Chasing The Conspiracy
by RadioActivity

Summary

What do you do when you can do literally anything? For Dipper Pines, life's choices are infinite... and overwhelming. Unsure of what he wants to do, he applies for the same college as his twin sister. Life as a new freshman is hard as Dipper finds no one at his new school likes him, and worse yet, he shares his first class with an old bully from a summer vacation he took when he was 12. Can't he catch a break?

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
First Day of School

The hallway wasn't big enough to breathe in. Even though it was long and narrow, and absolutely jam-packed with hundreds of kids going to their classes, it felt startlingly like all the oxygen had escaped from the hall, leaving Dipper breathless. Look, it's the first day of class... Just be cool. Don't blow it. Mabel's not here to take attention off of you.

Dipper took a huge breath, glancing toward the entranceway to his classroom and gripping his backpack tightly. He fixed his eyes on the door, air wheezing through his nose as he straightened up. Opening the pale yellow door, he walked into his class with confidence. Fake confidence. There were roughly fifty rows of seats stretching out in front of him, and roughly half of the seats in the back were filled with students.

The whispers reached him immediately, coming from four or five rows back. “Hey, it's that Genius Boy. That Pines kid.” He tried not to be cowed, holding his head up and making his way to a seat in the front row. Dipper took a seat in the dead front and center. He pretended that he didn't notice the people avoiding the section he was seated in like the plague, setting his bag down beside him. He removed his notebook from his bag, setting it on his little desk.

“They say he got a perfect score on the SATs...” someone whispered. “He's such a loser. I bet he doesn't do anything but study...” There was a soft, unified snickering in the back of the classroom as a paper airplane landed in the stairway.

“Doesn’t he go by some weird nickname, like... Dipper? Right? What a weird name.” Dipper skimmed over the encrypted writing on the first page of his notebook that he had written down in the courtyard the day he registered for classes. His hands were shaking as he started working on the encoded writing, trying to ignore the whispers. This was a great way to start his first day at college.

The room filled up quickly, except the two seats next to Dipper. His cheeks burned as he tried to ignore the hateful scorn that his classmates were kind enough to shower him with. Mabel said that I just need to be confident.

Dipper sat up, pressing his back tight to the wooden chair. I'm not here for them.

The door flung open, slamming against the drywall with a resounding crack. The walking definition of the word ‘eccentric’ strolled in, moving effortlessly across the room. Dipper turned back to his notebook almost immediately, recounting the number of students that had entered the room. The only two seats that were left, if his memory was correct-- happened to be to the left and right of him. The obnoxiously flamboyant student glanced around the room.

“Wow, look at all the future dropouts!” He strut across the front row, offering words of sincere encouragement such as, “I hope you didn't pay too much for tuition, kid! I don't think you'll make it through the semester!”

The kid that had been spoken to burst into tears as the tormenting continued. Dipper turned to stone when he recognized the far-too-familiar voice. Slowly he turned his head to see a blonde, dark skinned male strolling towards the empty seats beside him, a wide and confident smirk on his face. The smirk unfolded into a shark-toothed grin. An eyepatch graced the left side of his face, bringing even more focus to the steely gray of the other.

“Well, well! Look who it is, my old friend, Pine Tree!” He slid into the seat next to him, slipping his hands into the pockets of his yellow pyramid print hoodie. Dipper grabbed his things and moved a seat over towards the student to his right to avoid Bill.
“We are not friends, Bill!” Dipper told him forcefully. “Do you think I've forgiven you for what you’ve done? How could you think that we’d ever be friends? That we were ever friends?”

“Aw, Pine Tree, chill out!” Bill told him with a wave of his hand. The grin shrunk back into a smirk as Dipper stared at the solid black of the eyepatch. “Come on, can't you let by-gones be by-gones? Or in my case... EYE-gones?” He tapped his eyepatch.

“No way in hell.” Dipper scowled, rummaging through his things, turning his attention away from him. Maybe if he just ignored Bill, the arrogant bastard would leave.

“Aww, but I really am sorry about what I did!” Bill pressed on, like he was storming the beaches of Normandy. “I want to make it up to you!”

“Forget it.” Dipper turned back to his notebook, body shaking visibly. “I really don't want you sitting next to me. After what you did to me, I can't believe you think that I'd just forget about it.” He continued working on the cipher and Bill leaned over across the empty chair.

“Where am I going to go, oh blind little Pine Tree?” He bat his lashes. “The only seats available seem to be near you.” He tilted his head, looking at Dipper's notebook. His elbow rested on the chair between them.

“Oh nice.” He told Dipper brightly.”You gonna join them?”

“What are you talking about?” Dipper asked, annoyed.

“This cute little ciper.” Bill circled the coded message with the tip of his finger, getting far too close to Dipper for his comfort.

Dipper squinted his eyes and looked at the paper, frowning deeply to himself. He scanned it briefly, trying to figure out how Bill understood it so quickly.

Gr brx olnh frghv? Gr brx olnh flskhuv?

Gr brx mxvw sodlq olnh vhfuhwv?

Grq'w plvv brxu fkdqfh wr mrlq rxu vhfuhw vrflhwb!

Mrlq xv dw wkh Txdg, 12dp, Wxhygdb. Zhdu bhoorz.

Dipper had no clue how Bill had understood what that meant. Unless he’d already taken the time to translate it. Dipper refused to believe that Bill had translated the writing in just a few moments' time. He was smart, but Dipper couldn't believe Bill was a cipher cracking version of Google Translate.

“What do you mean?” Dipper frowned.

“You transcribed that from the bulletin board. It's an invite to-”

“Ahhhh!” Dipper shrieked, scooping the notebook up and hugging it tightly to his chest. Bill threw his hands in the air with a surprised flinch. “Don't tell me! I want to figure it out!” His voice was panicked, wavering with the fear that Bill would tell him what it meant before he had a chance to translate it.
“Heh, sure thing, kid. Best of luck!” Bill dropped a heavy wink that lost part of its charm due to the eyepatch. He turned back forward, leaning back comfortably in his chair.

“.Did you-” Dipper started, but was cut off by the appearance of the professor. She was incredibly tall, towering over the podium, heels clacking on the concrete.

“Good morning, class. My name is Ms. Lions.” She addressed the class in a relaxed breezy tone. Ms. Lions’ gaze swept over the room, landing momentarily on Bill. Her face screwed up in a scowl and she turned on her heel, grabbing a marker to write on the board with, writing her name in big, bright red letters. The snickers and jeers that Dipper had walked into class to quieted down as she commanded attention with the simple flicks of her wrist. “Welcome to American History. The only history that never mattered.”

Dipper tried to push the fact that his worst enemy was next to him out of his head, listening to Ms. Lions describe the short, almost annoyingly brief syllabus and where they could find it. Unfortunately, the only thing he could concentrate on was how he had to tell Mabel about Bill. They could plot a defense against him if they hurried, but Mabel had class until three... He snuck a glance over at Bill, who was inspecting the starch white gloves of his hands, picking at a tiny thread that was coming loose. Dipper didn’t know if he could survive that long.

Once class was over, Dipper started sliding his notebooks into his bag, before catching a glimpse of Bill staring directly at him.

“What?” Dipper demanded hotly, getting to his feet. He flipped the table of his desk back down beside the chair. “What are you looking at?”

“You've gotten a lot taller, Pine Tree!” Bill said, in a jovial manner, his hands tucked away. “Getting a lot of sun and water I see!” The taller man leaned over a bit, and Dipper shrunk away.” And who would have thought you'd have grown out of your awkward phase? It seemed like a permanent addition.”

“No one asked you!” Dipper hissed, stepping around him.

“And your voice got deeper! It doesn't crack like a three-egg omelet anymore!” Bill pressed on, grinning like an idiot. Dipper was furious.

“Making fun of me? I'm just teasing you,” Bill's eye widened and he fidgeted with the strap on his eyepatch, frowning in confusion.

“Well, stop. Just leave me alone!” Dipper told him as he stormed out of the room, going to his next class.

Dipper struggled to get through the rest of his classes that day. He couldn't stop thinking about his run-in with Bill, someone he'd felt sure he would never see again. In fact, that he had hoped that he’d never see again. It had been several years since he'd seen Bill, first running into him on family vacation to his Great Uncle's house when he was twelve. That summer had been sheer hell for Dipper, having been tormented and relentlessly bullied all summer. He'd honestly never wanted to see that jerk again, but here he was, going to the same college as Dipper. Dipper knew he never should have went to college in Oregon.
Dipper was headed towards the school cafeteria when he spotted a familiar pink sweater. He grabbed her sleeve.

“Mabel!” He blurted, relieved to catch her.

“Hey, Dip! Dipping Sauce. Bro!” Mabel grinned from ear to ear, excitedly. “You wouldn't believe the day I had!” Mabel was simply bursting with energy, eyes sparkling. Dipper could almost see the reflection of her day in her eye. “In my class, we had to illustrate a dress we're going to make for our first project and my teacher said she's really looking forward to seeing the dress I designed.” She spun in a circle, feet thumping on the ground. “Oh, oh! I made a bunch of new friends.” Mabel gushed.

Dipper laughed jokingly at her excitement. She was really excited about her classes. Dipper knew he shouldn't spoil Mabel's excitement by talking about why he wasn't enjoying himself. He'd decided to go here for Mabel, and that meant enduring a few hitches. Mabel liked it, and so Dipper would like it too.

“O-oh, that's awesome,” Dipper returned, the thought wiping away what little bit of confidence he had left. “That's great, Mabel! What's your dress look like?”

“Okay. Think skyscrapers... and GLITTER,” Mabel whispered.

“Wow... I can see it perfectly,” Dipper lied. “It's going to be awesome.”

“Yeah it is!” Mabel said, confidently. “What about you? How is your day going, Bro-bro?”

“It's... going great.” Dipper rubbed the back of his neck. “I've met some pretty interesting people.”

“That's awesome!” Mabel slapped his shoulder. “That's great... I'm glad you really like it. I wasn't sure you'd like it here.”

“What do you mean? Of course I like it! I'm here with you, after all.” Dipper grinned at her, before glancing at a girl walking past. She had silver to white gradient hair from root to tip, and she caught his eye with her confident strut and her shiny, almost disco ball hair. She glanced at him out of the corner of her eye and gave him a short wink before strolling onward.

With Dipper's attention divided, he didn't catch Mabel's smile faltering for just a moment. The corners drooped, shoulders dropping in a visible sigh. When Dipper’s attention returned to her, she was back to her bright, cheerful self. “Of course! Together forever, you and me!” Dipper punched her shoulder. “Mystery twins?” She asked, and Dipper grinned.

“Mystery twins.” He agreed. “Hey, are you hungry? We should grab lunch.” Dipper glanced toward the cafeteria. “Want to eat cereal until we vomit?”

“Do I? I want to eat cereal until they ban us from the cafeteria!” Mabel told him. “Race you there!” Mabel took off toward the cafeteria, forcing Dipper to chase her. For a moment, Bill was forgotten.
Chapter 2

Dipper hunched over his desk, working on the cipher. His new roommate was lying on the bed, directly behind him. The idea of having a roommate who wasn’t Mabel was odd, but Dipper figured he’d get used to it.

Much to Dipper’s chagrin, it was an easy cipher. A simple Caesar Cipher with a three letter shift. Still, it annoyed him without reason that the bastard had figured it out before him. One by one, the letters fell into place, each one leaving a satisfying click inside his mind and after working on the cipher for a few more minutes, he sat back, setting his pencil off to the side.

Do you like codes? Do you like ciphers?

Do you just plain like secrets?

Don’t miss your chance to join our secret society!

Join us at the Quad, 12am, Tuesday. Wear yellow.

Dipper let out a sigh, and rubbed the tension out of his shoulder. That was easy en- … Tuesday? Dipper looked at the clock. It was eleven-thirty. If he wanted to get to this “secret society” meeting, he’d better move quick.

Leaping to his feet, he grabbed the notebook. Crossing the room in just a few short steps, he grabbed his jacket, throwing the keys in his pocket. The tall, lanky teen that was lounging on the bed looked up at Dipper with an equal amount of suspicion and curiosity.

“Going somewhere cool, Dipper?” He asked, picking at his chewed nails.

“Nowhere in particular... just really want a coke.” Dipper lied, grabbing a yellow ball cap and pulling it over his head before moving out the door.

The dormitory hallway was had a few rogue students moving about, random bits of dialogue about classes or late night television shows creeping into Dipper’s ears. However, once Dipper dodged the residence advisor and moved through the front doors, it was like he’d stepped underwater.

It was dead silent outside. Dipper couldn’t even hear a car driving nearby. He wished he could have walked with someone – Mabel, ideally, but still, it would be cool to be part of a secret college society.

Arriving at the Quad, Dipper clicked his tongue, impressed to see how many students had cracked the code. It made him wonder how many had actually attempted it. Six interested students had managed to crack the cipher and were milling about the courtyard. Dipper noticed a guy in a black hoodie wearing a yellow bandana around his arm, keeping his head low, the silver haired girl from in front of the cafeteria looking pleased with herself. A large mind-numbingly yellow scarf was wrapped around her neck, adding a cozy charm...and without fail Bill Cipher was sitting on the base of a nearby statue, humming to himself. He was wearing his trademark yellow hoodie and looking all-too-pleased to see Dipper.
“Pine Tree! You made it!” Bill grinned from ear to ear. He waved to Dipper, his hand almost invisible in the darkness, due to his black gloves. Dipper let a stray thought flit through his head, momentarily wondering why the prick always wore them. And for that matter, the eyepatch was still too new for Dipper not to stare at it for an uncomfortably long amount of time when they talked. He certainly hadn’t worn it last time he met Dipper.

“... Ugh, Bill! What are you doing here?” Dipper asked, visibly distressed. He considered turning around and going back to his dorm, leaving the whole secret society idea behind.

“Joining the secret society! I mean, this one. I’m already a member of two un-charmingly awful ones, but why not go for three?” Bill threw an arm around the silver haired girl. “You know what they say. Third time’s supposed to be the charm. Or at least more charming.” He cackled to himself. “Right? You too? Making some friends! We’re doin’ the same stuff!”

The silver haired girl considered Bill’s arm, before stepping forward and letting it fall. “Hi. I’m Lyra,” She offered her hand to Dipper.

“Aw, aren’t we all friends here?” Bill questioned, leaning forward. The two ignored his statement.

“I’m Dipper, nice to meet you.” He shook her hand.

“Name's Wilson,” A guy butted in, wearing a yellow headband, awkwardly shaking Dipper's hand. “Heard a lot about you, man. Congrats on being brilliant.”

“I'm Teresa,” A girl sitting near Bill offered up, removing her sunglasses. “Sorry, all I have are these yellow sunglasses.” She fiddled with them, not looking up. Everything else she was wearing was black, right down to the choker around her neck. “Not the smartest choice to wear to sneak out into the night, huh? I couldn't find anything else yellow.”


Everyone traded introductions except for the unsettling man in the dark hoodie.

“Wow, so all of you are into codes and ciphers?” Dipper went on to say once they’d all gotten comfortable.

“Oh yeah. Linguistics is my major,” Lyra nodded. “And I’ve always been great at codes and stuff, so I thought, why not pursue that as my degree. What about you?”

“Oh, I don't know... I'm not... sure what I want to do.” Dipper rubbed his neck. “But I'm really good at codes and ciphers too, so this seemed like right up my alley.” Not like it had anything to do at all with the fact that everyone thinks I’m some nerdy freak. Dipper thought.

“Of course you are, you're Dipper Pines!” The guy in the hoodie complained, adjusting his yellow bandana. “Aren't you good at everything? Most intelligent guy at our crap college?”

“.Th-this college isn't crap!” Dipper steeled himself, standing tall. “This is a nice school.”

“Why are you even here, genius kid? Go home.”

“Hey.” Bill turned towards him, standing between Dipper and the unsettling student. “Do you know that in order to kill someone you have to asphyxiate them for three whole minutes? Because I do. Best three minutes of my life, let me tell you.”

“Hello.” The autotuned voice came out of both nowhere and everywhere, startling all six of them.
“Welcome to Rockcreek College's Secret Society. The seven of you have chosen to be involved in something very special.” The robotic voice let out a laugh. “Or maybe it's chosen you? But being part of a society isn't all games... it has consequences too.”


“For our first challenge, I've placed a series of ciphers all around the campus... and elsewhere. It is your goal to find them, crack them, and come back to me with the final passcode included in the final cipher. You have until September 23rd, 12:30am, to return with the password. As you all may or may not know, the 23rd is the College's Talent Show event... and the losers are required to get up on stage and do a performance that I will specify. I have already cleared all six of you for entry in the talent show... and only one of you will get out of it.”

“What if we don't want to play?” Wilson demanded. “This is bogus.”

“If you don't want to play my little game, I will reveal the deep, dark secrets that you hold in your little minds to the entire campus in the school newspaper. And believe me... I know your deepest secrets. I know what one of you did with a vacuum cleaner, and I know who hates their girlfriend of 13 years, and I will tell everyone.”

The group fell dead silent, looking around. “So, you have exactly one month to crack six ciphers... should be fairly easy. Except you will get no hints, because I will give none. There will be no clues, not even a starting marker as to where to look. I will see you all on September 23rd for the determining of the winner.”

The voice fell silent and the six of them stood there baffled. My worst secret? They'll tell my deepest secret? Which deepest secret? They can't know... everything, right? Dipper worried.

“Oh my god,” Lyra pinched her brow. “What kind of performance are they talking about? How much do they know about me?”

“I don't know if I can do this- I can't handle this,” Wilson gripped his hair, staring down at the ground. “I...”

“How the hell do they know...?” Theresa blurted out. She was shaking from head to toe, freaked out at the idea of how much their mysterious voice knew. They all started talking at once and Bill leapt down off the statue.

“Hey, guys, take it easy.” He put an arm around Dipper, leaning onto him. “All you have to do is win. Then you don't need to worry.” He pat Dipper on the back, and Dipper pushed him away.

“Why aren't you worried?” Dipper looked up at him, eyes wide. “Are you that sure you'll win?”

“Actually, Pine Tree, I'm pretty sure you'll win.” Bill grinned, amused. “But,” he hesitated. “I'm definitely going to do my best to figure out whatever ciphers they hit me with. I'm not interested in their little performance, and I'm not worried either.”

“What if they reveal your deepest secret while you're on stage?” Lyra demanded.

“My deepest secret? I don’t have those. So whatever my secret is isn't that big of a deal. If it gets out, it gets out.” Bill shrugged.

“Then tell us, what is it?” Theresa yelled, angrily.
“Well, I'm not going to tell you. If it gets out, that's a shame, but until then? I'd like to keep it to myself. Know what I mean?” Bill said, completely confident with himself.

Dipper was envious. While Bill was calm and collected, he was inwardly panicking. What performance would they have to do? What if Lyra was right and they WERE going to reveal their secrets on stage? How humiliating would that be?

“Look, don't play stupid with me, you're way better at codes and ciphers than me!” Dipper scowled with emphasis, staring at the arrogant asshole. “I'm still going to beat you though, no matter what! Next time I see you, you'll have been beaten so bad that you won't even look at me!” Bill let out a snort and tucked his hands in his pockets, his lips twisting up in an almost indiscernible smirk.

“If you say so, Pine Tree.”

“I do say so!” Dipper turned on his heel and took off toward his dorm, hands clenched into fists. He was going to win and he would bask in the whatever stupid task Bill had to do up on stage. Popcorn included.

Dipper entered his dorm and his roommate glanced over from the comic he was reading. “Hey, Pines. … where's your soda?”

Dipper looked down, frowning. “Dang it! I knew I forgot something.”

“Whatever, man.” His roommate turned back to his comic, flipping to the next page.
Chapter 3

Dipper slid down into his seat, the plastic catching his shirt and dragging it up. A bright red color dusting his cheeks and down his neck. He stared hard at the notebook in front of him, flustered. The chatter of the students around him was suddenly too quiet.

“Don't say a word.” He said, aggressively trying to pretend a certain asshole in an obnoxiously yellow hoodie wasn't sitting next to him with a shit-eating grin on his face.

“But Pine Tree, You haven't beaten me yet.” Bill thought about it for a moment before lowering his voice. “But I'd let you, if you really wanted to.” Bill grinned from ear to ear, endlessly amused by Dipper. He swung his arms out, tossing his head. “You haven't won yet... Have you? I haven't heard from you for a whole day! How did it go?”

“I said, shut up!” Dipper flushed all the way to his ears, slamming his hands on the desk in front of him. “Okay? Stop talking!”

“You forgot we had class together, eh, Pine Tree?” Bill nudged him with his elbow. “You got all caught up in the moment, and totally forgot-” Dipper shot him an angry look, before fixating on his notebook.

“Just stop.” He repeated.

“Geeez,” Bill drew out the word like he was stretching a wad of gum. “Chill kid, I'm just teasing you. You're so cute when you're embarrassed!” Bill grinned, tugging on his gloves. “So where do you think the first cipher is?”

“I don't know, if I did, I wouldn't share it with you.” Dipper seethed, feeling patronized by Bill's jokes. He clenched his fists, refusing to look in Bill's direction.

“Sure thing, kid.” Bill leaned back in his seat, looking up at the empty whiteboard. “If I find anything, I'll be sure to share it with you.” He grinned over at Dipper, tapping his fingers on the desk.

“Why do you always wear those gloves?” Dipper finally asked, annoyed. “Do you ever take them off?” Bill made a soft humming noise.

“Nope!” Bill turned his hand so his palms faced up, fingers curling towards him. “Fingerprints. I can't be leaving fingerprints everywhere!”

“Why not?” Dipper asked, skeptically. Bill was, and had always been a nut, nothing had changed since they were kids.

“Did you know you can even leave fingerprints on dead bodies?” Bill waggled his fingers at Dipper. “It's true, Pine Tree!”

“Okay...” Dipper wrinkled his nose, pausing to process the information Bill had given him. “So you wear them so you don't leave... fingerprints on dead bodies?” He said slowly, and Bill shrugged.

“Of course not, that was just a fun fact for you!” Bill grinned. “No, it's just my parents always insisted I wear them. You know, my parents are super serious about conspiracy theories and stuff,” Bill explained, prattling on. “It's also the reason I wear the eyepatch, so I can't be recognized by facial scanning technology! There's nothing wrong with my eye!” He continued, tapping the
“Really? Is that true? There's nothing wrong with your eye?” Dipper questioned, eyes widening. He looked over at Bill with a curious expression. “I know you didn’t wear it when we first met.” Bill laughed, slapping the table.

“Nah, I’m just pulling your leg. There’s definitely something wrong with my eye, but the eyepatch is also for the facial scanning tech.”

“Oh...” Dipper scratched his neck. “Geez, you’re weird...”

“Well, you get raised by Illuminati and Freemasons and you tell me how you turn out.” Bill said, keeping his expression and tone jovial.

“Ha-ha, very funny.” Dipper looked forward, tapping his fingers on the desk. “Like you were raised by the Illuminati.”

“Believe what you want, Pine Tree.” Bill grinned, stretching his hands up to the ceiling.

The professors strolled in, setting down her paperwork.

“Good morning, class.” She greeted, fixing the lid on her coffee. She spent the next five minutes doctoring her coffee up with various amounts of creamer and sugar. “Open your textbooks to page…” she looked at her syllabus. “Fifty-three. Read passages one through six, then answer the questions on page fifty-five, excluding the class activity on 15a.” She sat down at her desk with finality, leaving no more room for discussion.

Dipper strolled down the concrete path between the dorms and the library, backpack slung over his shoulder. He had the strap of his bag gripped in one hand, and a can of soda in his other. Mabel bumped his shoulder, looking up at him.

“Pass that here.” She reached over. Dipper held it out of her reach, and she thrust her bottom lip out, pouting.

“How are your classes going?” Dipper asked, taking a long draught of his cola, before passing the can into Mabel’s waiting hand.

“They’re going great!” Mabel grinned at him, taking a drink before passing it back to Dipper. “I’m gonna go out with some new friends I’ve made tonight, we’re going to go out to this new sushi place on the other side of town.”

“Oh, cool, can I go with you guys?” Dipper questioned.

“I’d invite you but I remember what you did last time.” She gave him a stern look. Dipper frowned at her, confused as to what she was implying.

“What does that mean? Look, it only happened once... we just – we had a good connection...”

“She didn’t know her shoelaces from her socks, Dip,” Mabel glared at him. “You really should try to find someone really smart, okay? Someone you can actually have something in common with, like books, reading, secret codes, monsters. Someone who’s not my friends. It makes it weird when your friend is dating your brother.”
“W-well, yeah- okay,” Dipper muttered, rubbing his neck. “How's your dress?”

“I've already finished my first draft sketches of it, and now I'm looking into what fabric would be best. And I have to look for a place that does custom printing.”

“Well, whatever you decide, it's going to be awesome,” Dipper said, affectionately.

“Of course it is, Dipper. I know my dress will be amazing.” Mabel waved him off. Dipper smiled at her in admiration. What he would give for that kind of confidence. “What about you? How are your classes going?” Dipper flushed, unsure of how to express fondness for something that he hated.

“Pretty well. I'm not a fan of my history class, but my other classes are great.” He shrugged. “But I don't really like history, so that's a given.”

“What's wrong with your history class, bro bro?” She pointed at the trashcan they passed. “Hey look, it's a house for that can.” She bumped their hips together. “Boop.”

Dipper tossed his now-empty drink into the can, pushing his way past the library doors. The dry, musty smell of thousands of decaying books hit Dipper’s nose and he inhaled in a pleasure only a bibliophile could truly enjoy. The smell of old books. There were small groups of students gathered around the square tables, study groups already forming. Everyone was whispering so Dipper and Mabel joined them.

“Eh, well... Do you remember Bill?” Dipper inquired.

“Bill?” Mabel's eyes grew wide, her voice low. “Y-yeah, why do you ask?”

“Well, he's in my history class.” Dipper hung his head. Mabel's expression turned from a cheery grin to an expression of horror. “What's a guy like that doing at this school anyway? What's he even going to major in?”

“Well, you don't know, and you're the smartest kid ever. Maybe he doesn't either,” Mabel returned. “Why don't you just ask him?”

“Ugh, like he's gonna tell me.” Dipper muttered. He took a seat at a table, opening up his backpack. “It doesn't matter.”

“If it bothers you, it does matter.” Mabel took a seat across from him, opening up her backpack, removing her laptop and textbooks. “I need to check a book out from here.” She glanced at the shelves. “365 Dresses of the Twentieth Century.”

“Oh?” Dipper glanced up. “I need a book too, but one for chem. Do you want me to go grab it while I'm up?”

“Yeah, If you would!” Mabel brightened up. “Thanks, Dip-dop.”

Dipper climbed to his feet and moved to the shelves, going through the shelves until he found the book Mabel needed. He removed it from the shelf, tucking it under his arm. He was going to leave the stack, when he noticed some of the books seemed to be sticking out on one of the shelves. Dipper frowned and tried to push them back on to the shelves.

When they didn't move, he pulled the books out, thinking that maybe another book had gotten pushed behind it. To his surprise, there was a long tube tucked behind the books. He lifted it out and slid it from it’s home. It had a cap on it, which he removed, sliding the piece of paper from the inside of it. A cipher! He capped the tube and scurried on to find his book, barely able to remember the
Dipper couldn't make heads or tails of the cipher. He dismayed, staring at the complex code, knitting his brow. *It's all one long string and there's even numbers in here! How am I supposed to... okay. It's not a Caesar Cipher, or a ROT1... not a transposition. Come on, Dipper, you can do it!*

His little pep talk seemed to inspire him, and he settled down to work.

Dipper worked on the code until he heard the door being unlocked, and he rolled it up and stuffed it back into the tube. Hiding it in his pillowcase, he straightened up as his roommate walked in.

“Hey, Pines. What are you up to?” He glanced around, brushing some hair out of his face as he strolled over to his bed, falling into it gracefully.

“Hey. Not much...” Dipper lied as he got up to lay down.“What about you, Chad?”

“Eh... you know... getting my heartbroken.” Chad murmured. “No big deal.” He glanced over at Dipper. “You look like you're up to something, but we share the same room so I don't really want to know about it.”

Dipper wrinkled his nose, grossed out.

“No way, I just got here.”

“Alright, I believe you.” Chad looked up at the ceiling. “Girls are harsh, man.”

“No kidding,” Dipper thought, remembering past experiences. “When I was younger, I once got the phone numbers of a whole bunch of different girls... and then they proceeded to act like we were dating. They were furious!”

“Well, yeah, man. If a girl gives you her number, it's supposed to be something serious... it doesn't seem serious to me.” Chad frowned.
“Girls are different though,” Dipper paused.

“No kidding.” Chad murmured, rolling over and away from the twin.

Dipper looked up at the ceiling, thinking about how it was probably best not to tell his roommate he was bisexual... sometimes people reacted wrongly when they heard that. He crossed his arms behind his head, thinking about the cipher. It reminded him of its existence like a leaky faucet, constantly dripping. He had no idea how to solve it... he wrinkled his nose. Bill would know ... what should I do? I know he'll win if he gets his hands on this cipher.

*I don't really have a choice, do I?*
“Well, well, look who's coming to me for help,” Bill gloated, his elbows resting on the cafeteria table, chin resting on the back of his gloved hands. “Are you sure you want me to look at your precious cipher?”

“Oh, shut it... just... here.” Dipper rested the tube on the table and Bill looked down at it.

“Hm. I don't know if I want to help you for free, Pine Tree.” He lifted his gaze up to meet Dipper’s eyes. “I need some kind of incentive to help you out.”

“What? What kind of incentive... what do you want?” Dipper asked, frustrated, crossing his arms. He wasn’t in the mood for this.

“Hmm... how about a kiss?” Bill murmured, his expression neutral, focused on Dipper's face.

“I can't believe I came to you for help!” Dipper snatched the tube up. “You're just gonna keep messing with me.” He turned his back to Bill, and went to storm off. Bill's hand around his wrist stopped him, yanking him back.

“Hold up!” Bill frowned. “Take it easy... I wasn't messing with you, but if you don't want to, you don't have to.” Dipper tugged at the hand around his wrist. “I'm not gonna force you, Pine Tree. Give me the cipher and I'll see what I can do.”

Dipper paused, his mouth making a grim hard line. After a few seconds of deliberation, he turned back around, holding the tube out. Bill took it and popped it open, unrolling it on the cafeteria table. He scanned it, thinking to himself.

“Oooh, this is a tough one! I see why you came to me for help.” Bill grinned. Dipper rolled his eyes as Bill continued looking over the cipher.

7KKRMCMLdc9INTPHG4xaHYdZFXpBTKKIX5PSd91HGTXXKKRMCMlDLILOTXXKRoCKHHTRQJl

“Well, this is considerably harder than the flier.” Bill frowned. “Give me some time... go get something to eat and I'll take a crack at this.” Dipper glanced toward the hot food line.

“Yeah, alright.” Dipper slunk over to the cafeteria kitchen. He glanced over to where Bill was, watching him carefully copy the code into his notebook. Dipper glanced over frequently, curious to see if Bill was going to double cross him, but Bill only rolled the original paper back up, tucking it away. He began to make notes in his notebook. The homework he’d been working on was pushed to the side, his attention now focused on the code that Dipper had brought.

Dipper took a seat across from Bill, beginning to eat, watching the strange man work. In a short time, his paper was filled with complicated notes. By the time Dipper finished his lasagna, Bill spoke up.

“I can't crack this, kid.” Bill finally told him.

“What?” Dipper knit his brow. “What do you mean you can’t solve it? Aren’t you supposed to be a master at this or something?”
“It looks like a Vigenère,” Bill continued taking notes. “These can't really be cracked without the key.”

“So you're saying I need a keyword to solve it? If you can't do it, I'm really done for.” Dipper sighed. He laid his fork down. Bill set his pen down in unison, ripping the page he was working on out, sliding it over to Dipper along with the notes.

“Maybe you should check the area you found the code at for the key. It might be hidden around there somewhere. Who knows... either way, this is a useless string of letters and numbers without it.”

Dipper ripped a chunk off of his garlic bread, sighing.

“Figures.” He stuffed the chunk in his mouth, chewing roughly. “Guess I'll go back and look,” he muttered around the mouthful.

“Wow, that's attractive.” Bill told him with a snort, pulling his homework back towards him. “I hope you won't mind if I get back to work.”

“That's a lot of textbooks,” Dipper eyed Bill's stack of books. “How much homework do you have for the second day of class?”

“Enough,” Bill responded, beginning to work. Dipper eyed the stack of dangerously tall books, ready to fall down upon their owner's hands at any moment. Bill's commitment to working was inspiring, at the very least. He finished his food and got to his feet, gathering his things.

“See you.” Dipper said, cautiously.

“Later, Pine Tree.” Bill responded, not bothering to look up. It was kind of impressive to see Bill working so hard. It was a little odd that he chose to work in the cafeteria and not the library, but Bill had always been an odd guy.

Dipper searched every shelf in the library until finally they closed and kicked him out. Dipper walked back to his dorm, hands in his pockets. I looked for three hours... I really need to work on my own studies... He knit his brows, walking quickly towards the dorms. I can't believe it wasn't anywhere to be seen. His thoughts began to wander towards Bill. I wonder why Bill has so many books? I only have like, 5, but he must have had like, 9.

The teen entered his dorm room, noticing his roommate was nowhere around. Exhausted, Dipper tucked into bed, deciding to get some sleep instead of staying up until the wee hours of the morning. He had some time tomorrow to check the library. He wouldn't run into Bill tomorrow, since he didn't have a class with him. Dipper frowned, moodily rolling over and fluffing his pillow. He tried to push thoughts of Bill out of his mind. Why am I thinking about that jerk? Forget him.

Dipper finished looking through the library, before heading to the cafeteria for lunch. He got a tray, going through the hot lunch line. Dipper jumped as he felt a hand on his shoulder.

“Hey, Pine Tree... I think I might've found the girl you're looking for...” Bill waved a tiny glass tube in his face and Dipper whirled.

“Where did you find that?” His eyes widened, looking Bill in the face. Bill was smirking, face painted an annoying level of smug.
“Well, I checked out a book on codes and it was tucked into the spine... wanna break it together and see what's inside?” Bill asked, waggling his eyebrows.

“Yeah!” Dipper's eyes were wide, voice high-pitched and cracking with excitement. He was nearly bouncing on his feet to see the tube. “I can't believe you found something...”

“You're so cute when you're excited. Meet me at my table, kid.” Bill headed toward the seating area, and Dipper finished getting his food, hustling over to Bill's table.

“Okay, okay, hurry up, I want to see.” Dipper almost whined, staring at the glass tube in Bill's fingers.

“Alright alright, don't rush me.” Bill chortled. He walked over to the trashcan, snapping the tube in half and removed the tiny paper. He walked back over to Dipper, unrolling the scrap of paper, lying it flat on the table.

Porcine

“Huh, that's weird...” Dipper wrinkled his nose. “That's the code?”

“Looks like it. If you wanna give me the code again, I'll decode it.” Bill crossed his ankles, looking up at Dipper.

“What, you don't still have it?” Dipper furrowed his brows. He could have sworn that Bill had kept it for himself as well.

“No, I gave it back to you, good faith and all.” Bill adjusted his eyepatch, and Dipper saw a faint hint of a scar beneath it. “So, the code? Chop chop.”

Dipper removed the tube from his backpack, removing the paper and passing it to Bill. Bill set to work, and Dipper watched him with fascination. Bill started by making a chart and... Dipper stared with wide eyes. Bill tore through the code with a speed and skill that was barely human. Dipper had only gotten to through two-thirds of his lunch when Bill set his pencil side, looking pleased with himself.

“Okay, kid. Here's the code.” Bill pushed the paper towards him.

*The path will lead you to Cipher Two Take the path from the Garden through the woods but be sure to make an unscheduled stop*

“What the heck does that mean?” Dipper wrinkled his nose. The code made so little sense that he almost preferred the complicated string of letters and numbers. “They mean the school garden? There are some woods over by there, right?”

“It's likely...” Bill crossed his arms, looking just as confused as Dipper did..

“I can't believe you solved it that quickly, it's unbelievable.” Dipper said, the awe breaking through, lining his voice. “It's almost inhuman.”
“Yeah well, growing up like I did, you get good at it...” Bill murmured. “You get pretty good at it... this one's not bad. It took me twelve hours to solve the code to the fridge once...”

“The code to the fridge?” Dipper asked, baffled.

“Yeah. You know, my mom's a Freemason, and my dad's Illuminati, so... they wanted me to be skilled at-”

“This again? You really like messing with me, don't you?” Dipper questioned, annoyed.

“I TOLD you, kid, I'm not messing with you,” Bill frowned, brows knit. “My mother is a Freemason and my father is Illuminati.”

“You're serious?” Dipper repeated, baffled. Was it really possible that, for once, Bill wasn't just messing with him? Were his parents seriously part of a secret society? Granted, that would make sense of some of Bill's more unusual traits.

“Yes.” Bill frowned. “They were never home... They always left cryptic codes and ciphers for me to solve, that increased in difficulty as I got better at them. They would lock up the fridge, toilet, my bedroom...”

“I'm so sorry.” Dipper responded, eyes wide as he set his food down. “What did... what would you do?”

“I solved them.” Bill put his books away and zipper his bookbag closed. “Whenever you're done eating, we can go to the garden.” Dipper took another bite of his food, chewing slowly.

“Yeah, sure... give me a few minutes.” Bill was quiet, resting his chin on the back of his hand. Dipper felt a little unnerved at the sudden silence. He could hear the scrape of silverware on his styrofoam bowl and Bill's soft breathing. With each moment, it became louder than all the chatter around them. He didn't think he'd ever heard Bill be quiet this long aside from in class. Dipper stood, taking his tray over to the trash, dumping his trash in and putting his tray away. He went back and grabbed his backpack.

“All ready. Let's get going.”
Chapter 5

Bill and Dipper walked slowly across the quad, heading towards the garden area mentioned in the cipher. Dipper was keenly aware of every step that Bill made and his soft breathing that stretched between them as they walked. Dipper was nervous, and he wasn’t sure why. It was odd, and he tried to calm his nerves with a soft assurance that there was nothing to be afraid of. Maybe it had something to do with the awkward conversation they’d had in the cafeteria, or maybe it was something else, something he couldn’t identify. All Dipper knew was that he felt keenly aware of Bill’s presence next to him.

The sky was slightly overcast, and it was a nice cool day. The silence stretched between them as they remained quiet for an undetermined amount of time until finally Bill broke the silence.

“No need to be so serious, Pine Tree. We're going to solve a cipher, not dig up a dead body.” Bill told him with a smirk. He pushed some stray strands of hair out of his face, before shoving his hands back into his pockets.

“You're the one who's being serious.” Dipper growled.

“Nah... I was lying back in the cafeteria...” Bill murmured, glancing up at the sky before sliding his gaze over to Dipper. “It's all-”

“I don't believe you.” Dipper snapped, cutting him off. “Anyway, what do you think unscheduled stop means?” Bill hummed, rolling with the new topic of conversation.

“I'm guessing it means that we need to stop at some point on the path to find the next cipher... but who knows! Sometimes people get really pretentious when they do ciphers, so maybe they're just trying to sound smarter than they are.” Bill shrugged.

“Could be...” Dipper paused, scratching his nose before sliding his hands into his pockets. It had gotten chilly outside. “But this seems like some higher level stuff... I mean, the keyword was in a glass vial.”

“Hmm... solid point, I suppose.” Bill looked forward, as the garden came into view. “But those glass vials aren't expensive to buy.”

“I guess so...” Dipper was silent, staring up at the darkening sky.

“Y'know, you're extra cute when you're serious.” Bill told him. He sounded honest, but Dipper didn’t trust him.

“Would you cut that out already?” Dipper snapped, looking away from Bill. His cheeks burned lightly. Bill was crazy good at making him flustered. “Your games are really getting annoying.”

“If you say so.” Bill walked through the garden, glancing at the flowers. He pointed at a deviating path. “Dirt path leading into the woods, the cipher is probably hidden in there.”

“Okay,” Dipper was eager to get to the second cipher. He entered the woods, walking fast. “I wonder what exactly we're looking for.” He murmured, looking all around him.

“I'm not sure either.” Bill responded. “Hopefully we see it and know.”

They continued walking, checking the underbrush and holes in trees. They were halfway through the
path when all of a sudden the ground gave way underneath them, dirt crumbling. Bill grabbed Dipper, pulling him close as they dropped straight down, Dipper screaming the whole way through.

Dipper cracked his arm against a rock as he tumbled down, and he let out a loud yelp of pain. They hit the bottom, Dipper landing on something soft, Bill letting out a loud grunt as Dipper landed heavily on top of him. Dipper started rocking back and forth, eyes wide. “I- what- what happened?”

“Someone dug a trap for us...” Bill muttered, his voice cracking in pain. Dipper whirled, finding that Bill was underneath him. “I- I'm so- aa-” he gripped his sleeve. “My- my arm... my arm hurts...” Dipper whimpered. “... I- did, are you hurt? I landed on you. Why did...”

“I'm fine, kid, are you okay? I can't really see you,” Bill narrowed his eye, trying to see in the darkness. “What's wrong?”

“My arm hurts. We're so deep...” Dipper looked up. “What happened? Did the society leader do this?”

“No way, it's too big of a liability.” Bill also looked up, at the endless wall of dirt wall climbing up over their heads, leading to a canopy of green leaves overhead. “... I grabbed you when we fell and... what happened?”

“Why did you do that?” Dipper whimpered around his own pain. “I hit something on the way- a rock. I'm... it's wet. Is it bleeding?” Bill leaned really close, looking at Dipper's arm.

“It doesn't look broken or bleeding. It might just be the dirt you're feeling.”

“How are you so calm?” Dipper demanded.

“Hey. Take a deep breath. Contact your sister. Tell her where we are.”

“How do I do that?” Dipper demanded, anger and panic in his voice. “Sibling ESP?”

“You have a cell phone, right?” Bill looked at him, deadpan. Dipper narrowed his eyes. He felt a little stupid, but he removed his phone from his pocket.

“I'll try. I don't know if I have signal. I think she's in class.”

“Just try.” Bill said, patiently. Dipper sent the message, and looked up at Bill.

“It sent. I- sorry. I'm panicked... I... my arm...” He put his phone away. “It went through.”

“Great, now we just hang out down here until Mabel comes to get us.” Bill looked up. “It's kind of neat to know what it'll look like when we die...” he joked, and Dipper took a shallow breath.

“Please don't make jokes like that,” Dipper muttered. He turned around to face Bill, shivering. “I don't... I'm freaking out.”

Bill sat forward, wincing around his bruises. He unzipped his hoodie, and put it around Dipper's shoulders. “You have to stay calm.” He said, voice ever patient. His yellow vest shone even in the darkness, and Dipper realized he'd never seen Bill without his hoodie on. “Just take it easy, Pine-mmf.” Bill was cut off as Dipper flung himself at him, kissing him deeply and hungrily. His hand clung at Bill's vest. Bill pushed him away, startled. “Woah! Woah! Hey, did you hit your head?” He demanded. He started feeling the back of Dipper's head, furrowing his eyebrows in concern.

“No! L-look, it helps with... it helps with the pain,” Dipper said, flustered, his cheeks red. “I figured
this out when – well, never mind, just...” Bill listened patiently, brows knit.

“I really don't get it.” Dipper leaned toward him, nuzzling his nose against Bill's. Bill put his hand on the back of Dipper's head gently, pulling him close for another kiss. This one was slower and more intricate. Bill pulled away for a moment. “But if it's what you want, Pine Tree, I'll be happy to oblige.” Bill murmured, his voice husky.

The tone Bill used sent chills up Dipper's arms. He continued kissing him, feeling the heat from Bill's body soaking into his skin, the firm pressure of Bill's hands on his head and waist, only pausing to catch his breath. Bill lightly nipped at Dipper's neck, playfully.

“Heh... You're a regular veteran at this,” Bill murmured.

“Well, it's not my first trip around the block,” Dipper closed his eyes, reveling in the feeling and rush of pleasure from Bill's administrations, voice thick with pleasure. Dipper lifted Bill's head, drawing him into another passionate make-out session, his working hand getting a little explorational.

Bill broke the kiss, watching Dipper pant for breath. “Don't start something I'm not going to finish, Pine Tree.” Bill murmured, stroking Dipper's cheek.

“What do you mean?” Dipper responded breathlessly, hand on Bill's shoulder.

“I mean, I'm not going to fuck you in this hole, so we'd better take it easy.” Bill murmured in Dipper's ear. “We'd better wind it down a little.”

Dipper looked into Bill's face, expression glazed, before turning his head to lick Bill's finger, glove and all, not breaking his gaze. Bill grinned from ear to ear, the expression a little dark.

“You minx,” he murmured.

“Pain's manageable...” Dipper murmured.

“You drive me insane,” Bill shook his head, hands resting on Dipper's waist, lips turned up at the corners. “You know that? Using me for pain management...” Dipper leaned in, brushing their lips across each other, relishing in the thrill he got from the feeling of kissing a man he used to hate. The taste and feel of intimacy topped the pain in his arm, making it easier to cope with it. Bill hummed to himself softly.

“Shame I'm taking advantage of you like this.” He kissed Dipper, nibbling at his bottom lip. Dipper moaned softly, closing his eyes. Bill tilted his head to the side, shoving his tongue in and wrestling another moan from Dipper. The twin was gripping Bill's vest so tight that his fingers were turning white.

“- bro? BRO?” Dipper jolted, sitting up away from Bill, his hand clutching a fistful of Bill's vest, Bill looked up toward the sky, hands still around Dipper's waist.

“Mabel!” He shouted. “Be careful, okay? If you fall down here too, we're going to be in trouble!” He scrambled to his feet, moving back and forth across the small space, clutching Bill's jacket around his shoulders. Bill slowly stood up, brushing the dirt off of him. He winced as he straightened up.

“Bro! There you are!” Mabel leaned over the hole. “Woah, this is a pretty deep hole. I'm going to get you out of!” Bill gripped Dipper around the knees, heaving him upwards. Dipper let out a short scream as he was pushed up toward the edge of the hole. Mabel grabbed Dipper's hand, pulling him up. Dipper sighed as he scrambled out of the hole. He turned around and looked down at Bill, who was calmly awaiting rescue.
“We've got to get Bill out of there somehow.” He peered down at Bill, trying to think of a way to get him out.

“I've got a rope,” Mabel held it up triumphantly. “See, there's even knots in it! Girl scouts finally paid off.” She tied the rope to a nearby tree before tossing it down into the hole. Bill carefully climbed out, bracing his feet against the side of the wall. When he had gotten out of the hole he stood up and dusted himself off.

“Thanks, Mabel. Big help.”

“No problem! What were you two doing out here anyway?” Mabel questioned. Dipper's eyes widened as pain shot through his arm again.

“Aah- uh, Ma-Mabel. I think I need to go to the doctor...” Dipper told her, clutching his arm to his chest in a ricocheting pain.

“What, what happened?” Mabel turned towards him, eyes wide in concern.

“There's something wrong with my arm.” Dipper whimpered, his pain coming back in nauseating waves. Mabel wrapped an arm around Dipper, careful of his arm.

“We'll see you later Bill.” Mabel told him, and her eyes narrowed as Bill met her gaze.

Dipper was leaving the hospital with his arm in a sling, inspecting the label of a prescription for pain medicine in his other hand. Mabel looked at him curiously.

“Hey, Dip. Not to be weird, but where'd you get the jacket?” Dipper frowned. He realized he was still wearing Bill's jacket. His eyes widened, and he made a noise of surprise. “Ah! It's Bill's... I guess I grabbed it on my way out. It's really lucky Bill was there. I was really freaking out. I don't know what I would've done.”

“It's lucky you didn't hurt your arm more seriously. It's just a bone bruise... you could have broken it.” Mabel pointed out. “What the heck though, what were you guys doing all the way out there? Why was that pit in the middle of the path?”

“I don't know...” Dipper muttered, clutching the jacket. I know I should be thinking of that... but... I can't believe I did that! Why the heck did I... oh man. Bill will never let me live that down! I practically tried to swallow his tongue. He could hear Bill's rough voice saying, “Well, I'm not gonna fuck you in this hole,” and the color rose to Dipper's face. That was really, really... ugh, I can't think about this. I really can't.

Dipper stayed silent the whole way back to the dorm, fingers digging into the cotton hoodie. When Mabel dropped him off at his dorm, he tossed Bill's jacket onto his bed. He pulled his shirt off and climbed into bed.

The hoodie had landed next to his pillow, and Dipper was surprised at how good it smelled. He almost regretted that he would have to take it to the dorm laundry room tomorrow and get it cleaned up. But it was filthy after its adventure down in the ground... for now, it smelled strongly of Bill. Inhaling deep, Dipper decided that it wasn’t a bad smell. After a few moments, Dipper felt himself get a little bothered. There was something weird about smelling Bill’s scent while he lay in bed, so he tossed the hoodie onto the floor and rolled away from it, closing his eyes.
Dipper stood in front of his usual seat next to Bill, unable to sit down. His fingers were frozen, clutching Bill’s hoodie in his hand, trying not to wrinkle it. His nerves were set on edge when it came to the subject of having to actually interact with Bill after the other day.

“Hey, um, I accidentally grabbed your coat when I left the other day,” Dipper muttered, holding it out to Bill, who was stretched out in his usual seat. “I washed it for you, I hope that’s okay.”

Bill glanced at him with a flat expression, hands resting on his lap. He was wearing his yellow vest and tie, as usual, but this time he was wearing a long sleeve shirt. He turned his head away form Dipper and rested his chin in his hand, making a point as to not look at him.

“Thanks.” Bill took the hoodie and set it in his lap. He was like a statue, unmoving and uncaring. “Here.” He reached into his pocket and held out a little scroll of paper to Dipper.

“Woah, you found it! Thanks!” Dipper took the waxed paper, sitting down in his seat. Bill was making him uncomfortable with the sudden switch in his attitude towards the teenage genius. Bill continued sitting with his elbow on the table, leaning as far away from Dipper as he could. He looked angry, the way he sat with his back stiff and the unpleasant, blank look he stared at the other side of the classroom. If Dipper hadn’t been sitting so close to him, he might of mistaken him as bored. He never sat so quietly, smiled so little or leaned away from Dipper with so much disgust. Dipper chose to let it go instead of pursuing it. Surely Bill would go back his normal, annoying self soon. He unrolled the piece of paper one handed, and there was only a black dot on it. Dipper looked baffled, and he looked at it really closely.

“It’s like... A tiny picture.”

“Magnifying glass.” Bill spoke up. “You should get one if you don’t have one.”

“Oh, yeah, good idea. I’ll go get one after class.” Dipper nodded. “Where was it?”

“Tree.” Bill told him curtly.

“O-oh...” Dipper rolled the paper back up, pocketing the scroll. Bill was definitely not acting right. Was it because Dipper had assaulted him? Dipper wondered if he should apologize for how he had acted. It seemed apparent that it bothered Bill, so Dipper gathered his courage to try to apologize. “Hey, Bill. I-”

“Good morning, class.” The teacher strolled in, cutting off any conversation Dipper was about to have. He resolved to talk to Bill about it after class, focusing instead on his work.

The class period was unbelievably slow, each minute ticking by like an hour. Once the teacher finally dismissed them, Dipper watched Bill pack his books up in silence. He was never this quiet.

“Hey- Bill.” Dipper caught Bill outside of the classroom. Bill made a soft noise of acknowledgement, not looking at him.

“I wanted to... apologize for how I acted...” Dipper muttered, flustered. Bill glanced up at him, curiously. “I... uh, I was in a lot of pain, and... I really... I shouldn't have taken advantage of you like that, just because-”
“Forget it, Pine Tree,” Bill's tone was oddly harsh and Dipper frowned.

“What do you mean? I'm trying to apologize!” Bill pulled his backpack onto his shoulder, holding his freshly laundered hoodie in his other hand. Dipper frowned, noticing just how tightly Bill was scrunching it up in his hand.

“Good job. I suppose you want a medal.” He glanced over his shoulder, heading out of the lecture hall, leaving Dipper baffled.

“What the heck was that?” Dipper asked, frustrated. “What did I say?” He headed to his next class, and the next one after that, thinking about that conversation all day. Even through lunch with Mabel, he was unusually quiet, unsettled by Bill’s painfully rude behavior.

“What's going on, bro-bro? Got somethin' on your mind?” Mabel asked.

“Yeah...” Dipper muttered. “I just... I accidentally did something to upset someone, and they got really mad at me... But when I went to apologize about it, they just got more mad. What do you do in that situation?” Dipper asked, ruffling his hair.

“Hmm. Are you sure you apologized about the right thing?” Mabel questioned, waving her spoon around. Mashed potatoes flew off the end of her spoon, dotting the table. “Because when my friends apologize to me about something I'm not mad about, over something I am upset about, it upsets me.”

“That can't be. I don't know what else he could be mad about.” Dipper knit his brows, thinking seriously about what else he could have done. Everything had been fine. He hadn't even imagined Bill would be upset when he saw him again. He dropped his fork and it clattered on the table. “Ah-sorry. I'm not good at using my left hand.” Mabel snickered at him and went back to eating.

Back in his dorm, Dipper pinned down the tiny paper, pulling out his magnifying glass. He looked at the small picture, copying down the code he found there. This one was simple morse code, short and sweet. Dipper wrote it all down, and set to translating it. Life was considerably more difficult one handed. Once he had it translated, he sat back and looked at his work.

```
.-- .... .- / - .... / --.. . - ... / .... --. ... / -- .. . --. .. .... ...
```

Where the glass hangs overhead.

Dipper set his pencil down, looking at his horrific writing, crawling across the page messily from using his left hand.

“Ugh, it's so hard to not use my right hand.” He rubbed his neck. I better show this to Bill. I wonder if he's in the library. His phone dinged cheerfully at him, and he checked to see that he had received a message from Mabel and he checked it without hesitation. Mabel was inviting him to dinner, so he responded back with a short agreement and took the paper with him.

The younger Pines twin met Mabel at the entrance and they loaded up their trays with all kinds of junk from the various lines, going to take a seat.
“Hey, there are my friends!” Mabel waved. “Want to go sit with them, Dip?”

“Uh-” Dipper scanned the cafeteria. Sure enough, Bill was sitting at his usual table, surrounded by textbooks, and he had a small plate with what looked like a cold-line sandwich on it. He seemed to be focused on what he was reading. “Yeah, sure.” He smiled at Mabel.

“Okay, cool, come meet everyone. Remember your promise!” Mabel led him over to the table. “Hey,” she waved.

“Hey, May-May!” One girl grinned excitedly, her halo of curly hair bouncing with her movements. “Is this Dipper?”

“Yup! This is my bro, Dipper!” Mabel introduced. “Dipper, this is Terra, Mary, Susan, and Liam. Terra is a fashion major, Mary is into art. Susan is majoring in chemistry and Liam is into writing. He's really good at it! All my friends are really good at everything they do!” Mabel pointed to each one in turn. Liam seemed flustered, fidgeting with his food, tucking his long hair behind his ear.

“Nice to meet you guys. Anyone who's a friend of my sister is a friend of mine.” Dipper said brightly. He shot a brief look at Bill, and then smiled at the table. “Sorry, I've got to do something really quick, and I'll be right back.”

“Sure thing.” Mabel settled down to her seat, and Dipper crossed the room, pushing the paper toward Bill. He glanced at it before glancing back down at his textbook.

“Yeah? Why are you showing me this?” Bill murmured. “You solved it, Pine Tree. Good work.” He turned the page.

“Well, you gave it to me, it was unsealed, so...” Dipper was unusually flustered. “I figured- you know...” He was at a loss for words.

“Thanks.” Bill picked up his sandwich in a gloved hand, taking a bite. “You're too nice.”

“Y-yeah. Well... I'm gonna go back now.” Dipper lingered a moment.

“Yup. See ya.” Bill told him, turning a page in his book.

Dipper moved back to the table, taking a seat in between Mabel and Terra. He was across from Liam, and Dipper gave a smile to the group. “Sorry about that. He's a friend of mine. I had to do something.”

“Study notes?” Liam asked, giving him a little smile.

“Yeah, we have history together.” Dipper took a bite of his food. “... class. History class. That came out weird.” Liam giggled. Dipper glanced over at everyone else, who seemed to be making small glances their direction. “Geez, everyone's really quiet.”

“Sorry, Dip, I was just thinking about my dress,” Mabel grinned at him, and he knew that she was definitely not thinking about her dress. He narrowed his eyes at her.

“Oh, you too?” Terra gushed. “Ugh, I don't know what I'm going to do at all!”

“My plans are almost finished, I could probably help you out if you wanted,” Mabel offered. “I checked out this great book...”

The girls started chattering and Dipper picked over his food, but his eyes kept glancing up at Liam.
His hair was fairly long, down to the nape of his neck, and slightly curly, glowing honey brown in the overhead lights. He had long eyelashes and delicate hands as he picked over his food. The list included a healthy amount of pasta, along with two small pieces of chicken, and a tall glass of milk.

“Do you always eat so healthy?” Dipper asked, as he took careful bites of cereal, trying not to look like a pig. *He's pretty cute. Geez, Mabel would kill me.*

“Oh, no, I'm trying to bulk up.” Liam was flustered over the question. “I spend a lot of time in the gym trying to... you know... change my figure a little...?” He gestured nervously. “It's really helped.”

“That's great. I've been meaning to go to the gym,” Dipper murmured, ruffling his hair. “But, uh, I never make it. Maybe we could go together sometime. I could use a figure change myself.” Mabel's eyes drifted over to Dipper, and he avoided meeting her eyes.

“Yeah! I'd- I'd like that.” Liam blushed, picking at his chicken with his fork. “I usually go late in the evenings... um, around seven. I hit the school gym, it's really nice.”

“Yeah, definitely... so you write?” Dipper asked. Liam nodded, embarrassed. “That's cool. I've kind of thought about it... I'd like to try, but I'm not sure if it's something that I can do.”

“Oh, I think you'd be good at it! From what I've heard from Mabel... You'd be great. I, um, my specialty is lgbt, with an emphasis on trans-men leading characters... I feel like there's really not enough of those.” He murmured, voice low. “You- you know what I mean?”

“Yeah, I could see that.” Dipper nodded. “I'd like to read something you write sometime.”

“Of course, I'd be super flattered if you would.” Liam glanced up, brows knitting together, and then his eyes widening in a calm sort of horror.

Dipper felt a light tap on his shoulder and he turned. Gloved fingers tilted his chin up and he met Bill’s eye, about to ask what the man wanted. Bill leaned over him and pressed his lips against Dipper's, drawing him into a deep kiss. His tongue pressed past Dipper's lips as he cradled the younger man’s face, making sure to keep him where he was. The kiss that lasted long enough for everyone to see, and he finished it with a light, hungry nibble on Dipper's lower lip, drawing a low moan out of the teen. Dipper stared up at him with a dumbfounded, glazed look in his eyes.

“Payback for the way you left me last time.” Bill smirked, sliding his finger up Dipper's chin slowly until his hand left the slack jaw. Bill left the cafeteria, leaving Dipper sitting at the table with all Mabel's friends. Color poured into his cheeks from embarrassment and shame. Dipper hung his head, stabbing at his food trying to avoid everyone's gaze desperately.

“I've... uh, I've... got to go. I... yeah, lot of homework, and- sorry, uh...” He grabbed his tray and power-walked to the trashcan, dumping his tray into it. Without further ado he was taking off for his dorm, unable to meet anyone's stunned expression, not even his sister’s.
Chapter 7

Dipper sat in his room, locks of hair gripped between sweaty fingers. It was so frustrating. He couldn’t believe that happened. Bill just grabbed him by the chin, kissed him passionately in front of all his sister’s friends and said some... ridiculous... thing that would make them all think something completely- well, make them think something right but- he groaned, pressing his forehead against the table. He wasn’t in a relationship with Bill and that’s what they were going to think. Due to this, he was frantically ignoring his phone going crazy beside him. Manning up, Dipper took in a deep breath, picking up his phone. Thirteen messages flashed at him, and they were all from his twin sister. Hesitantly, he opened them.

Dipper started with the first message.

Woah bro what was that about

seriously

bro

are you ignoring me

are you dating bill

that was a pretty deep kiss.

What did he mean

dipper I need to know

it's v important.

Dip

dipping sauce

?????

Dipper tapped his fingers on the desk for a moment before he decided to call Mabel, his head returning to the desk, pressed against it in shame. Mabel picked up on a half ring.

“Bro . Bro . What the heck was that about ? What was up?” she asked. Her speech was frantic and spilling over itself.

“Okay, so...” Dipper winced, trying to find a way to explain to Mabel what happened. “You know... when we were down in that hole?” There was an intake of breath on the other end.

“Oh my god. What did you guys do down there that I could have walked over on? I could have walked into .” Mabel seemed to be losing her mind on the other end of the phone.
“Mabel, you can’t walk into a hole. And nothing! Just... made out. Heavily.” Dipper winced as he said the words, checking the door to make sure his roommate wasn’t there. “And... I kissed him because... the pain was bad and I wanted... painkillers... euphoria? You know how...”

“Dipper, you made out with Bill, your worst enemy from our childhood, because... “ Mabel paused. “I don't get it.”

“He didn't get it either. It did work, though...” Dipper said, sheepishly.

“So now what? Clearly he thinks it's something more serious.” Mabel told him, back on track.

“Mm... I don't know.” Dipper said, feebly. “... he's good at it.”

“Sounded like it,” Mabel offered, clearly amused.

“God. I kind of want to die. In front of all your friends. The whole cafeteria.” He breathed.

“You moaned, Dip. In front of everyone. It's not hard to imagine why he might have a different idea.” his sister told him, and he heard her spin in her chair.

“Please, Mabel, I'm already embarrassed.”

“Well, I can't help you.” Mabel shook her head. “But you ought to clear up... that. With him.”

“Yeah... I... hey, it's Monday.” Dipper frowned.

“Yeah, it is. Why?”

“Well... nothing. Sorry. I'm gonna let you go. I need to crawl into a hole.”

“Okay, good luck.”

Dipper hung up, and he decided to check the library for Bill, knowing he would probably be out until the meeting tonight.

Bill was sitting at a table, surrounded by texts – as usual – when Dipper approached him.

“Um...” Dipper rubbed his shoulder awkwardly. “Hey.” Bill glanced up, smirking.

“Hi, Pine Tree. How'd the rest of your meal go?” he asked nonchalantly.

“I... uh.” He rubbed his arm. “I... left.”

“Your boyfriend lose interest?” Bill questioned, amused.

“I don't know! He's not my boyfriend, he's just a really cute guy...” Dipper fidgeted. “I... look. That was... not. I just. I really did just... I was...”

“You're trying to tell me that it meant nothing and you were just looking to use me to give you a prolonged adrenaline rush so that you could get past your pain.” Bill stared into Dipper's face, expression deadpan. “Which I could believe... but is that really true?” Dipper fidgeted, looking down.

“... I... well. Yeah. I shouldn't have used you.” Dipper whispered.
“If it was just for pain, why were you so into it in the cafeteria?” Bill went on, raising an eyebrow in question.

“You're... really good at kissing,” Dipper's voice turned husky, as he thought about it. “I...”

“Am into me.” Bill raised an eyebrow. “Right? It's not that you don't like guys, right? ”

“No!” Dipper's eyes widened. “No... I... yeah. I... I am attracted to you. That's not a lie...” he muttered, embarrassed. “But... it's not... probably... going to...”

“Why not?” Bill asked, curiously. Dipper’s ears were bright red at this point. “Have a seat, Pine Tree. Let's discuss this like proper adults.” Dipper was getting more and more flustered as he went on.

“Bill, it's not gonna work.”

“Sit.” Bill reached across the table, patting it. Dipper took a seat across from Bill.

“Okay. It's not going to work because we're just too different. You're a sarcastic jerk who never takes anything seriously, and... well...”

“You're a floundering genius who knows exactly what he wants out of life?” Bill questioned sarcastically, and Dipper flinched.

“You're just being mean now,” Dipper muttered, rubbing his arm.

“Kid, I'm taking 27 credit hours so that I can get through all my core classes in three semesters so I can transfer to Harvard and pursue a law degree. Not to mention get through college a year earlier than all these other sorry saps. I'm not sure what makes you think I don't take anything serious.” Bill glanced around at all the books that surrounded him. “At the very least, I'm serious about this.”

“Woah.” Dipper's eyes widened. “That's insane. So you... want to be... a lawyer?”

“Politician.” Bill grinned from ear to ear. “Think about it, kid. Politicians get to get away with anything... private jets, mansions, do nothing all day, bribes and success all day long, and all they need to do is throw the plebeians a bone once in awhile, and they get to keep their position.”

Dipper shook his head, not wanting to show his surprise.

“Wow... that's... disgusting.”

“Isn't it? My life is gonna be GLORIOUS.” Bill grinned from ear to ear. “And maybe, if I'm just slimy enough, just convincing enough, just a big enough dirt bag, I can become president. Then I really can get away with about anything.”

“I've never heard a more disgusting series of life goals... sorry, but...”

“You know what else is disgusting?” Bill tilted his head, resting his chin on the backs of his gloved hands. “When I met you, I wondered what was wrong with me. No one explained to me what it meant to want to be so... close, to someone who's the same gender as you... I didn't know it just happened. I didn't know it was okay. I had no parents around to explain to me that it was okay.”

Dipper's eyes widened and he fell silent, startled by the truths Bill was dropping so easily.

“I...”
“So I was scared. I bullied and threatened you and tormented you all summer, and I was glad to see you go. … Years later, I found out that there's absolutely nothing wrong with what I felt…” Dipper blushed. “It happens. Often. Easily.” Bill turned to his textbook, flipping a few pages. “You know, I really was upset when I found that out. I felt like I missed out on something.” Dipper avoided looking at Bill, his hand fidgeting on the tabletop, other hand in a sling.

“Oh?…”

Bill hummed, looking over his book. “Yeah. So... why again won't we work?”

“I…” Dipper was at a loss for words. “Um...” he bit his lip. “Well, because…”

“Our accidental drop into that hole was a dream come true, the culmination of everything I've dreamed in the last 5 years... because I was never able to get you out of my head.” Bill watched Dipper. “As I grew older, the thoughts grew less innocent, more...” Bill gestured, his hand moving in a circle. “And then you apologized about it, and told me it meant nothing.” He put his hand back under his chin.

Dipper couldn’t even raise his eyes from the table.

“I... need some more time to think about this. It’s so much information.”

“Isn’t it, kid?” Bill questioned. “See you at the SS meeting?”

“SS- oh yeah.” Dipper was silent. “I’ll see you there.”

Dipper headed slowly back to his room, thinking about some of the stuff Bill had said, including the hole. “But if that's what you want, Pine Tree, I'll be happy to oblige.” Bill had worked so hard to make sure he was okay, comfortable, in minimal pain... he'd cushioned Dipper's fall and had even made sure Dipper was in the proper state of mind to make the decision he needed to make before letting himself go. Dipper groaned and put his face in his good hand. Bill was way too serious about it for Dipper to mess around... Dipper would have to put a lot of thought into it before making any kind of a decision.

“Mabel, it's a really, really, big problem.” Dipper whispered into his phone. “I really, really want him.”

“Dipper, what happened? You had better not do anything crazy. What happened?” Mabel asked, voice coming through the phone sleepily.

“I talked to him. I told him it was a bad idea.” Dipper paused, unable to find the words... “I did. Let the record show I told him we should not be together. He told me he's taking twenty-seven credit hours... so he's at least that serious... and... he's liked me ever since we first met but he believed it was this sick, wrong thing and... he... he found out later it wasn't wrong and the hole thing was the culmination of his dreams and he really wants me and I don't know what to do.” Dipper was urgently trying to get through to the half-asleep Mabel.

“What do you mean the whole thing?” Mabel was frowning, Dipper could hear it in his voice. “You're talking too fast, Dipping Sauce.” she yawned.

“The falling down the hole thing.” Dipper stressed. “Where I started kissing him, it was a dream come true. He... he really likes me, and...” Dipper croaked, his voice dropping low. “And I want to.”
“Then I think you ought to go for it.” Mabel told him.

“What?” Dipper asked, now confused. Mabel was rarely this enthusiastic about Dipper's love life. “You do?”

“Of course. He really seems like he likes you. And you seem really into him. Why not? Go out with Bill.” Mabel was awake now, excitement lining her voice. “I like it. Just maybe tell him to stop making out with you in public.” Mabel paused. “Or not. I mean, if you’re okay with that kind of intimacy in public—” Dipper cut her off.

“--okay! I'll... I'll tell him.” Dipper fidgeted. “Thanks.”

“No problem, bro-bro. See you later.” Mabel told him, and he could hear the gears turning in her head already.

“Night.” Dipper told her, turning his phone off. “God help me.” he murmured, shaking his head.
Dipper showed up at the quad, looking around. Everyone was standing around, looking jittery.

“Hi, Dipper,” Lyra said. Her smile reached her eyes and voice. Today she donned an oversized scarf shining with rainbow colors. Even with the muted light of the quad, it lit up the area around her. “You seem in a good mood.” Lyra teased, circling him like a vulture.

“Thanks.” Dipper looked around. “How are you guys doing?”

“Ugh, not so well, you know. This whole cipher thing... tough,” Wilson muttered, adjusting his letter jacket. “I found one, but...” he brushed some dirt off his pocket. “I can’t really solve it.”

“What? I did too.” Theresa piped up from her place in front of the statue, her yellow shoes reflected the dim light of the courtyard. She kicked her foot, wagging her shoe. “Sounds like a lot of ciphers.”

“I haven’t even found one yet.” The voice came from inside the neverending darkness of a hoodied head. What did the guy’s face even looked like under there? There had to be some reason that he never saw him with his hoodie down.

“No way.” Lyra frowned. “So, which one of us has the final one?”

“I found one too.” Dipper’s eyes widened, looking around the group. “Wow... I wonder how many ciphers there are?” The boy in the hoodie was silent. His hands were stuffed inside his pockets. He was sitting on top of the statue, next to Theresa.

“Hey, where's the other ass-bag?”

“Um, I'm not sure. Bill said he'd be here...” Dipper scratched at the back of his neck.

“Dipper, what happened to your arm?” Lyra asked, breaking the line of conversation. She was leaning against the statue, standing next to Theresa.

“Oh! Hey. Uh, I need to warn you to be careful.” Dipper looked at his arm. “Someone dug a trap along the path for one of the ciphers. Bill and I fell straight down into it.” The group all turned to face him. “I nearly broke my arm... someone is trying to spoil the game by placing traps.”

“Holy shit.” Lyra whispered, and the entire group shared a look. “I didn’t sign up for this kind of shit.” Wilson nodded, hunching his shoulders.

“I’m not in this fucking game to die,” he agreed in a low grunt, meeting eyes with Dipper. “The ciphers are difficult, people are laying traps. I already have a heavy course load on top of football. I can’t risk hurting myself.”

“We’re going to have to be extra careful.” Theresa murmured, looking up at Wilson through her lashes.

Bill came walking up, his backpack hanging off of his shoulder. Dipper walked up to him, sliding a hand on his shoulder. He was suddenly irked by how much taller Bill was then him.
“Hey, bend down a second.” Dipper told him.

“Well, that's an odd request,” Bill responded, but that didn’t stop him bending down so he and Dipper were eye level.

“Hey, I've thought about it... I want to try to go out with you... okay?” Dipper whispered.

“What changed your mind?” Bill asked. Dipper almost wanted to punch him for the amused, smug grin that he could hear in his voice. Instead, Dipper pulled away.

“You.” Dipper told him. And maybe Mabel. A little bit. He returned to the group just in time for, the voice to speak up again, full of static and command. It startled the living daylights out of them.

“Welcome to the second meeting of the society. There will only be three more of these before you have to give up the code or your pride. Are you all doing well?” the voice sounded almost amused, and Dipper had a feeling that whoever was behind the microphone knew exactly how well they were doing.

“How many ciphers are there?” Dipper asked.

“There are too many for you to count. Many of them lead to strings of ciphers that will eventually lead you to one of six main ciphers with the final codeword inscribed on them.” the voice paused for what Dipper assumed to be a breath. “The most important thing is to find the codeword first…” A small laugh. “There's all kinds of different paths you can take.”

“Hmm... got it.” Dipper frowned. He definitely didn’t get it. At all. “Also... When we went to follow our cipher, there was a great pit dug... it was at least five feet deep. We think it was a trap for us, but they didn't take the cipher. I nearly broke my arm.”

“When I find out who is sabotaging the game, I will have them punished.” Dipper glanced at Bill, noticing the smirk that had settled on his face. Bill looked over and Dipper made a face at him, getting a snort from the blonde haired man. What did Bill think was so funny?

“Thank you.” Dipper told the voice. “Hopefully the attacks will stop but I'm afraid that's just the beginning.”

“Proceed with caution.” The voice said. “I can answer any questions you have now... if you have none, you're welcome to go.” Bill put a hand on Dipper's shoulder.

“Dipper and I are going to head out.” He smirked at the shorter man. “Right?”

“U-uh, yeah.” Dipper muttered, ducking his head. Bill led Dipper towards the sidewalk. “Do you want to walk to our dorms together?” he asked.

“I'm not in the dorms,” Bill smirked. “I'll walk you to your room, though, Pine Tree.”

“Where do you stay?” Dipper asked, curiously.

“I have my own apartment.” Bill tucked his hands into his hoodie pockets, walking next to Dipper. “You'll have to come over sometime.” he suggested. Dipper nodded, too embarrassed to say anything. He reached over, sticking his free hand into Bill's pocket. He grabbed the taller man's hand in his own. Bill turned his head towards Dipper, trying to see what was going on, as it was on his blind side. He relaxed the moment he realized it was just Dipper, smiling as he laced their fingers together, eyes fixed forward.
“I admire that you know exactly what you want to do already.” Dipper murmured.

“Don’t worry, Pine Tree, you’ll figure it out.” Bill smirked. “Even if you don’t.” He ducked his head, turning towards Dipper, smirking playfully. “You can just stay by my side. Senator Bill will take good care of his boyfriend.” Dipper let out an offended huff.

“You always have to tease me.” Dipper whined, shoving his shoulder against him Bill chuckled returning the favor.

“Maybe but that doesn’t make it less true.” He walked him to his dorm room, and they stopped outside of it. Bill’s hands rose and gently cupped Dipper’s face, thumbs resting below his ears. The hands tilted Dipper’s head back and Bill captured his lips. The kiss was deep and Dipper’s knees weakened beneath him. Bill pulled away, but not before ending the kiss with a lower-lip nibble; which just so happened to be Dipper’s favorite way to end a kiss. The action drew a low, wanton groan from his lips. Bill tapped his lips with his gloved fingers and pulled away. “Good night, Pine Tree.”

Dipper nodded his head, unable to keep the blush from rising to his face.

“Night.” He muttered, turning to unlock his door. “Hey, tomorrow... do you want to check out the, uh, art museum?” He fidgeted with the lock. “Second cipher?”

“Sure. I have an hour break between classes around one, if that’s okay.” Bill nodded.

“Is that lunch?” Dipper questioned. He didn’t want to rob Bill of the only break he had during the day.

“I can grab something to go.” Bill shrugged nonchalantly.

“Sure, then, one is fine.” Dipper disappeared into his room.

The next afternoon, he arrived before Bill, so he took a seat on one of the benches. His mind was a jumble of seeing Bill, his new story, the cipher... he took a few moments to sort through and attempt to prioritize his thoughts. He felt someone sit down next to him and he startled, but he realized it was Lyra and he relaxed.

“Hey! How are you?”

“Hey. Okay. Look, we need to talk about your friend Bill,” she said in a quiet voice.

“You- we do? What happened?” Dipper knit his eyebrows.

“Okay, well, nothing. But that guy is super suspicious.” Lyra tucked her silver hair behind her ear, bracelets clinking together on her wrists. Dipper focused in on them, wondering why she wore so damn many. He zoned out for a moment, thinking about if they were fake, her skin would definitely be a copper-rust green underneath. “-He was totally unphased by the punishment we’d have to go through - kind of like he wouldn’t have to go through it, and, he’s always late to the meetings, like... We’re all really sure he either made the sabotage or he is our SS leader.” Dipper looked up, catching her words with wide eyes.

“There’s no way he made the sabotage – we fell down that hole together.” Dipper told her.

“I don’t know then, maybe he wanted something out of being down that hole with you, but we’ve all
been discussing it. You seemed close to him so we thought maybe there's something you might know about it.” Lyra murmured. “If you find anything that seems to imply Bill was involved in them, we need to tell our leader. Okay? Can you do that?”

“Sure. I'll do that. But I won't find anything, because he wouldn't do that.” Dipper told her, tone going flat in annoyance. He glanced up, spotting Bill walking his way, clutching a sandwich in his gloved fingers, and he smiled, waving. “Hey, Bill.”

“Sorry I'm late, Pine Tree. Had to grab something from the cafeteria.” Bill took a bite of his sandwich, standing next to the bench.

“No problem, Lyra was just getting ready to go.” Dipper stood up, walking over to Bill. “See you, Lyra.” He and Bill walked towards the art museum, and Bill finished his sandwich just before they went inside.

“So what did you and Grandma talk about, anyway?” Bill asked, trying to sound like he wasn’t interested. Dipper giggled in surprise.

“You call her Grandma?”

“Sure,” Bill eyed a water fountain. “I mean, she looks the part.”

“Well, we just talked about the ciphers. It seems like she's having... a hard time.” Dipper lied. Bill reached out, ruffling Dipper's hair. Dipper blushed, ducking his head. “What?”

“Nothing, Pine Tree.” Bill murmured. “Okay, so we need to find a ceiling installation. Where the glass hangs overhead.”

“You know, I didn't think about it but it could mean a glass ceiling, too.” Dipper muttered, embarrassed.

“Got it. Glass ceiling or ceiling installation. This could probably mean chandeliers too...” Bill murmured. “… or any light bulb.” he rubbed his eye in frustration.

“Hopefully our first impression was the right impression.” Dipper nodded.

They began searching, starting with the bottom floor. No glass ceiling installations, but Dipper spent the hour with Bill pointing out random art pieces, mocking each one that he saw. Dipper giggled as Bill continued to be an ass about each art piece, until finally they got through the whole first floor and it was no luck. Bill checked a watch on his wrist.

“Well... I have class in about fifteen minutes... we can keep searching for ten or start heading back. Your call.” Bill shrugged.

“Well... let's go ahead and head back. We'll check the second floor whenever you get a chance.” Dipper looked toward the stairs. “I don't want to take up too much of your free time.” Bill hummed in thought, before reaching over and taking Dipper's hand. He walked them out of the building.

“Don't worry about it too much. Right now, classes are still a little slow so I have some free time.”Dipper nodded, embarrassed, squeezing Bill's hand, feeling the smoothness of the leather in between his fingers and on his palms. He loved it.

“Just make sure to tell me to shove off if I ever start taking up too much of your time.”

“Will do, Pine Tree.” Bill gave Dipper a grin, moving towards him to give him a light peck on the
cheek, beginning to walk to class, hand in hand.
Chapter 9

“I can’t believe we didn’t find anything.” Dipper said glumly, sitting at the lunch table next to Bill. He was rotating his cup in his hand, swirling the orange juice in his cup as he did so.

“Well, we can’t get discouraged.” Bill told him cheerfully. “Just because we weren't right the first time doesn't mean we won't find it.” Bill finished off the liquid in his water bottle, twisting the cap back on and setting it aside. He turned back to face the piles of texts that surrounded him. “Worst comes to worst, we'll look for a different series of ciphers and try again.”

“Want me to refill that for you?” Dipper pointed at the empty bottle, and Bill followed Dipper's finger with his gaze before smiling a little.

“Nah. I only drink water that I bring from home. Thanks though.” He tucked the bottle away in his backpack. “Besides, I have an extra one.” He removed it from his bag, setting it on the table.

“You only drink water that you bring from home?” Dipper questioned.

“Can't be too careful.” Bill teased, leaning back in his chair. “Lunches and stuff too.”

“Wow.” Dipper murmured. He didn’t know that Bill was so paranoid.

“I've got a special water filter at home, otherwise I couldn't even drink at home.” Bill rested his elbows on the table. Dipper rose an eyebrow at Bill, more curious than judgemental. “I know, my family is super weird... you should see the incinerator toilet.”

“Now you're just joking with me,” Dipper huffed, crossing his arms over his chest.

“You wish.” Bill replied with a smirk. Something caught his eye and he jerked his head up. “Hey, there's your sister.”

“Dip, hey!” Mabel took a seat next to him, setting her tray down. “Bill.” She nodded at him.


“I know. I wasn't going to leave even if I was interrupting something.” Mabel winked at Dipper. “Dipper, I wanted to ask you about something.” She reached into her purse, pulling out three squares of fabric. They were all varying shades of yellow, silken and pinched between calloused fingers as they were held out for inspection. “What do you think about these?” Dipper looked at them, attempting to come up with something intelligent to respond with.

“I... don't know. They're fabric. The colors look good.” he told her.

“Feel them,” Mabel encouraged. “Which one would you like sliding across your body?” Dipper winced at her wording, while Bill waggled his eyebrows across the table. Ignoring him, he reached out to feel the squares. They all felt relatively the same to him—so he pointed at the one in the middle. “That one's the best, I guess. What are you getting at?”

“Thanks! I wasn't sure which to make my dress out of.” She put away her scraps and started eating. “Oh boy, the cafeteria food looks absolutely radioactive today.” Mabel hummed cheerfully.
“If they’re anything like your sweaters, I personally can’t wait to see what you come up with.” he folded his hands in front of him. “Are you going to knit your dress?” Bill smirked.

“Oh, no, but you know, I’m thinking about knitting you a new eyepatch. Your current one doesn’t describe you well enough. Doesn’t make enough of a statement.” Mabel held up her hands. “New one will be bright green with the word ‘jerk’ written across it in black.”

“Perfect. I’ll wear it everywhere.” Bill agreed cheerfully with a nod. This prompted a snort Mabel and she rolled her eyes, focusing the ceiling.

“I’m sure you will.”

“Just, you know. Not green, maybe. Green really doesn't work with me.” Bill bartered. “Yellow and green clash terribly, don’t you know.”

“Nope, it's going to be green.” Mabel picked up her hamburger, taking a large bite. “Bright green. Besides, nothing can clash as badly with your get-up as your secondhand personality.”

“Ah, well, can't win them all.” Bill sighed dramatically. Dipper watched them banter, resting his elbow on the table.

“Guys, take it easy, or they’re going to think that you’re dating instead.” Dipper teased. Bill flashed Dipper a grin, turning back to face Mabel.

“Seriously though, are you guys doing some kind of big fashion show for your dresses?”

“Yes!” Mabel shot up, eyes sparkling. “In the art hall! There's this gigantic crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling, right over top of the stage.” She sighed dreamily. “It's so pretty, Dip! You gotta check it out.”

“Oh! Yeah!” Dipper hoped he didn’t sound awkward with his outburst. “I'd like to see it! The Art Hall?” Dipper rose to his feet, his one hand resting on the table.

“Pine Tree, relax... the art hall's still going to be there.” Bill told him, unable to restrain a snicker. Dipper took a seat, blushing and he laughed awkwardly.

“Y-yeah, sorry... I just got excited.” he ruffled the back of hair.

“Really into glass chandeliers?” Bill raised an eyebrow, leaning even heavier on the table.

“No! N-never mind... it just sounded really cool.” Dipper said, sounding completely fake. Mabel gave him an odd look, already on his tail.

“I'm free Saturday morning if you want to check it out,” Bill murmured, voice going soft.

“Yeah, that sounds great.” Dipper nodded, emphatically.

“Ugh, so when's the wedding?” Mabel asked with a roll of her eyes.

“We're gonna have it next week. Right, honey?” Bill told Mabel, not looking up as he turned the page in his textbook.

“W- wh-? We're not getting married.” Dipper tripped over his own tongue, confused.
Bill chuckled. “Not yet.”

“Seriously though, bro, I'm happy for you. You finally found someone as smart as you are.” Mabel set her burger down, wiping her hands on a napkin, reaching for her drink.

“Aw, hey, is that a compliment? That's serious coming from you!” Bill beamed at her.

“Don't get a big ego,” Mabel pointed at him. “Dipper’s the cute one in this relationship.”

“Sure sure,” Bill waved her off. “I'll treasure that information forever.” Mabel rolled her eyes and picked up her burger again, going back to eating.

Dipper awoke to a loud knocking on his door. He stumbled to the door, opening it slowly.

“B-bill? Hey... sorry...” Dipper apologized in a mumbled yawn. “I accidentally overslept... You want to come in while I get dressed?” Bill eyed Dipper, up and down, smirking.

“Geez, Pine Tree. You're dressed thoroughly this morning.” Dipper looked down, realizing he was just in his boxers.

“Yeah... well... it happens. Come on in.” Dipper left the door open, going over to his dresser, pulling it open. He dug for a shirt and pair of pants that weren’t crazy wrinkled. He felt someone come up behind him and he stiffened. Bill wrapped his arms around Dipper’s chest, ducking his head to rest it on Dipper’s shoulder. Bill’s breath was warm as it ghosted across his neck, causing a soft shiver to run through him. Dipper stayed perfectly still, feeling Bill’s body heat reaching his naked back through his hoodie and gloves. Dipper's heart began to pound irrationally.

“Wh-what are you up to? My roommate is asleep. Over there.” Dipper hissed, and Bill chuckled.

“Nothing. I'm just glad to see you,” Bill murmured, fingers gently stroking the sensitive area above his hipbones. “Something wrong with that?”

“No. I'm glad to see you too.” Dipper's voice was low. “Let me get dressed, and then we'll go.”

“Sure.” Bill released Dipper and took a few steps back, taking a seat on Dipper's bed. He crossed his ankles. “Roommate, huh?” Bill looked towards him. “Glad I don't have anything to worry about.”

“What does that mean?” Dipper asked with a blush, pulling his pants on and buttoning them up.

“Well, if it were Mabel's friend, I'd be a little concerned... you seemed interested in him. But I don't feel like I need to worry about that.” He gestured with a thumb. “He doesn't look like your type.”

“You don't need to worry about anyone,” Dipper protested. “I'm... not going to do anything stupid.”

“Hey... Pines,” Chad muttered. “You guys are being pretty loud. Can you move it outside?”

The hair on Dipper's neck rose and he stammered, unable to speak correctly. “I- I'm sorry! We'll move outside, right away!”

“Eh... no big. You and your boyfriend can hang but just be quiet, okay?” Chad muttered. “I'm a light sleeper. So no fucking.”

“S-sure-” Dipper threw his shoes on, threw his hat on and bolted out the door. Bill chuckled and followed him out, taking long strides to catch up, taking Dipper's hand. His gloved fingers were
warm and Dipper leaned towards him.

“Pine Tree, after the Art Hall, want to come see my place?” Bill asked. Dipper looked up at Bill, eyes wide in shock.

“You want me to come over?” Dipper asked, and Bill nodded.

“Yeah! But... I'd really appreciate it if I could get you to... wear gloves.” Bill rubbed the back of his neck, looking around the hall. “It's not that I'm a germ nut or anything. I'd just like it if you didn't leave fingerprints at my place either.”

“How come?” Dipper questioned. “Jealous fiance with a degree in forensic science?” Bill rolled his eyes.

“Well... let's say someone broke in, looking for me. They're not going to get any of my fingerprints, but if they get some of yours... they'll know you're close to me, and you could be in danger, and... plus... I don't want my parents to know about you just yet.” Bill paused. “…They'll ruin it.”

“Ruin what?” Dipper questioned, baffled.

“Your tentative feelings about me,” Bill said, matter-of-factly. “My parents are completely out of it! I don't want you to meet them until we've been going out at least a year.”

“L-long term plans.” Dipper murmured, his cheeks growing red. His chest tightened—he really liked the sound of that. He coughed, shaking the feeling. They hadn't even been together that long.

“I've been dreaming about this for a long time,” Bill murmured in his ear. Dipper startled, and slammed his head into Bill's chin. Bill flinched, jerking back at the pain.

“Ow! Pine Tree, what was that about?” He held his other hand to his chin, frowning. “You're on my blind side. That came out of nowhere.”

“Sorry! So sorry! I just...” Dipper's face was crimson, and his heart was pounding so fast he could hardly breathe. “You just really startled me.” He looked up at Bill, squeezing his hand.

“I was saying, I've been dreaming about this a long time... of course I'm going to have some long term plans.” Bill muttered, still a little annoyed about getting hit. “Right?”

“Yeah.” Dipper fell silent, reflecting on Bill's words.

“Well, anyway...” Bill trailed off, holding the door open for Dipper. “Hopefully the cipher's out there. Because we are wasting a prime date location on this.”

“How come you're not worried about the punishment?” Dipper questioned. “You keep helping me.”

“Well, it's a school club so they can't do anything too bad to us. Bill shrugged, swinging Dipper's hand in his like a pendulum. “Or would you prefer I make this a proper competition?” Bill grinned from ear to ear, turning to face Dipper.

“W-well, it's too late for that now,” Dipper muttered, embarrassed. “I would have liked to...”

“It's not too late.” Bill stated, matter of factly. “I can join in.”

“Maybe the next competition.” Dipper resolved, looking up at Bill. “Is that okay? I'd really like to pit my brain against yours. See who’s smarter, you know?”
“I wouldn’t say it’s about being smarter. I was raised in ciphers, every one had something riding on it...” Bill looked around the yard, before looking back at Dipper. “Ciphers are probably not the best tool for a competition between us.”

“Oh, yeah.” Dipper hummed. “We’ll have to figure something else out.” Dipper became lost in thought as they walked towards the Art Hall. He was delved so far into his own world that Bill had to physically stop him, yanking Dipper to a stop. He tilted his chin up and surprised him with a gentle kiss. Dipper easily gave in, unable to stop himself from falling into it. He pulled away, looking around for anyone who might have seen it. “What was that for?” He demanded, embarrassed.

“You were thinking about something else.” Bill pursed his lips, looking into Dipper’s eyes. He continued walking. Dipper followed along, flustered. “I’m more important.”

“Geez, Bill. You’re gonna give me a heart attack.”

“You’d better get used to it.” Bill smirked. They entered the art hall and walked to the area underneath the chandelier, looking around.

“We’ll split up and search the area.” Dipper nodded, feeling an awful lot like a spy. They searched the entire room and Dipper let out a small whoop when he found a small piece of paper taped covertly to the floor of the center stage directly under the chandelier. “I found it!” He shouted as he came over towards Bill, waving his paper proudly.

“See, I found it!” Dipper seemed excited about his discovery and he didn’t catch the admiration Bill’s face as Dipper flipped over the paper. “Looks like a really complicated cipher.” Bill looked up at him, giving a small, tight smile.

“Is it? Want to take it back to my house and we can look it over?”

“Sounds good.” Dipper beamed, tucking the paper away. “I want to try solving this one, okay?”

“Sure.” Bill grinned at him. Dipper ran to the center of the catwalk, throwing his arms out.

“Geez, look at that chandelier.” He looked up at it, causing Bill to follow his line of sight upwards.

“Get down from there.” Bill stuffed his hands in his pocket, awkwardly.

“Why?” Dipper tilted his head. “Come up here with me.” He grinned, looking at Bill. “We can re-enact the kiss scene from Romeo and Juliet.” Bill’s brows knit together. His lips pursed in thought, moving slightly on his feet.

“No. I don’t know, I just don’t like it.” Bill muttered. “Get down.” Dipper turned and ran up the stage before walking down the catwalk in a goofy manner. Once he got to the end, he heard a loud clinking, almost a ringing similar to the sound of windchimes. Dipper’s heart slowed to a near stop as he saw the chandelier coming towards him at an amazing speed. He felt a hand grab the waist of his pants, yanking him forward and he fell off the stage, into Bill’s arms – again – as the chandelier exploded onto the ground in a chorus of shattering glass, like falling dominoes.

Complete and total silence filled the building until Dipper remembered how to breathe again.
Hyperventilate was more specific. Dipper was hyperventilating, and Bill sat up. His arms latched around him like a cage, drawing the twin close to his chest.

“Hey, Dipper.” he murmured, stroking his hair. “You okay? You're okay.” Bill shook him softly and Dipper looked up at Bill, breath coming to him in aggressive puffs of air. Ms. Lions came racing in, head on the swivel. Her hair was an absolute mess, as if she'd stuck it out of the window of a moving car.

“What happened in here? Are you two alright?” Miss Lions asked. “Goodness, the chandelier. What did you children do?”

“We didn't do anything!” Bill scowled. “That thing almost fell on my boyfriend!” He pointed a finger towards the ceiling and the faculty member was red in the face, nearly purple with anger and fear. Miss Lions’ eyes darted to the ceiling as she pulled out her cellphone.

“You're kidding me! That thing was bolted to the ceiling.” She said in wonder. “You two, stay here- - I'm going to call the dean.” she whistled softly, stepping around the mess and heading into the hallway behind the stage.

“Pine Tree, you okay?” Bill repeated, trying to bring him back to reality. Dipper started to get his breathing under control, and he took a deep, gulping breath.

“Y-yeah, th-thanks to... you. That thing nearly crushed me!” Dipper gasped and Bill looked past Dipper's shoulder, staring at the destruction behind them.

“Yeah. It nearly did.” The chandelier was wider than the catwalk, spilling out over the sides, the boards on the floor cracked from the weight slamming against it. “You would have been pulverized. Pine Tree jam.”

“How did you know something was going to happen?” Dipper asked, letting out a shudder.

“I didn't.” Bill muttered. “I just was taught to be super cautious... My parents would have hit me if I'd even considered standing underneath that death trap.”

“I'm going to take that literally.”

“Good idea.” Bill looked back at Dipper. “It was literal.” He ran his hands across Dipper's face. Dipper couldn’t fathom the amount of concern in Bill’s eyes. “What is it with you and trouble?”

“If I knew, I would stop.” Dipper said, weakly. Miss Lions returned from the back, brandishing a six-point wrench.

“Look what I found! Some miscreant must of unscrewed the damn thing.” she waggled it at them. “If you ask me, it’s probably those damn basketball players. They act as if they’re in God’s own graces. The dean said to keep you two here.”

“Oh, you wouldn’t want to do that,” Bill smiled, the smile scaring Dipper in a way he didn’t quite get. “Pro tip though... quit touching that thing.” he jerked his head at the tool. “Fingerprints.”

“Oh really? Why would you know that?” She questioned, not even bothering to be careful.

“I know how to as well.” Dipper managed.

“He should do it. He's the victim here.”
After a few minutes, and Dipper borrowing some fine dust he'd found backstage, he managed to find three or four fingerprints, some of them smudged quite seriously. After comparing them to his and the teacher's, Dipper looked up. “The only fingerprints here are yours, ma’am.”

“You caught me. Endangering students is part of the fun.” Miss Lions joked. “I love finding ways to cost me my pension.” Other teachers began to file in, followed by the dean.

“Well, haven't these two boys been through enough? Get their names, student id numbers and send them on their way.” The head of the art department suggested. “It's not like we can't get ahold of them if we find something on the cameras.”

“There are cameras?” Bill pursed his lips.

“You two can go on home if you’d like.” She continued. “We’ll call you in the morning if we find anything out about this.” Dipper nodded, mute, tugging on Bill’s hand. Bill chuckled softly and followed Dipper out of the building, unaware of how tightly Dipper was clutching his other hand around the cipher in his pocket.
Once they were outside, Dipper fell against Bill, gripping his shirt. His fingers twisted in the soft cloth.

“I really just can't.” Dipper whimpered.

“Can't what,” Bill questioned, looking down at him. “Stop nearly getting yourself killed?”

Dipper stretched up, standing on his toes and wrapping his arms around Bill's neck. He began kissing his lips hungrily, unable to control himself. Bill's eye widened, but he quickly relaxed, putting his arms around Dipper's waist, kissing him back. He broke the kiss moments later, licking his lips.

“Do you always immediately get handsy after nearly dying?” Bill questioned. “Is it just with me or anyone?”

“I don't know…” Dipper wrinkled his nose and pursed his lips.

“I'd better stick close to you then,” Bill murmured, looking forward. He started walking towards the parking lot, leading Dipper by the hand. He removed his key FOB from his pocket, unlocking his car. Dipper looked over the car approvingly.

“Nice, it's electric.”

“Yup. It's harder to trace recharges than it is gas fillups.” The two climbed into the vehicle. Bill started driving before pointing at the glovebox. “Open that.” Dipper opened it and a pair of gloves tumbled out. “Put those on. I don't want you to leave any fingerprints.”

“Got it.” Dipper pulled the glove onto his damaged hand first, and then his other hand, surprised at how well they fit. “They feel nice… this isn't the same size you wear, is it?”

“Your hands are a little smaller than mine, so I bought you a smaller sized glove. They fit alright?”

“Perfectly.” Dipper shut the glovebox. “Okay, so, what are the rules for your house?”

“I'm sorry there's going to be so many rules.” Bill apologized right off the bat. “Leave the gloves on, no matter what. If you have to go to the bathroom, you can remove one, but don't touch anything you can leave a print on... Try not to leave any hair. Make sure you dispose of all trash into the toilet, and stand back from the toilet when you flush because it will ignite.”

“You- you were serious about a fire toilet?” Dipper's eyes widened in shock. He didn’t think that actually existed.

“Yeah. Let's see... okay, if you drink out of anything, tip the liquid into your mouth.” Bill paused. “Aside from that... I'm going to refer to you as nothing else except Pine Tree. I'd like them not to get your name. Also, if anyone approaches you and tries to hug you or shake your hand, don't do it…” Bill paused. “That's not at my house, that's just period. … If you want to be with me, you'll have to be on your guard. I know this wasn't your choice, but…” Dipper reached out and grabbed the elbow of Bill's jacket, just holding it. Bill turned to look, baffled. When he questioned Dipper, Dipper murmured,

“It might not have been at first, but...” Bill turned his attention forward, towards the road, tapping his
fingers on the steering wheel, deep in thought. “I... I may not be as ‘serious’ as you, but I really do like you, and I really want to see how far this goes.” Bill was silent, continuing to think. They pulled up to an apartment building, and Bill put the car into park.

“Come on up.” He climbed out of the car, and Dipper followed him up the stairs.

Bill unlocked the door and ushered Dipper inside, shutting the door behind them. A thought occurred to Dipper as the door shut. He paled slightly. What if Bill wanted to have sex? The thought nearly caused Dipper to panic. He was definitely not even close to prepared for sex with Bill. He had nothing, not even a condom.

He pushed the thought away to survey the space he’d stepped into. A simple, clean coffee table sat in front of a modernized, tan couch. Across from the couch was an entertainment center with a TV and a satellite bar. A computer rested on a desk nearby and looking through the living room, he saw that there was a door leading to a small kitchen that was tidy and organized.

It looked extremely... un-lived in. Dipper got a bad feeling in his gut looking at the place but he smiled at Bill.

“This place is pretty nice.” Bill grabbed his shoulders and pushed him a step to the side, adjusting him into the corner left of the door. He took a step into Dipper's space, causing him to flinch slightly.


“I just want to kiss you, Pine Tree.”

Dipper blushed, looking away nervously.

“Sure.”

Bill glanced over his shoulder, then slipped a hand in Dipper's. He pressed his body against him. His other hand gripped Dipper's free one, causing Dipper to frown in confusion. “Huh? What are...”

Bill slipped his hand out of the gloves Dipper was holding with a wink. He brought a single finger to his lips, shushing the other man. Dipper's eyes widened as he watched Bill’s finger reach up, lightly shaking. His fingers softly rubbed across Dipper's cheeks, chuckling at the how the flesh heated underneath his fingertips. They traveled down his neck, tangling into Dipper's hair with a silent, intense reverence. He rolled the thick, curly hairs between his bare fingers.

Dipper felt the trail of those fingers back across his face, down his neck, and all the way down his chest. A warm heat began to pool in his stomach as they explored. His knees were shaking underneath him, despite the fact that Bill had done absolutely nothing.

Bill tipped his head forward, mouth connecting with Dipper’s for one deep, involved kiss; one that nearly caused Dipper to collapse to the floor in absolute rapture. Bill’s hands snaked back into the gloves Dipper was still holding, his mouth to Dipper's ear.

“The only thing I ever want to leave fingerprints on is you, Pine Tree.” He whispered in a hushed whisper. Dipper wasn't even sure if he heard it correctly but his eyes half-lidded in pleasure at the mere thought of it, his heart pounding. Well. Maybe they could just mess around a little…

Dipper reached up with his hand to touch Bill but Bill grabbed his hand before he could, pulling him further into the apartment. “The living room. Not much to see here. Kitchen's that way... I'll cook something before you leave.”
“O... okay,” Dipper cleared his throat, attempting some kind of normalcy. “... um, B-bill...?”

“Come here, check out the water purifier.” He pulled him into the kitchen and showed Dipper a huge machine on the counter. “Here you go...” He picked up a glass, moving it over to a tap on the machine, turning it. Water flowed out and Bill held it out. “Try it, kid!” Dipper was a little confused and more than a little bit flustered. Revenge for...? Surely not again... He took a drink of the water, pleasantly surprised.

“Wow it's...” Dipper knit his eyebrows. “Wow. I don't know what to... I know it's just water, but- It really...”

“There is absolutely nothing at all in this water.” Bill pointed at it. “Completely sterile, 100% nothing but water. Perfectly balanced PH, even.”

“You're going to spoil me on this super fancy water.” Dipper joked, and Bill lead him back outside and down the hallway.

“You deserve to be spoiled.” Bill murmured, before moving on. “There's my study. We'll go in there to work on the cipher, whenever you're ready...” Bill nodded.

“Mm-hmm,” Dipper face was still red, thinking about the kiss and the hot feel of Bill's fingertips across his face. Not paying attention, he stumbled into a doorframe. “Ouch!” He muttered, rubbing his nose. “Right into it.”

“Careful.” Bill pulled him inside the room, gesturing around. “Welcome to my bedroom. It's nothing particularly special.”

Dipper got up on his tiptoes, his hand on Bill's shoulder, pressing himself against Bill's back.

“The only space that felt remotely like you was the study.” he told Bill.

“That's my favorite room.” Bill admitted.

“Mm, Bill...” Dipper murmured, rolling back and forth on the balls of his feet, rubbing against Bill's shoulder, suddenly a little shy.

“Yeah? What is it, Pine Tree?” Bill turned to face him. “Something wrong?”

“Can... can we, you know, fool around... here?” Dipper managed, around biting his lower lip. Bill knit his brows, thinking about Dipper's question.

“Well, we'd need to use protection. To keep it off the covers and stuff... can't have your traces around, but...”

Dipper grabbed him by the collar, yanking him towards him. Bill’s mouth was slack initially, surprised by Dipper's enthusiasm. A half-step later, he was battling Dipper's tongue for dominance, the burning heat spilling into Dipper’s mouth. Bill took a step back, falling onto the bed, pulling Dipper into his lap. Dipper reached up with his one free hand, unzipping Bill's hoodie, attempting to slip it off his shoulder. Bill smirked, watching Dipper struggle.

“Having a hard time?” He slipped out of the other side, putting his arms on Dipper's waist. “How long do you have to wear that thing anyway?”

“A week or two. I can't believe I nearly died earlier,” Dipper murmured, rubbing Bill's jaw and cheek. “Again. You keep saving me. You're always there at exactly the right time. How do you do
“I’m not a good guy so don’t get the wrong idea.” Bill kissed Dipper's wrist, ever so gently nipping the skin. “Okay?”

Dipper's eyes glazed over, pupils dialating in pleasure. “Uh-huh. That's why you save me so much. Because you're such a bad guy.”

“If I were a good guy, I'd save you even if I didn't know you. I'm only saving you because you're my Pine Tree.” Bill raised his eye up to Dipper’s face, staring deep into his eyes.

Dipper moved in to kiss him. The heat from Bill's mouth pooled deep in Dipper's stomach, and Dipper couldn't hold back his moan when Bill nibbled on his lip, the sound drawing a definitive smirk from Bill.

“You sure do love biting, huh?” Bill smirked. He moved down to Dipper's neck, placing an open mouth kiss on it, running his rough tongue across the smooth skin. Dipper shivered as Bill blew on the spot, teasing him. “I'd like to leave a mark here.” Bill murmured. “Can I?”

“N-no, what would my sister think?” Dipper asked, flustered.

“What would shooting star think?” Bill questioned. “I'm sure she'd have an idea. She always does.”

“Please don’t.” Dipper moaned as Bill moved down to the area between his neck and shoulder.

“... okay,” Bill murmured into the skin, the vibration of his lips tickling Dipper, and making him squirm. “Since you don't want me to, I won't.” He blew on the spot and Dipper squirmed again.

“Bill, stop teasing me.”

Bill pulled Dipper close again, kissing him fast and hard. Knowing Bill was equally hot and hungry just made Dipper want it more and he pushed Bill down onto his back, lying down on top of him, not breaking the kiss, his nose sliding against Bill's cheek. Bill grunted softly into Dipper's mouth, the brunette barely able to hear it over the sound of his own heart pounding in his ears.

Every brush of Bill against him set him on fire, right to his core. The hands snaking up his arms sent tendrils of pleasure straight to his core, curling around Dipper’s very essence, and he never wanted the impassioned kiss to end. Finally needing to breathe, Dipper broke the kiss, panting heavily.

More than anything, the feel of Bill's fingers on his face was still there, burning hot. The thought that Dipper was the only thing that Bill had ever left his fingerprints on – the only thing he touched without fear of leaving a trace – was a powerful thought, and it left Dipper with a stronger impression of how attached the blonde was to him.

Bill looked up at Dipper, his hair spread out around him, eyepatch a little skewed. Dipper could just barely see the edges of a scar around the eyepatch, but mostly his gaze focused on Bill's lips, red and swollen, same as his. Dipper lowered his head to Bill's neck, breathing in his scent. It was oddly calming and exhilarating at the same time, a musky scent that was unlike anything Dipper had experienced before.

“... you're a little heavy, Pine Tree.”

Dipper made a face, struggling to sit up with one arm. “What?... oh, sorry.” He slid sideways, to where the bed was supporting some of his weight.
“Thanks.” Bill tangled their legs together, pulling their bodies flush against each other. “As much as I enjoyed that,” he nuzzled Dipper's face teasingly. “I like breathing too.” Dipper rubbed his crotch against Bill's leg, making a little noise that was similar to a whimper.

Dipper remembered with a start that he couldn't get too involved in this. If Bill wanted to have anal, Dipper was completely unprepared for it... and it would hurt. Dipper had nothing, not even a condom with him, so...

Dipper moaned when Bill kissed his neck again, rubbing their bodies together. “B-bill, hey- um,” he lightly pushed against Bill, red faced. “We should... um, not... go much further than this-” Not because Dipper didn't want to. While he struggled to explain, Bill spoke up.

“You think it's too soon, too?” Bill stroked Dipper's hair, gazing at his face. Dipper's stomach sank because definitely not but Bill continued on. “We shouldn't rush too much... I want to make sure you're completely into this-” Dipper's erection screamed that he was completely into it, but he held his tongue, nodding in displeasure. “Into... the idea of us. Is what I guess I mean. I dunno... you get it, right?” Bill asked.

“... absolutely,” Dipper murmured, but pained. “We don't... need to be in a rush.”

“Right,” Bill stroked Dipper's hair, his gloves gliding smoothly through it. “I didn't bring you here with that in mind... it just sort of... happened...” He pursed his lips. “I probably shouldn't have pushed so hard. Sorry about that.”

Dipper's stomach twisted a little from guilt. It wasn't like that. Dipper was the one who had pushed... But Bill was – Dipper nuzzled him, trying to get him to stop apologizing. “Hey. No, it's okay, I was the one who - “

Bill was already pulling back, going to sit up. Dipper scrambled to sit up, gripping his collar. “Bill, wait. Stop. I was the one pushing...” He muttered, flustered. “I... I want to but I know that... it's... too soon.”

Bill looked over at Dipper, before kissing his hand. “You don't have to make excuses for me, Pine Tree.” Bill met his eyes. “Okay?” He kissed Dipper's forehead, Dipper painfully remembering his erection he'd forced on himself. “Want to work on the cipher?”

“... umm...” Actually, Dipper really wanted to keep going with this, end up completely entangled in Bill's sheets, sweaty and – Dipper wondered what sex with Bill would even be like. As far as he knew, Bill... “Do you ever take your shirt off?” Dipper questioned, shyly.

“...Only in the shower,” Bill muttered.

“Oh...” Dipper was silent a moment. “Not even... when you sleep?” He asked again, hoping Bill would say something else.

“No...” Bill ruffled his blonde hair, brows knit. “Not even when I sleep. Or... have sex. Why?”

“Just curious.” Dipper murmured, flustered.

Dipper didn't really want to work on the cipher. He had other wishes. But he knew that he should. The thought led him to shower sex and he fantasized about it absently. He wondered if Bill wore gloves in the shower, but assumed he had to. Still though... the idea that he would be able to feel nearly every inch of the blonde's body against his was really nice.

It had never mattered before, but after spending so much time with Bill, someone who never had any
skin-on-skin contact, Dipper found himself completely attracted to the feel of skin against his skin, since with Bill, the only skin he came into contact with was Bill's face and neck... every brush of skin on skin was euphoric. He startled when he heard the snapping of fingers in front of his face.

“... Do you want to work on the cipher?” Bill repeated, baffled.

“Huh? Oh – uh, sure,” Dipper snapped back to earth, blushing crimson. “Sorry, I was... I was thinking about something.”

Bill smirked. “Well, it'd better be about me. I hate the idea of you getting lost in thought over someone or something other than me when you're with me.” He got to his feet, helping Dipper to his. He led Dipper by the hand to the study, Dipper deciding not to tell Bill he had been thinking about him. It was just too embarrassing.
Dipper shifted uncomfortably at his desk, drumming his fingers on the table. He was unsure if he should work on his homework or... He glanced over his shoulder. Behind him, Chad was lying on his own bed in his hoodie and pants – the same ones he'd been wearing for a few days now – and a book was open on his chest. Dipper couldn't make out the title of the book from the angle he could see at.

At Bill’s house that night, they’d worked on the cipher for a while, going through many different possibilities before they decided to quit for the night. Dipper’s mind hadn’t really been on the cipher then… he’d had some other things on his mind.

Now Dipper was working on something else. He ruffled his hair, pencil in his hand. Well, it didn't hurt to try... He put the pencil to the notebook and began to pen words.

Even though he's 19 years old, he's never removed his gloves to touch anything in his life – except for me. Dipper flushed. It sounded horribly like a diary entry, but he continued writing, touching on the tale of how it came about that his character had never touched anything, and on to their relationship... writing the whole thing out from start to finish until his mind quit spinning. He looked over what he'd written, embarrassed. To be honest, he really enjoyed getting it all out on paper... there was something about it. He continued writing, feeling a little embarrassed at how clearly he was writing about himself and Bill.

Dipper reassured himself as he wrote that it was okay to do that... He really wanted to give writing a serious shot, and this was the easiest way to get started. He wrote for a while, finding that the words came semi-easily. He wrote until finally he couldn't justify staying up any longer and he packed the notebook away into his backpack.

A voice cut through the air suddenly, startling Dipper. “Getting some sleep?”

“Yeah, it's pretty late,” Dipper flushed, forgetting Chad was still up.

“Were you working on an essay or something?” Chad asked, looking up from his book.

Dipper thought to himself a moment, trying to figure out how he was going to explain it to Chad... he wasn't working on an essay, he didn't want to lie... but at the same time...

“No, I... well, I thought I'd give writing a try. I've always wanted to try writing for fun,” Dipper murmured, rubbing his upper arm. “I've done some stuff for school and I liked it but... I just never got around to it.”

“That's cool.” Chad nodded, shutting his book. “I'm in a few English classes... I do a little writing but I'm not too good at it, not like that guy in my class. We do this thing where we'll pass papers from one person to the next, until eventually you get your own paper back with revisions and stuff... I always really enjoy reading his stuff.”

Dipper moved over to the bed, turning down the covers and stripping his clothes off, climbing into his bed. “Oh, I'm sure you're better than you think! What kind of stuff do you write?”

“Well, I used to like to write about, like, aliens and stuff...” Chad paused. “But lately, I've been thinking that historical fiction's pretty cool.”

“Oh – that's … a huge jump,” Dipper laughed, laying his head back on the pillow. He tried to think
of the possibility that he would ever make such a big genre jump and he wasn't sure he ever could. He supposed right now, he struggled to write any genre, much less jumping from one to the other. When Chad questioned what he was writing, Dipper wasn't sure what to say. “Oh... a story about...” Dipper struggled to explain it. “It's a gay romance, I guess...? I'm not sure. I just started writing words.” He rubbed the back of his neck.

“Oh, neat. The guy in my class does lgbt stuff, too.” Chad nodded. “That's cool. If you ever want someone to read it, let me know. I'll read it for you!”

“Uh – sure, if I stick with it that long,” Dipper managed, tripping embarrassingly over his own tongue. “Th-thanks.”

“No problem.” Chad turned back to his book.

“Uh – hey. What... what orientation are you? Or...” Dipper questioned.

Chad looked up, before wrinkling his nose. “What am I... I don't really know. I don't label, usually. I guess I'm just into specific people. I don't really like the idea of excluding someone because they're, you know, a girl, a guy, or anything in the middle. I don't know. Cute people. I'm into cute people.”

Dipper snickered, before nodding. “Got it. I'll remember that.”

“Thanks, man.” Chad looked down at his book, rubbing the cover. “You're gay?”

“Bi,” Dipper rolled over onto his side, looking up at Chad.

“Cool.” Chad nodded. “Dating the guy from this morning? He's kind of weird but seems cool. Congrats.”

“Thanks.” Dipper said, genuinely. “How about-?”

“Nah, I'm single right now.” Chad turned the page. “I kind of... have a little bit of an interest in the guy in my English class but since I don't even know what he looks like... you know?”

“He could be cute. Is his writing cute?”

“Super cute.”

“Well, there you go.” Dipper murmured. “He's probably cute.”

“Yeah... I'm gonna try to figure out who he is. I'll let you know what I find out.” Chad nodded.

“Good luck.” Dipper closed his eyes, beginning to get sleepy.

“Thanks...” Chad responded.

Dipper struggled into class on Monday, feeling exhausted. He'd written all weekend, and chatted with Chad about various things, and gotten all his homework done. He managed to get into his seat, looking rough. He'd stayed up way too late last night, working on the cipher and his writing, and... He startled when he felt a familiar yellow presence at his side. “Woah!”

“Mornin', kid!” Bill grinned from ear to ear, teeth glowing white in his mouth. “What're you up to?”

“You scared me!” Dipper managed, holding his hand to his chest. “I'm just a little tired, that's all...”
“Stay up too late? You ought to get your rest... it's hard to be a genius when you don't get enough sleep.” Bill grinned, settling into his seat, sticking his hands in his hoodie pockets.

“Oh... shut it.” Dipper muttered, cheeks glowing. He was still a little embarrassed over Saturday, and he couldn't get it out of his head. At least Bill was in a good mood. “You're in a really good mood today.”

“Me? Of course I am. I get to spend today with my favorite plant,” Bill grinned at Dipper. “I really missed you, Pine Tree!”

“... I was looking forward to seeing you too.” Dipper murmured into his desk, playing with his pencil.

“How’d your cracking go?” Bill made a breaking motion with his hands. “Excellently?”

“Well, I don't have it cracked yet... but I think it might be a bifid or trifid cipher.” Dipper glanced at Bill. “We weren't too serious about cracking it at your place, or I'm sure we would have.”

“I'm gonna leave the ciphers from here on to you. I want to see what you're made of.” Bill lightly punched Dipper's shoulder.

Dipper looked away, embarrassed. “Thanks... I'll do my best.”

“So is that why you were up all night?” Bill asked.

“... ye-yeah.” Dipper muttered, too embarrassed to tell Bill about his story that was actually more like real life. He was let off the hook when the teacher came in, and Bill leaned forward, paying attention to the teacher. Dipper relaxed, relieved, beginning to take notes.

At lunch, Dipper was picking over his food, thinking about the next scene in his story, and what he wanted himself and Bill to do next in the story. He was startled by another loud voice and he turned to see Chad, in a beanie and his typical hoodie, holding a lunch tray, giving him an easy smile. “Hey man! I usually don't run into you here,” He slid into the spot next to Dipper. “I'm eating at kind of a weird time though, I guess.”

“Yeah, I usually am here at this time.” Dipper nodded.

“Oh, cool. I guess I'll see you when my classes let out early, huh?” Chad started eating his salad with vigor, Dipper watching with curiosity.

“You always eat like that?” Dipper pointed.

“Well, yeah, I'm vegetarian,” Chad glanced at him. “I'm considering the switch to vegan, but I need to do some more research about it, so I can make sure I meet my nutritional requirements,” he scanned the room, curiously.

“Oh, that's cool.” Dipper nodded. “Can't fault you for that.”

“We have to watch out for our planet. No one else will.”

Dipper continued eating his hamburger, feeling a little guilty. “I probably should start eating a little healthier.” he muttered.

“Well, I'm not going to preach at you. Everyone has different reasons for different things. I just want
to make as little an impact as possible.”

“Oh- hey, one sec,” Dipper stood up, waving his arm. “Hey!”

“H-hey!” Liam, standing across the room with a full tray, spotted Dipper and made a beeline for him. He smiled a little, embarrassed. “H-hi... Dipper. Your friend... he's not here, today?” Liam looked around, uncomfortably, before sliding in across from Dipper.

“No, he's not. He had to work on his homework. He said he was gonna work from home, so he headed that way.” Dipper nodded.

“Oh, that's – well... good. Sorry. I don't like him very much.” Liam pursed his lips, rubbing his shoulder. He adjusted his tanktop, before beginning to pick at his potatoes with a fork. "He's a real ass."

“Hey! You're in my english class!” Chad pointed at Liam, brightening up. “Right? English 102, Ms. Goldblum, 1pm?”

“...yeeeesss...” Liam knit his eyebrows, studying Chad, trying to figure out who he was for sure. “Sorry, who are you?”

“I sit in the fourth row, a bunch of seats in.” Chad nodded.

“What sorts of stuff do you pass around?” Liam questioned, beginning to cut his chicken breast into strips.

“Uh, weird stuff. Actually.” Chad admitted. “My last one was a... uh...” He ducked his head, ruffling his hair. “A historical fiction. About.”

“The knight one?” Liam asked, his voice dry.

“Yes!” Chad nodded. “Yeah, that's it. It's... a little weird.”

“Ah- no... it's... a little... out there, but you know, it's well written,” Liam murmured, ducking his head. “You're pretty alright.”

“Well, thanks. What do you pass around?” Chad asked. Dipper monitored the two of them, wondering if they were hitting it off.

“I write lgbt fiction, primarily with trans lead characters. I feel like we need more representation in fiction...” Liam looked at Chad, his expression serious. “My last one was -”

“Oh! You wrote the piece about the scavenger hunt, right?” Chad straightened up, looking excited to hear of it. “Right?”

“I – uh, yes, that was me.”

“I absolutely loved that one. I read it a couple times, I couldn't even leave a comment on it.” Chad grinned. “I mean, I had tons of comments, but nothing constructive, just how much I loved everything!”

“Oh?... well, thank you. That's really nice of you to say.” Liam took a bite of his chicken breast, seeming a little embarrassed.

“No, really, it's not even just something to say. I always really enjoy when your pieces arrive at my desk. They're so well-written.” Chad expressed, turning back to his salad. “I'm a big fan.”
“Stop.” Liam blushed.

Dipper took a drink of his soda, watching with an amused expression at how well the two of them seemed to be getting along. He stayed silent, hoping the two of them would continue to get along as well as they were. Unfortunately, Liam defied his efforts.

“Uh – so, uh, Dipper,” Liam tried to derail the conversation by focusing on Dipper. “Have you made any progress towards writing?”

“I’ve started giving it a try but I don’t think I’m comfortable letting anyone read it yet...” Dipper tucked some hair behind his ear. “You know?”

“Oh, I understand. It’s hard to get to a place where you’re comfortable sharing your works,” Liam nodded. “But you’re so smart, I think you’ll get the hang of it.”

“Right now I’m... I’m basically just writing about stuff that’s actually happening to me. It’s just like recounting my life like a diary or journal...” Dipper poked at his food with his fork. “I want to get to where I can write about things that haven’t happened.”

“You might try writing about something that you really want to happen.” Liam offered. Dipper thought about something that he really wanted to happen and he went crimson, shaking his head. “Ah – well, uh, no – no one has to read it, you know. It’s just for... you, if you want.” Liam flushed also, the color travelling through his cheeks and down his neck. “It’s mostly just to get you to write stuff that you’re making up... but, if you don’t feel comfortable, I get it.”

“Go get it, Dip. Write that story.” Chad nodded.

Dipper nearly died of embarrassment as he continued to eat. “I... I’ll try it, but maybe with going to a different school or something.”

“Yeah, good idea.” Liam encouraged.

“Thanks, Liam.” Dipper gave him a smile. “How do you normally write stuff you’re making up?”

“Well, everyone does it differently. I normally just think of stuff I want to write and do it.” Liam nodded.

“I sometimes start with the genre and be like, ‘this one’ and then I pick the elements I want to go into it, and then start constructing the story around the rough framework I built in my head.” Chad gestured with his hands. “You know?”

“Everyone does it differently, yeah.” Liam nodded.

“I appreciate your help. I guess I’m just embarrassed about it.”

“Don’t worry about it, Dipper. I’m supporting you 100%, even if I never get to see it.” Liam encouraged, and Chad nodded.

“Yeah, me too.”

“Thanks again,” Dipper said, and he meant it.
Chapter 12

Dipper sat in his room, pencil hovering over the page. It was worth a try. He put the pencil to the page before blushing hard and looking around for someone. Yup, still no one. He tried to think about how he wanted to start it off… he ducked his head, realizing he really couldn't do it.

He pulled out the cipher, working on it. He finally hit it just right and started translating the text on the page, aggressively avoiding the issue of writing.

*History bleeds from mouths and walls bones stand as relics from a forgotten era the streets lie numbered while honest abe looks over the ruins of his once great country*

Dipper set his pencil down, rubbing his shoulder. Well, this cipher was creepy. Dipper started thinking about places that had a lot of history so he started making a list.

*Library*

*Old Buildings*

*Museums*

*Old people*

Dipper crossed out the last one, because it didn't work with the rest of the cipher. Or it did and Dipper was scared. One or the other. Bones stand as forgotten relics. Dipper thought that it had to be a museum. The streets were numbered – must be where the museum is. The last line left Dipper baffled. Maybe something outside the building, like a statue? Maybe the other street name was Lincoln?

He really wanted to take this to Bill, but he knew it would have to wait a few more days. He was a little disappointed that Bill had left right after his classes but he knew Bill needed to catch up on his schoolwork.

… nothing to do now. Dipper was left staring at his notebook, blushing all over again. The door swung open and Dipper spasmed in shame and surprise, before wondering why he was even embarrassed – he wasn't even writing.

“Hey,” Chad strolled over to his bed, throwing himself on it, staring up at the ceiling, his beanie half-cocked. “Dip. Man. I can't believe you're friends with him, that's so cool.”

“Yeah, he's my sister's friend.” Dipper nodded, smiling. He realized he hadn't seen Mabel today so he checked his phone. No new messages. He turned it off and back on, a little paranoid about if it was working correctly. He shot his sister a text asking what she was up to.

“That's neat. He's the guy I was telling you about.”
“Oh really?” Dipper murmured, not completely paying attention. “Was he cute to you?”

He decided to approach writing like Chad did. He started with a genre. Mystery popped into his head first, and then fighting monsters and stuff. He wrote that down. An idea came to Dipper so he began writing, and almost instantly it started pouring out of him like water from a busted dam. He started filling the page with words, and he just barely heard Chad speak.

“... incredibly cute.”

“You should go for it,” Dipper encouraged, not stopping in his writing. “Liam’s nice, I’m sure-”

“Oh – no, I couldn't possibly. I mean, he's way... you know. Up there. No, I couldn't even know how to approach someone that cute and talented. Nah. I think I'll just do my thing on the fourth row.” Chad opened his book, looking at the pages. “It's okay, really. I mean, I found out who he was, at least.”

“Well... if you're sure. I had an experience like that one summer. I was into this super cool girl... but she wasn't really into me. Our age gap was too big, you know? She was this cool teenager and it was a totally one-sided thing. But we ended up becoming great friends. We visit each other every summer.” Dipper turned the page, unable to stop. “She knew I liked her though.”

“Yeah, I think I'd rather just try to be friends with Liam instead.” Chad said, offhandedly. “It's cool.”

“Alright, I won't say anything.” Dipper continued writing. A buzz alerted him to his phone and he checked it, reading the text.

Sorry dip been working on this dress

think its going to kill me.

Sorry, sis. I know you can do it. I’m here for you if you need it!

Please. We have almost identical body types and i need someone to make this dress on

Hey! What are you saying? Dipper texted back, irked. He pocketed his phone and put away his notebook. “I'll be back, I'm going to help my sister.”

“Alright, see you.”

Dipper walked to Mabel's room, moving past all the giggling girls standing in the hallway to Mabel's room and he knocked at the door. Mabel flung the door open, pulling Dipper inside. “Hurry up, get undressed,” she pressed.

Dipper looked awkwardly at Mabel's roommate, who was sitting back cross legged on her bed, chewing on her gum, texting one-handed on her phone. “Now? With your roommate...?”

“Dip!” Mabel pressured.
“Ah – fine! Geez, Mabel.” Dipper stripped his shirt off, and Mabel attacked him with a bit of fabric.

“Hold that!”

Dipper stood still while Mabel pinned stuff to him, pinning the bodice of the dress around his sides, and attaching the sleeves at the top. He was blushing crimson, trying to ignore the fact that Mabel’s roommate was sitting on her bed, popping her gum and texting away. It was embarrassing to be half-naked next to her. After a minute, he remembered Mabel’s comment, and felt the need to defend himself.

“What do you mean we have identical body types?” Dipper pursed his lips, salty about the text.

“I mean our measurements are the exact same, practically. If you can wear it, I can wear it. I just need to accommodate for your slightly broader shoulders and couple extra inches, but aside from that, you have wide, feminine hips like mine and – oof -” Dipper accidentally elbowed Mabel, lips pursed tighter.

“Sorry, sis. Accident.”

Mabel eyed him suspiciously, but continued pinning stuff to him, stepping back to take a look at the dress so far. “It's not bad, for a bottom layer. It's inside out, of course.” She threw a couple stitches into the various pieces, just to hold them together, so she knew where they lined up on Dipper's body. “Oh my gosh, Dipper, did you hear about the chandelier?”

“Uh, maybe a little... what happened?” he questioned, having known a little too much about the chandelier, but he wondered what Mabel knew about it.

“Take your pants off, too. They're bunching up under the dress.” Mabel requested. “And, apparently someone went into the art hall early Saturday morning and went behind the stage and loosened the bolts holding up a hundred thousand dollar chandelier... it nearly fell on someone. They checked the security footage but they couldn't manage to catch whoever it was.”

“Oh... really?” Dipper removed his pants under the dress, tossing them aside. He cast an embarrassed glance at Mabel’s roommate, who still wasn’t looking up. Her popping was really getting on Dipper’s nerves, though. “Weird.”

“Weren't you and Bill going to the art hall?” Mabel questioned. “On Saturday? Did you see the chandelier?”

“Well... I, uh, was the person it almost fell on.” Dipper muttered.

“What? No way!” Mabel gasped, leaning back from Dipper, pausing in her dress pinning. “How come you didn't tell me?”

“Well, it would have worried you for no reason! I was okay. Bill saved me.” Dipper looked away from Mabel.

“Tell me everything!” Mabel said, eyes wide.

“W-well...” Dipper muttered, his tongue awkward in his mouth. “I went there with Bill to check out the chandelier. I started messing around on stage, and then... The chandelier started falling. Bill grabbed me and yanked me off stage as it crashed around me. It was terrifying... actually.”

“That Bill guy is kind of shady...” The girl on the bed muttered, not stopping in her texting. “That's eyepatch and glove guy, right? Yeah. He's so weird. It's like he's always up to something. Did you
meet him there?"

Dipper frowned at the intrusion into the conversation but let it slide. “No, he came and got me from my dorm room, and we walked there together... He's not shady. You don't even know him.” Her comments annoyed Dipper and he did his best not to move while Mabel worked carefully on her dress, finally cutting down the back to add her zipper.

“I've seen him in some of my classes. He's really greasy, almost like a con man. It's kind of hard to trust a guy like that.” The girl glanced up, her gum popping and rude comments causing Dipper’s eye to twitch. “I wonder if he couldn't have went and loosened them before he went to meet you. Like, what did they see on the camera, Mabes?”

Dipper was finding it hard not to march over to her and tell her everything on his mind, he was nearly choking with rage as he shook, fists clenching. She was wrong. Bill wasn’t like that. He wasn’t like that. Bill wasn’t… wouldn’t…

He had before.

Mabel was shaking her head, clearly a little uncomfortable. “Well, just a guy in a hoodie... I don't know the color.”

"Hmm, like his yellow one?" She went on.

Dipper was finally done with her nonsense. Whirling, he ground his teeth, managing to spit out, “I think if they had seen Bill on that camera, they would have known it was Bill!” Dipper turned to face the other girl, rage in his eyes. “How can you miss a guy with an eyepatch and bright blonde hair and gloves and how do you not know who that is?”

“Well, first, what's under the eyepatch, right?” She shrugged. “Could be nothing. Maybe he just wears the eyepatch. Second, they sell products to cover up hair color. Or even wigs. What if he was wearing a wig? Finally the gloves, like, that's not as weird if you get rid of the other things, who wants to leave fingerprints on a hundred thousand dollar item?”

“You don’t know anything!” Dipper said, angrily. “It wasn't Bill!” Dipper remembered that Bill had told him to get off the stage, repeatedly. I don't like it! He had said. Dipper deepened his resolve.

“Bill definitely didn't do it. I climbed up on stage and was messing around and Bill saw the chandelier falling. He pulled me off the stage! You don't know what you're talking about.”

Mabel’s roommate didn’t know Bill like he did. She didn’t know he was sensitive about his eyepatch, or that… Dipper’s stomach churned. If there was nothing under there, it could mean he was ‘sensitive’ because he didn’t want Dipper to know. Or … Dipper felt nauseated. It wouldn’t be the first time Bill had tried to kill him.

“Why were the two of you even messing around in there? I mean, geez, if you look at the guy, he's clearly suspicious, and I hope they catch him for it. Our fashion show is ruined now. The chandelier is gone, and the stage is all busted up. Our fashion show is going to look trashy.” The girl huffed.

Dipper fell silent and Mabel continued pinning pieces to Dipper. Noticing the doubt and concern well up in her brother’s eyes - a summer of torment wasn’t forgotten /so/ easily… she decided to speak up.

“Look, it's not Bill or Dipper's fault our fashion show was ruined. I’m sure Bill didn’t do it. Why would he have a reason? The school will figure out who it was, and they'll get in trouble for it. If my brother believes Bill didn't do it, he didn't.” Mabel looked up at her brother, confidence in her eyes.
Dipper fought back the slight unsureness, feeling somewhat assured in Mabel’s confidence. Bill had seemed to think something was up with the chandelier. But then, Bill was raised in a way that taught him to be suspicious of everything... From what he said.

Dipper took a deep breath, assuring himself Bill hadn't had anything to do with it. He was sure Bill hadn’t been behind the attacks. Or, at least, he hoped he was sure.
Dipper sat at the library, studying with his sister, growing more and more frustrated with his own self-doubts about Bill. He knew he shouldn't doubt him like that, but it was tough to... He sighed, sliding down in his chair.

“What's up, bro? Focus, okay? We need to get at least two more chapters done today.” Mabel tapped on the textbook.

“Oh, sorry. Yeah...” Dipper looked at the textbook. “I'm just... I'm wondering if I can trust him.”

“Oh, Bill.” Mabel paused. “Do you think he's the kind of person who would do that?”

“I'm not even sure... what that is.” Dipper looked up toward the ceiling.

“Try to kill you.” Mabel paused. “... Well, I don't know about answering that, he tried it before.”

“... I don't think he would try to kill me again.” Dipper pursed his lips. “I won't believe it... He's so... careful with me.”

“Mm.” Mabel smirked. “How is he, anyway?”

“... wouldn't know.” Dipper said, glumly. “He hasn't tried anything. Like I said... he's extremely careful with me.”

Mabel sat back, surprised. “Wow, he hasn't tried anything with you? What a gentleman.”

Dipper groaned, tipping his face toward the ceiling. “Ugh, yeah. Perfect gentleman.”

“Nothing at all?” Mabel went on.

“Well... he's... we've... kissed.” Dipper paused. “A lot. Heavily.”

Mabel nodded.

“... that's it. Some heavy petting, but... That's it.” Dipper frowned at his desk.

“Wow. That's great, though! I'm even more convinced now that he's not trying to kill you! I mean, if he was, wouldn't he just do whatever?” Mabel went on. “The fact that he's holding back...”

“Could mean he's not actually into me and is just playing pretend.” Dipper muttered.

“Does he seem like he's just playing pretend?” Mabel questioned.

Dipper was silent before sighing. “No. He's not. Ugh.” Dipper dropped his head into his hands. “Mabel... how can I know what he's thinking?”

“It's trust him or don't.” Mabel paused. “If you can't trust him, maybe... don't be with him?”

Dipper paused, thinking. “... Is that... is that how you'd do it? Trust him 100% until I have absolute proof otherwise?”

“Yeah. Has he proved to you he's changed? Has he given you reason to doubt him?” Mabel questioned. “You know him better than anyone else.”
Dipper pursed his lips. “No. You're right. I have absolutely no reason to doubt him. This is stupid. I keep getting caught up in this drama and... these rumors. They don't know him like I do.” He leaned forward on his elbows. “They don't.”

“Good Dipper!” Mabel encouraged. “Good.”

“Mind if we pull up a chair?” A pretty voice rang out and Dipper and Mabel looked up, surprised.

Dipper was startled to see Theresa and Wilson standing by their table, texts in hand.

“Looks like a study group,” Theresa took a seat, and Wilson took one next to her. “What're you guys going over? History?”

“Yeah, we're going over history,” Dipper glanced at Mabel to see if she was okay with them joining. “Sis, these are two people I've seen around campus. That's Teresa and Wilson.” He gestured.

“Pleasure to meet the two of you,” Mabel said, brightly. “Theresa Marks! Pleasure!”

“Mabel Pines!”


“Oh, I didn't know your first name wasn't Wilson,” Dipper said, surprised.

“Just Wilson is cool.” Wilson shrugged.

“We're on chapter 13, if that's okay.” Mabel smiled.

“Oh, yeah, of course. We're needing to study 12 through 15, so we'll just study 13 and 14 with you...” Theresa gave them a bright smile.

Wilson sat back in his seat. “Sorry to intrude, actually, is it okay that we join you? We didn't even really ask...”

“Yeah, it's okay.” Mabel confirmed. “Anyone who's a friend of Dipper is mine too!”

“Friends is-” Dipper started, but was interrupted by Theresa.

“That's a good way to look at it!” Theresa agreed. “We're in the same club so of course we'd end up friends.”

Dipper tilted his head, surprised. Friends? He guessed that was true enough. He liked them well enough.

“I didn't know Dip was in any clubs!” Mabel nodded.

“Yup! I didn't know he had a twin though, that's really cool.” Theresa went on, with enthusiasm. “Are you identical twins?”

“If we were, we'd be the same gender,” Mabel corrected, gently. “We're fraternal twins.”

“Oh... I didn't know that. That's crazy.” Theresa murmured.

“If no one minds, I don't have a ton of time,” Wilson paused. “I've got practice soon. T, can you chat later?”
“Oh, right, right! Okay. 13.” Theresa opened her textbook and Wilson did as well.

“Okay, so, we're on the section about the Revolutionary War,” Mabel tapped on it. “So, I'll read the first three pages, and you all take notes, and then Dip will read. Dip and I are sharing notes so I can just copy his. Theresa, you take notes for Wilson and Wilson, take notes when she reads?”

“Sounds good.” Wilson nodded. “That's a neat way to do it.”

“Super neat!” Theresa said, brightly.

Mabel started to read, and when she got to the passage about the Second Continental Congress, Theresa scoffed. Mabel paused, thrown off her game. “... Is everything okay?” she paused.

“Oh, just that... it's so hard for me. I learned this stuff completely differently than this book says!” Theresa tapped her book. “So, I get what I learned and what this book says backwards.”

“What?” Wilson frowned. “What did you learn about this part?”

“Well, I learned that there was more than just the thirteen colonies here... there was also a secret group, which wound through all thirteen colonies, present. And they were the ones inciting the country to war – a country that never actually wanted to rebel against Britain in the first place... After all, Britain was nothing but good to America. This group wanted to rebel, and convinced the entire country to do so.” She paused. “This book makes no mention of the group, nor of the fact that America never actually wanted to rebel.”

“Oh.” Dipper said, surprised. “That's weird. I've never heard of a secret group involved in the second continental congress...”

“Yeah, and the Boston Tea Party was incited by them too.” she pointed at the next page. “It's fascinating how all the real parts of history have been erased.” She rested her elbows on the table.

“Wow.” Wilson studied the pages, frowning. “Someone just messing with you, or what?”

“No, it's true. I'm sure of it. My parents told me.” Theresa paused.

“Hm.” Mabel frowned. “Well... It probably is tough to write a paper on this information if you learned it all completely differently.”

“Hmm... oh well,” Theresa shrugged. “That's not what the book says, right? Let's just keep going. Sorry!”

“It's okay.” Mabel gave her a smile. “I'd be having a talk with my parents though... see if they have any proof! If it is true, it's really amazing. You have information that no one else does.”

Theresa stared at the textbook, tracing her finger along a line. “Yeah...”

“Oh. Second Continental Congress! As soon as I finish this page, take it away, Dip!” Mabel said, brightly. She started reading again, and Dipper nodded, focusing on his notes.

On his way out of the library, he spotted Chad and Liam sitting at a table near the entrance and he side stepped, moving behind a bookshelf, leaning against it. He wondered what they were talking about and actively decided to eavesdrop.

“I just don't know... I just really... don't know.” Liam sighed.
“He doesn't seem like a bad guy to me.” Chad was saying.

“You didn't see the look on his face after he finished making out with him in front of me.” Liam snapped, moving in his chair. “He looked at me with the most... soulless expression.”

“I didn't see it, but he seems nice, that's all I'm saying. Maybe your judgment is...” Chad paused.

“What? My judgment is what?”

“Clouded.” Chad rubbed the back of his head.

“My judgment is not clouded!” Liam yelled. “Forget it. I'm going.”

Dipper heard the sound of a chair sliding across the floor and something moving.

“Wait, no! Hey, I'm sorry... Look, I didn't mean to upset you. Maybe you're right, I don't know what you know. But without proof he's up to something, it just seems mean to judge him on my behalf.” Chad apologized.

There was a silence, then a thump. “I guess. I just … you don't believe me.”

“Well, no, I believe you. The evidence is scattered across the table.”

*What evidence?* Dipper questioned. He was afraid to look for fear they'd spot him, so he stood still. Hopefully they’d say more about it.


“Dip is way cool. Just tell him you need to talk and talk to him.” Chad paused. “Okay? It's not something you need to stress out about...”

“I can't help but stress out about it,” Liam muttered, sounding pained. “I mean, this is a big deal.”

“You're right. It's pretty important. But Dip's not going to just ignore you. He's too nice.” Chad paused. “Alright?”

“I guess. Thanks.” Liam sighed. “... Okay. For your help...”

Dipper listened, trying to figure out what was going on on the other side of the bookshelf. He couldn't see, but he wanted to.

“Yes! Thanks!” Chad's voice rang with pleasure and Dipper wondered what was going on.

“I'll see you around. Nice working with you.”

Dipper heard a lot of small clinking sounds and he tried to remember what he'd seen on the table but he'd been so distracted by seeing Chad and Liam together that he hadn't noticed.

“Y-yeah, you too. You can come see me if you need anything.”

Dipper wondered if he imagined the wobble in Chad's voice. He heard movement and the door open and close. Dipper peeked out and saw Chad sitting at the table, a notebook in his hand. He seemed to be reading with a lot of focus, so Dipper felt comfortable walking past him, and slipping out the door. He wondered if that was Liam's writing. He'd probably find out later.
That night, Chad was still reading the notebook. Curiosity about the entire thing was raging in Dipper's chest like a forest fire, continually battering against his mind like an overexcited billy goat. He couldn't focus on his own work and finally he set his pencil down.

“Everything okay?” Chad murmured.

“Yeah... I guess.” Dipper paused. “Have you ever heard about a secret group at the Second Continental Congress?”

“Hmm. Nah, sounds like it'd be a good novel.” Chad nodded.

“Apparently they also incited the war and the Boston Tea Party.” Dipper drummed his fingers on the table.

“That's neat.” Chad paused.

“What're you reading?” Dipper finally asked, dying to know.

“Oh... I ran into Liam and he said he was having some trouble with one of his pieces.” Chad glanced up. “So he let me borrow it. I don't see any trouble at all. It's amazing.”

“Oh...” Dipper paused. “What's – what's it about?”

“Want me to read it to you? I've read it like seventeen times already. I can start over.” Chad seemed enthusiastic, so Dipper agreed, and Chad flipped back to the first page. “It often amazed Captain Thomas how much more accommodating the alien races were of his identity than the people back home. Even here, in the cold jail cell he sat in, arms shackled to the wall. The shackles, tight on his wrists, raised his arms high, ensuring he had plenty of room to breathe in his binder... Of course they only wanted his absolute safety, until the time came to kill him. He awaited the trial that would lead to his execution. Or so they thought. He would be long gone before they ever came to collect him.”

Dipper listened to the story in fascination, vividly imagining the tale of the spaceship captain and his lesbian first mate as they traveled through the galaxy plundering various treasures.

When Chad read the last line, Dipper sat back. “Well, but – what did they do next?”

“That's it. He stopped it there.” Chad looked at the empty page. “... I know, right? I'm curious about what they did with the gem.”

“Me too.” Dipper frowned. “Has he thought about writing something to publish it?”

“I asked him and he got way defensive. Said he was nowhere near ready, but you might tell him too. It'd mean more to him coming from you.” Chad shrugged.

Dipper winced but looked away. “I hope he decides to finish this one.”

“Yeah.” Chad opened the notebook to the first page again. "Me too."

Dipper moved over to his bed, lying down on it. He thought about Liam's story and wondered where his inspiration for it had come from... the thought was followed by wondering what evidence Chad and Liam had been talking about. What did Liam know about Bill? Regardless of what it was, unless he had absolute proof that Bill had done something wrong, he would believe him entirely, as Mabel
had said. Closing his eyes, sleep claimed him easily.
The next day, Dipper entered the classroom, glancing at his usual spot. He felt relieved to see his boyfriend sitting there with a shit eating grin on his face, looking excited to see him too. It lifted Dipper’s spirits and settled him just a little. There was no way Bill was trying to kill him.

“Hey, Pine Tree! What're you up to?” He asked Dipper, sitting back in his chair, resting his arm on the arm rest. “Geez, it feels like I haven't seen you in forever.”

“Yeah, it really does.” Dipper relaxed, giving Bill an easy smile, sliding in next to Bill, setting his backpack on the floor by his feet. “How'd your homework go?”

“All caught up and a little ahead. I'm all yours for a day or two.” Bill winked at him, reaching over and taking Dipper's hand. “If you'll have me, of course.”

“Definitely! I'm really glad to see you again...” Dipper paused, glancing around the room. He loved the feel of Bill’s hand in his, but he was nervous to wonder who was looking.

“Me too.” Bill hummed, pleased.

Dipper remembered the cipher, and reached into his pocket, holding it out. “I finally solved it!”

“Oh, did you? Good job! What's it say?” Bill opened the cipher and read through it. “Huh. Sounds like they're sending us off campus for this. There's no specification where the actual cipher is though. Are they going to make us check the entire building?”

“Maybe that's the last line. Abe looks over, maybe he's looking at the cipher? I don't know. It's either a statue, a street name, or an exhibit or something.” Dipper scratched the back of his head.

“Have you done any research on this?”

“Yeah, there's a museum on 5 th and Somerset, but... It could be a red herring.”

“Any particular focus on Abraham Lincoln?” Bill questioned.

“I didn't check that! I should have.” Dipper murmured, embarrassed. He pulled out his phone. “I'll check now.” He checked, and excitedly confirmed, “Yes! They have a special exhibit on the life and accomplishments of Abraham Lincoln.”

“Great! You want to go there on Saturday with me?” Bill grinned.

Dipper nodded, grinning. “Yeah, I'd love to.”

“Okay, great!” Bill unzipped his hoodie, shrugging out of it, leaving it hanging on the back of his chair. “I'll come get you at... hmm. How's noon? I'm sure you want to get some sleep.”

“Noon is good with me.” Dipper confirmed. He glanced up, seeing the teacher walking toward the blackboard.

“Want to hang out at my house afterwards?” Bill looked toward the teacher, directing his question at Dipper.

“Definitely, sounds good.” Dipper whispered back. He was going to trust Bill until he had a reason not to.
Later that evening, Dipper carried his tray over to the table and took a seat next to his sister. She had a pencil behind her ear and she was making notes on a piece of paper. “Sis, you've got to take it easy. That dress is going to give you an anxiety attack.”

“Oh, I'm okay. It's not like that's the only thing I've been doing since the start of the semester…” Mabel continued working.

“Is that a joke?”

“No, seriously. I've been spending a lot of time hanging out with my new friends and stuff too.” Mabel looked over at him.

Luckily, Dipper had managed to befriend Chad and Bill… Aside from those two, Dipper hadn't even hardly been able to talk to anyone, much less make friends. Dipper envied how easy it was for Mabel to make friends, just a little.

“That's good. It's important for you to have some downtime too.” Dipper encouraged. Someone passed behind Dipper, and Dipper visibly flinched as he felt something wet pressed onto his head.

“Hey, egghead-“ Dipper saw as he turned that it had been a half a hard-boiled egg from the salad bar, and he felt disgusted and at the same time, horribly depressed. “Maybe you ought to apply at Harvard and get out of here. You're ruining the curve for the rest of us.”

The guy continued on his way, his tray in his hands as he made his way to an empty table. Dipper's eyes burned as he clinched his fists, knocking the egg remnants out of his hair, turning back to his food with anger.

“... Wh- what was that about?” Mabel asked, baffled. “What just happened?”

“Agh, it's nothing.” Dipper muttered. “Just some jerk from one of my classes.” In truth, Dipper had no idea who the guy was, but clearly he knew who Dipper was. Dipper wasn't going to tell Mabel he was being bullied by someone he'd never met.

“Oh... okay. What a jerk!” Mabel's eyes were blazing once she got over her shock. “I should go cover his ugly jacket in ketchup. Be right back.” She got to her feet, reaching for the ketchup bottle on their table.

“No! No – it's okay…” Dipper insisted. “It's alright. Don't worry about it. It'll probably just make the whole thing worse and I don't want to deal with it.”

“Well, if you're sure…” Mabel said, slowly. “I'll let it go.” She took a seat, looking frustrated. “I mean, what gives him the right to bully you like that?”

“I don't know…”

“It's because you're going here, right? That's what he said.” Mabel chewed her food slowly, her whole demeanor seeming very down. “You're being bullied because you're going to the same school as me.”

“What? No – that's not -”

“Dipper, I'm not stupid, although it probably looks that way from the college that I decided to go to.” Mabel's eyes blazed, but this time, they were mad at Dipper. “This college is not a college for people
who could be rocket scientists or … this place isn't for people like you, Dipper! It's a place for people like me, who want to make dresses or paint pictures or write books! Isn't it weird that everyone around you is going for some kind of liberal arts degree? You're being bullied because you decided to go to this stupid school just for me. You don't need to lie to me about it.”

“Well, what was I supposed to do? I couldn't just leave you by yourself!” Dipper shot back, his feelings hurt by his sister's outburst.

“Do you think I can't take care of myself? I've barely seen you since we got here anyway!” Mabel shot back. “I don't need you to follow me around and take care of me! You should be at a top three school, Dipper, not getting bullied at a liberal arts college because you don't trust me to get by without you!” She picked up her tray and stormed off, dumping it and disappearing out of the cafeteria.

Dipper's chest pounded with anger, and his hands shook from the hurt. He pushed his tray away, grabbing it and taking it to the trash can, clearing it and stalking out of the cafeteria. He couldn't hardly breathe, and he felt ill. As he walked through the hallways, the rage turned to sheer pain and sadness and he fought back his tears.

He walked to the library, hoping to see Bill there. He was relieved to see Bill off in the corner, sitting at a table, a single text in front of him. Dipper moved up to him, resting his hand on the table.

“Bill...?”

“Hey, Pine Tree!” Bill responded. “Sorry, I really am caught up! I just thought if I got a little more—” He looked up and studied Dipper's face. “What happened?” he leaned forward, eye narrowing.

“I'm... I'm hurt.” Dipper murmured. Bill reached out, pulling Dipper towards him, sitting him down in his lap.


“... I had a fight with Mabel,” Dipper bit his lip, leaning into Bill's chest, clutching it with his one hand. “Sorry to worry you... I'm okay. I'm just... upset.”

“What happened with Shooting Star?” Bill tilted his head, taking Dipper's sadness at face value.

“She was sitting across from me at dinner and some guy rubbed an egg in my hair... told me I shouldn't be here, bullying, basically. Mabel saw it. She said that it was because I went to the same school as her, and that I didn't belong here. It's not a college for people like me, and... she was really upset. I told her I couldn't leave her alone, and she got mad at me, saying I didn't trust her to take care of herself.” Dipper poured the story out.

“Well, she's not wrong, is she?” Bill questioned. “You're known around here as a real genius, someone who belongs in a top three... Seems like you threw all of that away for Mabel.”

“I didn't!” Dipper straightened up, shaking his head. “I... I didn't come here to keep an eye on Mabel or because I don't think she can make it without me!”

“Then why did you?” Bill rested his hand on Dipper's waist, the other hand rubbing Dipper's shoulder.

“Because... I don't know what I'd do without HER!” Dipper blurted, distressed. “I... I don't know what I want to do! I don't have any idea what I want to do... I... I'm not like Mabel, I can't... make friends everywhere I go and know exactly what I want to do right out of high school... I didn't want to go to a top three school because there's nothing I want to do... at least, if there is something, I don't
“So you decided to go to this school with Mabel because you didn't have any idea what you wanted to do, and you were too scared to leave Mabel?” Bill questioned. Dipper nodded. “You need to tell Mabel that, Pine Tree. Tell her that it was never you thinking Mabel needed you, it was you needing her. Tell her about the school thing, and try to make sure she sees your side. She won't be mad long regardless, but it's important she knows so she doesn't feel like she's ruining your life, like she has been.”

“But... she won't talk to me right now.” Dipper said, meekly.

“You can text her. I'm sure she'll read your texts.” Bill reassured.

“Yeah...” Dipper reached into his pocket, pulling out his phone. He carefully typed out a message, while Bill watched. He sent the message and he cuddled into Bill's shoulder. “…Thanks for... being here,” Dipper murmured.

Bill tilted Dipper's face up, engaging him in a deep kiss to try to take his mind off his sadness. “Mm... I was really prepared to fight someone. I'm still considering it. Do you remember what he looked like?”

“No... sorry.” Dipper murmured. “Just some random asshole.”

“He would have had a hard-boiled egg in an uncomfortable place if I'd been there...” Bill murmured.

“Heh...” Dipper stared at Bill's face. “…shouldn't do that. Isn't anal play with other men cheating?”

Bill snorted, before laughing out loud. “Don't be a smartass, Pine Tree.” He kissed Dipper's jaw. “That's really gross.”

Dipper only smiled, and his phone buzzed in his hand. “There she is.” He took a deep breath and looked at his phone.

_We need to talk bro. Where are u_

Dipper texted he was at the library, and Mabel responded that she was on her way. “I guess I should move to another chair...” Dipper murmured.

“Not yet. She's not here yet. Just relax a little.” Bill rubbed his shoulder and outer thigh in a comforting manner. “I'm not going to try anything, Pine Tree. You can trust me.”

Dipper seemed surprised by the statement. “I- I do.”

“Okay.” Bill rested their foreheads together, closing his eye.

They sat together for a few minutes before Mabel came up to the table. “Oh, hey, Bill. I didn't know you were here too.” Mabel said, awkwardly, taking a seat.

Dipper moved to the chair next to Bill, sitting up. “Sorry. I came to talk to Bill, and he helped me figure out how to tell you what I felt...” He ruffled his hair.

“This whole time, I was really upset, because you decided to go to this school because of me. It felt
like you were throwing away your chances of becoming something really really amazing... like Grunkle Ford did...” she pursed her lips. “Because of me. I didn't want to hold you back... and I felt like I was just holding you back. And our parents think so too. I know they blame me for you not going to a top three school...”

“That's not it at all!” Dipper insisted. “No. I... it's the opposite, sort of. It's... I can't... I don't know what I'd do if you weren't around.” Dipper ducked his head. “I need you, sis... You're the cool one with all the friends and you know exactly what you want to do and I'm... I'm just here.”

“Dipper, you can do literally ANYTHING, but you're here-” Mabel argued.

“Maybe that's it! I can do anything! I can do everything. It's too many choices! What if I make the wrong one? What if I go into a degree I hate and then I've flushed the better part of $100,000 down the drain?” Dipper threw his hands up. “Maybe I want to wait and see what I want to be before picking a school. Maybe I'm scared of going off without you and I don't want to waste money trying to figure out what I'm going to do just yet... I... it's not your fault, Mabel. I'm here because I want to be.”

“Bro, I'm sorry.” Mabel sighed. “I really shouldn't have gone off on you like that, I was just so... sad and frustrated, because you were getting bullied for going here, and I thought you were here to look after me, and... I thought it was my fault you were being bullied.”

“I guess we should have really talked about this a long time ago.”

Mabel nodded, hands tucked into her lap. “We really should have. I'm sorry I yelled at you. I shouldn't have yelled at you. I was just so...”

“It's okay. I forgive you.” Dipper nodded.

“Awkward sibling hug?”

Dipper moved around the table, pulling her into a tight hug. “Definitely. Want me to walk you to your room?”

“If you want to!”

“Hey, Pine Tree.” Dipper turned to look at Bill, who was looking at him, elbows resting on the table. “Swing back by here whenever you're done.”

“Oh, sure thing,” Dipper nodded, smiling. “See you in a little bit.”

“Sure.”

Dipper walked with Mabel toward her dorm, the two of them opening up about everything, lying it out on the table. When they finally parted ways, they hugged again. “See you tomorrow, sis.”

“See you, bro-bro.”

Dipper headed down the hallway, when he heard a voice from behind him. “Hey... Dipper?” Dipper turned around, wondering who it could be. He smiled when he saw Liam. He had a few questions for Liam, and he hoped he would get some answers.
“Hey... Dipper?” Dipper turned and spotted Liam standing a few doors down in a thin pair of pajama pants and a tanktop, leaning against the wall. “What're you doing on the girls' floor?”

“I just walked my sister to her room. What about you?”

“Oh... they won't let me be on the boys' floor...” Liam knitted brows. “So...”

“I'm sorry to hear that.” Dipper frowned. “That's really stupid.”

“Yeah.” Liam paused. “Just the way things are for us... But I heard your voice out here and I thought I'd say hey. Where are you going?”

“I'm heading to the library. Bill's waiting for me.” Dipper nodded.

“Oh? I see. That's cool.” Liam paused, before continuing on, meeting Dipper's eyes. “... um, I actually... do you have a minute?”

“Well, I have a few.” Dipper rubbed the back of his neck, eager to talk to Liam. “But I need to get going - what's up?”

“I wanted to talk about him.” Liam glanced away. “Mind if we talk in my room?”

“Him? Chad?” Dipper asked, pretending he didn't know what was going on.

“No. Bill.” Liam glanced up at him.

“Oh... sure.” Dipper nodded, eagerly. “Lead the way.”

As they walked, Liam decided to bring up some other conversation to ease the silence. “You been doing any writing?”

“Yeah, actually! I came up with something that I'm... kind of... proud of.” Dipper muttered, embarrassed, crossing his arms.

“Oh, really? I'd love to see it.” Liam grinned, crossing his arms, rubbing them. “If you don't mind. I can follow you back to your dorm to grab it, if you want.”

“If you don't mind, I'd love your input... I've got it with me, I don't like to leave it places.” Dipper adjusted his straps on his backpack. “Oh! Wait, uh, the front section. That's not... please don't read that part.”

“What is it?” Liam looked up at Dipper.

“Uh, well, I was writing based off of stuff that was happening to me... so it's... it's almost like a diary entry. It's just... it's embarrassing. It's about Bill, mostly... I made some stuff up in it though, but not much.” Dipper rubbed the back of his head.

“Sure, I can do that. Don't worry.” Liam asked.

They entered Liam’s room, the whole room decorated in blacks and greys, before Liam took a seat at his desk, crisscrossing his legs.
“Alright… you wanted to talk about Bill. I’m guessing it’s got something to do with the chandelier, right?” Dipper sighed, ready to defend Bill against Liam as well.

Liam’s eyes widened. “What about the chandelier and Bill?”

“… uh, nothing. Just a rumor… some people think… never mind.” Dipper muttered, ducking his head. “So what did you…?”

“Oh… well… okay.” Liam pursed his lips. “Dipper, I know he’s not my boyfriend and… it’s really not my business. I know it isn’t…” He rested his hands in his lap, looking grim. “But… He’s really - he seems…” He sighed. “I’m trying not to judge people based on first impressions and rumors. I know that’s wrong. But… he’s really just not a very nice guy. And I’m worried that you hanging out with him will make people think you’re a bad person too.”

“Well, what do you mean he’s not a nice guy? He’s not a bad person.” Dipper frowned, confused. “He works hard at his schooling and he’s really good to me.”

“Mm…” Liam paused, knitting his brows. “It’s just... Well, okay, first, he… ugh. Okay, he did that thing in the cafeteria. Your image here is already bad enough without you making out with guys in the cafeteria.”

Dipper ducked his head, ruffling his hair. “He promised not to do that anymore-”

“The whole school already knows you as the genius Pines, and now you’re the gay genius, which is fine, it’s good to be proud of your-”

“Bi.” Dipper flushed. “But, yeah, it’s not good…”

“Right. So… and… Dipper, one time, I saw him walking around campus at night. He was doing some… weird… stuff.” Liam rubbed his arm.

“What was he doing?” Dipper questioned, genuinely curious.

“Well, he just… like, he went out walking on the grounds… and I saw him talking with some weird people, and they unlocked the door to the library for him.” Liam paused.

“Okay, why is that-” Dipper started.

“It was two in the morning.” Liam pursed his lips. “And… he went around to a lot of other places too.”

Dipper’s frown deepened. “You’re sure it was Bill?”

“Well, he was wearing his normal clothes.” Liam paused. “I just don’t know why he was let into those places at 2 am.”

Dipper sighed. “… That is… odd.” He leaned back, crossing his arms.

“What about the chandelier?” Liam questioned.

“Oh… Bill and I were in the art hall and the chandelier came down and nearly killed me. Bill saved my life.” Dipper ruffled his hair. “The camera caught footage of someone in a hoodie coming in and leaving the art hall… some people think it was Bill, but I don’t believe he did it.”

Liam pursed his lips. “I don’t believe he did that… I think he’s up to some shady shit but… I don’t think he’d do that.”
“Yeah, me either…” Dipper trailed off. “I just… I trust him completely. Unless… I had some kind of proof…” he paused. “You know, a really good reason not to.”

Liam pursed his lips, thinking hard. After a moment, he spoke up. “... sorry. I’m really not sure I can help you with that.”

I know you know more! Dipper thought, frustrated. Why is he hiding whatever he showed Chad?

“It’s okay. I’m going to believe Bill. It’s really all I can do.” Dipper sighed.

Liam nodded. “I get it. If I hear or see anything else, I’ll definitely tell you about it.”

He’s really hiding something from me. Dipper smiled, nodding. What does he know?

“Okay, so, your story!” Liam waved the notebook. “Want to go through it together? I know you’re in a hurry, I’ll try to be quick!”

“Sure.” Dipper nodded, smiling.

“All right, I’m going to read, and when I get to a good stopping point, I’ll tell you what I think. Okay?” Dipper nodded, sitting on Liam’s bed, watching with interest.

“Well, wait. Why don’t we go over it together? It might be good for you to get some genuine initial impressions.” Liam smiled at him.

Dipper fidgeted. He really should get back to Bill. “Uh, sure. I can hang out a few minutes.”

“Cool!” Liam moved over and took a seat on the bed next to Dipper, smiling at him. “Here we go.”

Dipper completely lost track of time. By the time he managed to get away from Liam, it was well past midnight. He walked to the library, but it was locked up for the night. Dipper felt horrible. Bill had really wanted him to go back and see him... Dipper wondered why he'd wanted him to come back. He thought maybe there'd been something that Bill had wanted to talk about, but Liam had taken up all of Dipper's time.

Dipper went back to his room, closing the door behind him.

“Hey, man. Your boyfriend was here for a while, but he left.” Chad sat up, looking at Dipper. “He said he was looking for you. You alright?”

“Huh? Yeah, I was just talking to Liam.” Dipper rubbed the back of his head. “I was supposed to go see Bill but I lost track of time... I'll see him tomorrow, or Friday.”

“Oh. Alright then,” Chad sat back down, picking his book back up. “No big deal then.”

“Yeah. I'm gonna get some sleep.” Dipper moved over to the bed.

“Night, man.”

“Night.”

Dipper got his notebook back from Liam the next day, and he went through it, reading Liam's
handwritten suggestions and comments, the majority of which were overwhelmingly positive. Dipper buzzed with the good feelings from the positive feedback, and he was encouraged to continue writing his story. He pressed on with writing and he spent most of his Thursday doing that.

It wasn't until Friday that he saw Bill again in class.

He waved, grinning up at his radiant boyfriend. “Hi, Bill.”

Bill took a seat next to Dipper, his hands in his pockets. “Hey,” Bill paused. He didn’t have his usual bright grin on his face. “Where’d you go on Wednesday?”

“Oh... I went to take Mabel back to her dorm, but then I ran into Liam... and we talked for a while... by the time I noticed what time it was, it was way past midnight. The library was closed.” Dipper ducked his head. “Sorry I didn’t make it back.”

Bill looked at the chalkboard, moving his elbows to the table in front of him, leaning his weight on it. “So... wait. You skipped out on spending time with me, so that you could spend several hours alone with a guy who you know likes you?”

Dipper flushed. “It’s not like that!”

“What did you talk about?” Bill frowned.

Dipper was embarrassed, and so he looked away. “It wasn’t anything important...”

“If it really wasn’t anything important, you’d tell me about it.” Bill frowned. “I wasn’t actually mad about Wednesday. But then you tell me you were too busy talking about something secret with your guy friend who has a huge crush on you... to come back to see me.”

“I told you, it isn’t like that!” Dipper defended. “I just... I told him I’d been working on some writing and he said he wanted to read it... that’s all, nothing weird.”

“... It’s not that I’m suspicious of YOU. I trust you,” Bill looked him in the eyes. “Completely.”

“... You – you do?” Dipper was baffled by this information.

“Well, yeah... I know you’re not going to cheat on me, or run around on me...” Bill frowned. “Right? I can trust you?”

“Yes!” Dipper frowned, but his heart was warmed a little. He’d never had a lover trust him so easily... It made him feel oddly guilty inside, but he squelched it. It’s not like he was going to cheat on Bill. “I... thanks.”

“It’s him that I don’t really trust...” Bill murmured. “I know you were just hanging out with a guy friend. I just... I was worried something happened to you when you didn’t come back. I’ve thought about it, and I’m going to get a phone, so that you can contact me when you get held up like that again, just so I know you’re okay.”

Dipper’s blush seemed to spread inside his chest, and he looked away. “YOU with a cell phone?” He uttered, the blush spreading over his whole body. “Just for me?”

“Just for you.” Bill responded. “But... aside from worrying about you, and aside from you sharing things with him that you don’t me...”

“Hmm?”
“... I really miss you, Pine Tree.”

Before Dipper could ask for an explanation, the teacher walked in, heading towards the board. Dipper was dying to know what Bill meant by that. They saw each other every few days, more frequently than most of Dipper's partners he'd had, so... Dipper would just have to wait.

After class, Dipper casually asked Bill what he meant. “You... miss me? We see each other every other day...” Dipper paused.

“Yeah, but... just for a few minutes. I miss the time we spend alone together. That was why I asked you back to the library.” Bill adjusted his hoodie, turning toward the door. “I know being jealous won't help but it seemed like you wanted to spend time with him more than me.” Bill started moving toward the door, and Dipper followed after him, eyes locked on Bill's back.

“No, of course not,” Dipper insisted. “I just... I needed to ask him about my story.”

“I'm not much of a writer, so I can't fill that niche for you.” Bill sighed. “So I totally get it. I really do... I'm just sorry that I acted that way.”

Dipper reached out, taking Bill's hand as they went through the doorway. Bill twined his gloved fingers through Dipper's, eye appearing lost in thought.

“So, what were you writing about, or is that secret?” Bill questioned.

“Oh, it's a story about monster hunters,” Dipper scratched the back of his neck. “I'm sure it's probably not that good.”

“Well, who knows, maybe it is. You could have a gift, Pine Tree. I wouldn't know. It's not shared with me.”

Dipper eyed Bill's face, feeling relieved to see a shit-eating grin plastered there. “Yeah, well, it's embarrassing. In the first part of the notebook, I wrote a little something else... it was a first-hand account of my experiences with you... I tried to make it a little different but I don't know if I managed to do that.”

“I'd like to read that,” Bill glanced over at Dipper, who was shaking his head, embarrassed. “Oh, come on, Pine Tree! I'd love to read what you think of me!”

“I hope it's obvious what I think about you,” Dipper uttered, too embarrassed to let Bill read his private writing. “I'd rather you not read it.”

“Mm, but it's going to drive me crazy wondering!” Bill articulated, trying his best to convince Dipper to let him read it. “Come on. I promise not to laugh or tease you.”

“No way. You'll know everything.” Dipper blushed.

“What if I wrote a first-hand account of MY time I spent with you and we'll trade?” Bill offered. “That way, we're on an equal playing field!”

“I already know what you think about me...” Dipper clutched a fist to his chest. Dipper knew how much Bill liked him, how far he had went and would go for him. For someone he'd only been dating about two weeks, it was a vast amount. It almost frightened Dipper to think about.
What was more frightening was how fast Dipper was coming to completely depend on, how much Dipper was thinking and feeling about Bill... It was almost disconcerting.

“So because I'm open with how I feel about you means that I'm never going to get to know how you feel about me?” Bill murmured, distraught. “You're really hard for me to read sometimes, Pine Tree.”

“... I think I'd die of embarrassment if you read it.” Dipper responded.

Bill pulled him into an empty classroom they passed, pressing him against the wall. “Well, I better not keep pushing it then.” He rubbed Dipper's cheek with his nose, going in for a kiss. “I can't have that.”

Dipper drew Bill into the deep kiss, their tongues brushing together, teasing and entwining, Dipper's embarrassment turning into a stomach full of butterflies as Bill kissed him, hot and wet, and he ended it with that all-too-familiar lip nibble that made Dipper's stomach roll.

“Mmm,” Dipper couldn't contain the noise, looking away from Bill.

“You love that, don't you?” Bill smirked, pleased.

“I really do.” Dipper glanced up at him out of the corner of his eye. “That's the way I feel about that.”

Bill chuckled, stroking Dipper's cheek with a gloved thumb. “You going to start telling me, one thing at a time?”

“My favorite thing... was when we were at your house...” Dipper paused.

Bill leaned forward, kissing Dipper's lips, the kiss shallow, but affectionate. “I know. Mine too.” He whispered. He took a step back. “I need to get going. You probably do too, right?” He gave Dipper a smile.

“Y-yeah...” Dipper's heart was pounding, and his body was hot all over. He wanted Bill to come back, to continue what he started, but he knew better than to try to keep Bill from going to class. “I'll see you tomorrow at noon, right?”

“Right.”

Dipper watched Bill leave the classroom, headed on to his next class and Dipper took a long breath in and out, trying to calm down. It hardly worked.
“Hi,” Dipper whispered, stepping into the hall. He shut the door behind him before getting up on his tiptoes, kissing Bill's lips in a quick hello kiss.

“Hi, Pine Tree.” Bill drew him in, sliding his fingers across Dipper’s cheeks, tangling softly in Dipper’s hair. Not content with a chaste kiss, Bill slipped his tongue into Dipper’s mouth, toying with his partner’s tongue, finally drawing away moments later, drawing a thumb across Dipper’s lips. “You ready to go to that museum?”

“Mm...” Dipper murmured, his glazed eyes fixed on Bill. “Yeah.”

Bill led him to his car by the hand, glancing over his shoulder at Dipper. “Finally took your sling off?”

“Yup.” Dipper glanced at his arm. “It still hurts a little but I'm almost totally better.”

“I'm glad to see you've got two arms again.” Bill climbed into his car, and Dipper followed behind. Bill punched in the location on his GPS and off they went.

They wandered all around the museum, laughing and talking, pointing out random bits of history that they found intriguing or they knew about. Dipper enjoyed listening to Bill's unique (and possibly made up, Dipper couldn’t be sure) renditions of history, as they made their way toward the Lincoln exhibit.

“Here we go. Abraham Lincoln.” Bill swept his free hand across the room, holding Dipper's with the other. “Let's see if we can find that statue.”

“Yup.” Dipper smiled at Bill. “Thanks for today... it's been really fun.”

“It should be just as fun throughout the evening, I hope.” Bill winked at Dipper, leading him through the room, which was filled with artifacts of the past.

“... I hope so, too.” Dipper quietly murmured. Bill didn't hear him, continuing to lead Dipper through the room.

“Aha, here's a statue. Let's see if we can see where he's looking.” Bill followed the eyes of the statue to a map of the US, divided in half, the north and the south. There was a poster above it of war, and Dipper knelt down. Below the map was a small slip of paper, which Dipper picked up, bringing over to Bill. They opened it and it read:

Nothing. The paper seemed to be empty. He looked at Bill. “This must be one of those disappearing messages.” He scratched the back of his neck. “Let's take it back to your apartment and take a look?”

“Sure.”

Bill opened the door, letting Dipper inside. “Welcome to my place.” He shut the door behind Dipper and moved him into the same corner as before.

Dipper's face heated up, instantly and he nearly shook with anticipation. Bill moved against him,
pressing his body against Dipper’s, rubbing his nose against his. He placed his hands inside Dipper’s, looking into Dipper’s eyes as he did.

Dipper’s heart was pounding in anticipation, and he watched in silence, unable to speak. Bill slid his hands out from inside his gloves, lifting his hands to run across Dipper’s face. He took his time this time, seeming more greedy than last time.

Breaking their eye contact, he brushed his bare fingertips over Dipper’s lips, causing Dipper to softly whine with desire. Bill couldn’t help the smallest, shakiest smirk, quipping, “It’ll be okay, Pine Tree…” before sliding his fingers and palms up Dipper’s jaw, tilting his head upwards.

He lowered his head, capturing Dipper’s lips for a kiss, kissing him long and slow, the agonizing pace sending Dipper out of his reason. The feel of Bill’s bare fingertips across his scalp and in his hair sent shockwaves across Dipper’s entire body.

Wanting to touch Bill terribly, he went to put his arms around Bill, flinching when Bill pulled away suddenly, grabbing Dipper’s hands. Dipper flinched, realizing that had been a mistake somehow. Bill met his eyes, before slipping his hands back inside the gloves. Bill gave him a small smile, to reassure him, before heading deeper into the house, leaving Dipper breathless against the entryway wall.

This man would be the death of him. Dipper couldn't hardly breathe, his stomach was knotted so tight. He ran to catch up with Bill, grabbing Bill's hands, digging his heels in, pulling Bill to a halt.

“What's up?” Bill turned to look at Dipper, trying to maintain some mediocre amount of normalcy. “What's wrong?”

Dipper swallowed hard, thinking. His brain warned him to use caution. Glancing down, it looked like Bill was just as aroused as he was, which made Dipper more confident. He threw himself against Bill, flinging his arms around his neck, standing on his tiptoes, kissing Bill with a heated passion. The rest of Dipper wasn’t thinking caution. Bill staggered a moment, but put his arms around Dipper as well, continuing where they’d let off a second before.

After a moment, he pulled away, looking into Dipper's eyes, reading the full-blown lust inside of them. “Mm.” He stroked Dipper's hair. “What, are you wanting to mess around?” When Dipper licked his lips, Bill smirked a little. “Sorry, Pine Tree. I did it to you again, didn’t I?... I keep pushing you.”

Dipper couldn't help but think it was too little for him to be comfortable, but also too much to be comfortable. “You’re right in the red.” Dipper replied.

“Too far?” Bill asked, with concern.

“Or not far enough.” Dipper flicked his eyes up at Bill. Bill’s eyebrows rose for a second, registering his surprise before he licked his own lips, looking amused by his partner. Dipper glanced toward the study. “Want to make out?”

Bill hummed, amused. “You bet, Pine Tree.”

Dipper pulled him into the study, sitting down on the couch, leaning back, looking at Bill expectantly. Bill smirked, but seemed to hesitate just a moment before taking a seat next to Dipper, facing him. Dipper tried not to choke on his current frustration, he just wanted Bill to literally ride him, and Bill’s inexperience was a little frustrating. Taking matters into his own hands, he sat up, swinging his leg over Bill’s lap, straddling him.
The action surprised Bill for just a moment, before he lifted his hands up to Dipper’s hips, rubbing his outer thighs. He pulled Dipper in for a kiss and Dipper put his arms around Bill’s neck, pulling him close. He ground his hips against Bill’s, giving some small measure of satisfaction to his painful erection. Bill groaned into Dipper’s mouth, rubbing the back of his neck.

“Hey… Pine Tree.”

“Hm?” Dipper asked, meeting his eyes. Bill’s eyes were hungry and Dipper hoped he would suggest more. “We should stop before it gets too serious.”

Dipper’s heart sank and he sat back, lowering his hands to Bill’s chest.

“Well… okay.” Dipper stared at Bill’s chest, unable to make eye contact with him. He respected Bill’s no, but he couldn’t say he wasn’t disappointed, or that he didn’t want more. “Um, maybe, next time we can…”

“Oh?”

“Maybe we can go a little further than making out.” Dipper ventured, awkwardly. “If you want to.”

“Yes.” Bill brushed some hair out of Dipper's face so he could look at his birthmark, lovingly tracing the pattern with a fingertip. “Just tell me what you want to do.”

Dipper wanted to do a lot of things. But he could hold back. After all, he cared a lot about Bill, and he didn’t want to force him into anything. Bill wanted to go slow, so Dipper would go slow. “I want to suck you off.” Well… slow-er.

Bill choked, softly, turning his head away. “I – sure.”

“Too soon?”

“No, just the way you said it, surprised me.” Bill admitted.

Dipper debated repeating it again, this time more vulgar. He wanted to let Bill know how much he wanted it, but then again... “Sorry.”

Bill stroked Dipper's hair, looking down at him. “No... it's okay. I'd like to as well.”

The words I have a condom floated to Dipper's tongue but he bit it back. “... n-next time?”

“Well, if we had protection-” Bill used a familiar statement from the last time.

“I brought – one.” Dipper managed. “But if you don't have one, we should wait.”

“... sorry, next time, okay?” Bill, for the first time Dipper had ever seen, had darkened cheeks, looking far away from Dipper. His shoulders were tense and he'd stopped stroking Dipper's face. “Next time, we'll.”

“Sorry, now I'm pushing you.” Dipper sat up, leaning into Bill's shoulder. “We don't have to do it next time either.” He really wanted to, but Bill's comfort was the most important. “I know you felt like it's too early for sex, so...”

“... It's not like it's the first time I've ever done something like this.” Bill cut him off, still tense. “I just don't have a condom.”

“Sorry, I misunderstood... I've done this before, too. I'm just really looking forward to doing it with
you.” Dipper rubbed Bill's arm, and Bill seemed to relax. “And really nervous, that's why I'm acting like such a spaz.”

“... Sorry, Pine Tree. I reacted badly there. I really have done this kind of stuff before.” Bill let out a long breath, continuing to stroke Dipper's hair. He kissed his eyebrow, rubbing his nose against his temple. “Nervous...” he murmured. “Yeah, I guess that's the best way to describe it. I'm nervous to do all this with you.”

“Mm...” Dipper giggled as Bill rubbed his side. “Stop tickling me.”

Bill smirked, relaxing when Dipper did. “No. You want to go take a crack at that cipher now?”

“Hmmm, not really...” Dipper murmured. “This is pretty – augh!” He spasmed as Bill tickled his side fairly hard, and he grabbed Bill's hand. “Hey!”

Bill was grinning from ear to ear. “It's cute how ticklish you are, Pine Tree.”

“Are you ticklish?” Dipper directed the question at Bill, who shook his head.

“Not even a little.” Bill bragged.

“That's not fair!” Dipper protested, and Bill tickled him up his sides while he squirmed. Bill smirked and lowered his head to Dipper's neck, licking and gently nibbling on the skin with his teeth, and Dipper closed his eyes, the sensation causing his body to grow hot again.

“Hey, Pine Tree.” Bill paused. “What do you say we move to my room and you put that condom on...”

“What, but-” Dipper started to protest.

“It's okay.” Bill murmured in Dipper's ear. “I really want to... and I'll have one for me next time.”

Bill's low, gravelly tone was not one Dipper could disagree or resist. He went weak-kneed just hearing it. Bill slid his hands up Dipper's shirt, rubbing his chest and stomach, the fingertips dragged across him, sending ticklish waves of pleasure all over Dipper's body. “But do you want to, Pine Tree?”

“Yeah...” Dipper murmured, his eyes glossy. He got up, pulling Bill up with him, getting up on his tiptoes to kiss him long and hard, the gloves keeping Dipper from being able to feel Bill's skin the way he wanted to. Bill nibbled on Dipper's lower lip, before ducking his head and kissing the same spot on his neck.

“Mm, I still would love to mark you on your neck so everyone knows... Right here.” Bill opened his mouth and placed it on Dipper's neck, teasingly, but he only kissed it before moving on to nibble at the junction between Dipper's shoulder and neck.

“Y- you really have a fixation with that, huh?” Dipper breathed.

“Mm-hmm.” Bill tugged Dipper's hand toward the bedroom and Dipper followed, his eyes drinking in the sight of Bill's shoulders and back, and he couldn't help but think he was with someone special. Anyone else, he'd have fucked tons already, and they probably would have been broken up by now.

Back in the bedroom, Bill descended on him, working him back up to a passioned frenzy with blazing kisses and light bites all over his body, anywhere he could reach.
Dipper was moaning and digging into Bill's shoulder with pleasure, way too eager to feel his mouth around him. He finally stopped Bill, getting his condom out of his pocket. He struggled to open it with his gloves and Bill finally took it from him.

“I'll get it. You want to take your pants off for me?” Bill smirked.

Dipper nodded, licking his lips. He unbuttoned his pants while Bill opened the condom, sliding them down and away, lying back on his hands. Bill rolled it onto him, getting to his knees on the edge of the bed.

Bill took a moment to study it – a moment Dipper thought felt like forever. It was just long enough to stand out as odd before Bill wrapped his gloved hand around it, tightly, beginning to stroke it while his tongue lapped at the base. Dipper shivered, closing his eyes before struggling to sit up more on his elbows to watch Bill. Bill looked up at Dipper, his hand still massaging the length before he took the tip of it in his mouth, swirling his tongue around it.

The warm heat and friction was amazing. Dipper swallowed hard, watching Bill meticulously work, and he twitched hard when Bill lightly scraped his teeth across the shaft. Bill started massaging just the base while he bobbed his head up and down on his length. Dipper bit his lip, the pressure in his body beginning to build up.

To be honest, Dipper sort of understood why Bill had been hesitant earlier. He wasn't sure Bill had ever done this, and that made Dipper appreciate it more. “Can you go a little faster? And... grip a little tighter?”

Bill followed Dipper’s directions and Dipper buckled down, digging his fingers into the sheets. “Ahh-there you go...” Dipper uttered, his own tongue getting in the way. He arched his back, his breath beginning to catch. “There you go...” Dipper kept repeating the phrase in pleasure, closing his eyes tight. He turned his face toward the ceiling, mouth open in a silent moan of pleasure, Bill drinking in the sight.

Bill sped up suddenly, driving Dipper wild and over the edge. “Ahh-” With one final violent tremble, Dipper came hard, back arched up off the bed, his whole body coiled tight like a spring, the pleasure flooding his entire body. He rolled over onto his side, aftershocks rippling across his stomach, staring at Bill. Bill crawled up onto the bed, next to Dipper, putting his arms around him, pulling him close. Dipper stroked his back, uttering, “I can't wait until I can do that to you.”

Bill kissed Dipper's forehead, smoothing some of his hair away from his forehead. Bill seemed to be thinking about something, so Dipper fell silent and let him do it, gazing into the one-eyed man's face, studying every inch of it.
Chapter 17

Once Dipper was all cleaned up, he went back into the study, taking a seat next to Bill, playfully. “Hi.”

“Hi.” Bill reached over, pulling Dipper into his lap, wrapping his arms and legs around him. “You want to give that cipher a try?”

“Yes, I'd love to.” Dipper reached into his pocket, setting the paper on the table. Bill rubbed Dipper's shoulders, looking at the paper.

“So, let's add the lamp, we can start heating the paper, which'll reveal the areas that have the disappearing ink.” Bill chattered. Dipper watched as Bill went through the process, revealing a tiny code.

\textit{Ywm Ywo Kwboei}

“Hmmm. It's short enough that-” Bill trailed off. “You know what, I better let you do it.” He kissed Dipper's jaw. “You said you were gonna solve the rest.”

“I am.” Dipper closed one eye, leaning toward Bill, burrying himself in Bill's shoulder. “... I will solve them, thank you.” Dipper gazed up at Bill's face.

Bill smirked, looking down at Dipper. “It'll take you twice as long,” he teased, in a sing-songy voice.

“Mmm... maybe.” Dipper touched his cheek, stroking it with his thumb. His thumb traced the edge of the eyepatch and Bill flinched slightly, tilting his face away.

“Ha, I bet it will.” Bill resumed his smirk, fixing his eye on Dipper. “I bet I could solve this in five minutes.”

“Whatever, you're so on.” Dipper turned back to the desk, guilt and embarrassment digging at his stomach. He didn't know Bill was sensitive about his eyepatch, or what was underneath it, for that matter. He really hoped he didn't offend him... As Dipper settled down to begin working on translating the cipher, he felt a cold breeze on his neck and he shivered as Bill kissed his shoulder. “What are you doing?”

“Mm... distracting you.” Bill responded.

“Stop.” Dipper blushed. Apparently Bill wasn't that offended.

“Okay, okay. Do your best,” Bill encouraged.

“I will!” Dipper focused himself and finally, he came up to: \textit{Icy Ice Scream}. Dipper was confused, so he pulled out his phone, feeling comforted by the feel of Bill's hands sliding up and down his arms. “That's an ice cream shop here in town. They're closed tomorrow.” Dipper announced. “But... they're open the rest of the week.”

“We'll have to go.” Bill nodded. “Sort of vague... Maybe I'll buy you an ice cream soda.”
“What's an ice cream soda?” Dipper questioned, looking up at Bill. “Do you mean a float?”

Bill made a face. “No, I mean an ice cream soda. When can you go?”

“Well, I never go to school past 3, so anytime after that.” Dipper murmured.

“Oh, yeah,” Bill reached into the inner pocket on his vest, removing a flat black phone. “I need your number.”

“I can't believe you actually got a phone.” Dipper said, surprised.

“It's totally untraceable, but it's still a phone.” Bill added Dipper's number, and gave Dipper his. “If you ever need to contact me, at any time, for any reason, call me.”

“I will.” Dipper agreed.

“Alright.” Bill rested his head on Dipper's shoulder. “If you want to go home, let me know. It's a little boring here.”

“Not with you here.” Dipper returned.

“Mm. It sure is when you're alone.” Bill murmured.

Dipper thought about spending the night with Bill and his stomach fluttered, twisting into knots. “Ah – I bet. I don't know what it’d be like... I've only been home alone a few nights.”

“I'm used to it.” Bill sat up, rubbing Dipper's arm. “How about I put something together to eat and we can put a movie on?”

“Sounds good.” Dipper tipped his head back, looking at Bill.

“Mm. Okay.” Bill rubbed Dipper's arm, patting it. “You pick the movie, and I'll go put something together. Pizza okay?”

“Sure.” Dipper nodded. “You're making it?”

“Yeah.” Bill stood up. “I have to be careful.” He disappeared into the kitchen and Dipper picked up the remote, searching netflix for something to watch.

The next day, Dipper spotted Liam in the cafeteria and he took a seat next to him, cheerfully. “How are you doing?” Dipper asked.

“I'm doing good...” Liam murmured, rubbing his bottom lip with his fingertips. “How about you?”

“Doing well.” Dipper beamed.

“So you're still with... Bill?” Liam questioned.

“Yeah. Things are going really well.” Dipper nodded, blushing a little. “We went out yesterday to a museum. And now I guess we're gonna go to an ice cream shop...”

“That sounds really nice.” Liam grabbed a tray, walking up to the hot lunch line. “I don't trust him very much... but it's good that you're happy.”
“Why don't you trust him?” Dipper questioned, putting food onto his tray.

“Ugh, he just... I don't know...” Liam muttered.

Dipper felt a tap on his shoulder and he turned to see his sister grinning at him. “Hey, Dip!” She said brightly. “Hi, Liam!”

“Hi, Mabel!” Liam brightened. “How are you?”

“I'm great! Everything is okay. I don't want to throw my dress into traffic or anything!” Mabel added some food to her tray. “Not at all!”

“Want some help with it? I'm pretty familiar with sewing and stuff...” Liam held his tray, looking at Mabel.

“My wonderful, fantastic roommate is really making things easy for me... Jen's being a gigantic help.” Mabel smiled, her eyes screaming that she was lying. “By, you know, SABOTAGING me. I would love some help.”

“Sure thing.”

The three of them headed towards the table, taking a seat. “Where were you yesterday, bro-bro?” Mabel took a bite of her food, glancing toward Dipper.

“I went out with Bill... we went to the museum and then we went back to his house to hang out.” Dipper opened a ketchup packet, applying ketchup to each individual fry before eating it. Mabel waggled her eyebrows and Dipper gave her a wry smile. “I wish. No... we haven't done anything like that yet.”

“Oh. What, really? That's gre-”

“I mean, he did give me a blowjob, but that's it.” Dipper interrupted.

Liam made a grossed out face and Mabel rolled her eyes. “Gross, Dipper!”

“Heh, sorry.” Dipper paused.

“I was going to say... that's neat that the two of you have been dating for a few weeks and still haven't done anything.” Mabel nodded. “I think that's a good sign.” she punched his shoulder.

“Yeah...” Dipper stirred his fries around with his free hand. “I mean, I'd like to, but he wants to take it really slow. Which should be good, it means he's into me, but... Yeah. Sorry to talk about him so much.” Dipper rubbed the back of his head. “So... anyway, there's this cool ice cream shop, we're going to go to. I guess it's called... Icy Ice Scream?” He paused. “It's supposed to be really good.”

“Oh, that sounds really good! If it's not a date, you should invite me. Invite Mabel.” Mabel grinned at him. “I'd like to go to the ice cream shop with you. If it is a date, we'll go later, right?”

“Right. We can all go. Liam, too. And I think I'll invite Chad, too.”

Liam slowly chewed his food, looking away. “Chad, too?”

“Yeah.” Dipper smiled. “The only friend I made myself since I got here.”

“What about me?” Liam pouted.
“I met you through my sister.” Dipper pointed out. “I meant made myself... but you're definitely my friend, Liam.”

“Thank you.”

“What about Bill?” Mabel pointed out.

“He's my boyfriend, not just a friend.” Dipper grew flustered. “Why all the questions?”

“Just wondering.” Mabel nodded. “Is he really the only friend you made?”

Dipper thought about the cipher committee. “Well... I've become acquainted with a few more people... but we're not particularly close. We're just united with a common goal.”

“What're you all talking about?” A bubbly voice cut across the table, and a tray clattered down.

“Hi, Theresa.” Dipper rubbed the back of his head. “My friends and I were gonna go to an ice cream shop...”

“Oh, cool!” Theresa took a seat, picking at her food. “Which one?”

“Hey, you're one of Dipper's friends, right?” Mabel went on.

“Uh, yeah!” Theresa nodded. “Of course.”

“Do you want to come with us? It'll be fun!” Mabel pressed. “Dip needs to hang out with friends more. He's a shut in.”

“I'd love to! Which one?”

“Icy Ice Scream...” Dipper shrugged. “Or something... it's weird.”

“Oh, I've heard of that place. Cool. Can Wilson come too?” Theresa asked, taking a drink of her soda.

“Sure! The more the merrier.” Mabel nodded. “We'll...”

Dipper tuned out and took a drink of his soda. Mabel was talking about him like he wasn't even there.

“You and Wilson are close,” Mabel went on. “You two together? He's pretty cute!”

“We're not really labeling it.” Theresa started eating, shrugging. “Anyway, let us know. We'll meet you there if we don't have class.”

“Sounds good.” Mabel hummed. “Let's trade phone numbers.”

“Oh... I don't have a phone.” Theresa waved her hand. “I'll take your number and I'll contact you with Wilson's phone, if that's okay.”

“Oh. Sure.” Mabel frowned. She recited her number to Theresa, and she wrote it down. “Oh, by the way, I looked that stuff up. Are your parents conspiracy theorists or something? That stuff was all on these really sketchy websites! I'm not sure it's true. Did you ask them?”

“No. Not yet.” Theresa put the number away. “I'll ask them as soon as I can.”
“Okay, because I'm super curious!” Mabel nodded. "This is a lot of people coming, Dip!"

"Yeah... no kidding. Theresa, Wilson, Liam, Chad, you and me, Bill..." Dipper paused.

"I'm gonna invite some of the girls too. Let's make this a big thing." Mabel nodded.

Dipper shook his head, smiling. "We're just going to get ice cream, Mabel. It's not a birthday party or something."

"There's always time for a party!" Mabel declared, getting to her feet.

"Preach it!" Theresa grinned, nodding.

"Thank you!" Mabel took a seat again, nodding. "Yeah."

Dipper shook his head, smiling. There went his sister, getting carried away again.
Hey guys, this is Everyday_Im_Preaching, RadioActivity's roommate and occasional beta.
RadioActivity got in a really, really bad car accident. One that is going to take a long time to come back from.
I feel like she would of wanted me to tell you that she loved all of you and every single comment was like Christmas to her.
I'm going to be with her every step of the way.
I hope that y'all understand---I have full faith that we'll have our author back in action in a couple months.
“I’ll do anything you want,” Bill whispered in his ear. Dipper tipped his head back, moaning as Bill trailed hot kisses down his neck, his hands sliding over Dipper’s bare skin. “I want you to fuck me,” Dipper moaned back, and Bill smirked. “Sure.” Bill laid him out on the bed, bare fingers travelling up his stomach and chest, causing Dipper to shiver with anticipation. He positioned himself between Dipper’s legs, kissing Dipper’s inner thigh. He looked into Dipper’s face, lining himself up, pressing the head of his cock to Dipper’s entrance.

Dipper flushed to his absolute core, wadding the paper up and tossing it into the trash. There was DEFINITELY something wrong with him. No way about it. Normal people didn't write this... ugh. Not to mention, Dipper didn't even know how Bill would do it. He had no idea how Bill would... Dipper daydreamed about it another few moments before breaking his thoughts away, turning instead to his monster story. “Trouble writing?” Chad asked. Dipper nearly jumped out of his skin. He hadn't heard him come in. When had Chad even come in? Just now?
“Ahh!” Dipper bristled. “I- uh- yeah.” He looked up at Chad. “I'm just working on something weird and so I'm gonna go back to this monster thing.” “Yeah, I know that feel. It's important to write and explore different venues... you never know what you might be good at.” Chad nodded.

“Hey, would you mind taking a look at my monster story?” Dipper asked.
“I wouldn't mind, lay it on me!” Chad brightened.
“Here you go.” Dipper handed it to him, leaning back in his chair. “We're all gonna go to an ice cream shop sometime this week. Want to come with us?”
“ Heck yeah. I love ice cream shops.” Chad grinned. “Thanks, man. Who's all going?”
“My sister, Liam... Bill, probably. Maybe.” Dipper fidgeted with his fingers. “Probably some of Mabel's friends.”
“Cool, yeah, I'll definitely be there.” Chad nodded, emphatically. “Just let me know when you want to go.”
“I will.” Dipper smiled.

Dipper fidgeted with his phone, before texting Bill.

It’s Dipper. Do you want to go to the ice cream shop alone?

The reply came quickly, and Dipper rolled his eyes at it.

Good morning. Also, not particularly. I'd like to go with you.

I meant just the two of us alone. Sorry.

What did you have in mind?

Mabel asked about going. We can go alone and then I'll go back with them later.

Do you want Mabel to go with us?

That was a question Dipper wasn't sure about. He spent a few minutes thinking about it, before texting back.
I don't know... It seems like fun, but at the same time...

We can always go back alone. I'm okay with it if you are. I'm free Monday afternoon. 3.

Okay. Thanks. I'll tell everyone.

“Are you free Monday afternoon?” Dipper asked.
“Yeah, totally.” Chad nodded.
“Okay, he says 3. We'll probably meet in the parking lot.” Dipper nodded.
“Cool, sounds good. Your story is totally awesome by the way.” Chad continued scanning the pages. “So far I'm pretty into it.”
“You really like it?” Dipper asked, eagerly.
“Yeah. It's really unconventional.” Chad agreed. “I accidentally read a page or so of the first story in here. Sorry about that. I didn't know it wasn't your monster thing.”
“Oh! I forgot, I'm so sorry.” Dipper gushed, his cheeks turning red.
“It's cool. To be honest, I really liked your style you used with it.” Chad nodded. “You did a good job.”
Dipper's phone went off and he checked it. “Thanks. That means a lot to me.”

Who's all going?

Mabel, Chad, Liam... maybe some of Mabel's friends, is that okay?

Sounds fine. Lot of people though. Easier to sneak away.

Dipper blushed, setting his phone aside. He leaned onto the desk, working on an essay. He looked forward to Monday. He shot Mabel a text letting her know when Bill was free and she responded back with vigor.

Sounds great!!! I'm available at 3.

Dipper smiled, leaning his elbows on the table, looking forward to his 'date'.
He encountered Bill in class on Monday and he smiled at him. “Hey.”
“Hey.” Bill took a seat next to Dipper, sliding down in his seat. “My car'll only hold three, so we should take two cars if Mabel's bringing more friends.”
“Yeah, that's a good point.” Dipper murmured. “I'm not sure how many Mabel's bringing.”
“We'll have to wait and see...” Bill paused. “... I bought the condoms.”
Dipper bristled, looking around the room. “O-oh?” No one was paying attention to them, so Dipper relaxed. “Anything good?” He rubbed his lips, a little embarrassed to be discussing this publicly.
“Yeah... do you like strawberries?” Bill questioned. Dipper giggled, unable to hold back. Bill grinned, a little at ease. “That question was unrelated. I was just wondering if you liked strawberries.”
“Right.” Dipper rolled his eyes, glancing over at Bill. “I'm not a fan, really...”
“Why is it too bad?” Dipper smirked back. “If it's just a casual question.”
“Mm... if you had to pick a favorite fruit... which would you choose?” Bill questioned.
Dipper rolled his eyes. “Just admit you got strawberry.” He stuck his tongue out.
Without a second thought, Bill leaned forward, capturing Dipper's mouth in his, nipping the tongue. Dipper yanked back, smacking against the other chair. His eyes were wide, his hands clamped tightly over his mouth. “Wh- Bill!” Dipper looked frantically around. There were a few people looking by this point.
“I got strawberry.”
The teacher entered the room, calling the class to attention. Dipper couldn't hear a word of it for at least another half-hour, too embarrassed to even pay the slightest attention. Once class was over, he
grabbed his bag, going to run out of the room. Bill grabbed his arm and Dipper suddenly smacked him with the bag, causing Bill to flinch.
“I cannot believe you did that,” Dipper said, in a hushed tone. “In front of everyone.”
“Settle down, Pine Tree.” Bill smoothed. “Hardly anyone saw... besides that, I'm not embarrassed. I'm with you, after all.”
“I just... I don't want to... in public,” Dipper sounded strangled, the color pouring into his face again.
“Not in public.”
“Okay, that's the last time I'll do that.” Bill reassured. “I got it.”
Dipper let out a sigh. “Thank you.”
Bill followed Dipper out of the room, reaching for his hand. Dipper looked at it, before tangling his fingers in Bill's. “Hey.” Bill squeezed Dipper's fingers. “I'll see you at 3.”
“See you...” Dipper murmured, squeezing Bill's fingers back. They went their separate ways.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks everyone for your support. After 40 days in the hospital (two weeks in ICU) I'm 80% recovered. Thanks so much, everyone who supported me. :}
Chapter 19 - The Date

The two groups met in the parking lot, Dipper heading straight for the front seat. Mabel grabbed him by the shoulder, yanking him to a stop, before following it up by screaming, “I CALL FRONT!” “NO WAY!” Dipper yelled, shaking her off, grabbing the handle. The two of them got into a struggle, Dipper threw himself into the front seat, trying to secure it for himself. Mabel grabbed him, dragging him out. “My boyfriend, my front seat!” Dipper continued. “That’s no fair!” Mabel shouted back, defending her shot call. “I called it! You have to honor a shotcall!”

Bill was smirking, leaning on the hood of his car, watching the two of them struggle. “You Pines twins sure are lively.” Bill watched their struggle, enjoyment spread in his smirk. “I don’t really care who gets front with me... just don’t kill each other.”

Dipper was tossed to the ground while Mabel flung herself into the front seat, shutting and locking the door. “HA!” Mabel's voice was muffled from inside the car. She fastened her seatbelt, looking proudly at Dipper, who tried to avoid looking at her. Dipper hung his head, climbing into the back. “Fine, you get it this time.” He frowned. Liam packed in next to him, and Chad packed in on the other side of Liam. “Next time, I get front.” He muttered the last line under his breath, trying to rude Mabel out. It did not work, to his disappointment.

“Mm, this seat sure is comfy.” Mabel went on, trying to piss Dipper off intentionally. “Pine tree,” Bill glanced up, meeting Dipper's eyes in the rear view mirror. “There's plenty of room here in my lap if you still want front seat.” He winked. “Uh... no. That's okay,” Dipper muttered, embarrassed. The offer was nerve wracking around three of his people. If it had just been him and Bill, he might have considered it. “Gross.” Mabel gazed out the window. “There's four of us in here, Cipher. Not all of us want to see that stuff.” “Yes, that's true...” Bill agreed, but he seemed unsettled, drumming his fingers on the steering wheel. “Maybe not the best idea today.”

Mabel's other friend honked her horn and the two cars headed towards the ice cream shop, Mabel waving at them through her window. “Hello!” she yelled, through the window, watching them try to answer her back through cars and the air both.

“Your sister's pretty badass, Dipper.” Chad offered. “Damn straight. My friend Mabel is the coolest.” Liam murmured.

“How's your writing been?” Chad questioned, looking over at him. “It's been... good.” Liam scratched his chin, looking a little away from Chad, their knees touching. “My new piece is really fun, but it's kind of hard for me.” “Oh really, tell me about it.” Chad nodded. “Hey, Pine Sister.” Bill tapped his fingers on the steering wheel, still a little anxious. “Why'd you want to be in the front seat with me so bad?” “I always want the front seat. It had nothing to do with you.” Mabel returned. “Plus, I didn't want you and Dip being weird up here.” “It's a romantic comedy... type story.” Liam paused. “I'm not good at comedy, but I thought I'd like to give it a try.” “Good call. I would have pulled over halfway and ravaged him while the rest of you watched.” Bill went on, amused.

“Bill!” Dipper flushed. “Can you not?” “It's always tough when you try out a new genre,” Chad nodded. “I'm gonna write a few more historical fictions before I get good at them...” “I can if I want to!” Bill returned, playfully.

Liam leaned towards Chad a little, resting his elbows on his own knees. “Yeah, you're pretty bad at them now.”
“Ouch. Thanks.” Chad grinned.  
Dipper leaned back, crossing his arms. “Takes two, Bill.”  
“Oooh,” Mabel added fuel to their discussion, looking smugly amused.  
“Relax, I’m just teasing, Pine Tree.” Bill looked out the window. “Right? You’re not really mad?”  
“Hmm... no, I’m not really.” Dipper glanced out the window. “Just be careful, I could be if you pushed me.”  
“... So I had a big comedy phase. If you want help, just let me know, alright?” Chad offered.  
“Sure thing.” Liam scratched the back of his neck.  
They chatted the whole way to the ice cream shop and both cars filed out of the car when they got there, heading inside, going through the line to buy their treats. “Want an ice cream soda, Pine Tree? I'll get it for you,” Bill ducked his head, grinning with enthusiasm at Dipper.  
“Yeah, I'd love to try one.” Dipper smiled up at Bill. “Thanks, Bill.”  
“We’ll take two ice cream sodas,” Bill told the girl at the counter. “And also, do you know anything about a code?”  
“Hmm, oh, wait.” She reached under the counter. “I was told to give this to anyone who asked.”  
“Thanks,” Bill held it up. He paid the bill, and he and Dipper moved to the table.  
They took a large corner of the ice cream shop, all digging into their treats with vigor. “What do you think, Pine Tree? Ice cream soda?” Bill pressed, looking eager.  
“It's really good.” Dipper agreed.  
“I see you got strawberry.” Bill pointed.  
“What can I say?” Dipper shrugged.  
“Dipper loves strawberries.” Mabel piped up. “I’m a vanilla fan, myself. With SO MANY SPRINKLES.” She shook her fist, before digging into her ice cream.  
“I knew it.” Bill nodded, confidently. “I thought he might like strawberry.”  
“You were right there. He eats strawberries like they’re – ouch.” Mabel winced when Dipper gently elbowed her, she wondering what the expression and rough glance was about.  
“I'm a peanut butter cup fan.” Liam added. “I got a shake.”  
“Mmm...” Chad paused. “I'm kind of all over the place. I usually get whatever calls to me. Today, it was a brownie turtle cup sunday.”  
“I just got a plain vanilla ice cream soda.” Bill stirred his drink, humming with pleasure.  
“Isn't that, like, a float?” One of the other girls questioned. “I got a root beer float.”  
“A float is completely different from an ice cream soda,” Bill repeated again, sounding frustrated.  
“Ice cream sunday here.” Someone else added to the conversation.  
“I just got a cone.”  
“This place is pretty nice. I like the atmosphere.” Chad offered.  
“Did you find this place, Dipper?” Liam asked, gazing up at Dipper.  
“Ah... sort of. Bill knew this place before, but I’d found it on my own, and asked him to go with me.”  
“I asked you to go with me.” Bill corrected.  
“Right.”  
“And you invited your whole crew.” Bill added.  
“I’m glad I was invited. Thanks, Dipper.” Liam grinned at him, and Dipper smiled and nodded back.  
“No problem.” Dipper smacked the top of Liam’s arm, smiling to show his amusement.  
“They have a really nice arcade,” Liam pointed out.  
“ARCADE?” Mabel leapt to her feet, looking towards the arcade.  
“As soon as you finish your soda, I want you to step out back with me.” Bill gestured with a thumb.  
“I want to show you something.”  
“I'm sure.” Dipper gave him a look, but looked down at his soda, embarrassed. Mabel took off for the arcade machine, a few of her friends in tow. “... Is it something I’ve seen before?”  
“It probably is.” Bill rested his elbows on the table.  
“Alright, it'll be a few.” Dipper swirled his straw, embarrassed. He finished his drink, and Bill finished his a moment or two later, and they trotted off to the back, slipping out the back door.
Bill pulled Dipper a few feet away from the door, pushing him against the wall, stroking his cheek with a gloved hand. “Sorry to pull you away. It's just so hard, having to share you and your attention with all these other people.”

“Hey. You said you would be okay with hanging out with my friends,” Dipper frowned. “I am okay with it. I just wanted to sneak you away for a single moment to have you for myself.”

Bill leaned in, kissing Dipper fast and hard, their tongues wrapping together with passion. “It's okay, right?” Bill murmured in his ear. “That I steal you for just a bit?”

“Mm,” Dipper tried to speak around his tongue. “I- yeah...” He pulled Bill back into another hungry kiss, not ready to call it quits just yet.

The kiss was ended very abruptly. Bill lifted his head rapidly, breaking the kiss without warning, digging his hands into Dipper's shoulders, yanking him toward him. Dipper's world went totally white for a second, as if something hard struck him across the back of his head, a glancing blow that caused Dipper to stagger, unsure what had happened. The pain was real though and Dipper had no idea where it came from.

Bill was turned to face someone, the entire scene was blurry and Dipper had to force himself to concentrate. “What is WRONG with you?” Bill was snarling, facing away from Dipper already, causing Dipper some confusion about what had happened. “Why did you do this?”

As the scene began to clear up, Dipper's eyes widened. Liam was standing there, a wooden stick lying at his feet, and a horrified look on his face.

“I didn't mean to hit Dipper! I... I was aiming for you!” He turned to face Bill, fists clenched. “I was aiming for you!”

“Well, you hit Dipper and now I'm pissed,” Bill snarled, setting Dipper down on the ground gently. He turned to face Liam, strolling towards him, one hand curling into a fist as he walked. “Trying to hurt me is fine, but I won't let you hurt Dipper.”

Liam took a step back, lifting an arm to protect his head, and Dipper leapt to his feet, staggering. “BILL!” He shouted. “Wait. Please wait.” Bill stopped, turning to face Dipper, waiting. “L-Liam is my friend... I'm sure there's some kind of misunderstanding...” Dipper managed.

“Is there? This stick has nails in it. What if one of those nails pierced your skull?” Bill was furious, and Dipper was actually a little frightened of him. He'd barely seen Bill like this and it terrified him, but he tried to calm himself so he could talk to him rationally.

“Or yours... luckily it didn't, though... I want to hear his explanation.” Dipper pleaded. “If I had been stabbed, or you had, I would definitely not be so lenient, I promise.”

“I... I'm really suspicious of Bill! The more I see of him, the more suspicious I get!” Liam was shaking his head violently. “He never takes off those gloves, he wears an eyepatch, he's just super weird! I was sure he was hiding some kind of dark crime or secret... He does all that sneaking around late at night... hiding slips of paper everywhere, communicating with these, weird... secret people. Talking to no one!” Liam threw his hands up. “I was afraid for you, Dipper. I swear I didn't mean to hurt you.”

“But you were trying to hurt me.” Bill frowned. “Dipper, this is one of the many reasons I told you it would be dangerous to be with me.”

“I don't care.” Dipper said, his head starting to clear up. His vision was still a little shaky but it was clearing up as they talked. “Even if Liam doesn't like you, it's not going to change anything.”

“I am a little odd... You thought I committed some weird crime that I needed punishment for...?” Bill asked Liam, curiously. “… You want to see what's under my eyepatch?”

“Yeah! Take it off!” Liam clinched his fist.

Bill reached up and undid the eyepatch from the back, lowering it to his side, the fabric clenched in his hand. Liam's eyes widened at the sight beneath it and he staggered back, tripping over himself, falling to the ground. Behind the eyepatch was a large, circular scar that went from below Bill's eyebrow to the bone below the eye, a thick, completely sealed scar that left no trace an eye was ever there.

“I've taken it off. Now do you know why I felt like I needed it?” He paused. Liam was silent, gaping at it, before looking away. “You wanted to punish me for something I'd done... I've spent my whole
life in punishments for things I've done. I can't imagine what I must have done to deserve as much punishment as I've gotten. I lost my eye as punishment... I've suffered punishments you couldn't think of, for arcane reasons... And the only thing I've ever gotten in my life that was good... was the boy you struck trying to hurt me.”

Liam was dead silent, refusing to say a word.

“If you hurt Dipper again... you will disappear. And I will disappear. I'm untraceable, untrackable, and in no system ever made. No one will ever find me to avenge you.” Bill looked down at him, serious. “Dipper is the only good thing I've ever had. I won't let you stop that. If Dipper decides to leave, I'll let him, and wish him well... but I won't let you interfere.”

He turned to face Dipper, kneeling down. “Are you okay, Pine Tree?”

Dipper reached up, rubbing his fingertips across the scar tissue, with a reverent expression on his face. Bill jerked away, lifting the eyepatch back over his scar. Dipper grabbed his wrist. “Wait.” He murmured. “It's okay. It's a part of you I haven't touched or seen... I'm upset that it happened, but I want to pay my respects to this new part of you.” He stroked Bill's cheek with his fingertips, before tilting his head forward, a slow and steady movement, before placing a single kiss on the bottom of the scar tissue, before lifting the eyepatch, applying a gentle kiss to the center of the scar.

Bill jerked Dipper's head down, kissing him in a deep, hungry passion, one that left Dipper breathless, wondering what came next.

Bill pulled away, putting his eyepatch back on, turning to face Liam. “Even in spite of knowing it's dangerous, in spite of everything, he still wants to be with me. See that? He wants me. You should give up... You'll forever be his guy friend and nothing more.”

“Bill, don't be mean to him.” Dipper squeezed Bill's arm, before getting to his feet. He walked over to Liam and knelt down, hugging them tight. “I'm sorry.” Dipper paused. “I should have... tried to discuss this with you more. I should have gotten more about how you felt about Bill, I should have tried to address this instead of letting it build up.”

“I'm so jealous. What does he have that I don't?” Liam whispered. “Ugh...” Liam scrubbed at the tears running down their face. “... I'm sorry that I did this. I'm sorry to both of you. It was stupid. It was really stupid. I should go to jail... I...”

“You're not going to jail.” Dipper said, gently.

“He's not?” Bill raised an eyebrow.

“No.” Dipper shook his head. “He made a series of mistakes, and I don't think he's going to do anything like this again... he's my friend, after all. I can't send him to jail.”

Bill let out a long, slow breath. “... Fine.”

“Thank you, Dipper.” Liam spoke softly. “Do you think, if I'd met you before Bill...?”

“I'm not going to answer that.” Dipper cut him off. “That's not a question you should be thinking about or an answer you should be hoping for. This is what happened. And this is what happened. There's no way around it. Okay?”

“You're right.” Liam sighed. “... Thank you.”

“No problem.” Dipper stood up, helping Liam to his feet.

“Hey, Pine Tree.” Bill walked up behind him, putting an arm around his shoulders. “You wacked your head pretty hard, huh? You seem to still be having trouble walking... we should really get you somewhere to rest.”

“What are you talking about?” Dipper frowned as Bill pulled him inside the ice cream shop, Liam following after them. Liam immediately took a seat in his chair when they reached it, hands folded in his lap, embarrassed by the entire event.

Bill held Dipper tightly by the shoulders as they stood in front of everyone. “Hey. Dipper slipped and hit his head super hard outside... it was a real nasty tumble, you know? I think he needs to go somewhere he can rest. No offense to the Dark One over there but I don't think you're gonna keep a good enough eye on my Pine Tree. If he's got a concussion...” Bill clicked his tongue, his brow lowered in concern, fingers digging into Dipper's shoulders. “You know?”

Chad listened a moment before nodding seriously. “Yeah, I get you. Watch him. Thanks.”

“I feel fine,” Dipper protested.
“So I'm going to take him back to my place... and I'll keep a really good eye on him.” Bill smirked. “Okay? Right now. We're going to head there. He needs his rest.”
“What are you talking about?” Dipper questioned, getting annoyed and confused with the whole ordeal. “Bill, I'm really-”
Mabel paused, watching them a moment. “Yeah, concussions are nothing you should play with. Just, you know, make sure you have him back in time for his first class,” she waved the discussion off, winking at Bill. “Keep a good eye on him, Cipher!”
“Oh, I'll definitely do that. Come on, Dipper. Do you need help walking?” Bill lowered his head, crooning at Dipper.
“I can walk fine.” Dipper protested, embarrassed to be treated with such care in front of all his friends. “No need to worry about me. I'm fine...”
“Be good, you two.” Mabel called after them.
Bill ushered him out of the building and toward his car. “I thought we'd NEVER get out of there,” Bill complained, unlocking his car. “Come on, Pine Tree. Now I actually have something to show you.” He climbed into the car.
Dipper stood outside the car, blushing, but after a moment, and a helpless glance toward the ice cream parlor, trying to decide if he wanted to enter the car. Finally, he got into the car, shutting the door, trying not to be embarrassed. “Alright, here we go,” Dipper murmured, putting his seatbelt on. “Let's get going. I can't wait to see whatever you want to show me.”
The half-goofy grin Bill gave him made Dipper's stomach flip and he turned to look out the window, trying to be settled. Dipper was more nervous than he wanted to be. He was working at being more relaxed, but when Bill looked at him the way he just did, it was a little difficult. He suspected Bill wanted to show him something really embarrassing, and he didn't want clarification of that fact until he got it a little later. He scratched the side of his neck far away from Bill, trying to gather himself. The whole thing, in front of his friends – just deathly embarrassing. Bill immediately greeted him by giving his hand a squeeze. “Yup! Let's go!” Bill declared, amused, before taking his hand back and starting the car, going to leave the parking lot.
Dipper kept his eyes out the window, trying not to notice how quiet Bill had gotten since the trip started. Blush built up in his cheeks and he tried to remain calm. The whole thing was oddly embarrassing, and Dipper just had to stay relaxed. Whatever happened today was just whatever happened.

Bill was holding the steering wheel with two hands by now, glancing out the window just a moment to check for traffic before pulling out into the road, driving along. He noticed Dipper's embarrassment, and he chuckled to himself. “You doing okay, Pine Tree?”

“Yes! I'm fine,” Dipper managed, embarrassed. “Don't- don't worry. I'm just thinking about something that happened the other day.” He was embarrassed even more by his lie but Bill didn't seem to catch it, just drumming his fingers on the wheel.

“Oh, okay. You just seem a little extra embarrassed. I'm trying to figure out if I embarrassed you that bad or if you feel okay. That hit was pretty hard, luckily the blow only glazed you. It would have really hurt if I hadn't moved you.” Bill went on. “I'm pretty sure of it. The crack on the wall was pretty loud.”

“... Was it?” Dipper scratched his cheek, embarrassed. “Thanks for moving me out of the way. I didn't even notice he'd come out.”

“Paying attention to something?” Bill asked, amused.

Dipper's chest burned and he focused harder on the window. “Yeah, you, jerk.” He muttered, trying to gather his nerves. Bill's taunting was really getting to him with his nerves so on edge anyway... Dipper would not let him win. He would not.

Bill chuckled. “Well, I'm pretty good at paying attention. Sounds like we got lucky. That hit would have been a tragedy if I hadn't noticed he was coming with a weapon.”

Dipper's cheeks burned. “Yes. Thanks again.”

“Well, I couldn't let you get too hurt.” Bill glanced out the door window, and Dipper slid down a little in the seat.

Should I... um, thank him by... Dipper ruffled his hair. Does Bill like road head? Why am I wondering that? Probably. Okay, go for it. Gathering his nerves, Dipper turned in his seat, pushing his seatbelt out of the way on the top, trying to convince himself the choice he'd decided to make was correct.

“Uncomfortable?” Bill questioned, curiously. He glanced over in surprise as Dipper leaned toward him, reaching over the middle console, rubbing the crotch of his pants through the fabric. “Oh – nope. Maybe not uncomfortable.” Bill glanced out the door window hard, trying not to be embarrassed.

“Do you like road head?” Dipper questioned, smiling cutely, but Bill could hardly look at him between his focus on the road and side window, away from Dipper.

“I... probably.” Bill managed, still not looking at Dipper. “I've never had it before, so...”

“Well, you're getting a treat then,” Dipper went on, cheerfully. “You okay with driving and getting
“Blown?”

“Um... yeah,” Bill chewed lightly on his cheek, glancing down as Dipper undid the button of his pants, going boldly for the zipper next. When Dipper's hands wrapped around his length, Bill shivered in pleasure, trying to watch Dipper in between his frequent glances toward the road. “Maybe we should park for a minute...” Bill went on, trying not to blush.

The feel of Dipper's hot fingers on his length felt amazing. Bill was ready to park as soon as he could find a good place to. The next place they encountered that seemed good to park at for this kind of thing, he would. Without thinking about it.

“Hmm... you can if you want,” Dipper purred towards him, his own member twitching in eagerness. “But the act of driving at the same time, surely that's interesting, right?”

“Yeah, taking a little more of my concentration than I want to. I'd love to be completely invested in what you're doing, actually.” Bill went on.

“Well, we're going to continue this where we're going, right?” Dipper went on, his voice teasing.

“Definitely,” Bill nodded firmly and Dipper laughed, trying to cut his laugh off, trying not to embarrass Bill.

“Well, great. Let's have some fun then.” Dipper murmured, his voice low, moving across the middle console, taking his tongue and running it up and down Bill's length. Bill continued glancing between him and the road, finally finding an empty looking parking lot near a closed grocery store, and he pulled into it, parking quickly.

“Don't tease me too much, Dipper,” Bill ran his fingers through Dipper's wild hair. “If you do, I'll tease you like hell when we get to my place.”

“Hmm, my favorite.” Dipper looked up at Bill, a smug smile on his face before going back to working the length with his tongue. Bill let out a few noises of pleasure before digging his nails into the door arm rest.

“Well then, I certainly don't mind to tease you back later.” Bill managed, watching Dipper's work, feeling the pleasure build in his lower body. “I have more plans than just snuggling with you tonight.”

“Great. I look forward to experiencing whatever you're going to do.” Dipper's eyes sparkled with amusement as he looked up at Bill, meeting his eyes, fingers rubbing up and down Bill's leaking length.

“I'm gonna put this inside you if that's...” Bill sucked in some air when Dipper rubbed the tip with his fingers, looking amused. “Okay.”

“I can't wait.” Dipper went on, playfully. “We'd better head that way or we'll never get there if you stay parked.”

“I just really want to watch what you're doing. I can say I haven't experienced anyone doing this to me before.” Bill uttered. “It feels really good.”

“It'll feel better at home,” Dipper reminded, meeting his eyes.

“Right.” Bill shivered. “Then you'd better stay hands-off until we get home. Otherwise I'm just going to want to park right here until you're done.”
“Or until you’re done,” Dipper smiled, the expression unusually darker than Bill would have expected.

“I'm not good at second... orgasms, so, don't get...” Bill uttered before letting out a low moan. “Ugh. Dipper, careful. I'll probably only come once today.”

“Well then, don't finish,” Dipper smirked, before lowering his head to lick the length.

“You're gonna kill me, Pine Tree,” Bill muttered, his eyes looking hazy. “Telling me not to come while you blow me on the way home to screw you.”

“Heh, okay...” Dipper pulled his hand away, his smile more of a smirk now, and Bill admired the expression on his partner's face. Bill tucked himself back into his pants, sealing himself away, redoing his pants.

Dipper was startled when Bill swung across the car, climbing over him, drawing him into an extremely deep kiss, Bill's hands rubbing and stroking their way tauntingly across him, causing Dipper to break the kiss, breathing a little erratically. “Ah – That feels really good.” Dipper gripped Bill's waist. “I can come multiple times though, so don't worry about me.”

“I'd rather your first time be while I'm deep inside you,” Bill muttered into his ear, causing Dipper's member to twitch with want.

“Ah, we have to hurry home. I can't take much of this teasing either.” Dipper muttered, turning away. Bill kissed and licked Dipper's neck, playing with the sensitive expanse of his throat.

“Young wish is my command,” Bill smirked in response.

Once they made it home, Dipper entered Bill's house, his hand intertwined with Bill's. He couldn't believe they'd bailed on the ice cream parlor like that, but... Bill seemed really enthusiastic about the two of them going here... Dipper flushed, wondering what Bill had planned, before Bill tugged him away towards the bedroom. “Woah,” Dipper murmured. “You're really enthusiastic...”

Bill pushed Dipper down onto the bed, kissing him with a sudden passion. He broke the kiss to murmur. “Of course I am... After a display like that.”

“What do you mean?” Dipper managed, around Bill's impassioned kisses across his throat, moaning softly as Bill scraped his teeth across Dipper's adams' apple.

Bill continued nipping at Dipper's skin, before pushing Dipper's shirt up, beginning to kiss at the soft skin, teasing it with his teeth and tongue. It was fairly clear to Dipper that he was unlikely to get an answer, so he just closed his eyes and focused on the sensations, feeling Bill's body pressing against his.

Dipper opened his eyes, staring at Bill's face, his eyes glazed over. Bill moved back up, drawing Dipper into another kiss, feeling Bill's hands all over his body, touching him everywhere all at once. Bill was undoing Dipper's pants, kissing his way down, and Dipper flinched. “Wait... Bill, what are-”

Bill literally growled and Dipper's eyes widened. He had never been so turned on in his life. He raked his gloved fingers through Bill's hair, lifting his hips towards Bill, pleading, “Then do it.”

Bill kissed and nipped through the outside of the fabric before beginning to slow down a little. He
paused, nuzzling it, before sighing. “You're right. I was about to mess it up.” He kissed Dipper through his pants again, looking up at Dipper. “Where's your condom?”

Dipper reached into his pocket and handed it to Bill. Bill removed it, removing Dipper's pants, rolling it onto his partner's length. Dipper inwardly swore. He was sure Bill was about to have sex with him. Damn his mouth.

Dipper sat up on his elbows, watching Bill work his dick with vigor, each swirl of his tongue and hot caress sending waves of pleasure through Dipper's body. “Aah... You've... you've gotten the hang of this fast...” Bill continued working, increasing his speed. Dipper licked his lips, watching with pleasure, making small noises when he grew close. He gripped Bill's hair harder, arching his back a little. “...close.” he managed, his tongue thick. Every long, hot lick of Bill's tongue on his shaft, and every stroke of Bill's gloved hands... the wet heat of Bill's mouth around his head, it was building to a peak, and slowly things started to fade from his vision. He dug his fingers into Bill's head, arching his back, crying out as he came hard into the condom, shuddering and pushing Bill back, his cock pulsing from the finish, terribly oversensitive now.

Dipper panted, rolling to his side and sitting up. “Your turn now,” he murmured, leaning forward, brushing his lips across Bill's. “Go get your condom.”

Bill nodded, getting to his feet, taking long strides toward the bedroom. Dipper lay across the bed, waiting for Bill to return. Bill came back a moment or two later, holding the condom in his hand. Dipper unanimously agreed to make this incredibly long and slow, just to torment Bill. He climbed off the bed onto the floor, his legs spread and tucked behind him, hands between his knees.

“Get on the bed.” He tilted his head towards it, not looking away from Bill. Bill moved toward the bed, seeming a little clumsy and awkward.

“You're certainly in control now, aren't you, Pine Tree?” Bill murmured, around his hand, as Dipper crawled in between his legs, looking up at him.

Dipper grinned in response. “Whenever I want to be...” he pressed against the bulge, nipping the length of it up and down, very gently nipping at Bill's balls, causing Bill to flinch hard, sitting back. He unbuttoned and unzipped Bill's pants, pushing the boxers down, causing Bill's erection to spring free. “Mm... it's a nice one. Nice and thick,” Dipper hummed. Bill licked his lips, watching with anticipation.

“Damn, Pine Tree,” Bill muttered, around his hand. “Fuck.”

“Hmm? Relax... I haven't even touched you yet.” Dipper looked up at him, before opening the condom, rolling it onto Bill, flicking his eyes up at him.

Bill snorted before wincing in pleasure. “You're a tease.”

“Not as bad as you. Look at the size of this thing... You've really been holding out on me.” Dipper wrapped his fingers around it, beginning to stroke the shaft, lowering his head to it. “Mm... I can't wait to have this buried inside me.”

Bill shivered, leaning back on his hands. “Pine Tree, just...”

Dipper dragged his tongue across the tip and Bill drew in a long breath, hissing through his teeth. “Just what?”

Bill watched through half-lidded eyes, seeming unable to speak. Dipper smiled, pleased, before taking just the tip into his mouth, swirling his tongue around and across it. He dipped his head low,
sucking hard as he took the entirety of Bill's dick into his hot mouth and Bill moaned, surprised. Bill leaned back until he was almost flat on the bed, hands tangled in Dipper's hair, struggling to watch. Dipper focused his entire attention on the length, occasionally tossing in a swirl, or lifting his mouth from it, it releasing from his mouth with a pop. He loved watching how Bill was absolutely falling apart under his tongue.

Dipper also loved how Bill's dick filled his mouth, wondering how it would feel buried in his ass to the hilt, stretching him out, filling him completely. Needless to say, he was starting to get a littlehard again thinking about it.

“I'm sure you just want to come, you probably don't care about my showboating...” Dipper murmured, rubbing the strawberry-flavored head across his lips. “But I want to hear you cry out when you come. I want to make you practically scream.”

Bill licked his lips, his face looking vacant, eye trained on Dipper's. Dipper was sure Bill was observing so he could improve his own technique... He was looking forward to Bill's new technique... just... later. After Bill had ridden out his next climax inside Dipper's pulsing ass. Hopefully.

“Nothing?” Dipper questioned, watching him. He paused, lifting his head. “You should take off your eyepatch. I want to see you.”

Bill reached up, undoing his eyepatch, dropping it to the side, his breathing labored. “You're so sexy, Pine Tree. Fuck.” Bill managed. “I wouldn't have guessed that-”

“I could be so absolutely filthy?” Dipper questioned, looking up at him. “Mm... I sure can. I wish you could see what I was thinking about while doing this.” Before Bill could respond, Dipper dropped down, taking the whole thing in his mouth, bobbing his head up and down on it with a good speed and pressure.

Bill moaned loudly, arching his back, his fingers tangled in Dipper's hair. He started lifting his hips, trying to meet Dipper's movements. Dipper sped up, and Bill leaned back further, his mouth open, letting out nothing but a soft moan. His moan broke and turned into grunts and finally, he dug in hard, letting out a very loud noise that was exactly like what Dipper was looking for.

He panted, lying back. “Pi- Pine Tree...” Bill cleared his throat. “Pine Tree, I...” He was at a loss for words as Dipper crawled onto the bed, curling up with him, resting his head on Bill's shoulder. “Fuck. You are really, really good at that.” He murmured.

“Mm.” Dipper looked up at the ceiling. “Wait until you see what else I can do.”

Bill darkened, heat creeping over his neck and face. “I'm sure.”

Dipper nuzzled against Bill. “Bill?”

“Hmm?” Bill questioned, looking over.

Dipper took his hand, placing it on his crotch. “Could you take care of this?”

Bill licked his lips, surprised. “Again?”

Dipper nodded, encouraging Bill. “Please?”

“I could never say no to you.” Bill rolled over on top of Dipper, looking down at his partner. “We'll keep doing it until you're satisfied. Next time, we'll fuck for real. If you want to.”
“I do.” Dipper licked his lips, looking forward to Bill's improved efforts.

Later that night, Dipper found the paper they'd gotten from the ice cream shop. He started deciphering it while Bill read his textbook.

*Final keyword: sundayorcone*

Dipper sat up. “We did it! Bill, this is the last one!”

“Oh, great...” Bill glanced at the clock. “You could be too late though...”

“What do you mean?” Dipper questioned, before it dawned on him. “It's the 22nd!” He sat up in a hurry. “Bill, it's still 11:20! We can make it!”

Bill let out a sigh, setting his textbook aside. “Sure. I know you want to win.” He slid out of bed, picking up his hoodie from the side of the couch. “Let's get going.”

Dipper slid out of bed, heading toward the front door. “It's so weird that I'm still dressed.”

“Well, hopefully you get used to it.” Bill murmured.

They climbed in the car and took off for the Quad. Dipper stumbled in, waving a paper. “I've got it! I've got the final keyword!”

“Which one?” the voice announced.

“Sunday or cone,” Dipper announced.

“Congratulations, Dipper Pines. You will not have to walk the stage.” the voice announced. “The rest of you will have to appear at the stage tomorrow. I'll email you the files you need for tomorrow. Good night.”

“What are we going to have to do?” Wilson questioned, rubbing the back of his neck.

“I don't know...” Lyra frowned. “Good going, kid... wish I'd had Cipher to help me cheat.”

“What?” Dipper was surprised. “What do you mean?”

“It's clear that Cipher had something to do with all this.” Lyra pointed at Bill. “In fact, I bet he's the one who made the ciphers in the first place.”

“You're ridiculous!” Dipper clenched his fists. “You're just angry because you didn't win!”

“I hope you enjoy your shallow victory.” Lyra crossed her arms. “I can't prove that Cipher had something to do with this... but you'll never convince me differently.” She strolled away, leaving Dipper to deal with the situation.

The others cast Dipper with annoyed glances, leaving him standing there with Bill. Bill put a hand on his shoulder. “I'm sorry, kid.” Bill murmured. “Being with me will cause you trouble... I'm just sorry you had to experience it again.”
“No, it's okay.” Dipper turned to face him, holding his hand. “We'll be alright.”

“Hopefully this'll be the worst thing you have to experience...” Bill paused a moment. They started walking back toward the car. “People will be mean to you because of me... They'll blame me for your problems, they'll say I did things that I didn't do.” He ruffled his blonde hair, seeming annoyed. “... Dipper, how long do you think we'll be together?” He unlocked his car as they approached it.

Dipper's eyes widened, and he seemed to think about the question. “Honestly, I don't know... But I'd like to take it as far as we can,” he finally decided. Bill stopped him, kissing the backs of his hands.

“Good.” Bill murmured, turning back to the car, getting inside. Dipper climbed into the car as well, smiling to see Bill smiling. Dipper felt good to think that he'd answered the question in a way that had made Bill happy.
Chapter 21 - Secrets

At school the next day, Dipper walked with Bill toward the cafeteria, Dipper smoothing out his shirt. It was a little rumpled from being worn the day before, and Dipper was a little embarrassed to be obviously wearing the same outfit for two days. At least no one knew. “I can't believe we missed my first class,” Dipper grumbled. “I keep thinking maybe I should go change...”

“Pine Tree, you were insatiable last night, what was I supposed to do?” Bill shrugged, throwing his hands out. “Of course we overslept a little.”

“Mm, I don't know. I'm glad you didn't leave me like that.” He laced his fingers with Bill's, swinging their hands. Bill smiled a little. “It was a lot of fun, actually,” Dipper purred, meeting Bill's eyes.

“I would never.” Bill responded, smirking. “Want to go back to my place and redo it properly?”

“If I didn't have a full list of classes today, I'd probably be headed towards your car already.” Dipper smirked back.

“Hey, yo, Dip!” Dipper didn't immediately recognize the voice, and looked around to figure out where it came from. He recognized Chad coming towards him, waving at him. “There you are. I thought I'd never run into you.”

“Uh, hey. What's up, Chad?” Dipper rubbed his hair, a little nervously. “I wasn't expecting to see you this morning.”

“Liam is wanting to talk to you. Are you okay with that?” Chad asked, sticking his hands in his pockets. “He's in the library.”

“Oh, sure, I'll go see what's up with him.” Dipper stuck his hands in his own jacket pockets, looking towards Bill. “I guess I gotta go. I'll see you later.” He let out an embarrassed squeak when Bill grabbed his ass, returning it with a smack to Bill's forearm. “I'll see you later,” Dipper repeated.

“Yeah, yeah. I'll see you later. Maybe tomorrow. I'm not sure yet. I'm decently busy all days but I can make time for you if I have to.” Bill smirked, heading off, leaving Dipper to glare after him.

“Alright, the library.” Dipper turned to look at it. “Let's get going?”

“I'm not actually allowed to go with you.” Chad rubbed his upper arm. “I wish I was but Liam said I probably shouldn't be there. Afraid he'd get nervous or something probably.”

“What's he going to talk about?” Dipper questioned, his brows knit in confusion.

“Well, he needs to talk to you, and it's about Bill, so if he brings up something else, that's not why you're there.” Chad reminded, firmly. “He needs to talk to you about Bill.”

“Oh, okay. I'll try to keep that as the main point,” Dipper muttered, rubbing his hat. “In case he doesn't bring it up.”

“Good luck, man. You might need to remind him that you're there to talk about Bill. He gets nervous when he's got to talk about serious stuff.” Chad crossed his arms. “He'll almost never bring it up himself.”

“Okay, I got it. I'll just bring it up if he doesn't.” Dipper nodded. “Thanks for the tip.”
“No problem. I’ve talked to him a few times and usually I have to bring the conversation up myself, because he almost never does.” Chad frowned. “Good luck, again.”

“Thanks. See you.” Dipper waved as he headed to the library. He spotted Liam sitting at a table surrounded by books of various kinds, leafing frantically through the book in his hand. Liam looked up, surprised.

“Oh, you are here.” Liam set the book down, leaving it open. “I wasn't sure if you were out today or where you were.”

“No, Bill just kept me late at his place. I missed my first class.” Dipper rubbed his head. “I slept through it though so it's not that big of a loss, I guess.”

“I'm so sorry about hitting you. I really am. I never meant to strike you. I wanted to knock him out.” Liam muttered.

Dipper chuckled, looking away. “Well... He usually deserves it. Chad said you wanted to talk to me specifically about Bill. You mind if I take a seat?”

“N-no. Go ahead.” Liam scratched his nose, embarrassed. “I have plenty of room.”

“Lot of books.” Dipper remarked, taking a seat.

“Yeah, just a ton of research. Always,” Liam paused, knitting his brows. “Okay. Bill is up to something.”

“You think or you know?” Dipper questioned, tilting his head.

“I... know. Here.” Liam reached next to him, setting a light purple bag on the table. “Reach in. The glass vials, Bill covered the entire campus with them. I took all of them I could get to.”

Dipper’s brows knotted but he reached his hand into the bag, feeling a massive amount of glass in the bottom. He gently grabbed and pulled out at least four glass vials resting in his palm. “These are... Codes? Dipper removed the caps on them – they’d all been opened, Dipper assumed it had been Liam, and he read the choppy messages inside. “... These are... codes?” Dipper’s brows knit harder. “... This is insane. How many of these are in there?”

“A little around... a hundred?” Liam scratched his head. “He planted them all night. I couldn't get the ones in the buildings but I got all the ones outside.”

Not all of them. Dipper thought about the few they’d found outside. Unless Bill planted those so I'd find them on time. Why did he trick me... all of us ... like this?

“Why did he do this?” Dipper muttered, stunned. “Why did Bill plant all of these?”

“I have no idea.” Liam shook his head. “I assume there's something going on that I don't know about, but that's a lot of codes. I watched him personally plant all of them. I can't understand what the papers say inside the vials but I think there's something going on that I had to tell you about. Bill is up to something terrifying. I tried to act like it never happened but I couldn't. This whole code thing, it's too weird.” Liam ducked his head. “Why did he plant over a hundred vials like that? He even got campus help to go into the buildings at night. I just don't get it.”

Dipper drummed his fingers on the table. “… I don't get it either. I guess I'll have to take some of these and ask him. Maybe I'm just overthinking this.”
"I hope I am too. Let me know if it comes up suspicious. I would love Bill to be marked suspicious by you, of all people.” Liam looked toward the ceiling. “I mean, I know I'm suspicious too, but this is a ton of codes.”

“It is a lot.” Dipper took the four in his hand and tucked them into his pocket. “I'll ask him, but I'm a little scared of his reaction.”

“Ask him a little publicly if you're scared he'll lose it.” Liam offered. “It's better to be safe than hurt.”

“That's true. I'll ask him in the cafeteria.” Dipper zipped his pocket. “... I'm scared shitless but I have to find out why he planted these.”

“Good luck, Dipper. Thanks for believing me.” Liam sighed, running his fingers through his hair. “I'm surprised... if I were you, I wouldn't believe me.”

“... I believe you. You're not sketchy to me.” Dipper smiled at him. “Guess I'll go find out what these papers are. I'll talk to you later.”

“Later, Dipper.” Liam smiled back at him and Dipper went to the cafeteria, finding Bill sitting there, staring out the window. Dipper gathered his courage and went over to the table, taking a seat.

“Hey, Bill. Got a break before class?” Dipper worked up a smile, smiling at Bill.

“Yeah, my class was canceled.” Bill shrugged.

“I need to ask you something,” Dipper took a deep breath and unzipped his pocket, lying the four vials on the table. “Did you plant all of these?”

“... Someone saw me?” Bill questioned, raising an eyebrow. “That's why no one won. The codes were all taken.” He opened one up, looking it over. “Yeah, you couldn't have had these. Someone rigged the game.”

“... Did you plant them?” Dipper repeated, looking up at Bill.

“Yes.” Bill replied, resting his elbows on the table, putting the cap back on the vial, putting it back with the others. “I did.”

“Why did you plant these?” Dipper frowned.

“The leader of the secret society ordered me to plant all of them. I only made about half the codes but I didn't make yours.” Bill looked at Dipper, studying him. “Or mine. The leader insisted on handling that part.”

“Did he know we were going to work together?” Dipper frowned.

“I guess so. We were under watch from the leader the whole time.” Bill sighed.

“Who is the leader?” Dipper scowled, annoyed.

“I can't tell you. I'm not allowed to.” Bill muttered, studying the table.

“... I'm really upset that you did all this and I didn't know about it.” Dipper crossed his arms tight, digging his fingers into his arm. “What am I supposed to think?”

“Well...” Bill paused. “I get it if you're mad. I just didn't want you to know I was forced to participate in that game.”
Dipper was silent a few moments, his chest burning with every breath he took. “I just... I feel... hurt. I really hoped you weren't involved like this.”

“Well... I was. And I'm sorry. I get if you're mad. I really deserve it.” Bill held his hands up.

“I am mad. This whole thing is just gross.” Dipper got to his feet, gathering the vials into his pocket, sealing them back with his zipper. “I thought you were my friend but the whole time you were helping the enemy.”

“I was forced to.” Bill uttered, before sighing. “I get it.”

“I need time to think about this. I feel betrayed. BETRAYED.” Dipper repeated, his voice sounding hurt. “I hope you got what you wanted.” Dipper left the cafeteria, needing to think about everything he'd heard.

He skipped a few more classes that day, choosing to stay in his room and reflect on what he'd learned. Bill had been involved in the secret society since the beginning – and Dipper had no clue until after the first event.

Dipper hit the bed with his fist, making a noise of annoyance. How had Bill kept something like that from him so easily? The leader had “forced” Bill somehow and Dipper wondered how he'd done that. How could Bill keep secrets from him without even thinking about them?

Dipper was glad Bill wasn't there. Dipper just wanted to punch him in the face, so he was glad Bill was far away for the moment. His phone made a noise and Dipper checked it. Liam was sending him a message inquiring about his conversation with Bill and Dipper let him know that Bill had agreed that he'd planted the codes.

Liam responded with surprise and Dipper replied with how angry he was with Bill for hiding that from him and Liam offered his sympathy. Dipper set the phone down and returned to his sulk, looking with surprise when the door opened.

“Oh, hey. Man, you're never here at this time,” Chad said, surprised. “Class cancelled?”

“I didn't bother going. I'm so mad at Bill I can't stand it.” Dipper returned, annoyed. “Bill was hiding stuff from me for the whole time I've known him.”

“Oh, wow.” Chad muttered, looking dull. He scratched his cheek before sighing. “Geez, that's got to be hard. I don't think I could date someone who was full of secrets like that.”

“Yeah, I told him I need a break from him. I can't even stand thinking about him right now. He's full of lies,” Dipper seethed.

“Well... I mean, were the secrets dangerous to you? If not, maybe he just thought it was best not to involve you.” Chad scratched the back of his head before adjusting his hat, pulling it back down. “I mean, he has to have a reason for being that secret. Or I think he would, anyway.”

“He just said someone forced him to hide a bunch of stuff.” Dipper seethed. “I'm so furious I can't even stand it. It wasn't like he couldn't tell me he had to hide all that stuff. I knew the stuff existed, I just didn't know he was involved with making and hiding it.”

“Well, whoever made him hide the stuff must have something on him,” Chad muttered. “I mean, why else would he hide that stuff from you?”
Dipper sighed. “I guess... I just don't get why he wouldn't tell me anything when I confronted him about this.”

“Well, it must be a pretty big deal or he would tell you, I think.” Chad murmured, thinking deeply. “I mean, Bill's kind of a big secret anyway. He's got something to hide or he wouldn't need to hide it.”

“Yeah, maybe.” Dipper muttered.

“I'm gonna work on homework,” Chad pointed at his desk. “If you need me, just call and I'll talk to you.”

“Sure. I'll let you know,” Dipper muttered.

There was a knock at their door and Dipper glared at it. Chad cleared his throat. “I'll get that,” Chad offered. “I'll be back.”

“If it's Bill, I don't want to see him.” Dipper muttered, angrily.

“Okay, I'll let him know if it's him,” Chad offered, going to the door.

He stepped out, shutting the door behind him, leaving Dipper burning with curiosity. A few moments later, Chad returned, and Dipper studied him, wondering who that had been.

“Was that Bill?” Dipper asked, annoyed.

“No, it was Liam, wanting to check on you. I told him you were okay for the next hour, then I got to scoot to class.” Chad checked the time on his phone.

“Oh geez, my sister would lose it if she heard any of this.” Dipper checked his phone. “I'm so glad she doesn't know.”

“Sister can be a pain?” Chad asked, tucking his phone into his pocket.

“Well, no, but she can be overbearing, that's for sure.” Dipper sighed. “She'd really be too... much.”

“She shouldn't find out unless you tell her,” Chad shrugged. “So you're fine.” He moved over to his desk, putting a laptop from his backpack onto the desk, sitting down to work.

“Yeah, that's true.” Dipper muttered, unmoving.

The door rattled again and Chad sighed. “I'll get it again.” He got to his feet.

“Why is our door so frequented today?” Dipper complained, burying his face in the pillow.

The door opened and Dipper stayed unmoving. He moved, startled, when someone sat on his bed and he was angry to see it was Bill. “What are you doing here?” he spat.

“I came to see you. I knew you were angry but I hoped the hours would have calmed you down. I didn't want to hurt you with the secret,” Bill tried to assure, but Dipper just shot him an annoyed look. “I just had to keep the secret or we wouldn't be allowed to be together.”

“Really, why?” Dipper returned, annoyed. “Why wouldn't we be allowed?”

“The leader would have made my life miserable if I hadn't kept the secret.” Bill paused, making a face.
“The leader sounds like an ass.” Dipper scowled. “Why would they make you keep that secret?”

“I'm better at codes and secrets than them.” Bill returned with a smirk. “Of course, I've spent my life learning them... The leader didn't.”

“Bill, do you really like me?” Dipper insisted. “Or is this some kind of game?”

“I've liked you from the moment I met you. You're a lot of fun...” Bill leaned back on his hands, looking over at Dipper. “Keeping the secret wasn't my idea. I wasn't allowed to tell you. I would tell you everything if I could.”

“Tell me a secret, and I'll believe you more.” Dipper returned, annoyed.

Bill looked toward the ceiling. “Well... it is just the two of us. I suppose I could tell you something.” He turned, pinning Dipper down, smirking. “Okay. Hold still.”

Dipper tried not to move, panicking internally when Bill started whispering something in his ear and Dipper closed his eyes tight, trying to focus. When Bill pulled away, Dipper opened his eyes and stared at him. “Really?... I can't believe that's true...”

“I promise it is.” Bill leaned forward, rubbing his nose against Dipper's cheek.

Dipper flushed, trying to focus. “W-well... y-you're not unattractive at all-”

“The elders insisted and wanted me punished.” Bill moved in, lying next to Dipper. “Regardless of what the people my age thought – most of them wanted me... the elders thought I needed to be punished.”

Dipper lay his head against Bill's, looking at the ceiling. “The leader was really going to keep us apart?”

“Easily.” Bill replied, looking at the ceiling. “So I hid the papers and kept the secret. Because I like you.”

Dipper sat up, moving over top of Bill, taking an embarrassed seat. “Well, we can... fool around a little. If you want to.”

“You could lay on top of me so we can talk too, if you want,” Bill smirked at him and Dipper lay down on Bill, nestling his head on Bill's shoulder.

“Sure...” Dipper murmured. “… I was just so mad about your secret, Bill.”

“I know. It was a furious secret.” Bill kissed Dipper's fingers, which he lifted to his lips. “I wish I could have told you. But I wasn't allowed.”

“I believe you.” Dipper murmured. “I just... I am hurt still, but I'm glad you would have told me if you could.”

“I promise I would have. That's why I'm so glad you found out. I wanted you to know.” Bill paused. “I wanted you to know. But I couldn't tell you. It was so annoying that I couldn't tell you. There's a hundred things I want to tell you.”

“I'll listen.” Dipper looked up, meeting Bill's eyes. “If you want to tell me anything.”

“I'll tell you as they come up.” Bill kissed Dipper's forehead, before looking toward the ceiling. “You mean so much to me, for real. Don't forget that, okay?”
“... okay.” Dipper sighed. “I'll try not to. Just don't make me mad again, okay?”

Bill smiled, looking over at Dipper. “I'll try not to.” He reached his arm up, squeezing Dipper's upright shoulder. “You don't have to worry about making me mad. A lot of people make me mad but I don't think you ever would. If you do though, don't come visit me until I indicate to. I'm not a calm angry.”

Dipper smiled a little back. “Got it. I'll keep my distance until I get invited back.”

“Good call.” Bill looked toward the ceiling again. “I'm not safe to know when I'm mad.”

“I wanted to hit you in the face earlier so it's good that you weren't here then.” Dipper replied, sulkily.

“A fate I deserve.” Bill nodded. “Feel free to hit me if you think I deserve it.”

“You deserve it often,” Dipper replied, amused. “I missed all my classes today.”

“Mm, a day off now and again is good for you.” Bill answered, kissing Dipper's forehead. “It won't be a problem that you missed them, will it?”

“It's the first time I've missed any classes.” Dipper looked up at him. “No problem. I'll just gather the homework and get it done.”

“Good idea. I missed mine too.” Bill smirked, amused. “Trying to figure out how to make you less angry.”

“It worked mostly,” Dipper sighed, closing his eyes. “Good call coming to visit me, but if I ever get really mad, don't come visit until I ask you to.”

“Heh. Sure.” Bill chuckled amused, and stared at the ceiling. “Glad you weren't that mad.”

“In the end, the secret wasn't harmful to me.” Dipper paused. “So... I can't be too angry. If the secret affects me directly, at least tell Mabel and she'll tell me.”

“Will do.” Bill held him tight, letting the silence fall between them. “You know, I know someone who would love to meet Mabel. I should get her over. The two of them would be close.”

Dipper chuckled. “Well, okay. Get her here and give it a shot.”

“I could try but she's pretty busy.” Bill chuckled back. “Melanie is pretty hard to get ahold of. I'll try it and hope we see her soon. She used to be available much more before the last few years.”

“What happened the last few years?” Dipper questioned.

“We got busy.” Bill shrugged.

"Don't get too busy for me," Dipper muttered, looking up at him. "I'll be mad if you do."

"I won't," Bill smirked in return. "Don't worry."
Dipper held Bill's hand tight as they walked toward the cafeteria. “Is... is this okay? You haven't really eaten today, have you?”

“It's okay, I have food in the cafeteria. They hold it for me in the fridge.” Bill smirked back, lifting Dipper's hand to his mouth, giving it a kiss. Dipper looked away, flushed.

“W-well, that's... that's really nice of them.” Dipper managed, embarrassed. “I wonder if that's something they'd do normally or if you're special to them.”

“Hmmmm... I think my parents had to talk to them,” Bill hummed. “Not sure. Why? Are you thinking about it?”

“Oh, no... I can't cook at all.” Dipper admitted. “So no cooked food from me. My sister really loves cooking though. She might like something like that.”

Bill let out an odd noise when he felt a hand come up, and cover his eye.

“Guess who?” A girl giggled, hanging off his back.

He removed her hand forcefully turning around and backing up. “Melanie? What are you doing here? I literally just asked you to show up.” Bill questioned, his tone accusing as he raised an eyebrow to study their new guest.

Dipper assessed the girl quickly. She was short and petite, a few inches shorter than Mabel. Her strawberry blonde hair was pulled back into ponytails, and she had a large side swept bang that covered her front eye. She was wearing a pair of white cotton gloves on her hands, and a spring dress that showed off her enormous chest and long, fit legs. Dipper struggled not to stare. Whoever 'Melanie' was, she was super attractive.

“Well, I missed you. Isn’t that obvious? I saw your message and pretended I didn't so I could surprise you.” Melanie looked up at him through her long lashes. “Oh! Is this him? Is this your precious Pine Tree?” She marched up to Dipper, looking him over. “He's such a cutie. This is the guy you used to pretend I was, right?”

Bill let out a long breath, ruffling his hair. Dipper grew flustered at her last statement, unsure how to understand it. “…This is Pine Tree. Pine Tree, this is Melanie. You don't really need to know, because she's leaving but I thought I'd be nice.”

“Mm... he's a cutie. Let's have a threesome!” Melanie turned to Bill, grinning with enthusiasm. “Can't we?”

“No.” Bill crossed his arms.

“Come on. A threesome would be so fun.” Melanie took Dipper's arm. “Come on, you want to, right?” she asked Dipper, nuzzling her head against Dipper's, bumping his hat playfully. “Have sex with me and him?”

“No way.” Bill grabbed her by the shoulder, pulling her off of Dipper. Dipper's face was burning a crimson red, imagining Melanie and Bill. The two of them were certainly attractive enough to produce a nice image. “Leave him alone, Melanie. Even I haven't had sex with him.”

“What? No way. Bill, you're crazy about sex. Didn't we have sex like four minutes after we met?” Melanie gestured. “How long have you two been knowing each other?”

“A while,” Dipper ruffled his hair.

“... And you haven't fucked him? That's a crime,” Melanie frowned at Bill.

“Melanie, can you kindly fuck off?” Bill frowned.

“Well, you're the one who should be fucking off,” she gestured at Dipper. “Huh?” she gestured with vigor.


“I know you want to, you imagined I was him throughout our entire relationship, so why haven't you?” Melanie gestured even harder to Dipper.

“Melanie!” Bill barked, angrily. “Enough!”

“Well - wait, this isn’t actually the reason I came by.” Melanie raised her hands. “Although meeting
“Why are you here?” Bill repeated, his tone aggressive, putting his arm around Dipper protectively.
“I actually came to say goodbye.” she rocked on her heels.
“Goodbye? Where are you going?” Bill stuck his hands in his pockets.
“I’m going on a journey. A long one.” Melanie gave him a smile. “I just… wanted to say goodbye to
you especially.”
“Oh…” Bill gave a half-cocked smile. “Your long-awaited journey.”
“Yes.” Melanie looked up at him.
“I know I said I’d go with you, in the past, but… I’ve got something important to do. Sorry.” Bill
tipped his head toward Dipper.
“Oh, I know. You can’t go with me.” Melanie waved him off. “Didn’t ask you to. Just take care of
your partner, okay?”
“… You know what, before you go, you need to meet someone.” Bill scratched his arm, looking
towards Dipper.
“Oh, Bill. Come on… I don’t want to drag this out…” Melanie muttered, awkwardly. “I just, I need
to get going-”
“Oh, come on! You can hang around a little while!” Bill said, loudly, a big grin on his face. “Pine
Tree! Call your sister. Tell her to come here.”
“Bill, I-” Melanie was cut off by Dipper.
“Call Mabel?” Dipper was baffled. “Well, it sounds like Melanie needs to-”
“I asked you to call your sister.” Bill turned to look at Dipper, his expression deathly serious.
“Please?”
“I am calling her now,” Dipper dropped his eyes to his phone, wondering what was going on. He
dialed his sister. While it was ringing, he could hear them talking.
“Bill, why do I need to meet this girl?” Melanie frowned. “What are you doing? You said you
wouldn’t interfere.”
“Just meet her.” Bill crossed his arms.
“Hi, Mabel. Can you come meet me? I’m outside the cafeteria.” Dipper bit at his thumbnail. “Yeah,
sorry. Oh, you are? Awesome. See you in a minute.” He hung up, pocketing his phone. “She’s on
her way here.”
“Great!” Bill raved, putting an arm around Melanie, holding her shoulder tight. “You’re going to
really like her, Mel.”
Melanie’s face looked pinched, like she was annoyed. “Bill, quit meddling.”
“Oh, why would I do that? It’s not as fun!” Bill grinned.
“Hey, Dip!”
Dipper turned to face his sister, hearing her call across the grounds. “Hey, sis, come here!” Mabel
walked up to Dipper, her hair looking wild and clothes messy. “Woah, what happened to you?”
Dipper questioned, surprised.
“Oh, I’ve just been working on my dress. Working hard. Haha.” Mabel put on a forced smile. “You
know. No sleep. Just work. Mabel Juice! No time to sleep! I have to handstitch and alllllll work!
Yes, I'm unbelievably busy.”
Melanie’s eyes grew wide and she took a step partially behind Bill, clutching the fabric at his side.
Bill turned to look at her, and his grin widened. “Mel, you’d better go introduce yourself.” Melanie
shook her head. “Mel.” He repeated.
Mabel knit her brows, rubbing the back of her head. She strolled up to Melanie, holding her hand
out. “Hi! I’m Mabel.”
Melanie gripped Bill’s shirt harder before shaking Mabel’s hand, quietly. “I’m Melanie. Brooks.”
She said.
“Sorry. She’s shy around new people.” Bill gave Mabel a smile. “Hey, Shooting Star. Why don’t
you take Melanie here and show her around the campus?”
“Bill, why are you doing this?” Melanie pleaded, softly.
“Uh… well, I’d love to, but she doesn’t look like she wants to-”
“Great! Melanie, go. Go get shown around campus by uh, Mabel here. Go on.” Bill pushed her toward Mabel.
Melanie whirled. “Bill, I—”
“Mabel, take her.” Bill frowned. “Show her around. Please.”
“...I-uh, sure. Come on. Let’s go see the campus.” Mabel took Melanie’s wrist. “Okay?”
“I...um...” Melanie turned her face away from Mabel, avoiding meeting her eyes. “Fine. Yeah. For a little while. Thank you.”
“Great.” Bill seemed relieved. “Go on, have fun!” He waved as they walked away to take a tour of campus. He turned to Dipper, smiling a little. “Text Mabel and tell her to keep Melanie with her as long as she can.”
“Why? Bill, what was that all about?” Dipper demanded, brows knit, arms crossed. “What was all that?”
“Melanie’s planning on killing herself and if anyone can change her mind, it’s Shooting Star.” Bill said, arms crossed. Dipper’s stomach lurched. The way Bill said it was so nonchalant - almost like he just didn’t care.
“You’re making Mabel... deal with...” Dipper stuttered. “What if - what if she can’t?”
“You want to know something fun?” Bill ignored Dipper’s statement. “Mel used to live in Gravity Falls. She first saw your sister at that Sock Opera performance.”
“Oh god, don’t mention that performance,” Dipper ducked his head. “That’s something I want to forget.”
“Anyway, she wanted to be friends with her but Mel’s terribly shy.”
“You said she lived in Gravity Falls? I’ve never met Melanie!” Dipper protested. “And - Mabel never forgets a name or a face.”
“Melanie doesn’t have the same either one of those,” Bill went on, cheerily. “Which would explain that, and Shooting Star never met her. I told you she watched her. Nothing more than that.”
“So... if Melanie likes Mabel... you think that’ll help convince her not to kill herself?” Dipper paused. “You really think?”
“Could be.” Bill shrugged. “Worth a try.”
“Okay. I’ll tell Mabel.” Dipper shot her a text. A few moments later, he got a reply.

_Holy cow that's pressure_
_I'll try_

Dipper put his phone away. “She says she’ll try.”
“Best we can do.” Bill looked after them. “I told her I wouldn’t try to stop her when the time came but somehow, I couldn’t let her do it.”
Dipper’s eyes widened. “You told her you wouldn’t stop her?”
“We’ve lived a very hard life, Dipper.” Bill crossed his arms.
“...I guess so...” Dipper murmured. “...I, um, I have a question.”
“Shoot.”
“...Why aren’t we having sex?” Dipper finally blurted. Bill turned his head to look at Dipper, looking baffled. “Seriously. It’s been a while. The most we’ve done is some oral... why don’t you want to have sex? Is there something wrong with me that you don’t want to do it?” Dipper ducked his head.
“Shit. No! Of course not! How could you think... how could you think that I wouldn’t want to... ugh.” Bill rubbed the back of his head.
Dipper let out a long sigh. “So. What is it?”
Bill was silent a moment. “Okay... you’re going to laugh at me.”
“I’ll try not to.” Dipper murmured. “Just, tell me. Because if it’s some reason like... you don’t want to have sex with a guy, or something like that, we’re not going to work out.”
“It’s not that at all,” Bill murmured, frustrated. “It’s... I’m waiting for the perfect time.”
“The perfect time?” Dipper questioned. “What do you mean?”
“I mean... like... candlelit dinner, romantic walk, long sensual kisses and then take you back to my place and everything is exactly the right way...” Bill gestured with his hands. “... I wanted everything to be right.”

Dipper let out a long sigh. “... Bill, that's... I thought there was something wrong. I thought you didn't want to have sex with me, or that I wasn't attractive to you, I thought maybe you didn't like sex, or maybe you were going to break up with me, or any number of things.”

“No! Never.” Bill crossed his arms. “I just wanted it a certain way, and then you said you weren't quite ready, and...”

“I was actually just trying to say I didn't have a condom... not that I wasn't ready.” Dipper blushed. “... I... I want to show you something, but you have to promise to read it at home.”

“Oh, your story about how you feel about me?” Bill brightened. “Sorry I kept you waiting for sex for so long...”

“Yes, my story. But at home, okay?” Dipper rummaged in his backpack, removing the notebook, handing it to Bill. Bill clutched it to his chest.

“I'll read it with pleasure.” He looked eager. “And... how about... we go out on Saturday?”

“Saturday would be lovely.” Dipper kissed his cheek. “Now, let's get to that talent show.”

Bill rolled his eye to the sky, staring up at the clouds. “That thing is so stupid. Wait until you see what we have to do.”

Dipper smiled, following after Bill. “I can't wait to see it.”

The talent show, as Dipper found out, turned out to be hilarious. The losers had to be on stage and do a silly group dance for a solid three minutes, and they looked like they were completely not into it. Bill looked the least into it, but he put up with it. Dipper laughed his way through it.

Afterwards, Bill went home and Dipper went to his room, taking a seat at his desk, letting out a deep breath. It had been a long day. His phone went off and he checked his texts.

Bro.

What is it, Mabel?

Dipper could roll his eyes at the completely descriptionless text from Mabel.

Did you see her?
Did you see how hot Melanie is? Did you?

Dipper let out a long sigh.

Yes.

Dipper, she's a goddess. She is a 5'3” goddess I would go gay for her in a single second. I think I might have

I'm not sure that's a good idea.

Dipper's phone rang and it was Mabel. With a sigh and an eye roll, he answered it. “Hi, Mabel.”

“Dipper, I think I'm in love.” Mabel spoke clearly into the phone.

“You're in love a lot.” Dipper sighed.

“This is totally different. Dipper. She's amazing. I... I can’t even fully tell you about it.”

“What did you all do? It’s pretty late.” Dipper checked his watch. 11:02.

“We walked around campus and I showed her every last inch and then we went and got lunch. She paid for the nicest restaurant I’ve ever eaten at. It was so luxurious.” Mabel paused. “Then... uh... we came back to my dorm, and we hung out for hours, getting to know each other. Then she fell asleep on my bed. That's where she is now.”

“Oh, wow. She’s asleep in your room? I guess you really are keeping her close by. Did you
convince her not to… you know.” Dipper gestured.
“She… uh… well. Yes. She won’t be trying to do that anymore. She said she’s going to live her life for me. Well, I mean, because I want her to, not… not anything weird.” Mabel paused. “Dipper, I'm in love. She's so... so perfect. Ugh!” Mabel faceplanted the desk. “I don’t even know if she likes girls,” Mabel muttered into the desk.
“I didn't know you did,” Dipper murmured, surprised.
“I do now.” Mabel responded. “I like her.”
“Live her life for you, huh? Sounds kind of… servient.”
“No! I- I didn’t mean it like that. She mis- misunderstood me.” Mabel stammered, embarrassed.
“Dip, I tried to say, live her life because I wanted her to live her life… I wanted to get to know her. She laughed and told me that she would live her life for me but I had to take responsibility. She loves teasing, I guess.”
“Mabel, I think it might be kind of dangerous... Melanie's friends with Bill, so... I think it could be kind of dangerous.” Dipper paused.
“I don’t care. I… Dipper, she’s so fun, and so… wonderful. Everything about her. I would feel like I lost my chance at the best person I’ll ever meet if she did what she was planning on.” Mabel professed.
“… well... good luck, then.” Dipper paused. “I hope it works out.”
“Will you ask Bill?” Mabel begged.
“Ask him what?” Dipper questioned, surprised.
“Ask him if she likes girls.”
“I will not!” Dipper frowned. “I don't know, Mabel. Maybe she does. I think you should find out though... She asked Bill if we could have a threesome, so she seems adventurous.”
“What? Surely she was just kidding…” Mabel seemed surprised. “She seems way too shy and nice to ever do something like that. I hardly could get her to talk for most of our meet up.”
“Just telling you, I was there. I heard her suggest it.” Dipper sighed.
“What did Bill think?” Mabel questioned, curiously.
“He was against it really seriously.” Dipper returned, with a sigh. “I wish he’d just fuck me already.”
“Well.. alright. I'll find out if Melanie likes girls on my own. Thanks, Dip.”
“No problem. Talk to you later.”
“You too.”
That night, Dipper thought about calling Bill. He was so curious about what he thought about his writing, he practically couldn't stand it. He didn't want to be clingy... but he really craved Bill's presence. Dipper rested his elbows on the table, trying to combat his loneliness with thoughts about practically anything. Finally, Dipper decided to call Bill anyway. Just a few minutes. He dialed him up and listened to the ring.

A moment or two later, Bill answered, sounding as goofy as possible. “Hiya, Pine Tree. What's going on?”

“Oh... nothing.” Dipper paused. “...Just thought I would call and see how you were doing.”

“Hmm...? I'm not quite sure what to think here, Pine Tree. Sounds like you're missing me.” Bill hummed, his voice pleased.

“It's weird because I just saw you.” Dipper admitted. “But... yeah. I miss you.”

Bill was silent on the other end of the line for just a moment. “Me too.”

“I wish I could see you,” Dipper admitted, embarrassed. “I really do miss you, as weird as that is.”

“I'd cuddle up next to you, kiss every exposed inch of you...” Bill purred into the phone, causing Dipper to blush.

“Oh, geez,” Dipper managed, too embarrassed to go on. “I'd... I'd like that a lot. Um, how's... how's the story going?” Dipper asked, embarrassed to ask.

“I wonder how what you'd write now would compare to what you wrote then.” Bill paused. “... Would it be different?”

“I'm not sure.” Dipper paused. “I think so.”

“Good to know.” Bill hummed. “... It was good though, really. I think you could really be something as a writer.”

“Do you?” Dipper managed, Bill's comments causing a blush to spread across his neck.

“Yeah. Maybe you ought to give that a try.” Bill paused. “At the least, keep it in mind.”

“Thanks.” Dipper murmured.

“Turned me on a little, I had to go take a shower. Whew.”

Dipper could hear the teasing and somewhat exaggerated tone in Bill's voice and it made him smile. “Only a little? I wonder what you'd think if you could see all the half-written pieces in my trash can.” Dipper returned, playfully. “They're, uh, not friendly for anyone except us.”

“Better not tell me about those, I just got out of the shower.”

Dipper chuckled. “I understand... I should get off here. I have homework.”

“You alone in your room?”
Bill’s voice was kind of cocky and playful and Dipper burned to hear the rest of his dialogue. “Y-yeah,” Dipper muttered, embarrassed.

“So am I.” Bill leaned back in his seat. “Want to play around a little over the phone?”

Dipper’s skin burned down his neck and he moved to the bed, taking a seat on it, glancing nervously toward the door. “Uh-huh... I'd love to hear whatever you're going to offer.”

“I'd love to have my dick in your ass but that's not yet. Few more days before I get to experience that treat.” Bill smirked.

Dipper breathed out. “I wish you knew how excited I am about that.”

“Saturday,” Bill purred. “I can't wait.”

“Me either,” Dipper breathed out, tipping his head back. “I bet your dick will just be amazing inside of me. I literally can't think about anything except you right now.”

“I've got time, but not enough to go get you and make tonight our time,” Bill said, playfully. “So we'll have to talk it out on the phone. Sound good?”

“Yeah. Damn. Okay, I rub your dick with my long fingers until it's hard under my hand, and then I coat you completely with lube, hungry for it.” Dipper whispered in the phone. “I really want this, Bill. I'm so ready.”

“So am I.” Bill tipped his head back. “Imagining how bad you want it is fun.”

“I add some of the lube to my own hole, settling myself down on your lap. Slowly I position you and slide down, taking your dick into my hungry ass, exactly what I've always wanted.” Dipper trilled, listening to the noise Bill made of pleasure.

“Geez, imagining all of this is just insanely arousing,” Bill breathed. “I bet your ass is burning hot and super tight around me... I literally just can't even wait for Saturday.”

“I move up and down, taking your dick deep inside me and then letting it slide out. I know it's going to feel amazing,” Dipper purred.

“You feel amazing stretched around me,” Bill managed.

Dipper continued describing until he came, and he listened in pleasure as Bill came over the phone, breathing heavy.

“Hell, Pine Tree, you're just wild. I expected you to get nervous and blush and stutter but... you really didn't,” Bill managed, his voice rough. “I literally can't wait for Saturday.”

“Me too.” Dipper purred into the phone. “I'm going to make sure we do whatever I want.”

“What I want too,” Bill protested. “I'm just... a little nervous.” He admitted.

“Me too. Nervous and excited. See you tomorrow.”

“See you tomorrow.”

Dipper hung up the phone, slipping it into his pocket. It felt weird talking to Bill on the phone. It helped him feel better, but it wasn't the same as feeling the warmth of his body, the feel of his cotton gloves... He knew better than to think he'd get anything done on his homework. He went and
cleaned up. Afterwards, he sat down to write an updated chapter of his story with Bill, wondering, as Bill had, how they were different. Right now, it wasn't even about having sex with Bill.

Dipper just craved him being there, sitting or lying next to him, hearing his sassy voice or discussing unusual things... now that the hunt for ciphers was over, what was going to be his excuse for seeing Bill as much? When Dipper really got down to it, there was no realistic reason why he'd see Bill on Tuesdays and Thursdays anymore... they didn't have class together on those days or anything like that.

Dipper crossed his arms, lying his head on them. The thought felt stupidly lonely but he continued with it. It was a weird feeling because Dipper had never wanted to see his other partners this much. He'd been around, but Bill somehow felt different, and Dipper just didn't know why.

He sighed and continued to write, wondering why he felt like this. He'd literally seen Bill not even six hours ago. He needed to get over it, he thought. He would see Bill in the morning.

Dipper flinched in surprise when something smacked the top of his head lightly. “Mornin', Pine Tree.”

“M-morning,” Dipper grabbed the thing hitting him, finding it to be his notebook. “Thanks.” He put the notebook away. “How are you doing today?”

“A lot better now that I get to see you.” Bill took a seat next to Dipper, his hands in his hoodie pockets.

Dipper felt the same way. It felt really good to see Bill. His boyfriend. He looked away, embarrassed. “Yeah... I wrote more to that last night.”

“Did you? I was wanting to see that.” Bill brightened. “Can I read it here? Should I read it at home?”

“You can read it here.” Dipper passed the stapled pages over, and Bill began to read.

Bill read for a while, even reading through some of the teacher's lecture, finally closing the pages and refocusing on the class.

Dipper was burning with curiosity, wondering what Bill was thinking. It was a very, very long class period. When the teacher finally dismissed the lecture, Dipper put his things away, finding it hard to breathe for waiting.

Bill handed the pages over and Dipper tucked them away. “W-well?”

“I'm really glad that finally you're starting to feel the same way I do.” Bill responded.

Dipper blushed a little, embarrassed by the straightforward response. “How do you stand it?... I... I don't get this feeling very much. It's like I'm hurt and missing something, all the time. But when you're here...”

Bill reached out, taking Dipper's hand. “When you're here, I'm in a totally different place. Nothing hurts.” He kissed the back of Dipper's hand, glancing up at him. “Sometimes it's hard to breathe because of how strong my feelings are for you.”

Dipper blushed a little, feeling the softness of Bill's gloves in his hand, wondering if he would ever feel like that. If you'd asked him a month ago, he never would have said he could feel like this.
Anything was possible. “It's kind of a scary feeling, isn't it?”

“Mm...” Bill murmured. “At least we're both here to feel it together. If you're ever lonely, you can always call, anytime.”

“Okay.” Dipper looked away, embarrassed. “I should get to class.”

“Me too.” Bill glanced around the classroom, an amused smirk on his face. “I'll see you tomorrow?”

“Um...” Dipper paused. “Sure. I can't wait.”

“Okay, tomorrow.” Bill offered.

“Okay. Sounds good.” Dipper nodded. They walked out of the classroom together, going their separate ways.

At the cafeteria, he ran into Mabel and Melanie, they were sitting with Mabel's friends – Dipper couldn't remember any of their names except Liam, but he'd met them before. It looked like Melanie had been accepted to the group easily without a second thought.

“What's with the gloves, Mel?” one of the girls asked.

“Um,” Melanie paused, ducking her head. “I have a weak immune system, so...”

Dipper smiled a little. It was a terrible lie, but the girls immediately caved, apologizing and showering Melanie with encouragements. The truth was, if Melanie had a bad immune system, a pair of gloves she wore constantly were no different than her own hands. “Hi, mind if I join you?” Dipper asked the tableful, glancing around it.

“What do you think, girls?” Mabel asked. “And Liam.”

Everyone laughed, ushering Dipper to join and he took his seat. “Thanks everyone. Hi, everyone.”

“Where's Bill?” Melanie questioned, looking up at Dipper.

“Oh – uh, I don't know. Normally he likes to work on his homework in the cafeteria... but he might be at the library.” Dipper looked around. “Sorry I can't be more help.”

“It's okay. I didn't want to see him anyway.” Melanie rested her elbows on the table. “What do you think of him?”

“Huh?” Dipper questioned.

“I asked what you think of Bill.” Melanie looked up at him. “Like, I know you're dating and all but my question is still valid.”

“Oh. Well... I like him. A lot.” Dipper admitted, softly. “At first, I really wasn't sure, but... I'm glad I figured it out.”

“That's good.” Melanie murmured. “He always talked a lot about you. I never understood it before, but I do now.”

Dipper wasn't sure how to respond to that. He was silent, eating a few moments, before he froze solid to hear what Melanie added next.
“It was usually sexual, you know. He thought a lot about you sexually.” Melanie added. “He made me pretend to be you and then did me the way he wanted to do you. Often.”

“Oh...” Dipper managed to mutter, his face crimson, his fork wavering. “Uh... Well... That's... good. I've imagined... that too. A lot. It's good to hear that he's been thinking about that stuff a long time...”

Melanie smirked at Dipper, spearing her food with her own fork. “He really has. I got tired of pretending to be you really quick, honestly.”

Dipper flinched when he felt a hand snatch his hat, and he turned to face Bill, standing there with a smirky look on his face.

“Hey, Pine Tree, come sit with me.”

“Why don't you come sit with us?” Dipper protested.

“I don't want to sit near Melanie.”

“It's mutual.” Melanie responded.

“You came to find me, Mel. You must've done it for something.” Bill pointed out.

“My reason is gone. Now you're useless to me.” Melanie smiled.


“Okay, okay.” Dipper got to his feet, picking up his tray. “Sorry, everyone.”

He carried his tray over to Bill's usual table, taking a seat at the empty end of it. Bill set his books down on it, taking a seat next to Dipper. “You Pines Twins sure are predictable.”

“What do you mean?” Dipper questioned, baffled.

“Just... the two of you gravitated straight to Melanie,” he gestured with his head. “Personally, I'm kind of glad, she needs some outside friends. But I knew the two of you would really like her. I don't see why, but I knew the two of you would see something in her.”

“That's really mean,” Dipper shook his head, smiling a little. “She's really nice.”

“She's needy.” Bill muttered. “Not to mention she can't do her own work half the time.”

“What do you mean?” Dipper questioned.

“Ugh, I had to bail her out on her ciphers so many times... and help her with her assignments... then she wants to enroll here and make me do all the work on her paperwork? Ugh. But I knew she'd like Pine Sister.” He gestured toward Mabel. “Ol' Shooting Star saved my ass. I should do something nice for her.”

“When you say like... what do you mean?” Dipper questioned.

“What do you think I mean?” Bill asked.

“I don't know. Do you mean... like... romantically?” Dipper dug a little deeper, curiously, wanting to know whatever Bill knew, but without coming off weird.

“Hmm... I don't know. Probably more like sexually.” Bill turned to look at Melanie. “See, she's
acting weird. I bet she came onto your sister pretty hard a couple times and she didn't even notice. Since Mabel's not responding correctly, Melanie's not sure what to do. So she's studying her.”

“So Melanie is into my sister.” Dipper repeated.

“Ehh... sort of.” Bill gestured with his hand.

“Because Mabel really likes her. I mean, romantically. Maybe sexually too, I didn't care to ask.” Dipper repeated.

“You Pines Twins...” Bill shook his head. “It's like you're playing a game to be as predictable as possible.”

“I'm sorry we're so predictable,” Dipper frowned.

“Believe me, I don't care what Pine Sister does... But Melanie could turn up kind of dangerous. She's my fiancee, so they've got her under close surveillance. She's an important asset to the Illuminati. It could get rough for Shooting Star if she chooses to pursue it.”

“Yeah... maybe I shouldn't say anything.” Dipper paused.

“That's your call. I'm sure as heck not going to. I like watching Melanie look so miserable.” Bill flipped through a few pages in his book, writing things down in a notebook. “Believe me, I don't consider her a friend at all.”

“Yeah, I guess they'll figure it out.” Dipper took the final bite of his food, pushing his tray away. “We did.”

Bill glanced over at Dipper, studying him. “Yeah, we did.”

“Sounded like you considered her a friend once. She can only pretend to be me in bed so many times,” Dipper met Bill's eye.

Bill lightly choked, before looking away. “Yes. That number was pretty high.”

“How high?” Dipper questioned, eating peacefully.

“Um, well... More than ten.” Bill scratched his neck. “We... we were alone together a lot, so... We... Were intimate. All the time. Until we realized it wasn't going to work.”

“Hmm...” Dipper replied, amused. “That's cute that you imagined it was me though. I guess you must have really been into me.”

“Believe me, I was.” Bill scratched his arm.

“There had to be guys more attractive to you than just me,” Dipper went on, teasingly.

“Well... surprisingly, no. Not really.” Bill paused. “Everyone else just kind of came across as dull... You were... are... what I want.” Bill managed, getting embarrassed. “No. No one's as attractive to me as you are. Is that enough?”

“Hmm... yeah, I'd say so.” Dipper managed, amused. “Saturday, huh?”

“Mm. I can't wait for Saturday.” Bill breathed, looking toward the ceiling.

“Me too.” Dipper agreed, teasingly. “I can't wait either.”
On Saturday, Dipper was looking forward to being picked up by Bill. He woke up early, took a shower, and did some basic things he'd need to do in case they decided to have sex. He was really looking forward to it. When Bill knocked, Dipper was at the door, getting up on his tiptoes, kissing Bill's cheek. “Hi.” “Hey there, Pine Tree. Ready to get going?” Bill grinned. “Yup, I'm ready.” Dipper bounced on the balls of his feet. “Let's go.” “Sure thing. You smell pretty nice today.” Bill smirked, teasing him. “Looks like you're thinking about something pretty special.” “Of course not.” Dipper teased in return. “If you say so.” Bill shrugged, turning to leave. Dipper followed him, growing flustered. Was Bill seriously teasing him? They'd mentioned what they were going to do today all week, and now... Bill suddenly turned, amused, pressing Dipper against the wall. “Just kidding,” he teased. He stepped toward him, drawing him into a passionate, heated kiss that surprised Dipper. He ground his waist against Dipper's, getting a soft gasp from Dipper. After a thorough nibbling on his lower lip, drawing a low groan from Dipper, Bill murmured, “I sure am looking forward to the fun we'll have.” Dipper could feel the heat from that murmur and nibble all the way down into his stomach, and he flushed. “Ah. Well, I was lying.” “Mm. I'm not.” Bill lowered his mouth to Dipper's neck, biting and kicking the skin. “Want to fool around a little?” “Ah- not- not here,” Dipper stammered. “I don't want anyone to – to see.” “Aw, come on. No one's out here.” Bill insisted, playfully. “Roommate inside?” “Y-yes, so... no... in there.” Dipper insisted, growing flustered. “Let's just head to... head to your house?” “Sure, then... Come on. Dinner's waiting on us.” Bill called over his shoulder, heading for the car. Dipper blushed, wondering if Bill meant actual food or something else. To Dipper's surprise, Bill meant actual food. Bill had prepared a decent spread, and Dipper was impressed by the effort Bill had put in. “Wow, this all looks pretty nice. What all do you have here?” “I made balsamic glazed pork chops, and...” Bill went on. Dipper blanked out for a moment, just watching Bill explain. “Wow. You're really good at this. I can't fry an egg without breaking the yolk.” Dipper admitted. “Well, I can't go out to eat, so if I want something, I have to make it.” Bill paused. “I studied how to make this stuff so I could impress you. Have a seat.” “Consider me impressed.” Dipper took a seat. He watched in curious pleasure as Bill served the two of them, sliding in across from him. “Cooking's really not that hard.” Dipper had already begun eating, admiring the taste. “It seems hard.” “No, it's just simple instructions, really.” Bill insisted. “I'll teach you.” “I'll do my best not to screw up.” Dipper sighed. Bill smirked, a fork to his mouth. “You'll do fine.” “So those sandwiches you always eat-“ Dipper paused. “Yeah, I make them.” Bill agreed. “Then why do you go to the cafeteria?” Dipper questioned, taking a bite of his mashed potatoes. “I like the noise level. It's the perfect noise level to work at.” Bill paused. “Lot of questions, Pine Tree.” “Sorry, I'm just trying to understand you.” Dipper admitted. “In that case, go ahead.” Bill smirked. “Can you tell me about Melanie?” In reply to Dipper's question, Bill sighed in response, and Dipper
flushed, continuing to talk. “I'm not jealous of her or interested in her or anything. I just want to know how you two know each other. It seems like you're pretty close.” Dipper finished, hurriedly. “Mm. Pine Tree, you keep trying to mess with my head,” Bill took another bite of his food, chewing slowly. “Well, as you heard, she's my fiancee. It's nothing we want. Our parents said that, and we've maintained that we'd rather die than be married. But our lack of desire to be married didn't change anything else.” Dipper nodded, to encourage Bill to continue. “We met when we were 14. I was starting to get... antsy. Sexually. I knew I liked you but I didn't know much else. Our parents introduced us in an attempt to get us to form a union. And believe me, we did. But not like they wanted. They'd leave Melanie at my house for months, putting us through the same training and so on...” Dipper listened with interest, watching Bill talk. He took a drink of his water, his focus on Bill. “Well, that's about it. Melanie's never had any friends.” Bill paused. “That's why Mabel will be good for her.” He finished his plate, pushing it away. “Any other questions?” Dipper flushed. “Mm... no, I think that's it.” “Well, I have a question.” Bill paused. He was silent a moment. “I'm not sure how to ask my question.” “... What is it about?” Dipper pushed his plate away, leaning against the table. “... Who's going to... um, take it?” Bill paused. “... you know,” “Me.” Dipper sat back. “If that's fine with you.” Bill nodded. “Okay. I'm not adverse to the other, just so you know.” “Okay. That'll be for later.” Dipper smiled slightly. “I'll teach you how to take it once you've gotten used to taking me.” Bill licked his lips a little, nodding. He paused, seeming to think. Dipper got to his feet, walking towards Bill. He reached out and took Bill's hands in his and tugged him to his feet. “Come on.” Bill darkened, looking away. “I still have a few questions.” “Ask them in the bedroom.” Dipper teased. Bill looked up at him, surprised, before tilting his head, and smirking, struggling to look like he had control. “Yeah, you're right.” He wrapped an arm around Dipper, kissing his neck and shoulder, sighing over Dipper's neck again. He kissed and teased it up and down, nibbling at it as he went. He kissed Dipper everywhere he could reach, leaning over top of him. Dipper wrapped his hands around the back of Bill's head, following Bill's kisses with his eyes. “Bill, have you done this before?” Bill wrinkled his nose. “... Of course I have! I've had plenty of sex.” “I mean anal... I'm not trying to call you out.” Dipper sat up, pulling Bill close, kissing his lips with a gentle affection. “Melanie told me with excitement that you two have had a lot of sex. And she willingly diverged that she had to pretend to be me a lot. I was just wondering if you've... done anything other than a woman the normal way.” “... I can do it. Even if it's long and slow.” Bill's mouth twitched. “I don't get what you're saying.” “If you want me to, I can take the lead, and it'll be nice and easy.” Dipper promised. “At least the first time.” Bill seemed to relax, letting out a long breath. “Okay. I'd like you to take the lead, then. Tell me what to do and how to do it.” Dipper smiled. “Okay. Just a moment, then? I need to go to the bathroom.” “Okay, sure.” Bill took a seat on the bed, waiting patiently for Dipper to return. Dipper re-entered the bedroom a few moments later, strolling over to Bill, climbing into his lap, twining his arms around Bill's neck. “Okay. Back.” He pulled Bill into a deep kiss, Bill's mouth burning hot against his tongue.
“Mm... welcome back.” Bill rubbed Dipper's sides, sliding his hands down to his inner thighs. “So what should...”

“Impatient, aren't we?” Dipper teased. “You can't be impatient...” He nuzzled against Bill's neck, letting out a noise of surprise when Bill lightly nipped at his ear. “Ah- hey!”

“Nope, no complaints from you.” Bill smirked, sliding his hand down Dipper's chest. Dipper let out a soft breath when Bill slid his hand under his shirt.

“Ah- hey.” Dipper shivered, closing his eyes. “Don't tease me like that.”

“Well, don't you like it?” Bill questioned, amused. He unbuttoned Dipper's shirt and lowered his head, dragging his rough tongue across Dipper's nipples, playfully. “Don't you?”

“Ha- yeah~” Dipper flushed. “I do, but... you're ruining my- my set up.”

“Well, rebuild it once I'm done.” Bill smirked. He pushed him down on the bed, crawling over top of him, kissing his way down Dipper's chest. Dipper let out soft breaths, his pleasure building with each teasing kiss that Bill applied to his skin.

“St-stop teasing me, okay? I can't hardly work like this...”

“Heh... you know, I enjoy being pleased but I really enjoy pleasuring my partner too.” Bill smirked, sliding his hand inside Dipper's pants. Dipper immediately turned crimson and let out a noise of surprise.

Oh. Dipper shivered, looking away from Bill, pressing his hand against his mouth. “Th- then... Y-yeah, I really do like it... I really do.”
Bill unbuttoned Dipper's pants, sliding them down. “Just a little while, okay?”
Dipper was constantly in a wave of pleasure as Bill stroked him playfully. “Ah- um, yes... Ha. You're really good at... this. Have you-”
Bill chuckled, amused. “No, just from all the time I've spent pleasuring myself.”

“Ah – careful. I'm going to... to...” Dipper breathed out, surprised. “I'll come too soon if you don't stop.”

“Ah.” Bill removed his hand, amused. “I'm going to change my gloves... then we'll let you lead the play.”
Bill slid the glove off his hand, replacing it with a new glove from his pocket. “I'll just drop this in the wash.” Bill went off and Dipper grew increasingly flustered, sitting and waiting for Bill to come back. When he finally returned, Dipper pulled him down, taking a seat on his lap. “Come on, let me take charge already,” Dipper urged.


Dipper slid down off Bill's lap, nuzzling between Bill's legs. “Let me know when you're hard enough to put a condom on.” Dipper lightly nipped up and down the length of Bill's bulge, stroking it with his hand, teasing it.

“Are you sure the time is right?” Bill murmured. “Is everything really perfect? Is this really going to be the best chance we'll have to have the perfect first time?”

“Bill, the right time is whenever you and your partner decide you're ready to do it... and I don't think any time will be better than this.” Dipper looked into his face. “This kind of thing, especially first times, requires self-control and it will never be a better time for us to do it than when it's slow and romantic...” He murmured. “I'd rather it be like this than fast and heavy and rough. Believe me, I'd like to not limp to my first class on Monday.”

“Yeah... that's true.” Bill murmured.

Dipper could tell Bill was excessively nervous, and somehow, it made Dipper nervous too, like it was his first time all over again. His stomach felt a little butterfly-like and he tried to suppress the feeling. Dipper slid Bill's pants down, rubbing his mostly hard length, trying to tease him to an erect state. Bill watched, his eyes looking glossy with pleasure.

“That feels good.” Bill murmured. “But, don't you need to prepare before we do this?”

“Hmm?” Dipper glanced up.

“I've done a lot of reading about this... don't you need to be prepared?” Bill murmured. “Like... have yourself... stretched?”

“Oh...” Dipper bit his lip. “Yes, actually. That's a good point. Ordinarily, I would need to be
stretched out and lubed up.”
“Ordinarily?” Bill questioned as Dipper stroked him teasingly.
“I was so eager that I pre-prepped before I left the house.” Dipper murmured, embarrassed. “I
cleaned myself out and... prepped.” Bill made a soft grunt, looking away. “What?” Dipper
questioned, surprised.
“I'm just a little disappointed.” Bill murmured. “I wanted to experience the whole thing.”
“W-well... um, do you... want to do it anyway? I'd love for you to do it, I just wanted to make sure
that... I guess I didn't want you to get frustrated with how long it would take.” Dipper admitted.
“But... I'd love to feel your fingers deep inside me.”
Bill flinched a little, his cock pulsing under Dipper's fingers. He nodded, enthusiastically.
Dipper pushed his pants and his underwear off, sitting on the bed next to Bill. He rolled the
condom onto himself, lying back, his legs spread. Bill just stared in aroused pleasure a moment
before Dipper smirked and gestured down between his legs and Bill slid to the floor, moving
between them.
“Tell me what to do,” Bill murmured, kissing Dipper's inner thigh, running his tongue across it.
“There's two ways to prepare your partner...” Dipper murmured. “The first way is to insert a lubed
finger inside, slowly so your partner can adjust, then once they're ready, you insert a second, and
finally a third... stretch them out low and slow.”
Bill nodded. “Okay. Is that what you prefer?”
“It's what I'm used to. The second option is to slip your tongue inside... I've never had it done, but
I've heard it's- nnngh-” Dipper's back arched up off the bed, digging his fingers into the sheets. Bill
already had his face to Dipper's ass, tonguing the outside of it, the warm heat of it stimulating
Dipper's sensitive flesh, the sensation travelling straight to the base of his cock. “Ah- Bill, you don't
have to – ah – ha,” Dipper's body trembled as Bill pushed his tongue inside, the tip of it licking deep
inside him. Bill slowly worked him open, and Dipper moaned like Bill had never heard him moan
“Hmm, why?” Bill purred. “Am I going to make you come?”
“Mm-hmm,” Dipper breathed, his breathing labored. “If you don't stop. I told you that you didn't
need to do that...”
“I wanted to. The moment you said you'd never had it done... if you have any other firsts, tell me. I
want all of them.” Bill ran his tongue around Dipper's puckered hole, the area throbbing with want.
Dipper shuddered to his core. “I want you already. Get on the bed.”
“I'm plenty hard now from hearing you moan like that...” Bill took a seat, leaning back on his hands,
looking over at Dipper, who was already reaching over to stroke Bill. Bill watched in languid interest
as Dipper reached for Bill's condom, opening it and rolling it onto his partner. He added lube to the
head, coating the condom in it.
“I knew that mouth was good for something...” Dipper positioned himself carefully on Bill's lap,
holding Bill's cock in his hand.
“Mm. Next time I want to lick you like that until you come,” Bill smirked, amused.
“Next time, I'd like you to lick me like that until I come, too.” Dipper responded, before slowly
lowered himself down on Bill's erect member. He slowly moved down until it was buried completely
inside of him, his fingers digging deep into Bill's shoulders. He lay against Bill, giving himself a few
minutes to adjust to Bill's length and girth. Dipper breathed out slowly, closing his eyes. “It's exactly
what I wanted. You feel amazing inside of me.”
Bill held Dipper's waist, a little confused and incredibly horny, his whole face and neck were
burning from the pleasure and desire. “It feels so good inside you. It's so tight and hot...” Bill
murmured, his voice several tones lower than usual.
“I was right,” Dipper breathed. “You fit so well inside me.” He shifted slightly, beginning to move
up and down. Bill's cock thrust deep inside him, and Dipper moaned, panting softly. He began to
move faster, Bill digging his fingertips into Dipper's hips, leaning forward to kiss Dipper while he
moved.
Their tongues twirled together, before they broke the kiss to rest their foreheads together. Dipper
leaned forward a bit, letting out a shuddering breath, at Dipper's sharp down movement. “Ah- that's... there's really good.” Dipper breathed, continuing to move.

“Heh. I'm glad you like it... me too.” Bill managed, the sensation of Dipper's movements driving him up the wall. After a few moments, Bill's breath began to grow ragged before he nipped Dipper's shoulder. “P-Pine Tree. I'm about to come if you don't...” Dipper stopped all of a sudden, digging his fingertips into Bill's hair. “You're not coming until I'm ready to come.”

Bill shivered. “Okay.” Dipper started his movements again, watching Bill carefully. He got back into his rhythm, slowing down when Bill seemed close, speeding up when he wasn’t, and finally, he breathed into Bill's ear, “Ha. I'm really close. Are you close?”

“I'm close,” Bill responded, in earnest. Dipper kept his speed, his movements growing ragged until finally he came hard, thrusting a few more times, Bill coming hard underneath him. He slid off of Bill, lying down on the bed, panting softly. Bill lay down with him, tangling their arms together.

“Mm... That wasn't like what I expected.” Bill murmured.

“Was it bad?” Dipper asked, stroking his face. He lifted Bill's eyepatch off his face, setting it aside, stroking the skin with his gloved thumb.

Bill took his hand, kissing it through the glove. “Of course not. It was amazing.”

“Is that sensitive?” Dipper asked.

“No... not at all. But it really turns me on when you touch it.” Bill murmured. “If you'd done that earlier, I might have been able to go again.” He smirked.

“Mm.” Dipper gazed at the circular scar. “Can I ask about it?”

“Melanie and I were working and she nearly got her retina scanned, so I stepped in, and mine got scanned instead. My parents were so angry, they took me to an Illuminati doctor immediately to fix it.” Bill stared at Dipper. “This is his work.”

“I see.” Dipper murmured. “Next time, can we have sex in the shower?”


Dipper hummed. “Well, I want to feel your naked body against mine... and you won't take your clothes off unless it's in the shower, right?”

Bill smirked a little. “Yeah. Shower it'll be. We'd do it now, but I can only go once per session... so we'd better wait for that.”

“Heh. I can go more than once... but that wouldn't be a good idea.” Dipper smirked back. “I wouldn't want to go at you while you're not even turned on.”

“Yeah, that wouldn't be fun.” Bill agreed, amused. “Wait until I've had my cooldown time... I wouldn't mind being taken at all, but I'd have to be into it.”

“Heh... Honestly, I don't think I could ever take you.” Dipper returned, amused. “I mean, it might be fun once, but... I think I'd be too uncomfortable to do that to you.”

“Well, don't get too uncomfortable. I'd like to try it once.” Bill went on, amused. “It might be nice to try it once...” Dipper began, trailing off. “But I'm not sure that I want to. I'll think about it, though. Convince me, okay?”

“Sure thing.” Bill agreed, excitedly. Dipper snuggled against him, knowing that in just a moment or two, he'd have to get up and clean up. But for this moment, he could just lay here with Bill. And he did.
Chapter 25 - One Time Pad

Dipper lay in bed with Bill, covers lying messed up all around them. His head lay comfortably on Bill’s chest. “I've never heard of that kind of cipher before.” He murmured. “Probably because it isn’t crackable.”

“It's the best cipher to use if you don't ever want your cipher to be cracked.” Bill rubbed Dipper's shoulder, looking down at him. “One Time Pads are the best way to do it.”

“Huh. What if someone got the pad?”

“Then they'd crack it. It's a cipher system that needs a lot of discretion...” Bill went on. “Melanie and I, we memorize the-”

Dipper sat up. Being reminded of Melanie reminded him of Mabel’s question for Bill. “Oh, that's right! Mabel wanted me to ask-” Bill was lightly shaking his head, already prepared for what Dipper would say. “She thinks she might have accidentally... did something with Melanie. She asked me to ask you...”

“No can do.” Bill crossed his arms. “Sorry, Pine Tree.”

“Bill,” Dipper whined. “Can I finish talking?” Bill let out a long sigh. He waited patiently. “She wanted me to ask you if you would find out from Melanie if they did anything.”

“Pine Tree, you don't know what you're asking,” Bill protested. “If I ask Melanie if she and Mabel had sex, Melanie is going to think I care if she and Mabel had sex. She's going to tell me about it in detail if she did. Do I want to hear in detail what Pine Sister's like in the sack? Do you?”

Dipper shuddered. “No, but... it's really important to Mabel... Please, Bill?”

“Pine Tree, you know I love you, but I absolutely-” Bill paused, noticing the weird look on Dipper's face. “...What? Something wrong?”

Dipper fidgeted with a button on Bill's shirt, a blush on his cheeks. “You do? You love me?”

Bill scratched his cheek. “Well... yeah...” He muttered.

Dipper gathered his confidence together, deciding he should say it back. If he felt it. Dipper felt like he probably did. But when he opened his mouth, Bill cut him off.

“You don't have to.” Bill lifted Dipper's hand to his mouth, kissing Dipper's fingertips. “You don't have to say it or feel it yet. Especially don't say it if you don't feel it yet. I want to hear it when you do.”

Dipper reflected on the whole of his experience with Bill. The fear, trepidation, slow and steady progress, and how strong his feelings had actually become. What was love? Was love feeling like you couldn't live without someone? Was it feeling like you needed to be around someone all the time? Was love what Mabel expressed about Melanie every time they talked?

Or was it as simple as missing someone when they were gone, even though they'd just left? Dipper wasn't sure. He knew that it was easily possible that he'd never felt love for someone who wasn't family before.
“When I know for sure... I'll tell you. I promise.” Dipper murmured.

Bill smiled. “... But regardless, I can't help Pine Sister. Not unless it ends up really worthwhile for me, and Pine Sister has nothing I want.”

“... What if I made a deal with you?” Dipper asked, shyly.

“Oh, really?” Bill smirked, interested. “I really do like making deals, but be careful, Pine Tree... I tend to collect in a big way. What do you have in mind?”

“I was thinking maybe I'd let you do something I know you want to do...” Dipper trailed off, tilting his head and tugging his collar down a little bit. “Mark me?”

Bill grinned, licking his lips. “Oh? Just once or as much as I want?”

“... fixed amount.” Dipper flushed. “Not... as much as you want forever.”

“Hmm... how about 15 times?” Bill questioned.

“Way too many! I was thinking like, 2.” Dipper protested.

“Hmm. 10.” Bill rubbed Dipper's arms, pulling him against him. “10 marks.”

“What about 5,” Dipper offered, growing increasingly embarrassed, resting his head on Bill's chest.

“I really couldn't suffer through Mel's bullshit for less than 7,” Bill grinned.

“... Consecutive or all at once?” Dipper asked, a bit weakly.

“Whatever I want.” Bill glanced at Dipper.

“... Sure. 7.” Dipper sighed. “I hope Mabel appreciates it.”

Bill held out his hand, and Dipper looked at him, baffled. “We have to shake on it or it's not a deal.” Dipper shook his hand and Bill grinned wide from ear to ear. “I can't believe I got 7,” he laughed into his hand.

“Wh-what?” Dipper questioned, baffled.

“Well, I expected more like 3, but you're not very good at negotiating deals, are you, Pine Tree?” Bill grinned.

Dipper turned bright red. “Bill, you're such a jerk.”

“But I'm a jerk who loves you.” Bill kissed his cheek. “… ugh, I have to talk to Melanie now.” Bill tipped his head back. “Can I just ask her on Monday?”

“I'm not sure,” Dipper admitted. “Let me ask Mabel.” He sat up, going for his phone. He texted his sister, and laid back against Bill. His phone went off a moment later.

Yes, that's fine

thank bill for me
Dipper texted her back and he glanced at Bill. “She says that's fine, and also thanks.”

“Mm. I can’t say it’s not a problem, so...” Bill shrugged.

“I'll just leave it at that.” Dipper glanced at his phone.

*Mels texting me dip*  
*what do I do*

**Act natural?**

Bill peered at Dipper's phone. “What's Melanie saying?”

**What's Melanie saying?**

*Cant wait to see me*

Dipper relayed the information and Bill shrugged, seeming like he didn’t care very much. “Sorry, I don't know that much about Melanie... she's probably just missing Mabel.”

“Do you think she's interested in Mabel?” Dipper questioned.

Bill glanced at him, studying him. “Maybe sexually.”

Dipper winced. “Yeah. We should wait until we can talk to her.”

“Alright.” Bill smirked. “We'll wait.”

Dipper lay against Bill, relaxing. Tomorrow, they'd find out.

“O-oh, hi,” Mabel gushed, running up to them. “Hi, Dip! What's going on?”

“Oh, not much,” Dipper blinked, confused.

Melanie looked up at Bill, a little annoyed. “... Bill.”

“Melanie,” Bill muttered.

“Oh, man, I need to get to class. Can you guys entertain Melly while I'm in class?” Mabel pressed. “Please?”

“Sure, we'll watch Melanie,” Dipper gushed, patting Mabel's back. “You go on to class!”

“Okay! See you in an hour, Melly!” Mabel gave her a big smile and Melanie took a step towards her but Mabel was already rushing off to class.

Melanie tilted her head, pouting a little. She turned to face Bill. “I would rather be alone than here with you.”


Melanie raised an eyebrow, baffled. “... hmm. Not well. Well...” She paused a moment. “Maybe...”

“What does that mean?” Bill questioned.

“Aw, Bill! I didn't know you cared.” Melanie gushed. “I can't wait to tell you about Mabel.”

Bill made a pained face, looking at Dipper.

“... I really like her.” Melanie murmured. “She's so... vibrant.”

“I knew you would.” Bill nodded, pretending to care.

“At first, it was only sexually...” Melanie twirled her ponytail around her finger, pouting a little. “I wanted to ravage her.”

Dipper flushed, looking away. He really didn't want to know this. So gross.

“Mm-hmm...” Bill glanced towards Dipper, his eyes becoming a little glazed from disinterest.

“But, she's so DENSE.” Melanie scowled, crossing her arms. “I tried telling her a hundred different ways and she would just blush and stammer and... and act like she didn't hear it or she would misunderstand me... I... I thought maybe she just wanted to be friends. I've... I've really come to value her friendship, she's very important to me. But I want more. Way more.” She tugged on her ponytail, thinking. “So, following your suggestion, I got some alcohol and I thought I would ferret it out of her, how she felt about me.”

Dipper gaped at Bill. “YOUR suggestion?”

Bill shrugged. “So did you sleep with her?”

“Well, let me tell you all about it!” Melanie grinned.

Bill shrugged. “So did you sleep with her?”

“Well, let me tell you all about it!” Melanie grinned.

Bill looked at Dipper as if drawing on him for strength.

“So we started drinking, and we got friendlier over the course of the night. I thought I could just get her a little tipsy and that would be it but then I got drunk.” Melanie admitted. “I got a little too hot, and so I thought... well, what better way to get Mabel to admit how she felt...?”

“What do you mean?” Dipper paused, his question cautious.

“So I took it off, and Mabel immediately entered a dead stare at my breasts.” Melanie winked, sticking her tongue out. “She was really into them. How could she not be? They're completely round and firm... perfectly rounded in the bra I was wearing... Of course she was into it.”

“Keep going,” Bill murmured, pained.
“Well, anyway, so I leaned towards her and I asked her, 'do you like them?'. She was enthusiastic. 'Of course I do!'” Melanie grinned, pleased. “Around that time, I started getting a little hot under the collar... so, I asked her if she wanted to touch them.”

Dipper made a face. This was getting weird but Mabel wanted to know. … He supposed.

“She got really nervous, laughed, acted like I was kidding, so I put her hands on my breasts and she started touching them. Her focus was...” Melanie took a deep breath. “Intense. She looked up at me, and I asked her if she wanted to kiss me. She said yes, she really did. So we started making out. Bill, you might be interested to know that she's a better kisser than you.” Melanie smiled.

“Well, I can't say I care... particularly.” Bill looked at Dipper, trying to convey why he hadn't wanted to ask Melanie anything. Dipper wished he hadn't known that little tidbit, but he acted like he was paying attention anyway.

“So, we're kissing and Mabel is touching me everywhere she can reach. Everywhere. My face, my neck, my back, my breasts, stomach, thighs...” Melanie trailed off. “... I was on fire. Completely on fire. Mabel started slowing down... and I asked her what was wrong, and she murmured that she was feeling really sleepy. So I had a choice to make... I helped her get her clothes off and tucked her into bed, took my own pants off, and crawled in next to her. She was dead asleep before I even got into the bed.” She sighed. “... I just masturbated and went to sleep. The end was really disappointing.”

“Sorry to hear that.” Bill muttered, sounding not sorry at all. “Why didn't you just say no, you hadn't?”

“Because it sounded like you wanted to hear it!” Melanie smirked. “... mm, I'm glad we didn't. She woke up the next morning and didn't remember...” She rubbed her neck. “I don't want to take advantage of Mabel, I want to fuck her silly when she can remember it.”

“You should probably know that Pine Sister's not a real sexual person. Not like,” Bill gestured at Dipper.

“Oh, I know. Like I said, it started as sexual... but now, I can't imagine what I'd do without her.” Melanie paused. “Even if... we never have sex... I need her to stay my best friend.” Melanie fell silent. “My life would be empty if she weren't in it.”

“That's cute.” Bill took Dipper's hand, looking like he didn't care.

“But that doesn't mean I don't want to throw her on the bed and eat her out until she screams in pleasure too.” Melanie paused. “Can't I have both?”

Against Dipper's will, the image of Melanie eating out a woman sprung to his mind, and he felt himself grow a little hot. Melanie was, by no means, unattractive. It was almost imperceptible, but a moment later he felt two pairs of eyes on him. “H-huh?”

“Oh, that's cute...” Melanie smiled, and it looked a little smug. Bill's lips were pursed, and Dipper felt embarrassed, flushing. How did they even notice that? He stared straight at Melanie, trying to avoid Bill's judgmental gaze. “He's getting all turned on hearing about what I want to do to his sister.”

Dipper immediately cooled down, losing his interest. “... Thanks,” he muttered, embarrassed.

“For what?” Melanie smiled.

Dipper looked toward the school building, pretending he didn't hear her.
“See, he's the sexual twin.” Bill muttered, still annoyed.

“Yeah, I could make that comment to Mabel and she'd laugh it off as a joke.” Melanie sighed. “How do I convince her?”

“No clue.” Bill shrugged. “The Pines are dense.”

“No kidding.” Melanie sighed.

“Hey,” Dipper protested.

“I just... I really want to get the chance to taste her.” Melanie sighed.

“Well, you've kissed her already, haven't you?” Dipper questioned.

Melanie looked back at him, smirking. Bill rolled his eye and followed Melanie's gaze to Dipper. Dipper was baffled before he realized what they meant, hackles raised. “You both are disgusting.”

“Yeah, well, that aside... I'm going to go find Mabel.” Melanie crossed her arms. “She's been missing for a while.”

“She hasn't been missing,” Dipper protested. “She's in class.”

“Missing from my side.” Melanie frowned. “I'll see you both later.”

“Good luck.” Bill tilted his head.

“Thanks. I'll make sure to tell you all about our first time. Whenever we have it.” Melanie ambled off, leaving them to stare after her.

Bill turned to stare at Dipper. “Are you satisfied?” He questioned, annoyed. “Was my suffering enough for you?”

“Thank you, Bill.” Dipper moved up to him, kissing his cheek.

Bill was silent, pulling Dipper's forehead against his. “... I can't believe you get HER get under your skin.” He muttered, sullenly.

“S-sorry,” Dipper muttered, embarrassed.

“It's alright... I just hate the thought of you getting turned on by her.” Bill sighed, sitting up. “Don't forget, our fifth meeting of that club is tonight.”

“Wait, where are you going?” Dipper protested.

“I'm going to go to cafeteria and work on my homework.” Bill flicked Dipper's forehead. “Don't let Melanie talk you into anything.”

“Like what?” Dipper questioned.

Bill slipped his hands in his pockets, before strolling away, leaving Dipper to stand confused.

Later that evening, Dipper went to see Mabel, who was hanging out in her dorm with Melanie, who was sleeping solidly on Mabel's bed, hugging the pillow. Mabel looked around the room, before stepping out into the hallway with Dipper, her keys in hand. “So what did she say?” Mabel asked, quietly. “Did we?”
“Well, she said a lot of things.” Dipper paused.

“What did she say, Dip?” Mabel repeated, in a frustrated tone.

“Okay, okay. She said that she got hot and took her shirt off, and you started staring at her breasts. You groped them-”

“I did??” Mabel blurted, eyes wide. “What?!”

“And then the two of you kissed, apparently fairly consentually.” Dipper added, opting to leave out the fact that it was hot, heavy, and heavy-handed according to Melanie. “And then Melanie put you to bed, and also went to bed.”

Mabel took a deep breath in, and then out. Then in. She quickly started hyperventilating and Dipper put his hands on her shoulders, looking into her face. “Mabel, breathe. You need to focus. What are you going to do?”

“I don't know!” Mabel babbled. “Dipper, I can't believe it. I can't believe I actually kissed her and I don't remember it!” She gripped her head. “I want to remember it, Dipper!”

“Are you okay, Mabel?” Dipper repeated.

“I'm... I'm okay. I want to remember what we did. I'm just upset that I can't remember it...” Mabel muttered. “I'm never going to drink again.”

“You don't normally drink, it's odd that you did.” Dipper went on.

“I couldn't say I didn't drink to Melanie.” Mabel blushed. “I just couldn't, Dip. I know it's not good to lie to someone you love...”

“She shouldn't have pressured you into doing it.” Dipper frowned.

“I didn't even tell her I don't drink... I don't think she knew.” Mabel sighed. “I know I messed up. I'm not going to drink again and that'll fix it.”

“Well, what now?” Dipper asked.


“Well, the two of you kissed... and stuff. Are you going to... go after her?” Dipper questioned.

“Oh... I don't know. Dipper, what if she's only bi when she's drunk?” Mabel questioned, fidgeting with her hands. “What if we try to go out and it doesn't work and then we can't be friends anymore? Maybe...”

“It's your choice, Mabel. We don't know what'll happen in the future.” Dipper nodded. “Just let me know what you decide.”

“Thanks, big bro.” Mabel smiled at him, and they said their goodbyes, Mabel heading back inside.
That evening, Dipper headed out to the clearing. To his surprise, Lyra, Wilson, and all the others were there, waiting around as usual.

“Hey, guys!” Dipper waved, surprised. “I wasn't expecting to see you all come back after that talent show...”

“They still have dirt on us,” Lyra muttered. “Can't leave.”

“Oh.” Dipper rubbed the back of his head. “Sorry.”

“Eh...” Wilson was silent. “This is kind of fun. I'm not too arsed about it.”

“Well, I'm glad YOU'RE having fun.” Lyra muttered, her voice sharp. “Where's that asshole you hang around with?” She gestured at Dipper.

“Bill? I'm not sure. Working on his homework, probably.” Dipper looked around.

“Is his name REALLY Bill Cipher?” She questioned, annoyed. “That's the most ridiculous name.”

“Yeah. It is his real name.” Dipper crossed his arms.

“Wish I had a cool name like that.” Wilson murmured.

“Hello everyone, and welcome,” the voice intoned over the speaker. “Thank you all for participating in our first challenge... I feel like our second challenge will be just as fun as the last one.”

Everyone groaned a little, but the voice went on.

“It's a scavenger hunt.” Everyone fell silent, listening. “It'll be a great way for me to get to know all of you. By next week, I expect you to find everything on the list and bring it to me. You'll each take turns showing me what you brought, and telling me what each thing is. You'll find the lists on the backside of the statue Wilson is leaning on.”

Uncomfortably, Wilson straightened up, glancing awkwardly at the statue. He moved around the back and found a stack of papers. He started passing them out.

“Does anyone have any questions?” The voice went on.

Dipper took a look at the list.

One of your oldest possessions
A picture that means a lot to you (digital or physical)
Your favorite food
Your favorite drink
An item that has a painful story behind it
An item that has a happy story behind it
Dipper flinched. “This is a pretty serious list.”

“You'll show off each item and then tell me about it. Everyone else is welcome to sit around and eat and drink the things they brought after they confirm they brought them. If there are no further questions... you can go home.”

Dipper took his paper, and started heading toward his dorm, lost in thought. He bumped into Bill there, who seemed a bit jittery. “Hey, Pine Tree! I guess I'm late... sorry. What was the meeting about? I totally lost track of time.” Bill sighed, exaggeratedly.

“Oh, here.” Dipper handed him the extra paper, and Bill looked it over.

“Scavenger hunt. Ugh.” Bill fell silent. “None of this really means anything to me. I don't have any of these things.”

“You don't have any of those?” Dipper questioned, baffled.

“No. You saw my house... I don't really have possessions. Photos... I try to avoid them. It's dangerous to have a record of myself.” Bill made a face. “I guess I have a favorite food and drink, but typically it's just water and sandwiches... I guess I'll just do my best, or lie.” He tucked the paper away. “Oh well. I'm gonna get going, Pine Tree. Thanks for filling me in.” He ran his fingers through Dipper's hair. “... I wish it was the weekend.”

“Me too.”

“Night.” Bill smiled, and walked away, heading towards the parking lot, leaving Dipper with a fuzzy feeling.

“Night...” Dipper murmured. He really didn't want Bill to leave. After a moment, he ran toward Bill, clutching his sleeve. Bill stopped, looking surprised.

“Huh? What's up, Pine Tree?” Bill questioned.

“Um...” Dipper wasn't sure why he'd stopped Bill. “I don't know.”

“Miss me?” Bill smirked.

“It's only been a few hours,” the hair on the back of Dipper's neck stood up as he grew embarrassed.

“Mm. But I missed you.” Bill ducked his head, kissing Dipper's lips softly, the kiss slow and exploratory, Dipper feeling it all the way down to his toes.

Dipper rested his head against Bill's shoulder, flushed. “… I missed you too.”

“Just a few more days until the weekend.” Bill reassured.

“... Yeah. I'll count them.” Dipper murmured.

“... I just counted them, it's five.” Bill smirked.

Dipper rolled his eyes. “Ass.”
“Night.” Bill murmured.

“I'll see you tomorrow.”

“Of course, Pine Tree.” Bill grinned.

He headed out and Dipper headed to his dorm, embarrassed about chasing after Bill. Well... at least he'd gotten a good night kiss.

The next day, it was afternoon and he still hadn't seen Bill. He sat in the cafeteria, looking gloomy. Mabel poked his cheek. “Hey, Dip, cheer up. Your boyfriend's just busy. You'll see him.”

Dipper swatted at her hand. “Yeah, yeah. I'm alright.” He sat up, taking a bite of his food. “Sorry. Hey, Liam, would you read my updated writing here soon?”

“Of course. It's a pretty nice day... want to go to the quad?” Liam glanced out the window.

“Sure. Sounds good.” Dipper nodded.

“Cool.” Liam said, brightly. “I, uh, last time, I might have read the whole thing.” He admitted. “The stuff in the front too.”

Dipper flushed. “You- you did? That's so embarrassing.”

“Sorry. I wanted to come clean about that. I was trying to figure out what he had that... I didn't,” Liam murmured. “Again.”

Dipper sighed, stirring his food. “… Who knows. I don't even get him.” Dipper leaned on his elbow, seeming glum. “He's so confusing, really... I don't understand what it is about him that I'm so hung up on.”

“He really isn't worth getting hung up on,” Melanie nodded. “Are you guys fighting?”

“What? No... definitely not.” Dipper sat up, looking at Melanie. “We're just... I'm... ugh. I barely got to see him yesterday or today.”

“I get that that's hard.” Melanie responded, thinking. “Why hasn't he been around?”

“Um... working on homework, I think.” Dipper murmured. “He's going, like 28 or 29 hours a week.”

Mabel whistled. “Makes me feel like I'm not doing anything with my 18.”

“Well, I'm sure he's working hard.” Melanie sighed.

“He normally does it on the weekends but…” Dipper paused. “… oh.” Dipper ducked his head. “It's my fault.”

“At least you know why.” Melanie took a bite of her fruit, chewing slowly. “Let me guess, you're taking up all the time he spends on the weekends, so now he can't spend the week with you.” Dipper nodded, miserably. “So what're you gonna do? Spend the week with him? Or the weekend?”

Dipper paused, before he sighed heavily, shaking his head. “I don't know.” He muttered, miserably.
“Well, you'd better figure it out.” Melanie smirked, amused by Dipper's suffering. “Tick tock, Pine Tree,” she held a finger up, and Dipper sighed, unamused.

“I'll talk to Bill about it,” he finally responded.

“Good idea.” Melanie settled back in her chair.

“I didn't know you were such good friends with Bill,” Liam glanced at Melanie. “Although you do kind of remind me of him... both of you are a little odd.”

Melanie flinched a little, before glancing at Liam. “I... wouldn't call us good friends.”

“Oh?” Liam blinked, embarrassed. “Sorry, I just thought...”

“Before Mabel, he was the only friend I ever had... but I wouldn't call him a good friend or associate any positive feelings with our acquaintance. He might have been my fiance but good friend feels like a stretch.”

“Your fiance, so you were engaged?” Liam questioned, curiously.

“Against our will.”

“Oh? Are people still in arranged marriages these days?” Liam asked, sounding baffled. “Really?”

“Surprisingly.” Melanie adjusted her gloves. “You would be surprised to know of a lot of things that still go on today. Like slavery.”

“Yeah, I've heard that slavery still exists.” Liam nodded.

“I've seen it.” Melanie responded. “In my line of-”

“What is your line of work? Is it the same as Cipher's?” Liam went on.

“Roughly.” Melanie shrugged. “Currently he's off-duty, though.”

“What is your line of work?”

“Mmm. None of your business.” Melanie rested her elbows on the table.

“You've got to be kidding, right? There's no way your job is serious enough that you have to deal with... slavery, right?” Mabel looked over at her, looking a little fidgety.

“I'm also off-duty for the moment, so not right now.” Melanie soothed. “Right now, I have nothing but time to spend with you.”

“I'm oddly not comforted,” Mabel admitted, though she was blushing. “Though I'm glad we get to spend a lot of time together... Mel, are you wrapped up in something dangerous?”

“More dangerous than anyone can imagine.” Melanie smiled, putting her trash on her tray. She took her trash over to the bin, dumping it in.

“She's got to be messing with us.” Liam murmured across the table. “She's Cipher-weird but I don't think she has some seriously dangerous career where she deals in human trafficking.”

“The only thing I've ever seen her joke about is being in love with me,” Mabel rubbed the back of her head. “So... I'm not sure. She doesn't joke about things very often.”
“She's toyed with me before.” Dipper spoke up. “But...”

“Dipper, you're an expert on Bill. Is Bill wrapped up in anything weird?” Liam asked.

Dipper reflected on the time he'd spent with Bill and tried to figure out what he should tell them – yes or no. “... I'm not sure,” he admitted. “Sorry.”

“What were you gonna say, Dip?” Mabel asked.

“Well, just that I'd take her at face value.” Dipper winced when his hat was removed from his head. Melanie tugged it onto hers, putting her arms around his neck, leaning on his head.

“I'm not a liar like he is.” Melanie smiled. “And I don't ever joke about anything.”

“Like who is?” Mabel questioned.

“Cipher.” Melanie responded. “He lies about everything.”

Dipper was silent a moment. “Everything?”

“Except to you.” Melanie glanced down. “Honestly, the only one who can get the truth out of Bill Cipher is you. And that puts you in a dangerous place.” She moved around the table, taking a seat next to Mabel. “Mabel, I'm getting tired.” She glanced at her.

“Want to take a nap in my room?”

“Yes, please.” Melanie yawned.

“Hey, give my hat back,” Dipper's ears burned.

“No, I'll keep it. Tell Cipher to come get it if you want it back.” Melanie got to her feet, tugging Mabel up as well. Mabel went to dump her tray, Melanie walking alongside her.

“I can't believe those two.” Liam muttered.

“Why?” Dipper asked, loading his tray up with trash.

“Does Mabel really not know?” Liam frowned.

“Know what?”

“Melanie!” Liam gestured. “Ugh, like... Melanie could not be more obvious about her feelings.”

Dipper tilted his head. “Well, no, but specifically, what do you mean?”

“'I have plenty of time to spend with you', 'I don't joke about anything'?” Liam gestured, aggressively. “Now she's going to take a nap in Mabel's bed? Just looking at them makes ME frustrated.”

Dipper chuckled. “I feel Melanie deserves to be strung along.”

“... You think so? Why?” Liam questioned.

“She just does. I'm ready to go whenever you are.” Dipper got to his feet, and Liam also rose up.

“Sure thing. I'm ready to go now.” He and Dipper dumped their trays and headed toward the quad.
A/N: Okay. First off, hello everyone! I did make it through the accident okay... sort of. ^_^;; Still got problems, but I'm alive, I have all my limbs and stuff, so... so I'm okay. I... guess. Just... well, my brain is getting better. It's... not great yet. Still so many issues, but... ^_^;; I'm alive and I'm okay. Uh... Oh, okay. My point here. I'm super sorry about this chapter. I don't know if it's bad, but I was posting the chapters I'd prewritten ages ago, and this one was absolutely gone. Completely gone. I had no clue why it wasn't there, but it's probably on my computer that was in the accident... I hear that computer is /okay/ but the screen is damaged beyond all recognition so I can't use it. (I /hear/ because I've never seen it. It's okay, though.) So I had to write this whole thing from scratch after the accident, and I wrote it several months ago and it was absolutely horrible. I mean, horrible. It took directions I never would have gone with my healthy brain and I had no way to fix that. So I've sat on this mess of /new writing/ for like 3 months, and finally, I felt like I could maybe fix it, so I spent all day today trying to make this work. And well... this is what I ended up with. Sorry if it's bad, go ahead and tell me if it is, but this is the most I could attempt to make with my scrambled TBI brain. Future chapters will be back to however I used to write because it's all prewritten. I honestly feel like there's some gigantic disconnect between my writing before and my writing now, but my brain might just be having difficulty processing my writing now... I'm really not sure. I'm not really looking for super support, like everyone to tell me my writing is just the way it was or anything, I just wanted to apologize for A) taking this long, and B) feeling like my writing has changed. The other works, if you read them... they're, um, not pre-written. I feel like, every day, that I need to update them, but I think my writing is so far off from where it used to be, it's hard for me to feel strong enough to write on them and end up posting them. ^_^;; Let me know if you think my writing is okay enough to keep going with the others. My personal favorite one will be the hardest to continue from here... but I'd love to finish it. Anyway, I hope this chapter is okay, and I hope the rest of the story keeps you entertained. :) - Ari

“Ah, man. It's such a nice day out here.” Dipper tipped his head back, staring at the sky. “Geez... Weather out in this state is so odd.”

“... It really is.” Liam agreed, shutting the notebook. “Okay, I made notes all over for changes and suggestions... but it's pretty good. If you finished it, and had a really good editor, and took a year or so, you could probably publish this. I can't guarantee it'll take off if you did, but I think it has a good chance to.”

“Great! Thanks.” Dipper said, brightly, taking the notebook. “I'm glad you like it so far. I just... I really don't know what to do beyond, you know, writing it.”

“Once you finish it, you go from the 'tough' phase to the impossible phase.” Liam sighed. “Editing is literally the worst.”

“Got it. I'll try to edit it and have you look at my edits, see if I'm able to edit it.” Dipper put the notebook in his backpack.

“Well, every change is an edit, it's learning to change it for the better.” Liam offered. “I'm pretty good at that stuff, so if you need help, ask me whatever.”

“Right. I hope I can do that, but if I need help, I won't hesitate to ask.” Dipper ruffled his hair. “Gonna get going. Thanks again!”
"No problem!" Liam waved.

Dipper took off for the stairs, flinching when his foot splashed in a puddle. He stumbled slightly and flew off the step, slamming hard into the ground, cracking his head against the stone. When he woke up, Liam was down by him, holding his shoulders. Liam let out a relieved breath, and said something that Dipper just couldn't understand. He looked at Dipper like he was expecting some kind of an answer.

Dipper tried to respond something easily, but all that came out was some kind of a garbled mess... something Liam couldn't understand, and then Dipper latched onto him, yanking him close for a kiss. Liam softened for a moment, but quickly bristled, pushing Dipper away.

"Dipper, woah! Hey." Liam scowled. He said something else Dipper struggled to understand, before the gibberish slowly started into something Dipper could understand. "...I- I mean, I seriously do like you but that's just mean to tease me with..."

"... I... uh, yeah." Dipper managed, blinking the lightning of lights out of his eyes. His head felt woozy and disoriented, but the longer he focused, the clearer things started to become. He studied Liam, trying to focus on him. "I'm... my head really hurts, but... I... I think I'm okay. I'm... really sorry. I didn't mean to... to hurt you like that. I just... it's a... reflex, when I'm hurt, I..."

Liam pursed his lips, irritated. "It's just a thing you do, every time you're hurt? You need to stop doing that. Your boyfriend will get pissed if you keep that up. The next person you grab without thinking might not believe it doesn't mean anything."

"Yeah..." Dipper instantly felt guilty to realize what he'd done. When Liam mentioned his boyfriend off hand, it reminded Dipper that he'd made a huge mistake. His head fluttered and memories of Bill started crawling to the surface. "... You're – you're right. I... Bill will be... he'll be furious. I..."

Dipper ducked his head, rubbing his forehead. "... I'm... sorry. I... guess I ought to... tell him. He'll be so mad at me for this. I deserve it, though..."

"Yes. You should. And don't do it again would be even better. Glad you're okay." Liam answered. He walked away, leaving Dipper to lie on the ground. Dipper staggered to his feet and took off, falling at the base of a tree. He curled up there, pulling his phone out. He dialed Bill, holding his phone to his ear, waiting. As he waited, tears and embarrassment welled up inside of him, and he fought to stay calm.

"Hey, kid!" Bill greeted when he answered the phone. "You almost never call. What's up?"

Dipper burst into tears, unable to help himself. "Bill! Bill, I... I did something stupid... I fell down some stairs and I grabbed someone... and... I'm sorry. I..."

"You... you what?" Bill asked, astonished. "Where are you? I'm gonna come get you... What did you do?"

"I'm at the Quad. I kissed him, that's it. I immediately... told him it was a mistake..." Dipper breathed out. "It was. A huge..."

"... Okay. I'll be there soon." Bill answered, and the phone went flat. Dipper immediately knew that Bill was mad. Dipper lay on the grounds, crying, until he felt Bill next to him. Bill picked him up, carrying him towards his car.

Dipper cling to Bill's clothes, crying and breathing in Bill's scent. "Bill, I'm so sorry." Dipper managed.
Bill didn't answer. He set Dipper down in the car, gently, pulling away to go drive. Dipper cried the whole drive away, realizing they were at Bill's house.

Bill helped Dipper out of the car and up to his apartment. He set Dipper down on the couch, wrapping him in a blanket, before heading to the kitchen. “B-bill, aren't you... aren't you going to... you have to be mad!” Dipper pleaded with him, his fists clutching at his blankets.

“Of course I am.” Bill answered, resting his hands on the counter. “I must have done something, because you forgot about me, enough to reach for another man. So what did I do?”

“No!” Dipper yelled, leaning forward. “No, you didn't – you didn't do anything! I... I messed up! Okay? I... I did something that hurt you, and I'm so sorry... You – you have the right to be mad at me... I hit my head, really bad, and my mind wasn't there! I-”

“...I don't think you could get me to be mad at you.” Bill answered. “No, I'm mad at myself. If you're leaving me, then... I've never been good enough. If you don't want me, I understand... but I won't stick around and keep failing to meet your levels of satisfaction. I will either turn myself over to my father for care, or I'll take the other option.”

“No!” Dipper slammed his hands down on the table. “That's... no! I don't want... I want you! I... I just... I just was in pain, a lot of pain... I... made a gigantic mistake, but... I'll never make it again, I really do want you. I like you more than anyone else I've ever dated... I just... I just made a mistake. Don't... don't leave because I made a stupid mistake!”

Bill was silent a moment, digging his fingertips into the counter. “So that wasn't your way of telling me we were over?”

“It wasn't! It was me telling you that I fucked up and I'm sorry!” Dipper closed his eyes tightly. “… I did something stupid, and I get if you want to break things off with me.”

Bill let out a long sigh, combined with some odd noise, and he rested his forehead on the kitchen counter. “… I'm glad you weren't telling me you wanted to end us. I love you so much that I would do anything you ever wanted me to. Anything. And I thought you wanted us to break up.”

“No! Stop saying things like that!” Dipper flushed. “That's not what I ever would want or would ever ask. I... look, I don't... I haven't broken up with anyone. I've been broken up with but I never made that choice. I mean, I can't imagine a situation where I'd want to end it myself...”

Bill walked over to the couch, sitting down next to Dipper, lying against the back. Dipper turned, burying his face in Bill's chest. Bill lifted his hand and stroked Dipper's hair, not looking down at him. “... who – who were they?” Bill asked, after a moment. “The person you kissed.”

“It was... uh... Liam.” Dipper looked away. “… Please don't hurt him, he got extremely mad at me and told me to think about what I was doing to you and he was right, I... hurt you, and him, and... it was all really stupid.”

Bill chuckled, putting his arm around Dipper, gripping his shoulder. “That's odd that you made him mad... he does love you so much, I would have imagined he would have been thrilled.”

“He just got angry, I guess because I cheated on you. I get it... I made a stupid mistake.” Dipper sighed.

“Don't do it again, or I'll think you're just dating me to hurt me... and that would be the last time you ever saw me again.” Bill answered. “My father would hurt me, condition me, change me into someone you've never seen, and you would never know me, even when you spoke with me... you
would think I was someone you'd never seen before.”

“... Just- don't...” Dipper dug his fingers into Bill's shirt. “I did something stupid. I'm so sorry. I promise that's it. I'll never do that again.”

“Don't be afraid to do what's best for yourself.” Bill answered, looking at the ceiling. “If you find someone who makes you happier than I do, don't hesitate to date them and leave me behind.”

“Stop that,” Dipper answered, sharply, his fist getting tighter. “Stop... being so negative towards yourself... I...”

“Then agree to what I've said, and I won't do any of that.” Bill answered, meeting Dipper's eyes.

“... Okay. I won't do it again, but if I decide to do the dumbest thing I've ever done, I'll... let you know.” Dipper answered, his voice hurt.

Bill tipped his head down, nuzzling Dipper's nose. “I want to kiss you, but...I think he's still all in your mouth.”

Dipper met his eyes. “Sorry. Want me to wash my mouth?”

“This once is okay. If I get mad like that again, it won't be okay.” Bill answered, his voice low. He lifted Dipper's chin, drawing him in for a deep kiss. He let the kiss wind down and he grew quiet, holding Dipper as he thought. “If I lost you... Heh, I don't know. It'd be better for me to end it, really.”

Dipper dug his fingers into Bill's arm. “Stop it... I mean, I'm- I'm with you, so... We- we can... be together.”

“I wish.” Bill's lips quirked in a smile. “But that would be horribly too dangerous for you... We'll be chased by my father and my enemies and anyone who ever finds me and remembers me. I have no record of what I looked like before, but I'm sure someone does.” Bill pushed Dipper's shirt down over his shoulder, kissing the skin. “That makes any future you could imagine having with me in it... dangerous for you. I never planned on staying this close to you for this long... I never planned on getting this close, this deeply attached to you.”

Dipper breathed in, softly. “Hey... none of that. I'm too... too sore for you to...”

“Let me see your bruises.” Bill tilted his head.

Dipper dropped his blanket, sliding his shirt over his head. “I'll show you my back first.” He turned and Bill gently raked his hands across the bruises on Dipper's back. Dipper shivered, looking at the wall. “Oh- okay. Stop and I'll show you the rest of them. I have no idea what these look like... you're the only one who's seen them, so... I'm sorry if they offend you.” Dipper sat up onto his knees, undoing his pants. He slid them down to his knees and Bill got down to study the marks.

“... you're severely damaged. You must have fell extremely hard.” Bill paused, his voice concerned. “Is that what you meant by your mind wasn't there? Are you – is your head okay?”

“I don't know. I just know I went down and I couldn't see, there was a world of pain on my back side... I remember Liam helping me sit up, and... I grabbed him. My eyes weren't working, there was just... colored blotches all across my vision... So I just did what I thought would help my pain stop. It... It didn't. And Liam got mad at me... He said a lot of angry stuff and I felt sick... I took off running, and I... called you.” Dipper ruffled his hair. “He reminded me... he told me you would be furious with what I had done. I... it soaked into my head and reminded me... of what I had done, how
stupid and shameful it was... And it was the first moment that I realized completely how stupid some of my actions are.” Dipper ducked his head, before tugging his pants back up. “... I do things that... hurt people.” Dipper turned around, lying back against the back of the couch. “I'm sorry I hurt you...”

“You should apologize to your second boyfriend too. I'm sure he was hurt by what you did.” Bill lay back against the couch, pulling Dipper against him.

“He's not my...! I don't have a...” Dipper flushed. “That's so... mean! I'm sorry I did that. I'm so sorry.”

“Apologize to him.” Bill tilted his head. “Okay?”

“I- I will.” Dipper flushed.

“... Ah.” Bill ruffled his own hair. “I'm seriously horny now.”

“I'm always turned on by you, so...” Dipper looked away. “That's nothing new...”

“Suck me off,” Bill smirked, amused. “We can't fuck with you banged up like that. I'll do something nice for you too... You'll get to cum after I do.”

Dipper flushed, looking away. What was Bill implying? What was he going to do? “I... um, sure... I'll... suck you off.”

“Great. I'll put on a condom,” Bill said, happily, going to slide off the couch. Dipper gripped his elbow, stopping him.

“W-wait. Um... you... don't have to. We've been going out long enough... I mean, you're not... cheating on me, and I'm not on you, so... I can just... we can skip it for oral.” Dipper managed, flustered. He turned around to get comfortable, before undoing Bill's pants, pushing them down, until he got the blonde's full length freed. Dipper immediately set to work.

“Well... Ha.” Bill dug his fingers into his hair. “That's really good...” He ran his fingers through Dipper's hair, watching his partner work with pure intent. “Your expression is really nice,” Bill smirked. Dipper glanced up, meeting Bill's eye, swirling his tongue around the tip.

“Thanks,” Dipper answered, before going back to what he was doing. “... I wish I hadn't fallen. I'd love to have sex with you again... even through the bruises.”

“I won't fuck you through all that damage... even though I'd like to.” Bill smiled, watching Dipper work. “When you're healed, we'll go again.”

Dipper smiled at Bill before continuing his movements, beginning to speed up. Bill leaned his head back, closing his eyes tight. “… I like that pace.” Bill breathed out. “You're gonna get me to come pretty quick.”

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Dipper smiled, before changing things up just a little bit. A moment or two later, Bill's back arched and he let out a noise. Dipper lightly flinched when he felt the fluid in his mouth leak out of Bill, and he managed to swallow it down. It was surprisingly pleasant... the past ones Dipper had tasted had been terrible... but Bill's was really nice. “You have a really nice flavor,” Dipper murmured, licking the last bits off of Bill's head. “I mean, salty, but not painfully so.”

“Mm... thanks. I have a really well-organized diet...” Bill rubbed his forehead. “Okay... your turn.”
“Maybe you ought to teach me how you eat,” Dipper replied, amused, unbuttoning his pants. He pushed them down, before reaching into his pocket. He pulled his condom out but let out a long, surprised noise when Bill ignored his condom and went straight for his length, capturing him in his mouth. Dipper dropped his hands and dug his fingers into the couch. “I said... it was okay for you to... I mean, are you sure...? It's... dangerous for you to...”

“If kissing someone is bad enough for you to tell me you did it, with so many tears, I'm sure you didn't have sex with anyone else,” Bill answered.

“... just... be... cautious of other people in this... category. A lot of people can't be trusted...” Dipper tipped his head back. “You've definitely gotten a lot better at this...”

“I learned from you,” Bill answered, before ending his conversation. Dipper's fingers dug into the couch, his body burning from each soft lick and tease until finally, he couldn't hold back.

“I'm gonna... cum,” Dipper managed. He was startled as Bill pulled the same thing he had, swallowing it easily. Dipper lay back, taking huge, shaky breaths. “I warned you so you could switch to your hands...” Dipper managed. “So you didn't have to... swallow it.”

“Hehe... did you like it?” Bill asked, amused. “You're more trustworthy than I am.”

“... Bill, do you lie a lot?” Dipper asked, curiously.

“Never to you,” Bill answered, studying Dipper seriously. “I don't lie to you... but to other people... yes. I lie a lot.”

Dipper ran his fingers through Bill's hair. “Melanie told me that you lie constantly. She told us that while telling us that she never lies... I'm not so sure about that part...”

“She rarely ever lies to people she cares about.” Bill yawned. “She's extremely honest. Unless it's to someone in my father's business. She lies a lot to them.”

“You and Melanie, you're both really hard to understand,” Dipper laughed, continuing to stroke Bill's hair. “I'm glad that you don't lie to me, though.”

“I lie to everyone else, unless they tell me they know the truth and prove they know it.” Bill shrugged. “You, though, I've liked you since the year we met... I wouldn't lie to you.”

“I definitely can't say that's true for me,” Dipper ducked his head. “I hated you that year I met you. I hated you until you came into my classroom and... changed my mind.”

Bill laughed. “I know. I actively worked to make you hate me... I wanted to destroy every good thing you had... I wanted you to be just as unhappy as I was on the inside... But, it didn't work. You and your family did a very good job at keeping me from doing what I wanted to do. And you're still just as wonderful as you were back then.” Bill smiled. “I wish I had known I loved you that first summer... but at the same time, that was a very destructive summer for me. I would have done whatever I wanted to you. So at the same time, I'm glad I hadn't known. I did grow up a monster.”

“Hey, don't- don't say stuff like that.” Dipper flicked Bill's forehead.

“Of course, I'll quit talking about it.” Bill lifted his hands.

“Thank you.” Dipper breathed out. His world started wavering and he blinked. It was getting a little hard to focus.
Bill glanced at Dipper. “Don't worry. I would never hurt you.” He kissed Dipper's fingers, looking up at Dipper. “I promise I'd never do something like that to you. It would be a waste of my life.”

“My... accident, it really unsettled you, didn't it?” Dipper asked. His stomach was churning and he felt ill. He considered, just briefly asking Bill to call for an ambulance, but the conversation was pretty critical to have.

Bill glanced at the ceiling. “I'd resolved myself to die before you ever explained what you were thinking. If you hadn't bothered explaining it... this would have been the last time we'd met. Dark as that is, it's the truth.”

Dipper breathed out, slowly. “I'm so glad that I explained it to you then. You don't know how hurt I would have been if you had dumped me over that... I mean, I deserved it, but... I care too much about you to lose you.”

“Do you remember when I warned you about making me mad?” Bill asked. “The idea of you getting tired of me, and going for someone else... yes, that made me mad. If you weren't so damaged, I'd take on every inch of you, but falling down those stairs hurt you pretty bad. It'll have to wait. Whenever you're ready, I'll take you back to your place.”

Dipper flushed. “Mmm... sure, if I ever feel like it... do you... uh, want another blowjob?”

“No. It worked but I still feel unsatisfied.” Bill tilted his head. “You want one of our doctors to take a look at your damages?”

“Ah... that sounds so odd.” Dipper sat up a little. “... N-no... I don't need...” his whole body shuddered and he gripped the couch. “... Ugh... yeah, I need... help...” Dipper pressed his wrist to his mouth. “... I'm still feeling sick and really dizzy... Please.”

“I figured. You have a knot on your head, so you'd better get it checked out. You could have a concussion.” Bill slid his phone out of his pocket. “If you go to sleep tonight, you might not wake up.”

“... Okay. Call the doctor.” Dipper blushed. “Thanks...”

The doctor arrived around a half-hour later and he checked Dipper out carefully, finally deciding he needed to take Dipper to his office. The treatment went on past midnight, and finally, Dipper went back home with Bill, sleepily lying in the seat. “I'm glad they found that I wasn't hurt seriously beyond my skin.”

“Me too. I don't know how much time we'll have... it'd be hard to have that time cut down like that.” Bill answered, drumming his fingers on the steering wheel.

"What do you mean by that?” Dipper questioned.

"I just don't know when my father intends to assign me a new mission, that's all.” Bill sighed. “I don't want to leave you. It's possible he hasn't given me one because he knows I'll revolt.”

“R-revolt... you just mean... throw a fit, right? Not... the other crazy stuff...” Dipper gripped his pants.

“Yeah. Gigantic fit. One that would seriously give him hell.” Bill dug his nails into the steering wheel.

“I don't know what you're saying, really,” Dipper managed, looking down at the seat. “I don't
understand it... I hope... I hope you don't have to lose who you are.”

“Even if I do, I'll put in personally that I want to remember you, no matter who I am. Perhaps they'll follow my request.” Bill sighed. “... If you want to leave me, that's fine. I'll let you. But don't do it behind my back. That will cause problems like today, but much worse.”

“I wouldn't do it behind your back. Today was just because I smashed my head!” Dipper flushed. “... I promise, that's the last time I'll do that. He was so... mad at me. He mentioned you. He mentioned I was hurting you. I immediately felt he was right. The smash was so bad that it took about thirty minutes before I remembered everything.”

“Mm... Well, I want to keep an eye on you tonight. Come back to my place and get some sleep. If you have any kind of sleeping or waking up issues, I'll have you in the hospital before you can think.” Bill gestured with his hand. “Got it?”

“Mm... yes,” Dipper blushed. “My backpack is in the back seat, so I'll just try to finish my homework at your place.” “Sure,” Bill smirked.

“Sure,” Bill smirked.

“... Bill,” Dipper murmured. “I really don't think I can go.”

“Are you feeling okay?” Bill questioned, rubbing Dipper's back.

“I... I think so, but I'm really sore... Really sore. I think it was from the fall and everything else.” Dipper admitted. "I want to rest today.”

“... Want to rest at your dorm or-” Bill started. Dipper clung to his arm and Bill fell silent. “... Well, Pine Tree, I can miss a day.” He paused.

“I could stay here while you-”

Bill shook his head. “I don't feel comfortable leaving you here while I leave. You wouldn't be able to escape if someone came after you.”

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing in particular. I'm just cautious.” Bill put his arms around Dipper, snuggling him close.

Dipper fell silent, staring up at the ceiling. Bill's body was nice and warm, and the bed was so soft and luxurious. Dipper pulled the covers up and closed his eyes, going back to sleep.

“Hey, Pine Tree.” The question was just a murmur but Dipper responded.

“Yes?”

“Next time, I want to try the other side,” Bill answered.

“The other side?” Dipper opened his eyes. "What other side?"

“Yeah. I want to try getting it put in my ass next time.”

Dipper made a noise of surprise. “Oh. Sure. We'll do that, but... I'm not sure you'll like it.”
"Well, I like you. I'll be fine. I'm sure you've done it, right?" Bill stroked Dipper's hair, humming softly and Dipper chuckled, closing his eyes. Bill's hands were so comforting. Dipper was surprised by how easy it was to lay with him all day.

"Yeah, I've done it. I dated a guy once who..." Dipper yawned hard, rubbing his face against Bill's chest. "Who only wanted that... I do it but I don't... like it... much..."

Bill laughed, and kissed across Dipper's face, startling Dipper awake again. "Sleeping on me? I was trying to ask you something."

"Oh... uh... what?" Dipper asked. "... About giving it? I can do it. I did it once for someone... a lot. He only wanted it... I personally like taking it more than giving it but I don't really mind either way..."

Bill chuckled. "Got it. I was just playing. Go on to sleep."


"I'll get you some ibuprofen. Stay here." Bill slid out of bed, causing Dipper to sleepily grumble. Once Bill was gone, Dipper's eyes fluttered closed and he fell asleep a few moments later.
Chapter 29 - Heartache and An Event

He was awoken by a phone call. He reached out for it, and answered it on the third ring. “H-hello?” He managed, sleepily. He awoke immediately upon hearing Mabel cry into the phone. “Mabel? What's going on?”

“I... I went to ask her,” Mabel managed. “Dipper, I started to ask her and she cut me off. She said she knew what I was going to say, and the answer was no. We're best friends and she was not going to allow that to change for any reason... I... I'm so hurt,” Mabel cried, softly. “I know – I know she's right... But Dipper, it hurts so much.”

Dipper was thoroughly confused. Melanie had said no? There was no way Melanie would have said no to what Mabel was proposing... “Maybe she misunderstood?”

“I don't know, Dipper, but I can't bring it up again.” Mabel murmured. “I... I shouldn't have tried to ask her. It was stupid.”

“No, it wasn't stupid...” Dipper paused, wondering if he should get involved. Bill was looking up at him with a concerned expression, before shaking his head. “I'm sorry, Mabel. Do you need me?”

“... um, well... no, I'm okay.” Mabel sniffled. “Melanie went back to her hotel... She said she'd be back tomorrow. I need to spend some time with Mabel.”

“Alright.” Dipper sighed. “Sorry.”

“Oh, yeah, speaking of that... what did you do to Liam? He's so upset,” Mabel questioned.

“I... accidentally... kissed him,” Dipper proffered. “... It was stupid, I apologized to Bill...”

“Mm. Dipper, why do you do that?” Mabel asked. “Did he forgive you? I mean, that’s a pretty huge breach of trust. How’d you accidentally kiss someone?”

“I cracked my skull on the sidewalk. When I was in pain, I grabbed whoever was there... It was stupid. Yes, he did forgive me. I'm not going to do that anymore.” Dipper sighed. “That is over.”

“Okay. I hope you mean it this time.” Mabel paused. “Good night.”

“Night.” Dipper hung up and Bill rubbed his upper arm, affectionately.

“Good. We shouldn't meddle.” Bill responded. “If we get involved and it turns out bad for them... it'll be our fault.”

“I guess so...” Dipper murmured.

“Say they did get together and Melanie would use Mabel for sex, or have more baggage than Mabel would be able to handle... or whatever. They end up fighting. Whose fault would it be that they got together?” Bill gestured.

“Melanie doesn't have that much baggage.” Dipper protested. “Does she?”

“Less than me.” Bill shrugged. “But...”

“I can handle your baggage,” Dipper went on. “My sister can handle Melanie.”
“Dipper... I'm only letting you see as much as I feel you can handle.” Bill stroked his cheek. “Melanie isn't so considerate.”

Dipper frowned a little. “I don't like to hear that. I can handle everything. I want to help share your burden...”

“You are sharing my burden.” Bill kissed Dipper's fingers, looking into his face. “My burden is lessened, in a huge way, because you're here with me.”

“Mmm.” Dipper made a face.

“It is. Most of my life was lived in the hopes I'd get to see you again.” Bill pulled him tight. “So most of the things I went through were so that I could see you.”

“... I just wish you thought I could handle everything.”

“Someday you will.” Bill kissed Dipper's forehead, lovingly. “Someday you'll know everything there is to know about me, every last detail. When that day comes, I hope you're ready.”

Dipper's mouth tightened. He was ready now. Why didn't Bill get that? He lay with him, staring up at the ceiling, thinking about Mabel and Liam and Bill, and his entire life was a jumbled mess. But at least he had Bill.

The next few days were slow. Everything was back to normal again. He'd apologized to Liam, whole-heartedly, and Liam had forgiven him, but with reservations. Liam wasn't quite as friendly as he had been in the past.

Mabel and Melanie seemed to resume being best friends easily and Dipper wondered how they had so easily gone back to their awkward state. The only difference was that now Melanie didn't make her straight-forward remarks of things she wanted to do to Mabel anymore... or jokes. Whatever they were, Melanie kept quiet about them.

Dipper felt oddly like things were wrong, and he couldn't explain it. Except with Bill. Everything seemed perfect when he was with Bill, and that was another reason he didn't want to leave Bill's side. He looked forward to the weekend.

“I won't be able to see you this weekend.” Bill glanced up from his textbook, looking grim.

“Why?” Dipper protested. “I... our weekends are really...” He ducked his head, looking disappointed.

“I have to go to an event thrown by my family...” Bill rested his elbows on the table, chin in his hands. “It's perfectly horrible.”

“I wish I could go.” Dipper muttered.

“I'm glad you can't.” Bill responded. “I have to wear a suit and everything. It's wretched.”

Dipper licked his lips a little, picking at his food, embarrassedly. “I – uh. I bet that's a nice sight to see.”

“... I'll swing by your dorm before the party.” Bill smirked. “Show you what I look like in a suit.”
“I'd love to see it.” Dipper nodded.

“Great...” Bill turned back to his homework. “I can't wait for you to see.”

That weekend, Dipper was all alone. Chad had went to his parents' house for the weekend, so it was just going to be Dipper all to himself for a few days. At least there was the almost deafening noise of his next-door neighbors to look forward to – Dipper glowered at the wall. That was going to be annoying. Just as he considered knocking at their door to ask them to quiet down, there was a knock at his own and he went to answer it. He pulled the door open and his eyes widened.

Bill was standing in the doorway, looking unbelievably handsome in his tailored suit. It was a light yellow, nothing offputting, over a black shirt, and black pants. He wore a silly-looking little top hat and a bowtie as usual, and he was leaning on a black cane, looking a mixture of silly and unbelievably handsome. “Good evening, Pine Tree,” he winked.

“... you look great,” Dipper answered, after looking him over. “Really great.”

“I knew you'd like it.” Bill smirked. “I wanted to swing by and make sure you saw it.” He leaned forward, hooking Dipper under the chin with his gloved fingers, pulling him close for a kiss. Dipper slipped his arms around Bill's neck, his fingers running through Bill's soft, light hair. The kiss was long and slow, causing Dipper to feel the heat from it all the way down into his stomach. When Bill finally pulled away, Dipper was left breathless, looking up at him.

“Well... I should get going, Pine Tree.” Bill murmured. “I don't want to be late.”

“Isn't it fashionable to be late?” Dipper responded back, his voice low, running his hands down Bill's chest.

Bill chuckled. “I... could be a little late,” Bill rested his hands on Dipper's hips. He glanced up the hall, noticing some people staring. “Your roommate in there?”

“Gone all weekend...” Dipper stared up at him.

“Let's step inside.” Bill followed Dipper inside his dorm and took a seat on the bed, waiting for Dipper. Dipper crawled into his lap, carefully.

“I don't want to wrinkle your suit.” Dipper carefully rested his arms on Bill's shoulders.

“Wrinkle it. It's not like I care what they think.” Bill kissed Dipper's inner arm, before covering Dipper's neck in hot kisses.

Dipper closed his eyes, tipping his head back, before lightly nudging the back of Bill's neck with his fingertips. Bill glanced up, smirking. “Hmm? What's that for?”

Dipper looked away, embarrassed. “No reason.”

“You want me to mark you, huh?” Bill smirked.

Dipper remained silent, choosing not to say anything incriminating.

“Well, I have six left... maybe I'll use them all tonight.” Bill murmured in Dipper's ear. His eyes widened and he gripped Bill's shoulder. “Since you want me to use them.”

“That'd be mean to use them all if we don't have sex,” Dipper murmured.
“We can still fool around, right?” Bill questioned.

“Well...” Dipper paused.

Bill pulled Dipper back in for a kiss, not waiting for the answer to his question. Dipper lost himself in the kiss, breathless as he tipped his head back. Bill nipped at his neck lightly, before licking and sucking on it. Dipper closed his eyes in pleasure, voicing his satisfaction. At least he got to spend a little time with Bill tonight. He'd be sure to make Bill be as late as possible.

Once they had settled down, Bill stroked Dipper's back, their arms and legs tangled together, lying side by side on the bed. “I really need to get going, Pine Tree.” He sighed. “Ugh, believe me, I'd stay all night and finish what we started...”

“Then why not,” Dipper insisted.

Bill smirked. “I can't. My presence is mandatory.”

Dipper picked at the handkerchief in Bill's pocket. “How mandatory?”

“Extremely.” Bill cupped the back of Dipper’s head, kissing him softly. It was soft and slow kiss, one that Dipper wanted so much more of – but then it was over. “… I love you, Dipper Pines. I'll see you soon.”

Dipper felt unsettled by Bill's words, and he sat up a little. “I- I love you too, Bill.”

Bill moved around Dipper, getting to his feet. “I know you do.” He leaned over Dipper, lifting his eyepatch, kissing his forehead. “I'll see you soon.”

“Y-yeah.” Dipper stammered, not sure why he felt so uncomfortable. “Monday.”

Bill pulled his eye patch back down, before he strolled over to the door, opening it, and glancing over his shoulder. Dipper watched him disappear through the door, shutting it behind him.

Monday, Dipper eagerly awaited Bill in class, drumming his hands on the table, but to his surprise, Bill never came in. Dipper wondered if he'd lost track of time like he had the last meeting...

After class, Dipper decided he'd text him. Bill usually didn't miss class, but maybe something came up. The message bounced back and there was a message stating the number had been disconnected. Dipper's eyes widened and he stuffed his phone into his pocket, running to the cafeteria. Bill wasn't there, nor was he at the library. Dipper's heart started racing and his chest was pounding. Maybe Bill's phone had just been shut off. There'd been a time in the past where Dipper hadn't been able to contact Bill, so maybe Bill just decided the phone was too dangerous to have.

Regardless, Melanie would know. If Melanie hadn't disappeared as well. Dipper called Mabel. Mabel answered with a text.

dip I'm in class
Mabel, this is really important!

Be there in a sec meet in cafe

Dipper ran to the cafeteria, waiting to meet his sister, bouncing on the balls of his feet. Terror flooded his stomach. What if something bad had happened to Bill? With Bill's weird behavior on Saturday, maybe Bill had known something was going to happen. Dipper waited for Mabel, his mind pouring over all the possible things that could have happened to Bill. None of them were good.
Chapter 30 - Melanie

Chapter Notes

A/N: I could use a beta for my works going forward. ^_^;; It probably won't be this work, but the other ones posted here, as well as maybe some Yu Yu Hakusho works, and... well, I started a Will Cipher thing but I really don't know how to write that one. ... If you're interested in helping me out, please let me know. :) 

Mabel listened to Dipper's frantic story, listening with patience. “So... Bill skipped class and shut his phone down and you think it's something super serious?”

“Yes! Mabel, he would never do that!” Dipper insisted. “I need to talk to Melanie, so if you have her number...”

“Melanie is asleep right now.” Mabel sighed.

“Then let's go get her!” Dipper insisted.

“She's at her hotel...” Mabel answered. “I mean, I have the key and address and stuff... But I'd hate to wake her up, and I'd miss class...”

“Mabel, please.” Dipper begged. “Please. There's something wrong with Bill.”

“I don’t want to suggest in any sort of way that Bill isn’t important to you. Because I know he is. I know you love him. ... But, Dipper, I don’t think I can do this. Just... go talk to Melanie, privately, in her hotel room? I mean, she turned down my feelings, and it’s so hard to act normal with her after that... I just don’t think I can. Maybe you should go without me.”

“I can’t just go to her hotel and let myself into her room! Look, I... I just think, regardless of how she reacted that time, that way I could never imagine her reacting... She’s still your best friend.” Dipper sighed. “I just feel like that you two would be a good relationship. Just, bring it up to her again and I bet things will come out differently.”

“... okay, Dipper. I... I don’t really believe you, but we'll go find Melanie,” Mabel smiled, her smile nervous. “Do you want to call a taxi?”

“Can we afford a taxi?” Dipper questioned.

“Well, Melanie gave me her card, told me to charge the taxi if I needed to see her.” Mabel rummaged in her purse.

“Her credit card?” Dipper said, aghast. Mabel pulled it out and Dipper gawked at it. “It is a credit card! Mabel, don't you think that's really weird?”

“Well... a little, but we're best friends. She probably assumes I won't go see her unless it's really urgent...” Mabel muttered, awkwardly. “So I hope it's important.”

“It is.” Dipper nodded. “She must really care about you.”
“Yeah. We’re best friends, after all,” Mabel echoed, hollowly.

Dipper sighed a little and patted Mabel’s shoulder. “I’m sorry, Mabel.”

“Thanks…” Mabel sighed. They called the taxi and headed toward the address of Melanie's hotel room.

Mabel arrived at the room and let herself and Dipper in, quietly slipping inside. “Room 256,” Mabel murmured. The room was dark inside, the curtains were drawn, with the bathroom light left on. A mini-fridge rested next to a neatly organized desk filled with papers and all kinds of information. The chair next to the bed was covered in neatly folded and draped articles of clothing.

Melanie lay curled up on her side in the bed, sleeping. Mabel stood at the end of the bed, wringing her hands. “Mel? Melanie? It's Mabel.”

Melanie stirred, moving a little. She stretched, before yawning. “Mabel?...” she curled up. “What're you doing here? You've never come to my room before.”

“I need to talk to you about something important.”

Melanie sat up and the covers slid down, bunching down around her waist. Even in the dim light, it was clear Melanie was entirely naked, the blanket covering her just at her waist and below. Dipper's eyes widened to their maximum and the blood pooled immediately in his nether-regions. He blushed hard, and Mabel seemed to be completely lost in staring at the sight. Melanie was seriously stacked, and it was hard to look away.

Dipper managed to tear his eyes from her, staring at the wall. He felt Mabel's harsh and judgmental eyes on him and he tried to hide his embarrassment. He was only human after all. Mabel stared at him a moment, before she looked back, satisfied he wasn't being a creep.

“Uh, sorry, I didn't know you slept naked... I wouldn't have let my brother in...” Mabel muttered, embarrassed. “You don't do that at my place.”

“I always sleep naked. I just don't do it at your dorm, you're right.” Melanie gathered her hair to the side, sweeping it over her shoulder. “I don't care if you or Dipper sees. It doesn't matter, does it?”

“... uh, Melanie, we came to ask you if you know where Bill is... he wasn't at class today, and his phone number's been disconnected.” Dipper scratched his neck.

“Mm. No. I haven't heard from him. What's the last thing you heard from him?” Melanie questioned.

“He was going to a party that his family was throwing,” Dipper rubbed his arm, avoiding looking at Melanie.

“So he's been re-assigned.” Melanie murmured, her voice falling on an empty room.

“Reassigned?” Dipper asked, turning to look at her, stunned. His eyes fixed on her face, not noticing the rest of her.

“Your partner – Bill, as you knew him, is gone.” Melanie leaned back on her hands, sounding nonchalant. “I’m sure from what you’ve said that his personality has been wiped, he's been assigned a new one.”
“No!” Dipper yelled, clenching his fists. “You're wrong! Bill's not gone, and I want him back. I have to have him back. Melanie, you don't understand.”

“I get it. But nothing you do or say or try will get 'Bill' back.” Melanie yawned. “Sorry... He's already someone else.”

“I don't get it! What are you talking about?” Dipper clenched his fists.

“Do me a favor. Hand me that phone.” Melanie pointed to the desk. Dipper picked up the cellphone, bringing it over to Melanie. “I want to show you something.” She swiped, going into her phone. She selected something and held the phone up. “Okay. Take a look at this photo.”

Dipper leaned in, and Mabel leaned in as well. “... Is that... Bill?” Dipper asked, baffled.

“His name was Joshua.” Melanie waggled the phone.

Dipper studied the photo carefully. The man in the photo had a similar face shape to Bill's, but looked completely different. His hair was a coal black color, with eyebrows to match. His eye was a dark blue color, and his other eye was a thick patch of scar tissue, and it looked recent. The man in the photo was smiling from ear to ear, and he had his arm around a beautiful girl, and she was laughing.

“I was the girl here.” Melanie pointed. “My name was Amber.”

“Wow...” Mabel said, eyes wide. “I wouldn't have ever guessed.”

“Go ahead and scroll through.” Melanie handed it over.

Dipper scrolled through, and he stared with wide eyes. Every photo, he could just barely catch a flash of Bill and then he recognized him completely. He stopped in amazement when he saw a picture of Bill with both his eyes and he breathed out slowly. “He has his other eye.”

“Mm... that was before I messed up.” Melanie sighed. “Yes, this was Tyler when I first met him. He and I really experienced an... awakening in our desire to live for a while after we met... of course that faded. ... He, uh, he... changed, after that.” Melanie murmured. “Tyler was never the same.”

“... Please, Melanie,” Dipper's voice broke. “Please. I have to find him...”

“... I can't help you.” Melanie sighed. “But if you step outside and let me get dressed, I'll explain to you in detail why I can't help you.”

“Can I try to convince you?” Dipper asked.

“Of course.” Melanie nodded.

“Okay. Come on, Mabel.” Dipper tugged her arm. Mabel was staring at Melanie's chest again, and she responded when Dipper tugged her arm.

“Oh! Right! We'll be back!” Mabel fled the room, gripping her hair when she stood outside. “Oh my goodness, Dip. Oh man. Woah. Woah. Argh!” Mabel threw a fit once the door shut.

“What's going on?” Dipper questioned.

“MELANIE! She was completely naked, Dip! I saw everything!” Mabel clenched her fists. “Half of everything,” Dipper rubbed his hair, ruffling it a little. 
“I... Argh, she's so beautiful!” Mabel was completely off her rocker. “How, Dip? How am I supposed to be okay with this? I love her so much and she’s... she’s my best friend and I can't look at her like a friend when she lays around naked like that, and, I'm such a BAD PERSON, DIP!” Mabel was freaking out. “I'm a bad person because I can't look at Melanie like a best friend because I just want to kiss her!”

“Ma-Mabel, calm down, you're screaming. You're going to tell the entire hallway, and Melanie, too!” Dipper tried to shush her.

“Aghhhh, what am I supposed to do?” Mabel ducked her head, volume lowered considerably. “Dipper, I love her so much. There's no way I can look at Melanie as just a friend. I...”

“Okay, stay calm.” Dipper reassured. “It's... it's okay. Maybe you should try telling Melanie again how you feel.”

“Wh-what if... what if she doesn't feel the same?” Mabel whispered. “What if... I mean, she said...”

“Well, if she doesn't, then you can keep being friends with her, but you have every right to keep loving her. You just have to respect her wishes in the other sense.”

Mabel was silent a moment. “You're right. I'll... try.”

Melanie opened the door smiling lightly, her eyes focused on the twins. “Come in.” She left the door open just a little as she made her way back to the bed, sitting cross legged on it.

The twins came back inside, sitting across from Melanie. “Okay... Why is it again that you can't help us?” Dipper asked.

“Bill doesn't want me to. He specifically asked me not to get you involved.” Melanie crossed her arms over a notebook in her lap.

“... B-bill asked you not to help me find him?” Dipper asked, baffled.

“From the beginning, Bill never wanted you to be involved with the Illuminati.” Melanie started writing on her notebook. “And I can understand that. I wouldn't want Mabel to be involved on my behalf either. I would hope if... or when, I am reclaimed, that Mabel would forget about me.” She held a sign up, meeting Dipper's eyes. There are no cameras here, but there are bugged microphones.

Dipper nodded quietly in agreement. He got it now… Melanie wanted to tell them something but just couldn’t say the words.

“That's ridiculous! I would never forget you!” Mabel clinched her fists. “I never could.”

“I would... I would like to think I could go on remembering you, but it's unlikely I would. Without a doubt, they'd take that memory from me.” Melanie wrote something on the next page. I understand how you feel about Bill, which is why I will help you find him. “So I would hope you could forget about me as well.”

“Are you saying Bill doesn't remember me anymore?” Dipper asked.

“Extremely possible.” Melanie sighed. “Once we get reassigned, we forget everything that came before.” He and I can still communicate, but it is slow and unsteady.

“... I... I don't like it. I can't stand the idea that Bill's forgotten who I am.” Tears fell from Dipper's
I will have to find him before anything else. Melanie sighed. “Once we’re reassigned, we don’t remember our names, likes, dislikes, hobbies, people, or anything else that we had or were before. We 100% become an entirely new person. Which is another reason why I think you should give up on your search. The person you’re seeking is gone.”

Dipper sniffled. “I... I don't care... I... I've fallen in love with him. There were still so many things I wanted to do with him. There were tons of experiences that I'll never have...”

“You're too persistent over a dead person,” It could take a very long time. It took me four months this last time. Can you wait that long?

“I'll wait for him as long as it takes!” Dipper yelled, angrily. “He's not dead! And he's going to come home to me! He told me he was!”

Then I'll do my best to find him. Melanie set her notebook down, sighing. “There's nothing I can do for you. Nothing at all. I can't disobey Bill's wishes by getting you involved in illuminati business.”

Dipper sniffled, nodding. “Fine... I wish he trusted me.”

“You should go home,” Melanie sighed. “I'll call and prepay a taxi for you.” Mabel went to get up as well, but Melanie caught her wrist, stopping her. “Mabel, why don't you stay a little longer? I'll get dressed to go out, we can go do something.”

Dipper recognized instantly the predatory look that crossed Melanie's face. He was sure without a doubt that Melanie had heard Mabel’s yelling from out in the hallway. “Yeah, uh, Mabel, go ahead and stay. Maybe you could convince her to help us...” Dipper got up. “I'll see you guys...”

“Farewell, Dipper.” Melanie reached for her phone, dialing the taxi. “I'll have the taxi ready for you as soon as possible.”

“Wait, I, uh...” Mabel looked confused, looking between the two of them. “Are you sure, Dip? You don't want me to-”

Dipper fled the room, leaving the two of them to whatever Melanie had planned. Dipper wasn't even completely sure Bill was gone yet... he would come back. He said he would. Dipper had to believe him.
That night, Dipper got a phone call. He looked and saw it was Mabel. He winced hard to see it, having forgotten about Mabel and her predicament. He hesitantly answered, holding the phone to his ear. “Hello?”

“Dipper,” Mabel breathed. “Bro. You are not going to believe...”

“Woah, I'm not completely sure I want to know where you're going with this,” Dipper said, hastily.

“... I listen to your stories about you and Bill,” Mabel answered, a little hurt.

“... Okay. You're right. Just... go easy on me. I don't know if I want to hear about... some things... happening to my sister.” Dipper muttered.

“After you left, Melanie... she. Wow. Okay. She told me to take a seat on the bed. She said she wanted to braid my hair.” Mabel breathed. “I said sure. I took a seat, she started running her fingers through my hair, and... she... ah... she – well. She surprised me.”

“... okay. Is it PG?” Dipper asked.

“She, um, she put her arms around me and hugged me from behind. She murmured in my ear that she could hear everything I'd said out in the hallway. I started freaking out... and she held me super tight and told me that now that she knew that I felt the same as her... she wasn't going to let me go.” Mabel fell silent. “She turned me around and kissed me... Dipper, I thought I was going to die. I freaked out on her. I... I couldn't handle it.”

“Are you okay?” Dipper asked, worried.

“... I, I asked her what she meant.” Mabel was silent. “I...”

“Are you okay?” Dipper repeated.

“I'm fine, just let me finish, okay?” Mabel repeated. “I asked her what she meant. Felt the same... I asked her what that meant. She... she was upset. She didn't understand what I meant. So I got upset. I said, 'There's no way you can love me.'”

Dipper fell completely silent, listening. “Wh- what did... she say?” He was completely on edge listening to Mabel's story. He had no idea Mabel felt that way. He'd thought they were just going to... well, basically fall into each other's arms and be happy. Apparently not.

“She got really, really, mad.” Mabel breathed out. “She said, 'Mabel Pines, what are you talking about?' I couldn't speak. I got choked up. I was angry and embarrassed... and she kept talking. 'I love you, Mabel Pines.' And I said, 'Why?' And she said, 'The day I met you, I planned on dying.' ...” Mabel choked, ducking her head. “Dipper...”

“... I... are you serious?” Dipper whispered.

“She said she came to say goodbye to Bill,” Mabel's voice broke. “She said when she saw me, she decided to stick around a little longer... just to find out about me. I was... She...” Mabel sounded close to tears.

“... I, I... wow.” Dipper was stunned.
“She said she loves my sparkle, the way I smile and laugh and... she said a lot of things, Dipper.” Mabel breathed. “She... she loves me, Dipper. Melanie loves me. She's alive because I asked her to hang out with me. She's alive for me.”

“That's amazing.” Dipper murmured.

“She... she kissed me again, and this time, I let her. It... it was really nice.” Mabel murmured. “She... she has the right amount of tongue and... she tastes like... like happiness.”

“Well, that's sort of gross, but I'm really glad.” Dipper smiled. “I'm glad the two of you worked it out.”

“We did a lot of kissing.” Mabel went on.

“Still gross.”

“A lot. And exploring.”

“Okay, I got it.” Dipper wrinkled his nose. “Please don't make me have to threaten Melanie.”

“I won't.” Mabel breathed out, happily. “Dipper, I'm just so happy.”

“I'm glad you're happy.” Dipper sighed.

“I need to go.” Mabel whispered. “Melanie's wanting me to come out of the bathroom.”

“Okay, have fun.” Dipper nodded.

“Dipper,” Mabel blushed. “No.”

“Y- whatever, I'm not encouraging this.” Dipper looked away. “Night, later.” He hung up on Mabel, ruffling his hair.

It took a week before Dipper finally broke down. Sitting in the class he shared with Bill, hoping with all his heart that Bill was just on a trip and not gone for good... he finally gave up, accepting that Bill was really gone. He broke down into tears when the teacher came in to start class. He had to leave the class, taking off for his dorm to try to calm down. He was stopped by the secretary.

“Dipper Pines? You have mail,” she said, kindly.

Dipper scrubbed the tears off his face. “A- a- I do? Thanks,” He took the letter. It was a plain white envelope, with just his name printed on the front. His immediate thought was Bill. Did it have something to do with Bill?

Excited, Dipper took off for his room. He took a seat at the desk, opening the letter. Inside was an extremely long piece of paper, with letters printed one at a time on the paper, filling the whole length of the paper. The paper must have been three or four feet long, a jumble of letters. Dipper let out a long breath, ducking his head.

First, Bill was really gone. Secondly, he had sent Dipper a message- Dipper was sure-, and he was going to read it if it killed him. He picked over the letter for an hour before sighing in frustration. Nothing was working. He called Mabel, hoping she wasn't busy.

“Hey, Dipper, what's up?” Mabel's voice cheered through the phone and Dipper rolled his eyes.
“Hi, Mabel. Is Melanie there?”

“Yeah. One second.” Mabel moved the phone. “He wants to ask about Bill, I think.”

Melanie took the phone. “There's still no progress yet, Dipper.” she sounded annoyed.

“It's not that... I got... uh...” Dipper paused. “Um...”

“What?” Melanie sighed. “What is it?”

“I'm not sure... are you guys' at the dorms?”

“... yeah. Come over.” Melanie hung up.

Dipper folded up his paper and took it to Mabel's room, knocking on the door. Melanie answered the door, letting Dipper inside. “... so what’s it say?”

“Hi, Dipper,” Mabel waved from the bed.

“Hi, Mabel... and I don't know. I can't read it.” Dipper sighed.

“Hand it over.”

Dipper handed the paper over and Melanie unfolded it, looking over the long string of letters. “... I can't do this.”

“What do you mean?”

“It's a scytale.” She handed it back. “I can try but it'll be tough.”

“Scytale.” Dipper repeated. “That's... um, isn't that the... thing, where you... ugh, it's from ancient Greece... You...”

“Wrap it around an object of a certain size and the text will reveal itself. Let me try a bedpost.” Melanie took it back from Dipper, wrapping it around the bed leg. “Too big. Gibberish. We can just keep wrapping it around stuff and see if something works.”

“Wrap it around Dipper's face.” Mabel offered from the bed.

Dipper wrinkled his nose in annoyance. “... nah. I'll... I'll try to figure out what it is.”

Melanie made a face. “He probably picked something with some significance. See if you can figure out what the significance is. Whatever it is, it's not in his apartment anymore... it's packed up. Someone else is already living there.”

Dipper clutched his chest, looking pained. “... really?”

Melanie nodded, gravely. “All gone. Bill's gone, Dipper. You know that, right?”

“I don't believe it,” Dipper muttered, in a surly tone. “He contacted me. Right? ... Hell... maybe this isn't even him. I don't have any proof.” He looked down at the scytale, sighing.

“No, it's definitely him. I recognize his work.” Melanie crossed her arms. “Not Bill, but my fiancee.”

Dipper clutched the paper. “So... he does remember me. He wants to talk to me.”

“With any luck, he managed to get around his reprogramming.” Melanie shrugged. “Who knows?
He's a slippery bastard... Good luck finding the object.”

“Thanks.” Dipper slipped out of the room and headed toward his dorm, wondering what the scytale could say.

He spent the next week looking for some object that he could use, but it was no luck. He hadn't heard from Melanie either... and he was starting to get desperate. The scytale was starting to drive him mad.

He slammed his fist against the desk, scowling. “WHAT THE HELL DOES IT SAY?” He yelled. “... Bill, why couldn't you leave me some kind of clue?” He stood up fast, his chair tipping over behind him, clattering to the floor. “God – I - …” Dipper choked before the tears started to fall. He felt like his chest was being squeezed, and everything came crashing in at once.

He started bawling, unable to stop. He missed Bill so much he couldn't stand it. How could Bill go to that party? He KNEW he would be taken away... he knew. He had to know. He cried until the tears finally stopped falling and then he kneeled down to pick up the chair, hand shaking. It would be okay. It would. He was sure of it.

Bill would - Dipper's eye caught sight of something lying under the bed, just far enough in that he couldn't see it unless he was bent down. He reached out, wrapping his fingers around the object, eyes widening as he realized what it was.

Bill's cane, covered in a thin layer of dust, lying just under Dipper's bed. He remembered now that Bill had come in with his cane, strutting like a peacock and he'd left in such a hurry – or, maybe not. Bill had left the cane on purpose. Dipper turned, grabbing the paper, wrapping it around the handle of the cane.

I love you. I'll come home.

The only message on the paper, printed only for Dipper's eyes, from Bill. Dipper's heart swelled and yet, he was very far away from Bill. The pain was almost unbearable for Dipper, and he had to take a seat, clutching the cane close to him. It hadn't been urgent that he translate it... but Dipper wanted Bill home so badly he couldn't stand it.

“I'd do anything if you'd come home,” Dipper whispered into the cane. “I wish you could just... stroll through the front door right now. I would give anything for you to stroll through that door right now and...” He closed his eyes. “... life's not that convenient.”

He lay down in his bed, pulling the covers over him, hugging the cane close, exhausted from his long cry. “... You better keep your promise.” He whispered. He closed his eyes, falling asleep easily.

He woke up to a ruckus outside of his dorm and he stumbled outside, poking his head out. Liam was standing there, fighting with someone Dipper could only see the back of.

“Look, would you lay off me?” Liam yelled. “I just... I'm allowed to be angry!”

The guy put his arms on Liam's elbows, trying to soothe him. “You are. But... I just think... I... I want a chance to make you happy. He doesn't have room for anyone but Bill. Please give me a chance.” Dipper immediately recognized the voice as Chad's and he wondered if he should shut the door.

Liam looked away, upset. “I... why? I just got done being toyed with by the guy I liked... I've just
“I finished being jerked around, and now you want to jerk me around too?”

“I would never jerk you around!”

Dipper felt a little pleased, realizing that Chad was finally making his move on Liam. He silently cheered for Chad and also felt bad for Liam. Dipper realized he needed to apologize with more seriousness, but for now, he stayed silent.

“Oh, really?” Liam muttered.

“I really liked you before I even met you!” Chad insisted. “Like... okay, so, your writing in class... it was always so... awesome. It really gave me a really good picture of the kind of person who wrote it, and... like... I had a huge crush on them, and I spent all this time trying to find out who in our class it was... Then I found out it was you, and it was like, ‘Wow, he's just as cute as I hoped!’ I mean... I don't... I'm not in love with you... but I really really like you and I want to get to know you. It can be just as serious or not as you want it to be. I just want a chance.”

Liam looked at him, looking frustrated. “... What if I just jerked you around? Maybe I'm an asshole too, huh?”

“What if?” Chad shrugged. “I'm alright with that. I just want a chance to get to know you... we can work it out.”

Liam frowned, looking away. He was silent a moment, before speaking up. “... you just want to... try going out? Can I set all the limits on what we do?” He crossed his arms.

“Well, I want some limits of my own,” Chad held his hands up. “But of course you're allowed to set limits. We can do or not do whatever you want.”

“... fine.” Liam paused. “I'll give you a chance, but I'm not going to promise anything.”

“I get it. That's perfect. Thank you so much.” Chad breathed, sounding enthusiastic. “How about I take you on a date Friday? Is that okay?”

Liam looked away. “I guess...”

“Thank you so much. God, I want to kiss you like, so bad, but I'll wait until you say I can.” Chad scratched the back of his head. “Shit, sorry, that wasn't supposed to be out loud.”

“... let's settle this now. I'll let you kiss me now...” Liam crossed his arms. “If I like it... I'll go on the date with you. If not, I want you to leave me alone.”

“Woah... pressure.” Chad ran his fingers along his lips. “... okay. I'll take the gamble.”

“Okay. Kiss me.” Liam frowned, looking at Chad.

Chad turned bright red. “Man, this is so much pressure. Okay. But you can't be all tense like that. It's gonna totally ruin the mood.”

Liam sighed, relaxing his shoulders. “Okay. You're right, this should be fair. Do whatever you want, you have a green light.”

Dipper felt like he should stop watching, but he was so curious. It made him miss Bill, somehow. Chad took a step towards Liam, gripping his hips firmly, pulling Liam the rest of the way towards him. Liam's eyes grew wide and he squeaked, resting his hands on Chad's chest. “I... ah-...”
Chad tilted his head, before going in for a kiss, while Liam's mouth was still open in surprise. Dipper watched as the kiss lingered for a minute. … or two... Dipper stepped back, closing the door quietly. Well... that definitely went well.

He looked back at the bed, where the cane was still lying against his pillow. He went back and picked it up, crawling back into bed, curling up with it. Waiting would be agonizing.
Chapter 32 - One Time Pad

Dipper poked at his food before pushing the plate away, resting his elbows on the table. “Dip, are you not eating?” Mabel protested, pointing at his plate.

“Nah... I'm just really not hungry.” He sighed.

“Miss Bill?”

“More than you can imagine.”

“... I don't know. I might be able to imagine it now... I couldn't before.” Mabel replied, a bit shyly.

Dipper glanced around the table. Liam was sitting silently on the far end of the table, picking at his food as well. Mabel's other friends were talking about something silly, so Dipper just ventured a, “I'm glad.” and glanced toward the windows at the back of the room.

“Do you think I love her, bro? Or do you think I'm just infatuated?” Mabel spoke up again.

“... I'm not sure. It's really hard to know.” Dipper sat up. “Who knows, maybe I'm just infatuated.”

“It's not like Bill is much to love.” Melanie clattered her tray down, taking a seat. “Probably infatuation. Bill is extremely weird, which is why he's perfect for you.”

“What do you mean by that?” Dipper frowned.

“Well, he is. It's not a lie. Bill's eccentricities are very intriguing for you, aren't they, Dipper?” Melanie took a seat, beginning to eat her food.

“... well...” Dipper trailed off. Melanie was telling the truth, but the truth made Dipper worried somehow, like something was off about it. “Yes, but...”

“See? Bill was made for you.” Melanie went on.

Dipper made a face. “Sorry, I don't get it... I don't get what you're saying.”

“I'm saying Bill is a liar. He always has been, he always will be.” Melanie set her burger down, reaching for her fries. “If you haven't caught him in one yet... it's because you're blinded by fascination.”

“What's up with you?” Dipper frowned, annoyed. “Are you trying to upset me?”

“No. I just suppose that... I'd like to continue to make sure you really want to find Bill. If you think it's only childish infatuation, you had better give up now.” Melanie met his eyes. “Because the path to finding Bill is littered with danger, the kind a normal kid like you would never encounter on your own. It can fall on you, or your friends or family... If you're prepared to accept the danger, risk the consequences... then I'll keep searching. If you still really want to find a liar who doesn't exist anymore, who was everything he was to impress and intrigue you... Then I'll find him.”

Dipper fell silent, staring at Melanie. He looked down at his tray, falling into thought. “Are you sure that everything he was... was made up for me?”

“Everything Bill and I are is made up.” Melanie responded. “Except our feelings, I guess.”
“... then that's enough.” Dipper clenched his fist. “If... he really loves me, then... I'm sorry, Mabel! I know this could put you in danger... But I have to find Bill.”

“No, I get it. You have to do what you have to do.” Mabel sighed. “I would never want to be in your place.”

Melanie leaned towards her, kissing her cheek. “I hope you never will.”

“Is that a possibility?” Dipper questioned.

“Of course. If they call me back, then that's it. Unlike with Bill, you'll never have a way to find me.” Melanie responded.

Mabel's brows knit, and she looked down at her lap, fidgeting with her fork. “... That would be...”

“I know.” Melanie sighed. “They've got us on a very short leash. Right now, Bill and I... they're just letting us go for a walk. Well, were, in Bill's case.”

“... I want to find him. Nothing's changed my mind.” Dipper looked at Melanie, his expression serious. “Please help me.”

“Well. I-” Melanie started.

“What are you all TALKING about?” Liam asked, suspiciously. “What is going on? Danger, consequences... Dipper's friends and family? What, is Bill some kind of mafia member? Is he some alien being hidden by the FBI and you guys have to go get him out? You all sound absolutely nuts over there.”

“FBI...” Melanie murmured. “Please, we have a far greater grasp on the United States than the Feds. ... I was actually going to say that I found him.”

“What was that?” Dipper questioned, looking baffled. “You have a better grasp on the United States than the Feds? Found who?”

Melanie dusted her gloved hands off, and crumbs rained down. “Your lying boyfriend.”

“You guys are just messing with me... I'm not in the mood.” Liam stalked off, going to dump his tray.

“... you found him?” Dipper yelped, launching to his feet.

“Sit down, Pines.” Melanie's expression darkened. Dipper sank back down. “We won't discuss any more until we're back at Mabel's.”

“Well, let's go!” Dipper insisted. “Come on.”

“... Mabel, are you done eating?” Melanie glanced over at her.

Mabel stirred her vegetables with a fork, her eyes downcast. “Yeah. I'm not really that hungry.”

“Hmm? What is it? Are you sad about me potentially being taken away?” Melanie asked, reaching over towards her. Dipper didn't see the action but he guessed Melanie had rubbed her leg because Mabel grew embarrassed.

“Of course I am!” Mabel blurted out, staring at Melanie with disappointment. “I mean... that's a huge thing, what if I wake up in the morning and you're gone and I didn't get to say goodbye? And if you
go, I'll never find you again... Your work is so horrible, Melanie! I wish you could just quit. I wish you could quit and go to college with me and...” Mabel gripped her hair. “... I don't want you to disappear.”

“... Don't worry, Mabel.” Melanie leaned towards her, kissing her on the lips, and looking into her eyes. “I'm working towards not having to disappear... But it won't be easy. Give me time to work, okay? Don't be sad. I won't leave you.”

A feeling of frustration and disappointment welled up in Dipper's chest. It quickly simmered down into rage. Bill hadn't told him he might have to leave suddenly. He'd mentioned it was possible, but Dipper at least thought he'd know before it happened. In fact, Bill's working so hard to get his degree... if anything, it just settled into Dipper's mind that he had complete plans to stick around a very long time. Why hadn't Bill told him anything? Why hadn't he warned him? Why hadn't he trusted him? There were tons of questions Dipper was going to ask him when he saw him.

Dipper stood up and went to dump his tray, unable to listen anymore. He decided to wait by the entrance, and finally, Melanie came towards him, Mabel in tow. “Let's go, Dipper.” She directed at him.

“... Sorry, Bro.” Mabel finally offered. “I know you're hurting and... I feel like it was really rude of me to have that conversation in front of you.”

“It was but it's okay. I'll be alright, Mabel,” Dipper reassured her, gently. Mabel was scared too. “I know where you're coming from. I wish I could have had that conversation with Bill.”

“He didn't tell you he'd be called back?” Melanie tilted her head.

“No! And you tell Mabel everything... I'm... I'm really hurt and pissed off.” Dipper frowned.

“... Mabel doesn't know everything.” Melanie ventured.

“What? What don't I know?” Mabel protested.

“Many things, Mabel. If it were at all possible, I'd keep you as far away from what I'm involved with as you can be.” Melanie sighed.

“... Bill thought that too.” Dipper murmured, with a sigh.

“... I want to know everything.” Mabel skidded to a stop. “I want you to tell me.”

“... Fine. Mabel, we'll discuss it at your dorm. Okay?” Melanie seemed down, looking away from Mabel. “If you truly want involved, we'll get you involved.”

Mabel pursed her lips, nodding grimly.

Once they got to Mabel's dorm, they all settled down, much to the chagrin of Jen. She scoffed, rolling her eyes. She picked up her phone and started texting furiously.

“We'll have to wait to talk about Bill.” Dipper sighed, crossing his legs.

“He sure disappeared, didn't he...?” Jen spoke up, causing Dipper to shoot her a cross look.

“Yeah... don't worry, it won't be long.” Melanie lay back on her hand, looking over at Mabel.
“I wonder if the police came and got him for destroying the chandelier.” Jen glanced over at Dipper. “That's totally what happened, right?”

“No. He... uh, he had to travel for work.” Dipper muttered.

“Ugh, yeah right. I bet he lied to you... I'm sure he got arrested.” Jen continued texting, popping her gum.

“Hey, Mabel.” Melanie leaned towards her, resting her head on Mabel's shoulder. “Baby.”

“Wh-what?” Mabel stuttered, surprised. “I mean, uh,”

“Wanna have a threesome with your brother?” Melanie looked up at Mabel.

“That’s a disgusting joke! You two are disgusting. Demons in human form!” Jen was on her feet so fast, she looked like she was made out of lightning. She snatched her bag up, storming out of the room, slamming the door shut behind her. Mabel looked like she'd been dipped underwater, staring at Melanie with wide eyes, completely open mouthed.

“Thank everything, she finally got out of here. Sorry, Mabel. I was just playing. Do you forgive me?” Melanie wound an arm around Mabel's waist, kissing her shoulder.

Dipper let out an aggressive sigh of relief. “I was seriously wondering what the hell you were thinking! It's not the first time you've made a comment like that...”

“O-of course you were kidding...” Mabel stuttered. “I was just... I was so stunned at first! You said before you never joked around! Please don't joke around like that again...”

“Okay. I won't.” Melanie pulled Mabel against her. “That's one of the only jokes I've ever told. Was it funny?”

“It's more gross.” Mabel wrinkled her nose. “But it worked, I guess.”

“Yeah... I have to agree.” Dipper sighed. “That joke is gross.”

“Sure got her out of here.” Melanie tilted her head towards the door. “So... Bill, and I. That's what we're here about.”

“Yes. Where is he?” Dipper asked, eagerly.

“Surprisingly, he's still in town. As you know, this town is rather large... so it was hard for me to find him.” Melanie paused. “They've got him ferreting out a law firm. They want to get the CEO on their side, so they're looking to blackmail him into... never mind, it's not important. I know where he'll be on a certain day and a certain time.”

“You guys are qualified to work at law firms?” Mabel questioned, baffled. “What is he, a paralegal?”

“Well, with forged documentation, we can do anything.” Melanie said, patiently.

“Where?” Dipper asked, urgently.

“First things first. His name is Ryder Johnson.” Melanie sighed. “... He'll be difficult, so you need to corner him and talk to him.”

“Forged documentation?” Mabel went on. “I... I guess I don't really get any of this. He has a new name?”
“Yes, Mabel. Give me a minute. I'll explain everything.”

“Have you talked to him?” Dipper questioned.

“... yeah.” Melanie sighed. “I got a communique from them.”

“A what?” Dipper asked.

“I received a one time pad from Bill a long time ago... the same day you got your letter.” Melanie tipped her head towards Dipper.

“What!” Dipper demanded. “Why didn't you tell me you got a code from Bill?”

“I didn't get a code from Bill.” Melanie clicked her tongue. “I got a one time pad.”

“What is that?” Dipper demanded.

“It's the solution to a cipher. It's the only form of communication that is entirely uncrackable, unless you have the one time pad.” Melanie sighed.

“So where is it? What does it go to?” Dipper asked, eagerly.

“... I memorized it and destroyed it.” Melanie glanced at Mabel. “But then I got the code.”

“Let me see it.” Dipper said, eagerly.

Melanie reached into her shirt and removed a small book, passing it to Dipper. 102 Recipes: The College Kid Edition. Dipper gave her the most baffled look. “Melanie, this is a cookbook.”

“Dipper, this is the cipher that Bill sent me.” Melanie sighed, irritated with him already. “Combined with the one time pad, it translates to a message.”

“That must have been a long pad...” Dipper murmured, eyes wide.

“It was. 114 pages of pure gibberish by your standards.” Melanie looked at the book. “I want you to take a look at what I've translated while I talk to Mabel.”

“... I think I might listen to this instead.” Dipper looked up at her.

“Sure.” Melanie paused. “Okay. Thank you for your patience, Mabel.”

“I'm so confused about what's going on... please tell me what's going on.” Mabel met her eyes.

“Sure.” Melanie sighed. “Mabel, Bill and I are members of a secret organization known as the Illuminati. Bill's father is a famous Illuminati member. The leader, in fact. He raised Bill to be the next leader. I was engaged to Bill to be his fiancee... but it did not work out.” Melanie paused. “Now, they've come to take Bill back and put him back to his duties, which includes controlling people and manipulating events to work out in their favor.”

“... Okay, wait. What? The Illuminati? That’s a joke!” Mabel blinked. “... That’s... that’s a horrible joke, Melanie... I could believe the organization thing... but... the Illuminati isn’t real. It’s something made up.”

“It’s definitely not made up. It’s 100% real.” Melanie took Mabel’s hands, stroking the backs of them with her thumbs. “This isn’t a joke. We really are members of the Illuminati, and it is really a real
organization.”

“... So... you do this stuff too? Control people, manipulate events...?” Mabel asked, looking at Melanie. Melanie nodded, seriously. “... why are you here now?” Mabel asked. “What is your... task?”

“I am currently between tasks.” Melanie sighed. “They're letting me have some free time before I go back to work. They occasionally give us a few moments in-between missions... Surprisingly, they didn't know I was about to end myself. I did everything I could to hide it... Uh, until you blew my secret for me. They strip searched me in the bathroom.” She gripped her hair. “...If they’d known before that, I'm sure they would never have let me have free time.”

“... I just, it's a lot to get my head around.” Mabel finally sighed.

“I know. I'm sorry. Do you have any other questions?” Melanie asked.

“Have you ever...” Mabel paused. “Have you ever killed or hurt anyone?”

“I've never killed anyone. I've never hurt anyone directly.” Melanie soothed.

“... Have you ever... slept with someone in the name of work?” Mabel went on.

“No. You and Bill are the only people my body has ever been shared with.” Melanie reassured. “I haven't slept with you for my job, Mabel.”

Mabel looked startled. “You- you knew I was thinking about that?”

“Of course.” Melanie sighed. “And I can tell you... I certainly haven't done that. I love you, Mabel Pines.”

Mabel let out a long sigh of relief, curling into Melanie's shoulder. “... I love you too. Thank you for telling me... I'm sorry I was so worried.”

“No, I'm sorry I kept it from you.” Melanie responded.

Dipper opened the book, beginning to read.

_MelanieIMW_

_Appetizers_

Dipper made a face. What a weird cipher. “How does this form of cipher work?”

“In this case, he found the text he wanted to use to translate the scrambled message. He then converted each letter in that word, appetizers, and converted it to a numeric. 1, 16, 16, 5, 20, 9, 26, 5, 18, and 19.” Melanie explained. “Then he added the letters of his message, converted to numerics, to the numbers he created in appetizers, and turned that back into letters. Those letters he wrote down, and sent to me in the form of the one time pad.”

“... So... MelanieIMW, that's... uh... let me get some paper.” Dipper moved over to Mabel's desk, picking up a notebook and a pen.
“Is it really essential to figure out how the cipher works?” Melanie questioned.

“I've never seen this kind of cipher.” Dipper looked at her.

“Fine, go for it.”

“13, 5, 12, 1, 14, 9, 5, 9, 13, and 23. Adding those to the original...” Dipper muttered. “14, 21, 28, 6, 34, 18, 31, 14, 31, and 42. So the pad would have looked like... NUBFHRENEP.”


“Wow.” Dipper sat back. “That's really... advanced. I would have taken a long time to figure that out.”

“It's the way we were raised.” Melanie responded.

“Oh, yeah, Bill said something about that...” Dipper turned back to the cookbook.

Melanieimw

Appetizers

riün g todiscus

Pigs in a blanket

Dipper went on reading. Melanie, I'm writing to discuss my plans for freedom. Plans I need your help with. You're the only person I can trust to help me with these. I hope you will. I have great need of my freedom... he's waiting for me.

Dipper got warm fuzzies reading the message. He smiled, setting the book down. “Thanks, Melanie.”

“That's all I've gotten so far, but there's 114 pages to translate... Bill has detailed his plans in agonizing detail. Because he's an asshole.” Melanie responded.

“I'm going to head back to my dorm.” Dipper got to his feet. “When do I need to meet with Bill?”

“On Saturday, he'll be at the Mother Earth Coffee Co. on 10th and North. 2pm. He's going to meet up with an important Illuminat member at 2:15pm, so make sure you wait until after their meeting is over. At around 2:30, it'll be safe to approach him. But look carefully from wherever you are, because if their meeting isn't over, you could get him killed or seriously hurt.” Melanie looked up at him.

“I got it. Thanks.” Dipper smiled, heading out of the dorm, and towards his home.
Chapter 33- Messy

Dipper stood nervously outside of the coffee shop. It was nearly 2:25, and he was finding it hard to breathe. The thought that Bill was inside was both terrifying and unbelievably exciting, and Dipper was extremely nervous. He took a breath, went inside, and got in line, scanning the crowded cafe.

People were chatting about all number of things around him, seated at two seat tables and sitting alone with laptops. Dipper didn't see Bill, and he felt a little annoyed. Had Melanie lied to him? It was after he got his coffee that he spotted him, and his heart did flips and launched into his throat.

Bill looked nothing like Dipper had seen him. His hair was dark brown, cut shorter than before, neatly cared for. He had two eyes, and no eye patch, without a trace of the scar tissue Dipper remembered with such fondness. His suit was perfectly tailored to his body, a dark blue color, which brought out the lovely shade of blue his eyes were... now. He was doing something on his cellphone, an object that captured all his attention.

Dipper felt nervous and unsettled, but at the same time, he knew without a doubt this was Bill. The curve of his jaw was the same, the expression in his eye was the same... The way his shoulders were carried... It was Bill.

Even knowing for sure, Dipper still hesitated. Should he really go bother him? Bill had said he would come back on his own terms... Taking a deep breath, Dipper marched over and took a seat across from Bill. “Need some company?”

Bill looked up, registering Dipper's face. For a single moment, his face registered pure shock and surprise, before breaking into an ear to ear grin. “Only if it's you.”

“... I miss you.” Dipper whispered, the words tumbling from the very bottom of his heart.

“God, kid, I miss you too. So much.” Bill whispered back. “Mel tell you I was here?” Dipper nodded. “Can’t believe you recognized me – one second.” Bill swiped his phone, holding it to his ear. “Hello. Ryder Johnson speaking.” He listened a moment. “Yeah, definitely, sir. Please email me the files and I'll take a look at them... I can guarantee you're not making a mistake entrusting it to me.” He listened a moment. “I hope you have a nice weekend, sir. Thank you. You too. Good bye.” Bill hung up the phone, silence filling the air. “... You really should stop looking for me, kid.” Bill leaned forward, picking up his bag. “I told you, I'd be back when I came back-”

“Are you leaving?” Dipper accused, eyes cold. “... already?”

“... actually, I was headed to the bathroom.” He flicked his eyes at Dipper. “Come with me?”

Dipper nodded, looking annoyed still. He tossed his coffee into the trash on the way into the bathroom. He was too nervous to drink it. He had so much he wanted to say to Bill. So many questions and... Bill tugged him into the handicapped stall, shutting the door behind them, locking it. He ducked his head, kissing Dipper with as much passion as the first time, and Dipper threw himself into it.

They kissed for a few minutes, hands rubbing and touching each other’s bodies with hunger, the two of them communicating how much they'd missed each other. Finally pulling away, Dipper and Bill were both out of breath. “I have... some questions,” Dipper licked his lips.

“Shoot... can't promise I'll answer them but I can try.” Bill nipped at Dipper's neck lightly, his arms around Dipper's waist.
“Why didn't you tell me there was a chance this could happen?” Dipper whispered.

Bill was silent, stroking Dipper's cheek. “... it was more than a chance. It was a guarantee. I knew this would happen, and there was no way around it. No way to avoid it... I didn't want to change what we had. I didn't want the two of us to spend our time together waiting on goodbye.”

Dipper got up on his tiptoes, kissing Bill suddenly, the kiss loaded with love and passion. Dipper moaned a little when Bill nibbled on his lip, rocking his hips against him, standing there in the middle of the stall. “Good answer.”

“Mm. Thanks.” Bill smirked.

“... Why did you go so easily?” Dipper asked, looking into his eyes.

“I didn't want to give them cause to suspect me. If they're not suspecting I'll run away at the first drop of the hat, I can get away with more. It'll be easier to come back to you.” Bill responded. “... Pine Tree, you've got to stop looking for me. This is horribly dangerous for you.”

“But I love you.” Dipper whined, softly.

Bill took Dipper's face in his hands, unable to stop kissing him. “God, Pine Tree, I can't – I love you so much. I can't hardly leave. It's so hard.” Bill murmured, his voice thick. “I've missed you so much, Pine Tree. So much. But I'm so scared... I don't know what they'll do to you if they catch you. I can't let them do that.”

Dipper looked up at him. “Please, just a little longer.” Dipper dig his fingertips into Bill's perfectly tailored suit, desperate for more time. “I kept thinking it would get easier while you were gone but it never did. You've been gone almost as long as we've been together-” Dipper's eyes welled up with tears.

“No. Dipper, don't.” Bill tilted his chin up, kissing Dipper's closed eyes, trying to stop his tears. “We're still together even when I'm not there. I promise...”

“... Don't leave.” Dipper pleaded.

“I still have stuff to do.” Bill sighed. “I have to leave. Pine Tree, it's because I love you so much that I'm working so hard to protect you. You have to understand that. You have to know I'm working so hard to keep you safe... and I'm working to come home to you...”

Dipper was silent, resting his head against Bill's chest, breathing in his scent. “Are you?”

“Mm-hmm. My job begins officially Monday morning. On that day, things will change with me...” He stroked Dipper's hair. “On that day, I won't be Bill for a long time. But I will be when I come home to you.”

“... How long? How long am I...” Dipper's voice was so soft it disappeared, and it was hard to breathe. “How long am I expected to wait?”

“I don't know. I'm sorry, Pine Tree. I should never have gotten you mixed up in this...” Bill whispered, stroking Dipper's hair. “It could be a really long time. I never should have mixed you up in my Illuminati bullshit... I guess I never really believed you could love me too... I never imagined how good it could feel to have you in my arms... I'm so addicted to you, Pine Tree. Believe me, I would never leave if I didn't have to... I'm sorry that you'll have to be kept waiting for months...”

“Months...” Dipper whispered. “Bill, months?”
Bill rested his forehead against Dipper's. “If you want to end it, Dipper, I promise you, I understand. I love you so much it's hard to breathe... but you shouldn't have to wait months or longer for me to come back. You should go back to living your life...” Bill's voice cracked suddenly, his face twisted in pain. “Because I don't know when I'll have my chance to escape.”

Dipper shoved him hard and Bill stumbled back, slamming against the wall. Dipper was furious, standing tall, all puffed up like an angry cat. “Don't talk like that! Damn it, Bill,” tears welled up in his eyes. “End it? Are you serious? I...” Dipper crumpled inwards, his shoulders curling in and head dropping. “Why do you keep telling me to leave and stay away and wait for eternity and... even if it's dangerous, I'd rather -”

“I'd rather you live your life without me than die, Dipper Pines.” Bill's eyes were dark. “I'd rather you live without me than become a pawn of the Illuminati...”

“Don't you get how I feel?” Dipper repeated, desperately. “Bill, don't you... don't you get it?”

“Of COURSE I do... but I can't change it.” Bill sighed. “I can't... I can't speed it up for you and I can't... I can't risk your life over it. I... Dipper, I've waited five years since last time for my chance to see you again. I don't expect you to spend five years waiting for me after all we had was a month and a half... I won't ask you to. Dipper, I love you more than anything else in the entire world. And I'll come back as soon as I can. If you've moved on by then, then I'll accept it, and bless your union. I'll become your best friend... your support system. I won't ask you to wait or anything... but I will ask you to please, don't look for me, and go home.”

Tears started flowing down Dipper's face, unable to stop them. “Are you breaking up with me?” He whimpered. “Is that...?”

Bill let out a long sigh. “If that's what I have to do to get you uninvolved in this-”

“You said there was nothing I could do that you'd break up with me for!” Dipper pleaded. “Please, I just wanted to see you! I just...” Dipper ducked his head, tears flowing down his face. “Bill...” he whispered, heartbroken.

“It's nothing you did.” Bill sighed.

“I... I'll leave, I won't look for you again! I'll stay at the dorm, I'll wait!” Dipper begged, taking a step toward Bill. “Please don't-”

“I can't make you wait for possibly years...” Bill muttered, his brows knit, shoulders tensed, expression full of pain. “And I can't get you involved in this danger...”

“Bill,” Dipper begged. “Bill... please. Please.” He moved close to Bill, tears flowing down his cheeks. “Please don't do this...”

Bill looked at him, his eye full of pain. He reached up, his hand going to brush Dipper's cheek. Dipper inhaled sharply, begging for Bill to touch him. “Please, Bill. I love you.”

Bill dropped his hand, turning to the door. He unlocked it and left the bathroom. When the door shut behind him, Dipper slumped to the ground, sobbing. He curled up, his arms to his chest, rocking back and forth.

He immediately dialed Mabel, rocking back and forth. “M-mabel,” he sobbed. “Mabel...”

“Bill dumped me,” Dipper sobbed.

Mabel gasped deeply from her lungs. “No!”

“Yes!” Dipper blurted, tears stinging his eyes.

“Where are you, I'll be there!” Mabel cried. “I'll kick his ass.”

“He's already gone!” Dipper cried. “He's gone... He's gone, Mabel.”

“He better hope he's gone! I'll rip his stupid bleached hair out of his head.” Mabel seethed.

“C-can... can I stay with you?” Dipper whispered.

“Of course! Where are you, I'll meet you!” Mabel insisted.

“No... I'll get on the bus... I'll be there soon.” Dipper wiped his eyes. “I'm sorry.”

“... I'm sorry, Dipper. I'm so sorry. I never would have ever thought...” Mabel breathed.

“I'll see you soon.” Dipper hung up quietly, heading toward Mabel's, still in a state of shock and devastation.
Dipper lay in Mabel's bed, his head in his sister's lap while she pet his hair. Tears continued to roll down his cheeks while Mabel soothed him. “I'm so sorry, Dip. I really am... I never would have guessed he would have done that...” Mabel sighed. “He seemed like he cared so much about you.”

“... I begged him, Mabel. With everything I had, I begged him not to dump me... and he just... walked away.” Dipper whispered.

Melanie sat on the floor, looking annoyed, watching Mabel try to make Dipper feel better. “I can't believe he did that either...”

“... Maybe... maybe he didn't actually love me...” Dipper whispered.

“That's ridiculous. Bill loved you more than he ever has anything.” Melanie frowned, darkly. “Don't act stupid.”

“What?” Dipper demanded, sitting up. “How do you know?”

“Because I grew up around him, and I know more about him than you.” Melanie frowned. “Dipper Pines, Bill loves you deeply. He's just doing something stupid to try to 'protect you'... but believe me, he's suffering as bad as you right now over how much he made you cry. He'll never forgive himself for that.”

“Good.” Dipper muttered. “... I... I'm giving up on him, like he wants. If he comes back... I'll see where I am.”

“Are you hungry, Dip?” Mabel asked, stroking his hair. Dipper shook his head. “Want something to drink? Ice cream? A snack? There's got to be something you want...”

“... Yeah. Can you get me a Pitt Cola?”

“Yeah, 'course. I'll be right back.” Mabel pet his hair before slipping out of the room, the door closing behind her.

“... Dipper. Are you really giving up?” Melanie tilted her head.

“... yes.” Dipper muttered.

“There's one thing you can do to get Bill back and get what you want.” Melanie leaned toward him, studying him. “Bill wouldn't be able to do anything but accept it.”

“... What?” Dipper asked, quietly, suspicious. “What is that...?”

“... Join the Illuminati.” Melanie responded.

Dipper's eyes widened and he sat up, angrily. “No! That's exactly what Bill doesn't want...! He'll be furious if I...”

“He won't be able to do anything.” Melanie responded. “If you go to the Illuminati, and join willingly... you'll get Bill... they'll make you his fiance and you'll be protected.”

“Me? I'm a guy.” Dipper said, baffled. “... His... fiance?”
“Yes. They don't care what gender you two are.” Melanie drummed her fingers on the floor.

“... I don't know. Bill doesn't want me to join for a reason.” Dipper muttered. “There has to be a reason.”

“It's dangerous. It really is. But since Bill will become the leader, you'll be protected in that role, and it'll be no more or less dangerous than going to a theme park.” Melanie shrugged.

Dipper gripped Mabel's pillow. “I... I need to... think about this.”

“Well, of course. Take all the time you need.” Melanie leaned back. “Of course Bill will be angry at first... but you'll have him, and he'll get to be with you, and the two of you will be happy.”

Dipper was quietly thinking. He lay back down, thinking about what Melanie had said. Mabel returned with a Pitt Cola, and Dipper sat up to drink it, before laying back down. Mabel pet him some more, and Dipper lay there until he fell asleep.

Dipper spent a long time thinking about his options. He could spend two years waiting for Bill to come back, or he could take the risk... if he joined the Illuminati... Bill would be furious, and... he would get to fold into Bill's arms and feel the kiss of his lips and the heat of Bill's body and the warmth of his fingers through his cotton gloves... His eyes welled with tears as he thought about Bill's breaking up with him... He just wanted to feel Bill's hands on his skin and his tongue in his mouth and his partner's embrace. Even if he never got to have sex with Bill again – which would be a tragedy – he would still take that if he got to be with Bill.

Dipper took a deep breath. His options felt horribly narrow. He wanted to be with Bill more than anything. It took him over a week, but he finally decided to go talk to Melanie. He ran into Chad walking hand in hand with Liam and they looked embarrassed like they'd been caught doing something embarrassing.

“Hey, um... I wanted to say thanks to the two of you.” Dipper stuck his hands in his pockets. “Thanks for putting up with me... and... for being my friends. I really appreciate it.”

“Hey, no problem, Dipper. What's up?” Chad questioned.

“Oh... nothing, really. I just...” Dipper paused. “... just wanted to thank you.” He settled on. “Anyway, I'm going to talk to Melanie. See you.”

He found Melanie sitting outside with Mabel, her gloved hands folded in her lap, long strawberry blonde hair waving in the breeze. Mabel was laughing about something, and Melanie was smirking. As he approached, he heard Melanie say, “Mabel, you're so bad,” but she seemed highly amused by Mabel's comment.

“Want some Mabel Juice?” Mabel offered the jug.

“Sure. What am I supposed to be doing with the jacks and plastic soldiers?” Melanie held her cup out, glancing up at Dipper.

“Oh, just drink around them. They're just for texture.” Mabel smiled. “Hey, Dip!” She poured Melanie a glass, handing it back to Melanie. “We're having a picnic. Want to join?”

“Sure. I'll join.” Dipper sat cross legged in front of Mabel. “Sorry to interrupt your little date.”
“It's okay. We were just talking about Jen... the bitch.” Melanie muttered, taking a drink of her Mabel Juice.

“I've thought a lot about it... and I'm not going to give up on Bill.” Dipper finally spoke up. “Even after what he did... I still love him, and I know he feels the same. I have to... I feel like I'll regret letting the love of my life go.”

“That's so sweet, Dipper.” Mabel sighed. “What are you going to do?”

Dipper looked at Melanie who was shooting him a death glare. Dipper flinched a little. “I'm – I'm just going to - … keep searching,” Dipper muttered, uncomfortable.

Mabel nodded. “Good luck, Dip.”

Melanie relaxed, taking a sip of her Mabel Juice. “Mm. I'm sure it's all downhill from here... after all, you know his name and where he works.” Melanie replied.

“Oh yeah. What was his name again? I still have to get revenge for Dip.”

“... I wouldn't-” Dipper and Melanie started together, and glanced at each other.

“He just made a mistake.” Dipper paused. “He's... trying to keep me safe.”

“I'd like it if you stayed away from him, Mabel.” Melanie reached over, rubbing Mabel's cheek. “Okay?”

Mabel flushed. “Woah, okay. Sorry – but, he dumped you in a public bathroom after furiously making out with you, Dip, like... that was the weirdest and worst way to dump someone! Why am I the only one still angry about it?...”

Dipper looked around the campus, sighing. “... I'm still hurt by it... and I don't know how strong his resolve is... maybe he won't want me back if I came back.”

“He will. Believe me, I know.” Melanie paused.

“Do you?” Mabel questioned. “I mean, how are you so sure?”

“... Personal experience.” Melanie sighed. “Mabel, sweetie?”

“Hmm?” Mabel looked over at Melanie, curiously. Dipper was struck by how soft her eyes were in that moment. Melanie also seemed struck by it too, because she paused for a moment.

“Ah – I was going to ask you if you'd go grab me a Pitt Cola... we're all out of drinks. But you know... I think I'll go get them myself. Anyone else want some?”

“I can still go get it if you want me to,” Mabel offered.

“... I have something I want to talk to your brother about. If it's okay, I would really appreciate it if you grabbed it for me.” Melanie sighed, picking up Mabel's hand and rubbing it in her own hands.

“Of course.” Mabel beamed, wrapping her hand around one of Melanie's, giving it a squeeze before getting up and heading inside to the nearest vending machine.

“So are you telling me you officially want to join?” Melanie looked at him. “Dipper, what you've chosen won't be an easy path. It will be hard, and once you're in, you'll never be able to get out. Your body becomes their property to do what they decide with. They'll implant things in you if they
want to, they'll remove things from you if it urges them... But I was well protected as my status as the future leader's fiancee. And I'm sure you will be as well.”

“I... to be honest, I'm scared to death.” Dipper breathed. “I've never met this society or anyone in it except you. But if they just removed Bill's eye on a whim... then put a fake eye in its place...” Dipper shivered. “I... I get where Bill's coming from...”

“The Illuminati have had their eyes on you in particular for a long time, Dipper Pines.” Melanie swirled her empty cup of Mabel Juice, looking inside the cup. “Your scores caught their attention, and your natural ability to make connections and solve codes... They were extremely impressed with it.”

“I'm not anywhere near as good as Bill!” Dipper protested.

“No one is as good as Bill, but I'm only better than you through meticulous training.” Melanie responded. “If you're sure, I'll come by tonight and take you where you need to go. Just make sure you're sure. I don't know what they'll do to you. You may never be able to see your family again... Can you live with that?”

Dipper opened his mouth when he spotted Mabel booking it towards them. “I couldn't wait any longer!” Mabel took a seat, flouncing down. “Sorry!” She passed Melanie a can and then Dipper too. “I got one for everyone.”

“Thanks, sis!” Dipper beamed back.

“Were you done talking?” Mabel fidgeted with her can.

“Yup, all done,” Dipper smiled. Melanie glanced at him, before looking back at the can, popping the tab on it.

Mabel smiled, genuinely. “Great!” She leaned against Melanie. “I wish I could've known what it was... but I know it was probably important stuff that I shouldn't know.”

Melanie wrapped an arm around her, stroking her hair. “Not yet, mia vita.” Melanie murmured.

Mabel flushed. “Just like everything else... maybe later, huh?”

“Mm-hmm.” Melanie held her close.

Dipper wondered what that meant but it sounded deeply personal, so he didn't ask. He drank his can of Pitt Cola and thought about the possibility he could never see his sister or family again. It was difficult... how could he trade his friends and family for one person?

Even with the way Bill made him feel... whole, happy... like there was someone in the world just for him... could he really trade everyone for a liar?

Dipper felt the tears drop onto his hand and he scrubbed them away. Damn it. “Bro, you okay?” Mabel asked, worried.

“Yeah, I'm fine.” Dipper muttered. “Sorry. I just... I was thinking about Bill... and what a liar he is.”

“What are you thinking of specifically?” Melanie questioned.

“He told me there was nothing I could do that he'd break up with me for.” Dipper paused.

“It wasn't anything you did. It was Bill trying to protect you.” Melanie shrugged.
“It's not your fault, Dipper!” Mabel insisted. “Don't even think that.”

“Yeah.” Dipper sighed. “... I know he didn't mean it, so it'll be okay if I go see him. He's just scared.”

“Good luck.” Mabel encouraged.

“Thanks.” Dipper smiled. That night, when Melanie showed up at his door, Dipper would be ready.
Dipper opened the door, stepping into the hallway. “Hey.” He shut the door behind him. “... Thanks for this, Melanie.” He muttered.

“Don't thank me,” Melanie responded, sliding her hands in her jacket pockets. “Let's get going.”

Dipper followed her outside, and into the taxi that was waiting for them. Melanie moved around in her seat, uncomfortable. “Do you think he'll hate me for this?”

“Maybe for a bit,” Melanie responded. “He'll get over it...”

“You're right.” Dipper sighed. “This is... well... it's stupid of me to do it. But I... I love him, so...”

“And he loves you more than he even loves his life.” Melanie agreed. “It was up to you to decide if it was worth it. And you did. Follow me.”

They got out at the office building and Melanie circled around, to an outdoor elevator. She pushed a few buttons and the elevator opened. She stepped inside, and Dipper followed her. The elevator went down for what felt like miles, before letting them out into a dimly lit hallway.

Dipper's heart started to pound in fear. “W-wait, this looks kind of...”

“You can't turn back now, Dipper Pines.” Melanie glanced over at him. “This is what you've chosen. It will lead you to Bill.”

Dipper nodded, beginning to panic. He followed Melanie down the dim hallway. They went through a series of corridors until they arrived at a dark room, with a single man sitting at a desk. He glanced up at them. “Dipper Pines, we've been expecting you.”

It was becoming a little hard for Dipper to breathe, staring at the man. The man looked every bit as weird as Bill, with one half of his face covered in black paint, and gloves on his fingers.

“I'm assuming you'd like to speak to our leader.” The man said. “He's through the door. Don't keep him waiting.”

Dipper breathed in and out rapidly before passing through the door. Seated inside was a man that Dipper could tell was insanely powerful. The man before him held more power than any one man should ever have. His face was uncovered, but his gloves were the same style as Bill's – simple white cotton gloves which fit his hands well. His eyes were dark and oozed power. This man feared absolutely nothing, and it was apparent.

“Welcome, Dipper Pines.” He looked at Dipper. “What brings you here today?”

“I -” Dipper started, hastily. “I, uh... I want... I want Bill back,” he stuttered, overwhelmed by the presence of the man before him.

“Hmmpmmm...” The man murmured. “I think I could allow you to have him back, but only if you join up with us.”

Dipper was out of breath, but he nodded, dryly. “... I – yes. I... if I get to spend as much time with Bill as I want.”

“... Well, unfortunately, you don't have any bargaining chips. Take him to surgery.” He snapped his
fingers and two men appeared out of nowhere appeared, grabbing Dipper's arms. Dipper panicked, looking back and forth.

“What about me?” Melanie demanded.

“Oh – right. Our deal. You bring me Dipper Pines, I give you your freedom...” He leaned back in his seat. “Of course. Take her to surgery as well. We'll have your tracking devices removed...”

“What?” Dipper demanded. “Melanie, this was part of some Illuminati deal?”

“Yes.” Melanie looked over at him. “I traded your freedom for mine... I wanted to spend my life with Mabel, and this was the only way. You're still getting what you want. I'm also getting what I want. It's...”

“You're useless to us now that you're no longer Bill's fiancee... Heh. You're pretty enough, I'd take you as my wife if the old crone wasn't still battering around...” he rubbed his chin. “Get them out of here.”

“Wait! What – what am I gonna do?” Dipper begged. “What are you going to do to me?”

“Nothing serious. We're just going to implant a tracking device inside your body so we'll know where you are at all times...” he clicked his tongue. “And as for what you'll be doing, you won't be doing anything dangerous. All you have to do is help us control my son.”

“Help you... control... Bill?” Dipper's voice faded out.

“Absolutely. My bastard son is making things very difficult for me... but thanks to you, he'll do anything we want.” He tipped his head.

Dipper felt himself be dragged back, and he closed his eyes tight, chest pounding. He'd never been so scared. What had he been thinking?

Dipper opened his eyes slowly. The room was completely white, and he was lying on a very uncomfortable table, lying on his back, staring at the ceiling. His body was heavy and hard to move. He looked to his left and spotted Bill sitting there, his elbows resting on the edge of the table, staring at Dipper's waking face. Dipper's heart fluttered, and he sat up slowly, struggling to sit up. “B-bill...”

“Dipper. Do you know what you've done?” Bill asked, his voice cold. “Do you even realize?”

Dipper flinched, looking down at the table. “I...”

“Dipper. Alex. Pines.” Bill barked, and Dipper flinched. “Look at me.” Dipper looked up slowly, dragging his eyes over to Bill. He was overwhelmed by the rage that he knew was coming. “Do you KNOW what you've done? You did the exact opposite of what I wanted... Everything I was trying to prevent!” He slammed his hands on the table, and they made a large noise that startled Dipper. “You marched yourself down to the Illuminati, joined up with them like it was an after-school club, and now... now... you've trapped me – and yourself - to the Illuminati forever.” His fingertips dug into the cushion on the table. “I was trying to keep you away from the Illuminati! I didn't want you tied up in this!” He was roaring, and Dipper was flinching, fighting back the tears. “I was doing everything I could to get out, so that I could be with you! How did you get here, Dipper? Tell me!”

“I... it was – Melanie took me here...” Dipper tripped over his own tongue. “So she could be with-“
“MELANIE!” Bill yelled, fire in his eye. “I swear I'll make her regret—”

Dipper started sobbing, unable to hold it back. Bill stared at him a moment, before his eyes widened in realization.

“B-Bill, I'm so sorry... I just wanted to be with you...” Dipper sobbed.

“Fuck.” Bill ducked his head. “Fuck!” He swore. “... how many times am I going to make you cry? … This is twice now...” he let out a long breath. “ Before, and now... What I said to you last time... seeing you like this now...”

Dipper moved towards Bill, wrapping his bare arms around his partner, clinging to him, tears falling down his cheeks. “Bill...” Dipper whispered.

Bill put his arms around Dipper, hugging him close. “... It's so hard, Pine Tree...” Bill whispered. “I've missed you so much, and I couldn't hardly live with myself after what I said to you...” He stroked Dipper's hair, listening to his partner sniffle. “I've missed you so much, but I never wanted to see you this way. I never wanted you to be here, like this.”

Dipper sniffled. “I've missed you too, Bill. I'm so sorry... this is all my fault. I couldn't wait for you to come home. I couldn't wait for you, and now I've cost you your freedom.”

“... Tomorrow we'll have to negotiate our contracts.” Bill sighed. “As long as you stay safe.” He kissed Dipper's eyebrow, running a hand through his hair. Dipper lifted his head and Bill kissed him, gently. Dipper looked into his eyes, resting a hand on his shoulder. “Pine Tree, you know... you'll have to stay with me forever.”

“I know...” Dipper breathed. “I wouldn't go through all of this unless I was sure that I wanted to be with you forever.”

“... Tomorrow we'll have to negotiate our contracts.” Bill sighed. “They brought you here like this to show me what they've done... what they could still do. Are you in pain?”

Dipper shook his head. “No.”

“Good... at least the Illuminati doctors are the best influence can buy.” Bill rubbed Dipper's shoulder. Dipper kissed him again, his fingers tracing Bill's cheeks.

“I'm sorry, Bill...” Dipper whispered. “I wanted to be with you, both now and forever.”

Bill rubbed Dipper's back. “You're my fiance now.” A smile turned up the corners of his mouth. “Isn't that funny, Pine Tree?...” He continued holding him, silently studying his partner. “... I'm not ready to say you're forgiven. I love you every bit as much as I always did... but... I don't forgive you yet.” He rubbed his fingertips across Dipper's lips, studying him. “Is that okay, Pine Tree?”


“I can take you to my home...” Bill murmured. “We'll have to come back tomorrow, but I want to take you home, get some food in your stomach, get some clothes on you...” he brushed his cheek. “Come on, Dip.” He helped him up to his feet, helping him out of the room.

Back at home, he slipped some gloves on Dipper's hands, moving him to the couch, kissing his
forehead, tucking a blanket around him. “I'm going to run a bath for you, and make you some dinner.” Dipper's stomach rumbled. “Actually, I'll bring you a few sandwiches first and then the bath, how about that?” Bill chuckled, disappearing into the kitchen.

Dipper wrapped himself in the blanket that smelled wonderfully like his boyfriend, thinking about the decision he'd made. This new apartment was completely different. It was decorated elegantly, in a modernist type design, and there was a large TV on the wall and a lovely coffee table. The couch was lush and Dipper thought he could easily sleep on it for the rest of his life.

When Bill returned with the sandwiches and water, Dipper scarfed it down. Bill stuck around, making sure he didn't choke, before he left to go run the bath. About fifteen minutes later, Bill helped Dipper to the bathroom, helping him down into the bath. The warm water felt absolutely blissful on his skin and he blushed as Bill rubbed a washcloth across his shoulders and down his arms. “Hey, I can do that,” he protested.

“Sorry, Pine Tree.” Bill smirked. “It's just so cute, getting to take care of you like this.”

Dipper blushed, looking up. “This new place is nice.”

“Thanks... I needed a nice place so I could have my work colleagues over... You'll likely meet them next time.” Bill looked at Dipper's shoulders. “The wounds look clean... mostly healed. I wonder how long they kept you under?”

“Um, I'm not sure. It was Wednesday when I went.” Dipper paused.

“Well, it's Tuesday today.” Bill sighed. “At least six days. Maybe even as long as thirteen days.”

“... I wish you could get in here with me.” Dipper murmured.

“Next time, Pine Tree. Okay?” Bill flicked Dipper's nose.

He flinched, embarrassed. “Yeah, okay.”

“I'm going to find you some clothes to wear,” Bill got to his feet, leaving the bathroom.

Dipper let out a long sigh. At least Bill wasn't holding it against him. It would be forever before Bill forgave him... but at least he wouldn't hold it against him. It was going to be alright. Probably.

Out of the bath, wearing Bill's clothes (all of the articles just a little too big on him), he curled up in bed with Bill, gazing up at him. The sheets were so soft, and the bed was so warm and comfortable. He rested his hands on Bill's chest, feeling the warmth of Bill's arms around him. This was what Dipper had done it for.

Feeling Bill's eyes back on his, Dipper could feel all the love in those eyes and it helped him feel at peace with everything. Tomorrow would go just fine.
Chapter 36 - The Contract

“I want to discuss his terms on his behalf,” Bill protested, angrily, crossing his arms.

“Sorry, son. Your fiance will have to negotiate his own terms...” Bill's father rested his elbows on the table. “We can't allow you to interfere with his contract.”

“He is my fiance, and I'm invoking the Right to Know.” Bill crossed his arms.

“Your Right to Know is denied. That stipulation only works for married couples or family members.” Bill's father said, patiently. “There is nothing you can do. Wait outside.”

“But he has no bargaining chips!” Bill protested. “Attempting to bargain now, for him, will lead to-”

“Wait outside.” The man ordered.

Bill fell silent before nodding. “There's nothing I can do. Dipper... you have to negotiate better than you did with me.”

“I – well - … I'll do my best,” Dipper sighed. Bill left the room, and Bill's father gestured at the seat in front of the table.

“Mason Alex Pines, you're meeting me today to discuss the terms and conditions of your contract with the Illuminati. We take our deals and contracts very seriously, and once you agree to a contract, if you break it, it will result in death.” He steeped his fingers, looking at Dipper over them. “On the table is some paperwork, I need you to sign that and return it to me.”

Dipper looked at it. “... You mean, read it, and then sign it?” He muttered, cautiously.

“Well, reading it would take a very long time...” The man shrugged.

“I'll read it.” Dipper picked up the paperwork, reading through it. After some time, he came across a stipulation that he decided to bring up.

“Here, in this section, it says that I can be ordered to kill... that's something that I can't do. I'm not...” he was shaking his head.

“Hmm.” Bill's father adjusted his hairpiece. “I'll remove that, if you agree to work with us to convince Bill to follow our orders.”

“What will working with you entail?” Dipper asked, cautiously.

“It just means we will be listening to you talk, and we want to ensure you're always working to convince Bill to work for us.” He paused. “If any comments are heard to the opposite end... we'll have you punished.”

“Doesn't Bill already work for you?” Dipper protested.

“Bill will become my replacement. I'm getting old. The lady and I would like to retire to some nice island in Hawaii... but I need an heir to carry on the hard work I've done.” He smiled. “Just convince Bill to do his best to become the leader of the Illuminati, and to work hard at his job, and you won't be ordered to kill anyone.”

Dipper nodded. They did the necessary work to remove that part, and he drafted up a new series of
rules especially for Dipper.

“These are the specific terms of YOUR contract, Dipper Pines.” The man said, cheerfully. “Number one, obviously, convincing Bill to do his best at his work becoming my replacement. Number two, keep him happy. You are to ensure he stays as happy as possible. If you become too irritable or moody, or cause him any kind of mood problems beyond the occasional fight... well... you'll be punished. Number three, you're not to discuss Illuminati business with anyone who isn't Bill. Four, you'll follow the same rules of dress as Bill. Gloves, face coverings of your choice, and you'll need to be careful to protect your DNA. You are now officially Illuminati property, and it's best you act that way. Five, if we tell you to do anything, sans killing or torturing someone, you will do it. You are to follow our directions in everything. You will not tell Bill the terms of your contract.”

Dipper pursed his lips. “... Am I... allowed to finish school, or...?”

“Of course, Pines. We have no intention of keeping you from your life... things will stay much the same for you as they are now, except you are to live with Bill, and to keep him happy when he's not out on work business.” He shrugged, leaning back in his seat. “We won't put you out on the front lines. And that's everything. If you'll sign...”

Dipper looked at the paper, knowing he didn't really have a choice. “Will I be paid for my service or am I being forced to serve for free?”

“Free, Pines.” The guy seemed amused. “Don't worry, though... your housing and utilities are covered. If we change our mind and decide to use you for more dangerous work... After all, you're exceedingly talented at ciphers and codes... we will renegotiate your contract to include a payment.”

“You said when Bill's not out, how often will he be out?” Dipper asked.

“Sometimes for months at a time... you'll stay at a central location, and Bill will do most of his work without you there.”

Dipper looked up, and then down. “... months?”

“Tell you what, kid. I'll make a deal with you. For every month Bill spends out, he'll get to spend a week with you.”

“... a month.” Dipper repeated. “Month for a month.”

“Month for a month! Kid, you're crazy.” He smiled. “How about a week and a half?”

“I want three weeks.” Dipper crossed his arms.

“Okay. I'll give you two weeks for every month, but kid, any more than that and you're just interfering with Illuminati business.”

“Fine. Two weeks.” Dipper frowned. “Two weeks per month... IF he can qualify for overtime.”

“Overtime?” he seemed amused.

“If he works more than three months away, he gets time and a half for the entire duration of his away.” Dipper frowned.

“So, at four months away, that's three months with you?” Bill's father seemed to think about it. “Well, I'd like your marriage to stay amicable... Provided he's allowed to do local work for me in that time, I'll agree to it.”
Dipper considered it. “Define local work.”

“Little jobs around town that'll have him back by dinner.”

“Fine. Write it into the contract.”

Bill's father added the addendum to the end of the list and pushed it towards Dipper. “Here you go. Sign away.”

“What about my family?”

He let out a long sigh. “What about them?”

“I want a guarantee they'll be completely safe, and uninvolved.” Dipper frowned.

“Fine. I'll add it.” By his tone, it was something he thought silly, and not something he cared about, but he added it anyway. “If you personally get them involved, then it isn't my fault and I won't take responsibility.”

“I understand.” Dipper nodded. Dipper signed the paper, feeling sort of confident at what he’d accomplished.

Bill's father reached his hand out. “Shake on it, Pines. It's not a deal unless we shake on it.”

Dipper remembered hearing Bill say that before. It must have come from his father. He reached out, and shook Bill's father's hand.

“Good to have you as part of my crew.” He grinned. “Send Bill in behind you.”

Dipper marched out of the room, heading straight to Bill outside, nodding. “Alright, it's your turn.” He sighed. “I don't think I did very well.”

“You weren't in there very long... you didn't negotiate, did you?” Bill scratched the back of his head.

“A little...” Dipper muttered, disappointed. “I asked for...” he paused. He remembered he wasn't allowed to discuss it. Bill put a finger over his lips.

“Shh, Pine Tree.” Bill hummed. “Contracts are private, kept between the two parties and no one else. If it pertains to me, he'll tell me.”

He headed inside the room, leaving Dipper to sit outside, painfully. Dipper sat for what he realized really was hours. Bill had been inside for three hours now, and Dipper wondered if he was ever coming out. He rubbed his shoulder, frowning. His scars were itching, and Dipper really wanted to be very far away from this building. So far, things had been amicable... but Dipper knew he was really only a pawn used to control Bill at this point. As long as they had Dipper, they could do nearly anything they liked to Bill.

He sighed, softly, thinking about what he'd done to Bill... It was something that would haunt him for a while. The doorknob turned and Dipper's head shot up, looking. Bill came strolling out a few moments later, larger than life.

“Hiya, kid! That went spectacularly~” Bill winked.

“Oh, did it? Good job.” Dipper got to his feet.

“Thanks for the time, by the way.” Bill kissed his cheek. “That was some good negotiating.”
Dipper wrapped his arms around Bill's neck, loosely. “Thanks... I did my best... I'm glad you did well too.”

“As well as I could. Come on, Pine Tree. Let's go home.” Bill smiled as Dipper dropped his arms. Bill took Dipper's hand in his, holding it tight, walking him toward Bill's car.

As the door closed behind them, Dipper glanced over at Bill. “Want to take a bath?” Dipper asked, sliding his hands into his pockets.

“What, do I smell?” Bill sniffed his armpit.

“No, I meant, like, together. It's been kind of a long day. I thought maybe...” Dipper trailed off.

“Actually, I'm kind of tired...” Bill slipped his hands in his pockets. “You mind if I lay down?”

“I don't mind...” Dipper ruffled his hair. Bill had clearly cut Dipper off in his attempt to rekindle.

“We can take a bath tomorrow. I'm going to get you back in your classes tomorrow with a note that exempts you from any trouble...” Bill yawned. “I'm hungry, but I don't want to make anything.”

“... I can make something, but I'm not a very good cook...” Dipper rubbed the back of his neck. “Sandwiches?”

“Sounds great.” Bill smirked, heading off to the bathroom.

Dipper went into the kitchen, getting the bread out. It had really been a long day. He was exhausted. He put the sandwiches together, and Bill came up behind him, putting an arm around him. “Mm. I'm starved.”

“Me too,” Dipper sighed. They took a seat at the table, eating their sandwiches. “How's your incisions?” Bill asked.

“A little sore, but alright. Better than yesterday.” Dipper picked at his sandwich.

“That's good. You'll be healed soon... I'm sorry they did that to you.” Bill frowned.

Dipper had a bad feeling in the pit of his stomach. Before Bill had left, they'd been all over each other, and now... well, they'd barely kissed since then. He wondered if it was because of how mad at him Bill was. Or maybe it was just Dipper's imagination.

“Hey!”

Bill's voice brought Dipper back to the present. “What? Sorry... I was thinking about something.”

“Better be about me. I hate the idea of you getting lost in thought about someone else.” Bill smirked.

“It was.” Dipper stuck his tongue out. He finished his sandwich and Bill smirked harder.

“Oh yeah? What was it? How handsome I am? How charming I am? My golden tongue?”

“Yes, it was definitely those things.” Dipper rolled his eyes.

Bill finished his sandwich. “All done. I'm ready to hit the hay.”
Dipper nodded, following Bill to the bedroom. He tugged his clothes off, climbing into the left half of the very luxurious bed. “Oh, man, this bed is so comfortable.” Dipper breathed.

Bill climbed into the bed next to him, pulling the blankets up, letting out a sigh. Dipper rested the back of his head against Bill's chest, closing his eyes. Bill put his arms around Dipper, hugging him close.

“The bed feels so nice.” Dipper murmured.

Bill made a noise of agreement, resting his hands on Dipper's legs. Dipper glanced downwards, wondering if Bill was thinking about starting something. When a few moments passed, Dipper closed his eyes, relaxing in the arms of his partner.

Bill ducked his head down, kissing Dipper's head. It was just a little one but it caused Dipper to turn around sideways, facing Bill. He leaned against Bill, comfortably, his head resting against his shoulder. Dipper looked up at him, getting a crooked smile in return. “What's up, Pine Tree?”

Dipper studied his face before tilting his head up, kissing Bill's lips. It was a small, light kiss. Dipper didn't want to press his luck particularly. He assumed either Bill was still mad or their relationship had already changed... he wasn't looking forward to either option. After Dipper attempted pulling away from the kiss, Bill lifted a hand to Dipper's face, bringing him back for another.

He tasted the same as always, and it made his stomach hurt from longing. He'd missed this – missed Bill. Once the kiss broke, Dipper murmured, “I've missed you so much.”

“Believe me, so did I...” Bill rested his hand on Dipper's shoulder, putting his other arm around him, holding him close. Dipper rested his head against Bill's shoulder, thinking to himself.

“Didn't seem like it. You dumped me in a bathroom stall of a coffee shop,” Dipper pointed out.

“Hey! You know that was—” Bill defended, but he relaxed when he heard Dipper laugh. He looked down to see Dipper grinning from ear to ear, and he grinned in response. “You little shit.”

“Mm. Maybe next time you'll break up with me somewhere better, like the city dump, or—” Dipper shrieked in laughter as Bill tickled him up his sides, gripping his arm. “Hey! Stop that.”

“I'm never breaking up with you again, Pine Tree,” Bill lifted his chin. “Got it?”

Dipper swallowed hard, nodding while staring into Bill's eyes. Bill kissed him deeply, breaking the kiss moments later. He ran his fingertips up and down Dipper's sides and Dipper cried out, squirming in protest.

“No... Haha, stop,” Dipper writhed, embarrassed. He grabbed Bill's hands, clutching them tight. “Don't do that...”

Bill swooped down and kissed him again, his arms on either side of Dipper, lying on top of him. Dipper could feel the heat and enthusiasm behind the kiss and he went with it, putting his arms around Bill's neck, rubbing his shoulders. “Mm... Aren't you tired?” Dipper murmured, as Bill kissed the crook of his neck.

“Want me to stop?” Bill asked, nipping lightly just behind Dipper's ear, hand sliding up and down Dipper's thigh, teasingly.

Dipper sucked in a long, shuddering breath. “No. Don't. I just – I thought you were going to sleep.”
“After.” Bill kissed up and down Dipper's neck. Dipper's breath grew a little ragged, and he sucked in sharply when Bill sucked hard on his neck, marking him. “After I do what I want to do. It's been a long time...”

“Ah – yeah, it... too long,” Dipper breathed, wrapping his legs around Bill's waist. He rubbed Bill's chest with his hands, looking up as Bill trailed kisses across his neck. “I thought you were never going to do this again.”

Bill paused in his assault of Dipper's skin. He raised an eyebrow. “Why'd you think that?” He cocked his head, waiting to hear Dipper's answer. Dipper rubbed his thumb across Bill's cheeks, affectionately.

“Well, it's just... we used to be all over each other... and since we met up again...” Dipper trailed off. “… I thought that it had something to do with you being mad. I didn't mean never, I guess... I just figured it'd be a long time before you wanted to touch me.”

Bill let out a long sigh. “Pine Tree... Just because I'm mad doesn't mean I don't love you.”

“I know that.” Dipper sighed in return. “Sorry. I just thought... I guess I'm just really glad that …” he let out a long breath.

Bill tickled Dipper up and down, and he squirmed, gripping Bill's hands.

“Bill!”

“Stop that, Pine Tree.” Bill murmured. “We're together now, forever. Just because I wanted to give you a day to recover...” he gave Dipper a crooked smile. “From your surgery... doesn't mean I don't want to touch you.”

Dipper flushed. “Yeah, th-that's... something I didn't... think about.”

Bill tickled him up and down his sides, and Dipper shrieked, squirming, laughing hysterically. “Bill, stop that,” He protested, grabbing Bill's hands.

“Hopefully it won't be long before you come to understand my intentions.” Bill murmured.

Dipper tipped his head forward, kissing Bill. “I know what your intentions are right now.”

Bill smirked. “Do you, Pine Tree?”

End Notes

Thanks for reading, guys. :) Much appreciated. Link to my tumblr is here. Come talk to me if you want, I like people. Also, I will take suggestions for fanfics and stuff. :) Just let me know.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!