

"Since we found you," Dipper replied softly.

"Wh-wh-what a-are y-you go-going t-to d-do?"

Mabel gently rested her hand on Danny's shoulder blade.

"Nothing," she assured him. "And neither will Wendy, Stan, Ford, or Soos."

"Th-they a-all kn-know t-too?"

"Yup," Dipper confirmed. "But they know not to tell anybody."

"We promise," Mabel added.

Danny shivered. "Y-you wo-won't se-sell m-me t-to th-the ag-agents?"

"Of course not," Dipper said, exchanging a glance with his sister. *Agents?*

Danny nodded. His heart was racing, which was dangerous for a Halfa. They had naturally slow heartbeats, and if they got to be too fast, it could be potentially half-life threatening.

"Are you okay?" Mabel sounded concerned.

"Y-yeah. I-I just n-need to sl-sleep."

The twelve-year-old twins led they ghost boy back up to the attic room.

"Just shout if you need anything, okay?" Dipper told him. Danny nodded and climbed into Mabel's bed. He wrapped the sweater that she had given him around his body, enjoying the comfortable coolness.

The Halfa closed his eyes and let sleep overtake him. It had been an truly exhausting day.

Dipper and Mabel sat down together in the yellow chair, flicking on the TV. It was playing Help! My Mummy's a Werewolf 2: This Again!

After a while, Stan walked in. He was counting a handful of money and smiling. When he saw the twins it disappeared.
"Who dropped your ice cream?"

"We told Danny that we know about him being a Halfa." Dipper said.

"Okay, so?" Stan frowned.

"He-he asked us not to give him to 'the agents.' You don't think that-"

"Listen kid," Stan sighed. "I hate those guys just as much as you do. But I don't think that they would do that to a child, no matter how strange they are."

A scream rang out from upstairs. The three members of the Pines family looked at each other for a moment before taking off up the stairs.

They were joined about halfway up by Ford, who had scratches up and down one side of his face.

"What happened to you?" Dipper asked as they flung the door open.

"Kappa. Nasty little river monster from Japan."

Danny was thrashing and screaming the same way that he had been last night, but this time he was saying words too instead of just screeching.

"Please!" He sobbed. "Stop! I swear I'm your son! I swear! Please! Stop! No more no morenomorenomore!"

Dipper clapped a hand over his mouth. His eyes were wide.

"Does he..." the next second he had bolted out of the room. Dipper almost didn't make it to the bathroom in time before he vomited.

In a few seconds his sister joined him, and when they were done they just sat there, staring at each other.

Mabel let out a hiccuping cry. "Why would anybody do that?" She whispered. "That's so awful! It's-it's just...ugh!"

Mabel punched the side of the sink and yelped in pain. "Why would somebody do that to their own kid, Dipper?"

The boy hugged his sister. "I know."

The two could still hear the screams echoing from the other room.

"He'll be okay," Mabel said under her breath. "He'll be okay."

Someone crouched down next to them. Actually, two someones. Four arms wrapped around them, and there was a long group hug.

"He's going to be alright, kids. It's going to be okay."

Danny stood on the ruins of what looked like it might have once been a house. He had been pulled out of his nightmare and into this black, white, and grey dreamworld somehow.

An icy feeling began to creep over his skin, and he felt as if somebody was watching him. Danny shivered, and suddenly the universe shuddered. Ripples moved from his body and bubbled around
Something that felt like talons latched onto his waist and shoulders, ripping him apart. Danny tried to scream, but nothing came out.

Without even looking, Danny knew that his body had been split down the middle, black and white, ghost and human.

One side of him was in his Phantom form, while the other looked like Fenton.

"Well, well, well," somebody was talking to him. Danny spun around, searching for the source. "How's it going, DP?" The Halfa still couldn't see who was speaking.

"I see that Shooting Star and Pine Tree found you before you could bleed to death."

Where was that coming from?!

"Honestly, I'm surprised. I didn't think that the old men would want you to corrupt their great-niece and nephew."

A hand grabbed his hair and raised his head up. Something touched the bottom of his chin. Danny tried to pull away, and slammed into an invisible wall.

"Don't worry," the voice purred. "I've got a lot of big things coming, and I'll need all of the puppets that I can get."

Danny raised a hand and blasted at the force. The world shook again, and this time different colors started to leak through. One latched onto his arm and began to squeeze. It started to slowly drag him into wakefulness, although how Danny knew that he didn't know.

"Who are you?" Danny managed to choke out. There was a long silence, and Danny's mouth started to function properly again. "Who are you working for? What are you where am I? How do you know who I am?"

There was more silence, and Danny started to wake up. Just before he could, the voice rang out again.

"You can call me Bill."
Danny woke up, tangled in the sheets. He struggled weakly to free himself, before he tumbled through the blankets and onto the floor.

He groaned as his body made contact with the floor. Pain shot through his stitches, and he winced as he got to his feet. Glancing at the bed, Danny noticed that the blankets were still in their twisted position. Which meant that he had gone intangible without meaning to.

Which also probably explained the way that he was sinking into the floorboards.

Danny yelped and flailed his arms. "Help!"

Somebody grabbed his arms and pulled, yanking Danny out from the wood boards.

"Careful!" Dipper warned. "We don't want you falling through to China."

"Is that even possible?" Danny wondered.

Dipper grinned. "You didn't stutter that time!"

"I-I didn't?"

"Nope! That's great..." he trailed off and bit his lip. "Um, Danny? You were having a nightmare last night, and you said some stuff in your sleep..."

"Like what?"

Dipper took a deep breath. "You were asking somebody to stop. And you said...you said that you were their son."

Danny tensed.

*The Fentons dragged the blade down his front, the cuffs around his wrists and ankles crackling and snapping with electricity. He screamed, tears streaming down his cheeks.*

"Why?" He begged. "Why are you doing this? I'm your son! Your son! Please, I promise that I'm really your son!"

Danny backed up into his corner. "Y-you're wrong. You m-must have heard wrong."

Dipper crouched down. "Danny, if your parents hurt you, than we need to call the police."

"N-no! You can't do that!"

"Why not? We need you to tell us!"

"Because I can't let the Guys in White find me!" Danny burst out. He curled back up. "I can't. I won't go back there. I won't."

"We would never, *ever* in a million years hand you over to somebody that hurt you," Dipper said. "But if they did injure you, than we have to help somehow."

Danny managed to curl up even smaller. "No."
Dipper sat across from the hybrid. The twelve-year-old thought thought for a moment before speaking.

"Why don't we share stories?" He suggested gently. "If you tell me something about yourself, than I'll tell you something about me, okay?"

"O-okay. Do I start?"

"Yep. Then me, then you, then me, and so on."

Danny thought for a moment. "Once," he began. "I had this crush on a girl named Paulina. When I finally worked up the courage to ask her out, I got so nervous that my pants went intangible and fell down."

Dipper laughed. "For around half of the summer, I had a giant crush on Wendy. I also kept whispering things under my breath, about weird things that I liked about her. When I confessed, she said that she had always known. Also that she was too old for me, so we stayed friends."

They swapped stories for a long time, although Danny got the sense that Dipper was leaving some stuff out of the ones that he told.

Like how whenever they encountered a monster, they always somehow knew the way to defeat it. Or how Ford was strangely absent from practically all of the adventures.

They had been talking for quite some time when Mabel smashed through the door.

"Hey dum-dum, hey Danny!" She chirped. "Do you two want breakfast?"

Dipper punched the air. "Of course!"

"Alright. I-is there any more bacon?"

"Mm-hm. Dipper, you get cereal."

"What? Why?"

"Because I said so. And nerds don't get bacon, so Ford didn't get any either." Mabel waved her pastel blue arms around. Today she had a sweater with a red butterfly with yellow spots on it. Her brother gave Danny puppy dog eyes.

"Please can I have some of your bacon?"

Danny shook his head. "No. It's my breakfast, and you can't have any."

Dipper collapsed dramatically. "Curse you, Danny! Why must you withhold delicious bacon from me? Have I not provided you shelter and warmth at my hearth for many long winters?"

Mabel poked her brother. "What are you talking about? Danny hasn't been here for that long, and I'm the one who's been giving him food."

The boy twin clasped at his chest with a gasp. "Oh how you wound me! Why must your words form such a blade with which to impale me, dear sister? I thought that you loved me, but now I see that it was a false assumption! Forsooth, why is thine heart not pure?"

Danny and Mabel exchanged a glance.
"What does forsooth even mean?" Mabel wondered. "Fake teeth?"

Dipper continued to roll around on the floor, saying words that sounded like Shakespeare. His sister shouted out the door, "Stan, I think Dipper's broken. He's talking about forsoothing and impaling."

Danny laughed. It was far from the hysterical one that he had made yesterday, and he was grateful for that.

Suddenly, without any warning, the world fell sideways on it's axis. It spun black, white, and grey once more, and Danny clutched at his stomach.

Azure flames wreathed his vision, and a ring of symbols appeared on the ground. Several if them seemed rather familiar, as was the design in the center. It was akin to the eye of providence, but before the hybrid could focus on it the glowing insignia had vanished.

The earth tilted again, and Danny was back in the attic.

The twins were looking at him with worry.

"Uh, are you okay, man?" Dipper asked.

"You kinda went all shaky on us for a moment there," his sister added.

Danny clutched at his head. Someone was whispering in his mind, trying to tell him something important. The voice got louder, echoing and contorting in his brain.

Black mist that was swirled with blue floated out of Danny's mouth, and his stitches felt as if they had been lit on fire. He was vaguely aware of the twins shouting for help, as mad laughter invaded his ears.

"Don't worry," the same person that was talking in his dream last night spoke into Danny's ear. "I've got big plans coming, and I don't need you getting in my way."
Chapter Twelve

Chapter Summary

Trustworthy.

Danny was floating. No, that wasn't the right word for it. More like he was chained in place by the
air, suspended above the earth. Danny was comfortable here, cool blue energy dancing across his
body. Why hadn't he been here before?

It was nice and safe, even if there was a bit of screaming. Wait, screaming?

The ghost boy could hear loud shouts at the edge of his mind, as if somebody were trying to wake
him up from a long sleep.

But he wasn't asleep, was he? It felt so real, like being in the Far Frozen.

Suddenly, Danny's entire body erupted into agony. Blue flames curled around him, and the Halfa let
out a soundless cry of pain. Then it was over, just as quickly as it began.

"Well, DP. You're a lot stronger than you look."

Oh great, the annoying voice from the night before was back.

But this time, a large white supernova appeared in front of him, and something floated out.
Something that Danny didn't know the name of.

It was like a golden triangle, with one slit-pupiled eye closer to the top of its...forehead? (Did
triangles have foreheads?) There was a black top hat balanced on the top point, and it was spinning
a cane in one of its dark hands. Legs and strange feet dangled beneath it, and one of its hands was
on its side. Almost as if it were resting on a hip.

The thing's eye tilted up like it was smiling. The triangle spun around Danny's head, looking him up
and down.

"Nice to finally meet you face-to-face, DP! The name's Bill Cipher, by the way."

Bill tipped his hat up in greeting.

"Wha-what? Where am I?" Danny asked weakly.

"I'm a Dream Demon, kid! So you're in the Mindscape, where only something like me can find
their way around. Oh, you might be able to survive, if Pine Tree and Shooting Star don't kill you
first!"

"Who are Pine Tree and Shooting Star?" Danny wondered aloud.

"Ah, I think that you fleshbags call them... Dipper? And Mabel?"

"W-why would th-they k-kill me?"
"It's what they do! Hunt the supernatural, just like Sixer does. Although they'll probably want to open you up and see what makes you tick first."

"Y-you're lying! I-I tr-trust the twins!" The Halfa was startled to say it out loud. But it was true. Even though he had only known them for a few days, the hybrid still trusted the twelve-year-old kids. And Wendy.

"Oh really? Well then why don't you ask Pine Tree about me, DP? And then maybe you'll see just how quick they are to trust a Halfa."

The world went grey, and everything was dark for a moment. Danny twisted around and tried to locate where the dream monster had gone.

"Remember!" Bill shouted. "Reality is an illusion, the universe is a hologram, buy gold BYE!"

Danny awoke with a start. He was disoriented, and could hardly tell which way was up or down. Somebody rested their hand on his shoulder and the ghost boy flinched away with a squeak of fright.

"Easy there, kid," Stan said. "You gave us a bit of a scare."

Danny shook his head slightly to clear it. He had... something to ask, right? Yeah. About... Bill. The Halfa focused on Dipper.

"Bill Cipher," he said. "Tell me about Bill Cipher."

The four members of the Pines family jumped back slightly. Danny realized that each of their stances were different; Mabel had moved in front of her brother, and looked ready to beat down all of the monsters in the forest.

Ford was completely rigid, staring at the hybrid warily with all of his muscles clenched. There was something dark in his eyes that Danny didn't like.

Stan had his brow furrowed, and looked like he was about to say something.

Dipper... Dipper was tensed up quite a bit in a way that looked rather painful. He had his arms wrapped around his waist and midsection, as if he was protecting something. One of Dipper's hands had clamped around his upper arm, for some reason.

"Why do you want to know?" The brunet boy asked quietly.

"He-he said th-that you g-guys would k-kill me. Th-that you wo-would never t-trust me be-because I was a H-Halfa. You w-would c-cut me open and s-see what I w-was."

"Of course we trust you!" Mabel cried. "But Bill is bad news. Really, really bad news."

"Did you make a deal with him?" Ford growled.

Danny blinked and hesitantly shook his head. "N-no. He d-didn't a-ask for one."

The older man lunged forward, and grabbed Danny's lower arms. For the first time, Danny noticed that he had six fingers on each hand.

"Are you absolutely sure that he didn't make a deal with him?" The man sounded so angry and serious, and Danny wondered why. He didn't like it when people got mad at him.

Danny ripped his arm away, shaking. The hybrid shook his head frantically. "N-no, I swear."

"Stop scaring the kid, Ford," Stan grumbled, away tugging his... actually, how were they related? Ford looked a little bit younger, but they had the exact same face. Just like Dipper and Mabel.

"Did he tell you that he was a Dream Demon?" Dipper asked.

"Yeah. He kept calling me DP. And you two were P-Pine Tree and Sh-Shooting Star."

"Those are true names," Dipper said softly. "Soul names. He can't use those ones to control you, but they're still incredibly powerful if you know how to use them."

"H-how do you know all of that?" Danny tilted his head. The ghost boy was pretty sure that you couldn't get this kind of thing on the internet. Unless you went on one of those weird conspiracy message board sites that Tucker loved. Used to love.

The four shifted uncomfortably. "That's a really long story," Stan muttered. "And we don't know if your trustworthy enough yet to hear all of it."

Mabel gasped and flopped her sleeves around. "Grunkle Stan! Danny is totally trustworthy! Although it would probably take you a while to tell him your entire formerly-mysterious backstory."

"I'll tell you mine," Danny said, before he could lose his nerve. "About my powers, my life, my f-family. If you tell me about you."

The Pines family huddled up and discussed it. Danny covered his ears to block out his enhanced hearing, trying not to intrude.

Finally, they all turned back around.

"Alright," Stan said. He took a deep breath. "It all started a lifetime ago..."
"I was born in Glass Shard Beach New Jersey, with my nerdy twin brother Stanford..."

Danny listened attentively until the story was finished. Even though quite a bit of the things that he had been told were pretty unbelievable, the hybrid doubted none of what they were saying. But they seemed to be skipping over some of the details, like what exactly Bill did when he made a deal. All that Dipper said was that you should never do it for a puppet.

"So that's basically our entire life story so far," Mabel concluded. "So now tell us about yourself!"

Danny took a deep breath.

"My name is Daniel James Fenton, and I was born to a family of ghost hunters in Amity Park, Illinois," he began. "My parent's names were Madeline and Jack Fenton, and I had an older sister named Jasmine. But we all called her Jazz.

"When I was little, I met one of my best friends Tucker Foley, who loved to play video games. A few years after that I met Sam Manson, an aspiring goth who hated her parents.

"Not long after I turned fourteen, my parents built a portal in our basement that they believed could access the dimension that ghosts came from, called the Ghost Zone. I invited my friends over to watch them turn it on, but when they plugged it in they device failed. They left, disappointed."

Danny paused to take a few ragged breaths. He didn't really like to talk about his death.

"I thought that I could fix the machine, so I put on a hazmat suit. Sam pulled the logo of my dad's face off of the front, and I went inside.

"It was... dark. Very dark. I couldn't really see what I was doing, so I put my hand on the side of the portal. Then... I tripped.

"It was just over a wire, but I fell forward and hit my hand on something small. A button on the side of the wall. And then..." Danny shuddered. "And then it turned on."

Dipper's eyes went wide. "But the amount of power that was used to punch a hole through the dimensions should have..."


"I came out different. As a ghost. It was terrifying. My parents had spent their whole lives hunting ghosts, and I had never believed them. But now I was the very thing that they hated.

"After that, I worked on mastering my powers. It was hard, especially because I didn't tell my family. Sam and Tucker knew, and later I learned that Jazz had found out on her own. It seemed like maybe I could do this, live as a freak. Until the ghosts started to attack.
"I protected the town in my ghost form, as Danny Phantom or just plain Phantom. Amity was so stupid for never figuring it out.

"One day, our parents took my sister and I up to Wisconsin for a college reunion. It was at their old friend, Vlad Masters' house.

"I fought a ghost there. One that turned into Vlad. Jack had made a proto-portal in college, and Masters got hit. Now I knew that there were two half ghosts that my father had created.

"Vlad-Plasmius, he called himself-wanted several things in his life; to kill my dad, marry my mom, and get me as his evil son/apprentice. I constantly refused, but I don't know if it was just my obsession to protect or because I legitimately didn't want to. I hope it was the second one.

"Vlad was so desperate that he cloned me. But something went wrong, and the only one that was even remotely stable and didn't melt into a puddle of ectoplasm for no reason was a girl named Danielle, or Dani with an i. She overheard him saying that she was worthless, and helped me defeat him before flying off. She came back later, and we stabilized her so that she wouldn't melt into a pile of goop whenever she used her powers.

"I met a ghost named Clockwork, who could control time and space. I... I saw the future, and fought my evil self. I hope that it never comes down to that again, but there is still a chance for me to go evil."

Danny paused again, shaking slightly.

"For a while, there were government agents around. The Guys in White, or just the GiW. They were mostly just a joke, but then they started to get stronger. Th-they captured me, and did lots and lots of painful experiments before I managed to escape.

"I tried to put it behind me, but not long after I was caught again. And this time it was by my parents.

"They didn't believe me, even after I changed back. It was... horrible. One day, some of the agents came for a transfer. Sam and Tuck were there too, caught trying to sneak into the house.

"They tried to rescue me..."

A few tears leaked out of Danny's eyes. "And the agents killed them in front of me."

Mabel gasped and jumped forward. The brunette girl wrapped her arms around the Halfa, snuggling into him.

"I bet that they were amazing people," she mumbled into the ghost boy's neck.

"Yeah. Sam wore combat boots, and had the most lovely black hair and purple eyes. Her parents were rich, but you wouldn't know it from her clothes. \n
"Tucker loved technology, and he could hack into anything with just a PDA and decent internet connection. He loved meat, and Sam would always fight with him because she was an ultra-recyclo vegetarian, which basically means that she doesn't eat anything with a face."

"How did you escape?" Stan asked. His hands were clenched into fists, and he was glaring at nothing in particular.

"I saw an opening, and I took it. But I don't know how long I was in there for. I didn't mean to teleport, or that I even had that power. It just happened. Wherever I came out, it had to have been
better than with the agents. And mo-Maddie and da-Jack."

"They were there too?" Ford asked, scowling like his brother.

"Yeah. They... they carried out most of the experiments. I wasn't their son anymore. I was just a test subject to them, one that couldn't feel pain."

Danny clutched at his chest, curling up.

"I felt it," he whispered, trembling. "I felt it all."
Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Summary

Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me,
starlight and dewdrops are awaiting thee.
Sounds of the rude world heard in the day,
Led by the moonlight have all passed away.

Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song,
List while I woo the with soft melody.
Gone are the cares of life's busy throng,
Beautiful dreamer awake unto me.
Beautiful dreamer awake unto me!
Beautiful dreamer, out on the sea,
Mermaids are chaunting the wild lorelei,
Over the streamlet vapors are borne,
Waiting to fade at the bright coming morn.

Beautiful dreamer, beam on my heart,
E'en as the morn on the streamlet and sea,
Then will all clouds of sorrow depart,
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me,
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

Danny sat on the floor, the Pines family watching him. Mabel had tears in her eyes, and her brother looked rather close to that stage himself. Ford and Stan looked like they were about to hit something, namely a certain pair of adults. As the ghost boy watched, Stan gave in to the impulse and drove his fist into the side of Mabel's bed. He winced in pain.

"That was a bad idea," he muttered. Stan looked at Danny. "Kid, I don't care what your blood relationship to those monsters is, they aren't your parents. And they never were."

The younger set of twins nodded in agreement. Dipper wrapped his arms around Mabel's shoulders. The brunette girl twisted her sweater in her hands.

"What happened to Jazz?" She asked tentatively. "Did you ever see her again?"

Danny shook his head. "No. I d-don't even kn-know if she's st-still alive."

Dipper crawled forward, with his sister close behind. Danny leaned away, fear spiking in the hybrid's body. But instead of hurting him, the two twelve-year-olds hugged him.

"I'm sorry," Dipper said. "I don't know what I would do if I lost Mabel."

"Or if I lost Dipper," his sister added. "And we already know what would happen if Stan and Ford lost each other. It's not pretty."
They sat like that for a very long time, until Ford's head snapped up.

"Did you hear that?" He whispered.

Stan frowned at his brother. "Hear what?"

"That whispering."

"Are you sure that you're not just hearing things?"

Dipper pulled away from Danny and Mabel and stood up. "No, I hear it too. Like someone's trying to tell us something."

Ford's hand dropped down to his hip. There was something beneath his coat, and Danny tensed when he saw the outline of a gun.

The man narrowed his eyes. "Get do-!"

The world collapsed and everything turned to blackness and dust.

The universe was grey again. Except, this time, he wasn't alone.

The Pines family was there with him. Mabel and Dipper stood back to back, eyeing the strange plains and cliffs warily. Ford had a... thing, that looked like a cross between a gun and a mirror. Stan looked mostly confused, but he seemed to understand that this was bad news. Danny crouched down, trying to make himself as small as possible and avoid being a target.

"How you doing, Pine Tree, Shooting Star, old men, DP. That was quite the moment there, don't you think? Very sappy." Bill spun down and landed in front of them, hovering about a foot off of the ground.

Ford pointed the gun at the triangular demon. "Back off, Cipher."

"Relax. I just want to talk to DP over here," he chuckled and snapped his fingers, and the four other people were flung backwards. A blue dome formed around the ghost boy and the yellow demon. Bill smirked, or at least he would have if he had a mouth.

"You see, Halfa, I have a bit of a proposition for you," he began. Danny watched out of the corner of his eye as the Pines family slammed their hands on the blue light. Dipper was shouting something, but Danny couldn't tell what it was. The dome was soundproof.

The dream demon snapped his fingers. A window opened from nowhere, and Danny saw a very familiar face backed into a corner. His eyes widened, and he gasped.

"No! Dani!"

Bill's eye tilted up in amusement at his reaction to Danielle's pain. "You see, it's very simple. Either you give me a puppet, or Glow here gets captured. And I would imagine that you don't want the same thing that happened to you to happen to Glow."

Immediately, alarm bells started to ring in Danny's head. The Pines family had warned him about making deals with Bill, especially for puppets. But Dipper and Ford hadn't exactly specified what happened, just that it was really bad.

But if he didn't do something than the girl who was basically his little sister would get hurt. And he
knew that whatever nightmares had happened to him, it would seem like a daydream compared to what they did to Dani when they found out that she was a clone.

The hybrid watched as the female Halfa raised trembling fists lit with bright green energy. The GiW advanced at her, and one of the agents fired. The blast smashed into the ground at Dani's feet, sending up a shower of stone.

Danny looked up at Bill. The demon extended one of his black hands, lit with blue fire. "Tick tock, DP."

The ghost boy's eyes flicked back and forth, between the demon and his genetic identical. Between his family and his new enemy. Between hope and fear. But something seemed off about the whole thing.

And then it clicked. Danny looked back at the image of Dani. There were tears streaming down her cheeks, and her entire body was trembling. But it was the blue that swirled through her ectoblasts and the paper-thin quality of the image that was unusual.

Danny made direct eye contact with Bill. "No."

Bill's body turned bright red. "What do you mean, 'no'?!"

"I mean exactly what I say. That creation is not Dani. Where is the real girl?"

"That is her! Watch..."

The hybrid saw Dani fall under a barrage of ectogun fire. He felt his heart snap in two as the clone was dragged away. But he stood strong. "That is not my clone. That is a fake, a copy, a hologram. You can't hurt me."

The demon's body stayed scarlet for another moment, before turning yellow again. His eye lit up. "Are you so sure about that? Because I think that it will only take a few select hits for you to break."


And the worst one. Dan.

That one whispered of the inevitable, of the unstoppable future. Of how no matter how hard he tried, something would still happen to make him turn his back on humanity. Make him change into something else. Something cruel and monstrous.

Bill laughed. "You see? You're already on your way there. It just takes one little push for you to fall, DP. And I'm going to be there when you do. Ready to make a deal."

And then he was gone, the dome was gone, and Danny was falling, falling into oblivion. The last thing that he felt was someone catching him and shouting for him to stay awake, to wake up, to stay alive.
But the darkness was so tempting, so amazing. It tickled his skin and danced in his brain, making it feel like a thousand doses of adrenaline. But it had the opposite effect, and so Danny fell.
Danny was lying on Mabel's bed, face slightly pinched and drawn. He had been asleep ever since the incident with Bill, which was a few hours ago. They had no idea why the ghost boy was like this, but the Pines family suspected that it had to do with whatever the yellow dream demon had done to him (although what exactly that even was they didn't know).

"Well, his heart rate is normal. At least, normal for a Halfa," Ford sighed. Halfas were confusing. They weren't full ghosts, so they had heartbeats. But their heart rates were far slower than a normal humans, so they seemed as if they were about to die. The research on it was incredibly spotty, even in these strange modern times, so estimates and guesswork was the best that anyone could do.

"But he'll be okay, right?" His great nephew demanded. Damn, that was strange. Not to long ago, he didn't even know that his baby brother had even had kids, much less grandkids. And when one of them had revealed that he had found the third journal, had lived through the monsters, had learned the secrets, was also shocking.

He didn't know why he was thinking about this now; maybe it was because his brother was practically on top of him in an attempt to see over his shoulders at the prone teen on the bed. Ford tried to shove him away, but even though his brother was old, he was still solid.

"Stop that," he growled. That seemed to be the only way that he talked lately. "Danny isn't going to get better just by you looking at him."

"You didn't answer the question," Mabel pointed out. Her voice was shaky.

Ford sighed and ran his hand through his hair. "Because I don't know. Halfa anatomy is strange, and what seems normal to us might be dangerous or potentially deadly to him. We also have no idea what that assh-

"Ford."

"-ole demon did to him, so we have no definite way of waking him up. It might happen on its own, but I honestly have no idea."

"That's a first," Stan muttered. Ford rolled his eyes.
"Are we seriously going to do this now? Because I'm sure that we have more important things to do than argue about who's is-"

"That's enough!" The two younger kids shouted in unison, glaring. Dipper closed his eyes and mentally counted to three before opening them.

"All you two do is either argue or get mad at each other about the simplest things. And usually, we don't care. But right now, we need you, Danny needs you, to work together instead of bickering. So can we please just figure out a plan?!!" The twelve-year-old boy's teeth were gritted, and his hands were clenched into fists. His sister nodded in agreement.

"Yeah. You two need to hug it out."

Dipper elbowed her and rolled his eyes. "Give it a rest, Mabes. I don't think that they'll ever do that without you tying them together."

"Yes they will! I can repair anything!" She declared.

Stan sat on the opposite bed with a sigh. "Kid, there are some things that even you can't fix."

Danny's breathing suddenly became ragged, which was unusual (and bad) for a Halfa. Ford bent back over the hybrid. Suddenly, the ghost boy's back arched up, and he let out a choked cry.

Mabel and Dipper were beside him in an instant, looking worried.

"Is he okay?" The girl whispered.

"Physically? Yes. Mentally? I don't think so," her great-uncle answered. "He seems to be having some kind of lucid nightmare, even worse than the normal kind."

"Than why isn't he screaming like he was before?" Dipper wondered aloud.

"I don't really know, but it could be because the nightmare either hasn't picked up speed yet, or because whatever is keeping him unconscious is also internalizing all of his reactions."

"That could mean that his dreamscape might carry over into real life, and if he gets any injuries than they might manifest physically."

Mabel squinted at her brother. "What's that supposed to mean, Dippingsauce?"

"If Danny gets any fatal wounds, he could end, dissipate, or have some kind of reaction that might him to lash out and injure somebody in either the physical or mental state." Ford answered.

Mabel and Stan exchanged a look before turning back to the resident nerds and speaking together. "But what does that mean?"

Their respective twin brothers both facepalmed.

"If he gets hurt in his dream, than it will happen in real life. And if Danny gets hurt in a way that might kill him (in the nightmare), he might end, which is how ghosts die. Or he could attack us while trying to wake up," they explained.

Mabel gulped. "Oh. Um, that's bad."

"That's an understatement." Her brother shook his head.
They were silent for a little while longer, watching Danny's fitful sleep. Ford moved over to the side of the room where Stan and Dipper's bed was. He stood there, absentmindedly resting a hand on the side of his jacket where he still kept the first journal. There was something that he wanted to bring up, but he wasn't really sure how to broach the topic.

"Kids," Ford began awkwardly, speaking in a quiet tone. "There's a very good chance that Danny won't survive this."

Mabel shook her head frantically. "That's a lie! He will! He has to!"

Stan gently rested a hand on her shoulder. "We don't know that for certain."

"He will! Danny's strong! He'll be okay!" Mabel insisted. Her brother looked at the body on the bed. Mabel followed his gaze.

"Right?" She asked meekly. Dipper grabbed her hand and try to give her a reassuring look, even while his own mind tried to rebel against the program.

"He can do this," the male twin said. "If he can fight ghosts and protect his town, than he can do this. I guarantee it."

But the words felt empty, and for once Dipper didn't know if this was a promise that he could keep.
Chapter Summary

Chapter Sixteen

Time to play around with ghost and Halfa headcanons! There is some gore in this chapter, so consider yourself warned.

Danny was trapped. The hybrid was stuck in a box, one with white walls. They sparkled and shone, unblemished by dirt and grime. To most, they might have been beautiful. But to Danny they meant death, pain, and heartbreak.

A bright light outlined a door shape, and it swung inward. Four people walked in, and they were the faces from Danny's dreams.

Sam, Tucker, Jazz, and Danielle strode in, ugly sneers on their faces. But they weren't alive; they couldn't be. Sam's face was torn apart, her skull grinning in the false light. One of Tucker's eyes was gone, as well as both of his hands. They had been replaced with bones, and they had long claws sprouting from his skeletal fingertips. Jazz's ribcage was split open, and her insides were spilling out. Dani was melting, and the clone's lower body seemed as if it had been mauled by tigers. All of their clothes were filthy and torn.

Danny tried to lean away from the awful four, but chains clinked around his wrists and ankles. Sam sneered, and a whip appeared at her hip. She picked it up and unfurled it, green sparks dancing along its length.

"Now, now," she crooned. The former goth's voice was twisted by her decaying features. "Lets not be hasty. I thought that you loved me?"

Then her face contorted. "Or at least, that's what we all thought. But you left us to die, didn't you? You claimed to care about us, you claimed to love us, but you murdered us! YOU COULD HAVE SAVED US!"

Sam snapped the whip against Danny's side, and it tore through his cloths and bit into his side. The ghost boy bit back a cry of pain and surprise.

Dani lunged, pinning the boy that she was copied from against the wall. "You promised. You promised that you would always help me, but you let me die! You let the agents take me away and experiment on me!"

"L- liar..." Danny managed to croak. "Th-that wasn't you. I-it was just a fake."
Tucker pulled Dani away and lifted up his shirt to reveal a gaping hole where his heart should have been. His lungs were torn apart, and his intestines were leaking out.

"Does this look fake to you?" He hissed. "You left us to die! You never cared about us at all, did you? We were just a way to keep your secret, an ends to a mean. Did you ever even love Sam? Were we ever even friends? You're just a monster that doesn't have feelings, a piece of scum."

Dani hissed like a wet cat. "You don't deserve to live."

Sam picked up a scalpel from a table that suddenly materialized beside her. "And we're going to make sure that you remember that."

The four people other than Danny watched as he started to thrash, and ectoblast starting to build in his hands. His irises glowed green and blue beneath his eyelids, and a sickly emerald light leached faintly from his mouth.

"What's going on?" Dipper asked. Mabel gasped as a faint frost began to grow on the walls. The air started to chill.

Ford ran to the Halfa's side. "I don't know. But I don't think that it's good."

Stan charged out of the room, and came back with several pairs of handcuffs. He shoved them into his brothers hand. "Use these. It might keep him from hurting himself."

Mabel wrinkled her nose. "Why do you have those?"

"Don't ask," her great uncle muttered.

Ford clipped the cuffs around each of Danny's wrist, holding him to the almost non-existant bedposts. Then he secured them around the hybrid's ankles, and looped them around the edge of the mattress.

"That will have to do for now. But one strong pull and he might be able to rip it up," Ford warned. He started to pace in the small room, and the other three moved out of his way. The man frowned and rubbed his chin.

"Ecto... ectoradium. It might work to restrain him and neutralize his powers, but we would need a diluted strain in order to prevent it from burning him. And where would we get it? It's so rare, I don't know how the Guys in White got their hands on it. Where could we find some..."

Dipper leaned over Danny, ignoring Ford's musings. Danny's eyelids were were twitching, and the twelve-year-old knew that he must have been dreaming. His own eyes widened.

"REM," He murmured.

"What?" The other three asked.

"Rapid Eye Movement," he explained.

This only served to confuse the others more. Ford knew what it was, but not the point of why he was saying it. Dipper sighed.

"It's a form of deep sleep, sometimes associated with lucid dreaming."

Mabel shrugged. "So what?"
Dipper started to pace in the same way that Ford had. "Bill did something in his mind, the same way that he tried to get the code to the safe out of Stan's. We could use that spell and follow him, but that might cause long-lasting damage on his mind."

He took out the third journal and flipped to the page on Halfas. "It says here that they sometimes have a split personality with their two sides. It also says that they may have two personal Mindscapes, one ghost and one human. But if they were to merge, what would happen?"

"We don't know, because it has never happened. Most people don't even know that they even exist. But Bill did. Could he launch an attack on both simultaneously, even though normal ghosts don't dream?"

Ford frowned. "I don't know. He could, but it would be hard to maintain a pair of separate attacks on both sides of the mind. Even if the dreams were the same, it would still be more than double the effort of a normal dream or nightmare."

Dipper snapped his fingers. "Exactly. Which is why he's not. Bill is only giving him the nightmares on his human half. That's why his powers are reacting in the physical world."

Ford realized what he was getting at. "They're trying to wake him up."
Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Summary

Khoor? Khoor?
Fdq brx khdu ph?
Zkb lvq'w wklv zrunlqj?
L mxvw-rk qr.
Kh'v frplqj. Wkh ghprq lv frplqj...

Chapter Notes

Shit is about to get real.

Danny didn't know how long he was there, enduring the torture of words or wounds. Jazz, Sam, Tucker, and Dani were sometimes replaced by others, like Mr. Lancer, Valerie, or his parents. Those times hurt almost as much as his friends. Occasionally random agents would walk in and beat or insult him.

It became apparent that it was a dream not too long after that.

Maybe all of it was a dream. What if he had never been captured, by the agents or his parents? What if he had never been found by Dipper and Mabel?

Danny couldn't decide if that was a good thing or not. He hated that his parents thought that he was a monster, that his best friends and sister were dead or missing. He hated that he had been tortured, and that he had to live with what the agents had done to him.

But he liked the twins. And he liked Wendy. Soos was okay, but the hybrid didn't really know him. Stan and Ford seemed alright, even if Ford scared him.

But it wasn't worth all of the pain.

The hybrid had no idea what was happening in real life, or if he would ever wake up. Was the Pines family trying to wake him up? Or did they just leave him?

Would they leave him?

The pure white walls around him began to darken, and soon they were pitch black. It shone oddly dark purple, the color of Sam's eyes in the sunlight. The glowing moonlight ring appeared around his waist, and his body reverted back to human form against his will.

Something inside of his chest clenched, and an ectoblast formed unconsciously in his hand. It glowed
bright for a moment before disappearing, and Danny felt as if his powers were coming undone. Like they were pulling in a dangerous direction. Somehow, Danny knew that if he followed the urge, he would either wake up or die.

Danny gasped in pain as fire lanced through his body. He felt something move inside of him, and he tried to run away. But his feet moved in empty space, chains wrapped around his arms, legs, and waist. The hybrid screamed, and then everything became agony and azure flashes of flame.

When it finally stopped, Danny welcomed the sweet release from pain.

Familiar white symbols started to shine in a ring around him, and they spun in a circle. Then they froze, and Bill stepped out from the middle. The triangle's eye tilted up as if he was amused.

"Had enough yet, DP?" He asked. The demon twirled his cane. "I can make it stop, you know. You just have to make a deal..."

Danny braced himself and shook his head. "No."

"Oh really?" Bill's body turned bright red again, and his body grew to a tremendous size. The veins in his eye popped out, bleeding a dark crimson into the pupil and cornea. "Are you so sure about that? Because I can think of something that might make you change your mind."

He snapped his fingers, and a window similar to the one that he had shown Danny earlier appeared. In it, Danny saw himself, but it wasn't.

It was Dan.

Dan's fists lit with an ectoblast, and he hurled it at a group of people that the ghost boy recognized. The Pines family scattered, and Danny watched as they went down one by one.

First Stan, then Ford as he shielded the younger set of twins from a flaming sphere. Dipper was next, pushing his sister out of the way. And Mabel fell last, pleading with her brother to wake up.

"You see? You're inevitable. No matter where you run, no matter where you hide, you can't outrun your future."

"You-you're lying!"

"Am I? Your human aspirations are so funny, DP. Not quite as bad as Pine Tree, though. And Sixer always was easy to trick."

"You're lying. You have to be lying." But this time Danny wasn't sure that he was. The demon was right; he could feel it in his gut. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't stop himself from becoming Dan. Couldn't stop himself from becoming evil.

He looked up at Bill, dread heavy in his chest. "H-how can I stop it?"

"Easy," the yellow triangular demon extended his blazing hand, lit up with blue fire. "You make a deal."

Danny looked at the hand. "What's the catch?"

"All I want is a puppet. Simple, really. A puppet to stop the inevitable. I know that Shooting Star has one left over from that play of hers, and you could probably make one yourself."
The Halfa closed his eyes, then opened them. They glowed a pure, bright green with no pupils, and Danny shook Bill's hand.

The demon cackled and tugged on Danny's palm. There was a feeling as if the fabric of the universe itself was tearing, and Danny's ears popped.

The four people in the bedroom were startled when Danny's mouth opened, and black-and-blue mist floated out. His eyes snapped open, and they were a pure green ringed with bright blue and yellow.

He began to speak, but it was just a mess of static-y gibberish. "Nehw ytivarg sllaf htrae semoceb yks raef eht tsae htiw tsuj eno eye."

"What does that mean?" Mabel whispered, clinging to Stan's leg. Her great uncle set a reassuring hand on her head.

"I think... it's just normal English, but backwards," her brother said with an uncertain frown. He bit his lip and tilted his head. "But I don't know why or how he's doing it."

Ford moved toward the ghost boy slowly, watching him warily. He leaned over the Halfa and studied his eyes and the mist. He frowned.

"That's very... strange," he commented. "I've never heard of a ghost sense looking like that before. Although I don't know what his normal one looks like."

"It's all blue, but it was mixed with black when he saw Bill for the first time earlier," Mabel informed him. "We saw it when we helped Pacifica with The Box Ghost."

"Is he okay, great uncle Ford?" Dipper asked.

He was answered when Danny phased through his handcuffs and sat straight up. His eyes were closed again, but the glow shone through the lids.

A huge smile spread across his face, almost unnaturally big, and an awful feeling of dread settled into the pit of everyone's stomachs. His canines were oddly long and deadly looking, as if he had grown razor-sharp fangs.

Danny's eyes snapped open, revealing slitted pupils. He laughed, and his voice echoed strangely as if he were speaking down a long tunnel.

"Oh, don't worry yourself Pine Tree," he cackled. "I'm just fine."
In two seconds, Mabel had her grappling hook pointed at Danny's chest. The brunette girl narrowed her eyes.

"What did you do to Danny?" Mabel demanded.

Danny's body laughed and flicked its wrist. One of the lamps glowed green all over and lifted into the air. It smashed in front of Mabel's feet, and she jumped back.

"Well, he was rather eager to make a deal once I showed him the inevitable." The Halfa's body shrugged. "DP is currently floating around your head, Pine Tree, just so you know."

Ford stalked up to the dream demon and grabbed the front of his shirt. The man lifted the ghost boy up off of the bed. "What's your game, Cipher?"

"Oh, not much." The boy phased out of Ford's grip. "Just a bit of chaos and destruction."

An ectoblast lit in Danny's hand. He raised it, and Bill laughed from inside of the ghost boy's skin. "But I might as well take care of some loose ends while I'm at it."

Ford jumped back just in time, as the emerald blast slammed into the place where he had been standing.

"Mabel, look out!" Dipper shouted, jumping on top of his sister just as a ball of ice smashed into the floorboards.

Bill-Danny laughed again, the harsh sound grating on their eardrums. Energy began to gather around him, light shining in his eyes. "I wonder who will fall first, don't you DP? I bet it's going to be Pine Tree."

Stan positioned himself in front of the twins, raising his hands above him in a ready stance. "You're going to have to get through me first."

Ford stood beside him. "I think you mean us."

Bill-Danny smirked. "Of course. Now we can do this the easy way..." His eyes gleamed even brighter. "Or the fun way?"


Dipper blinked. "What? But we can help!"

"I said run, kid! Now!" Stan shoved the two away as Bill-Danny sent a powerful wave of bright green light at the Pines family.
Dipper and Mabel sprinted out the door, listening to the crashes from upstairs.

"Where are we supposed to go?" Mabel asked.

Her brother skidded down the hall. "Bunker! Go, go!"

The two pounded the code into the vending machine and slammed it shut behind them. They leaned against the door for a moment while they caught their breath.

Mabel punched Dipper hard in the shoulder, making him yelp in pain. "We can't just leave them!"

"I know! But they'll be okay-" I hope. "-while we get supplies."

The twins got into the elevator and pressed the last button as many times as they could in a desperate attempt to make it go faster.

Finally, it halted with a shuddering snap. The two jumped out and raced through the bunker, feet slapping on the cold ground. They split up automatically, Mabel taking the left and Dipper going right. When his sister wasn't looking, he reached out and pocketed something.

They rooted frantically through boxes and cabinets, searching for something that would help.

Mabel lifted a glowing green blade triumphantly. "Found something!"

The world suddenly shook, and debris fell from the ceiling. After that, everything was still and silent. Too still.

"They're okay, right?" Mabel asked tentatively, clutching the knife to her chest.

Dipper didn't answer, instead grabbing his sister's hand and making a break for the stairs.

The universe was spinning around them, and the twelve-year-olds took deep gulping breaths as they searched for a better exit.

When they managed to run out from behind the vending machine, the house was in ruins.

Shelves and miscellaneous objects were tossed about the Gift Shop, and the rest of the Shack had fared no better. Parts of the house had collapsed, just as bad as when Gideon had stolen the deed.

Mabel and Dipper moved carefully towards the stairs, maneuvering around fallen wood.

Dipper tested the steps with his foot. "I-I think it'll hold."

They crept up, knife, journal, and grappling hook at the ready. Mabel ignored the extensive damage to the rest of the upstairs and pushed open the door to their bedroom.

The beds looked as if they had been thrown around, and the table that nestled in between them was splintered. A thin sheen of frost covered most of the surfaces, as well as a sticky green material that Dipper recognized as ectoplasm.

Splattered across the floor was something red, and a strange feeling cramped painfully in the brown-eyed boy's stomach as he realized that it was human blood.

Mabel saw thick, green and red swirled liquid slicking against some of the blankets that were lying on the floor.
"That's what Danny's blood looked like," she whispered. "That means that they got him!"

She noticed her brother staring at the dark stains. She came over and stood next to him. Mabel gagged. "Is that... their blood?"

"Yeah." Dipper was shocked by how calm he sounded. "Yeah, it is."

His sister traced its patterns with her eyes. "But... there's so much."

Dipper nodded. "I-I know."

There was a small cough from behind them, and the twins spun around with the knife raised. But instead of the demon-possessed boy, they saw one of their great-uncles clambering out from underneath a broken rafter.

"Grunkle Ford!" The two shouted, running to his side. "Are you okay?"

He winced and flexed his arm. "Sort of. Where's Stanley?"

Dipper and Mabel exchanged a panicked look. "He wasn't under there with you?"

"No. You haven't seen him?"

"Danny's gone too." Mabel cast a wary glance around the destroyed room.

Her brother started to look around, trying to find the other man.

"The Halfa escaped." Ford and Mabel started to help him. "I don't know if Bill thought that he killed us, or if he just wanted to injure, sow some chaos and leave."

"But where's the real Danny?" Mabel asked. "His soul should still be here, unless he decided to follow Bill."

"We can't contact him anyways," Dipper pointed out. "We don't have a puppet on us, and it could take forever to find one in this mess."

The boy rounded the end of one of the fallen beds, suddenly realizing that the wall had been smashed. The room was now much larger.

Dipper sighed and moved around a large pile of, well, something, and stepped in something that made him slip.

He yelped in surprise and put down his hand-which also slipped. "Huh?"

Dipper looked down and gasped, scrambling backwards.

"Mabel, Ford?" He called, voice several octaves higher than normal. "Get over here!"

The other people ran up behind him. "What is it?"

Dipper pointed with a trembling hand at the huge puddle of dark red that he had stepped in. "I suppose it's too much to hope for that it's red paint?"

"Wh-why is there so much?" Mabel's words were shaky.

The trio crept forward, avoiding the blood. At the back of it was a dark shape, half-hidden in
shadows. Ford stiffened.

"Kids, go back and look for Danny."

"What?" They looked at him.

Ford squeezed his eyes shut for a moment. "Go back."

"No way!" Dipper protested. "That could be him."

"It's not," Ford whispered. "I know it's not. Now go!"

He ran to the edge of where the bloody shape was. The younger set of twins followed.

Mabel crossed her fingers. "Please be furniture. Please be furniture."

But it didn't change the fact that it wasn't. Mabel let out a loud sob, but Dipper couldn't make a sound. There was something in side of his head that couldn't connect what he was seeing.

Couldn't connect the glasses. The blood. The marks on the shape's back. The peculiar effects of frostbite on the limbs. The main burn mark and the jagged hole in the center of the chest, the smaller ones scattered around the shape.

Couldn't connect that Stanley Pines was lying dead on the floor.
Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Notes

Minor gore warning. You're going to find out exactly how Stan died.

Bill Cipher swooped over the forest, the air tickling the body's skin. He laughed. "Come on DP, isn't this fun?"

"Hardly," Danny whispered, trying to keep up. The boy was blinking tears out of his eyes, trying not to think of the events that had transpired not an hour before.

Danny pushed at the demon wearing his skin, hissing in frustration when his hands fell right through as if he had gone intangible. Bill cackled as Dipper and Mabel sprinted from the room, after Stan gave them instructions.

Frost began to grow along the edges of the walls and floor. The cold ice painted swirling patterns on the wooden boards. Ford pulled out a... gun? Danny wasn't really sure. It certainly looked like a gun, but the upside-down triangle where the bullet should have fired from didn't seem very normal. The man pulled the trigger, and Danny winced involuntarily as the ray-bullet thing that shot from it slammed into his body. Bill hissed angrily as he visibly dropped a few inches in the air, but otherwise seemed uninjured.

"Gotta try harder than that! Pain is hilarious!"

Danny tried to offer a distraction for the demon, attempting to block him from getting a clear shot at the older set of twins. But Bill just looked right through him with a snort of disgust.

"Out of the way, DP."

He launched an ectoblast at them, smashing one after another into the wall behind them and the roof above their heads. Boards crumpled and snapped, burying the two in a sea of dust and wooden shards.

After a few more green rays were fired into the cloud, Bill floated down himself. The demon hummed absentmindedly to himself, "Come out, come out, wherever you are."

That was when the fist slammed into the side of his head.

Bill collapsed for a moment, before lifting up off the floor and firing a ball of ice at Stan's chest. The older man somehow dodged, but it still caused his fingers to chill and blacken. The demon growled and lunged, ectoblasts biting into Stan's body. Danny cried out and tried to put himself between the demon and the human, but it was as if he wasn't even there.

"Stop it!" The former Halfa (for how could he be a Halfa if he was not in his own skin?) shouted
desperately. "Please!"

Bill sneered, the cruel expression out of place on Danny's face. His hands bubbled with green energy, and he lunged forward. The hands that had once belonged to the ghost boy sank into the chest of Stan like it was warm butter, and the skin around the burn bubbled and hissed. For a moment, Danny wasn't sure if Stan was going to stop screaming. Then he realized that the old man hadn't made a sound, and that the terrible crescendo was being produced by his own mouth. Bill laughed, reached in deeper, and pulled. He yanked something out of Stan's chest, and Danny tried to vomit (but found that he couldn't) when he realized that it was the man's heart.

The yellow demon studied it for a moment, before tossing the organ aside and letting his victim collapse. Then, surrounded by a pool of blood, with the thick crimson liquid still splashed on the body that he was possessing, Bill Cipher started to laugh.

"One down, three to go."

Now, they were circling above the woods as the demon made his way to the actual town. Danny was following, determined to get his body back. And maybe slow the creature down while he was at it.

"Why are you even doing this?" He asked. "I thought that we had a deal!"

Bill-in-Danny's body shrugged, but thankfully stopped flying.

"Simple, really," he began. "With this town gone, the last standpoint of defensive mystic energy in the northern hemisphere will be destroyed. And then I can fuse the Mindscape with this pitiful dimension. That portal was my first attempt." The demon bared his teeth-Danny's teeth. "But as it turns out, Sixer is a lot smarter than I gave him credit for. He was such a fun meatsack."

"Pitiful? If we're so pitiful, then why do you want to take over our world?" Danny tried to keep his voice from shaking. He just had to keep the demon distracted for as long as he possibly could. Easier said than done.

"Chaos." Bill's-well, Danny's- mouth split open into a huge grin. "Fun. Humans are so puny and breakable. Not like demons or Halfas like you, DP. I have some old friends that can't wait for me to get this show on the road."

He readied to start flying again, so Danny moved in front of him. "Wait! Are you all knowing?"

"If you like." Danny's own body blinked at him in a rather reptilian way. First one eye, then then the other.

"Is that a no or a yes?"

"It's a neither. And DP, stalling won't get you anywhere. That's more Shooting Star's talent."

Before Danny could say another word, the monster took off in the direction of the main square.
Dipper was driving the golf cart. His sister was beside him in the front, while Ford sat in the back. Mabel was sobbing, and Dipper knew that there were tears coming down his face as well. The brown-eyed boy was willing to bet money that Ford was crying to, at least slightly. Stan may have fought with him a lot, but Dipper knew that it must have been even harder to lose someone that you had only just gotten back.

He didn't trust himself to speak. Dipper was terrified that he would either puke, break down in tears, or start spewing ever profanity that he knew in complete denial. None of those options sounded very appealing at the moment.

The trio was driving into town, ready to fight that demon. No, they were beyond that stage. They were ready to kill him. Make sure that he never came back to hurt anybody else ever again. But first, they had to make a small stop.

Dipper pulled up in front of Wendy's house, just as the redhead was exiting. She looked up to the sound of tires.

"Oh, hey Dipper. What are you guys doing here?"

The twelve-year-old stepped out of the cart and lifted his chin. "Get in." Somehow, his voice was calm, with only a slight tremble to betray how close he was to crying. "Now."

"Um, okay. Why?" Wendy asked as she sat next to Ford. "And where's Mr. Pines?"

Mabel's tears came faster, Dipper squeezed his eyes tightly shut, and suddenly Wendy put all of the pieces together. Her emerald eyes went wide. "Oh my god. How?"


Even as the cart was moving, Dipper's mind was in a turmoil. His two secret weapons weighed down heavily in his pocket. He didn't blame Danny. That was one thing that he was positive of. The male twin knew firsthand how convincing the Dream Demon could be, especially for something so seemingly innocent like a puppet. Oh, he absolutely blamed Bill. There was simply no other person to hold responsible. One of the first people in his life that actively tried to make it better was gone, and it was all the fault of a yellow triangle with a weird fashion sense.

It would have been stupid if it wasn't so awful.

As they pulled into town, the four people heard screams and shouts from the middle of the area. There was a crashing sound, and somebody's screech was abruptly cut off by an unseen force. Without even discussing it, they all knew what to do.

Ford went left, Wendy went right, and the twins went straight ahead. They shoved as many humans as they could find in the direction of the woods, hoping that they would find safety in the shelter of the trees.

High in the air above them, the sky turned green as energy fluctuated around a white-haired figure. Down on the ground, monsters and people alike stared up in awe and fear at their impending doom.

Four people (soon joined by a fifth) tried to steer everyone to safety.

Deep in the woods, a tall pillar that had guarded the earth with magic for eons began to shake.

And nobody noticed as Dipper Pines stuck a piece of gum in his mouth and began to chew.
Bill felt the powerful energy surging through his body. This was even better than Pine Tree's pathetic skin. This was *power*. The Halfla hadn't even managed to unlock his full potential before making the deal.

The demon knew that the body had limits. But what he didn't know was that they were fast approaching.

He had, while still settling in to the new fleshsuit, used telekinesis. That was an incredibly advanced ghost power, one that Danny (when in his own body) still hadn't developed. Then he had fired several powerful ectoblasts and used cryokinesis.

Danny's body was close to collapsing.

The energy that Bill was making was draining the strength of his vessel, and if the demon wasn't going to conserve his power, than getting the real Danny back wouldn't be very hard.

Ford assessed all of this as he shooed that girl, the one Mabel was friends with (Grenda, right?), into the trees. He thought about how much energy it would take to use up the last of Bill's.

He thought about how many people were probably still trapped in the rubble of the mall.

He thought about the way that Bill's (Danny's) eyes were still glowing with triumph, even as the rest of his body started to fade from exhaustion.

Stanford Pines thought about a lot of things.

But not one of them was his brother.

He couldn't-he *wouldn't* think of Stanley as dead. He had only just gotten him back; he wasn't losing him again. He *hadn't* lost him again. Ford couldn't accept it.

For once in his life, Stanford Pines refused to believe in the facts.

Wendy yanked a tall plank of wood off of the top of a collapsed building. Soos, who had recently joined them, grabbed the one beneath it. They lifted out that creepy puppet kid (who was sobbing over the ripped bodies of said puppets) and sent him on his way.

Wendy didn't know how exactly Stan had died. Although she had her suspicions that Danny had watched the whole thing, the way that Dipper had explained how he saw Bill attack his sister.

But Soos didn't even know that his boss (although he was practically the man's son at this point; Soos at least saw him as a father figure) was dead. And Wendy had no idea how to tell him.
Dipper and Mabel worked as a team. They were twins, after all, so it was only natural. Mabel used her grappling hook to pull them out of the way of debris or energy, and Dipper searched for trapped townsfolk.

Mabel was trying to keep her mind off of it, but her brain kept replaying the scene. Stray tears were still leaking down her face, and her eyes were slightly blurry. That made it a bit more difficult to get everything under control as she protected her brother and any of the people that they found. She repeated a mantra in her head; *I won't lose any more family. I won't lose any more family.*

Danny was trying to distract Bill, but it didn't seem to be working. Just as he was about to throw himself into the path of another ectoblast (even though they just went right through him as if he were mist) when a loud echoing *crack* echoes through the air.

Bill-Danny grinned. His eyes seemed to glow brighter. '*You hear that, DP? That's the sound of me breaking an era's worth of magical stone.*'

Danny looked around. He couldn't afford to worry about that now. Where was Wendy? Ford? Soos? The twins?

A flicker of movement caught his eye. Dipper was saying something in Mabel's ear, far beneath them on the ground. Her eyes went wide, and Danny's enhanced eyesight could see her shocked expression from here. She punched Dipper lightly on the shoulder, then gestured for him to lead the way.

And then, to Danny's surprise, they started to climb up the ruins of a building next to them.

Danny's body swiveled its head around to face them, and the actual ghost boy shuddered at its creepiness. '*What do you two want? To be the next to die?*

They both flinched back slightly and wince. Dipper lifted his chin. '*No. But I would like to make a deal.*'

Immediately, all of the power stopped pulsating in the air. Bill turned the rest of Danny's body to face them and lowers himself to their eye level in the air. '*Oh really?*

'*Yes.* This time it was Mabel that spoke. '*But it's more of a gamble, really.*'

Danny felt a twinge of surprise and slight betrayal. They were gambling with his soul, as if he were money or something that you could just give away easily. Maybe he was.

Dipper took a step forward, almost falling off the edge of where he was standing. He reached into the pocket of the navy vest that he's wearing, and pulled out two things.

One was a die. It had too many sides for Danny to count, and he's pretty sure that he could see the number 38 on one of the facets. It was blue in color, with white numbers. Danny wasn't exactly sure how Dipper thought that it was going to help.

The other thing looks a bit more... *promising.* It's a glass orb secured on a pedestal, with black and yellow markings that Danny was pretty sure mean that Dipper shouldn't have been handling it. But the inside was where it got interesting.

There were shapes swirling around inside of it, each one filled with stars. The tiny voids held an aura of power around them, and Danny felt the faint tingling sense that he got when he was in the Ghost Zone.
For some reason, the teen was drawn to it like a moth to a flame. But he knew that if his fingers so much as brushed that rift into space, he would never be able to return to earth.

"Dipper, are you crazy?!" Someone shouted from the ground. Danny saw that Ford was staring up at them. "Do you know what you're doing?!"

The male twin ignored him and spoke the words that would decide the fate of Danny's entire future, entire life.

"If this die lands on a 13, you'll have to release Danny and go back to where you came from. But if it lands on anything else..." he paused. "We'll give you the dimensional rift and allow you to do whatever you want with Gravity Falls."

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