Let Me Be Your Eyes

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Summary

Dipper and Mabel Pines go to live in the large town of Gravity Falls with their great uncles. Both are excited, but Dipper is a little more than nervous. Exploring new places without the gift known as sight is rather ominous...

Bill Cipher is bored with school. He aces the advanced classes easily and his classmates are rather dull and boring. The new kids might prove to be fun though! Especially that one in a hat...
Chapter 1

It was going to be Mabel and Dipper Pines’ junior year at their school in Piedmont, California. At least, until their parents got new jobs all the way across the country in Washington D.C. The twins’ only options now are either to move all the way to D.C. with their parents or live with their great uncles in Oregon. Neither twin wants to go to Washington, so Oregon it is!

Dipper Pines is the younger of the twins by five minutes. He is extremely intelligent and takes advanced classes almost all of the periods in his high school. Unfortunately, the boy is socially awkward and finds talking to most people other than his sister to either be impossible or unbearable. Another disadvantage Dipper has is his lack of eyesight. From birth, all he ever saw was a world of black; absolute nothingness. Not that he ever let it hold him back.

Mabel Pines, the slightly elder twin, holds an excessive amount of creativity. She once made a bouncy castle for hamsters out of a few balloons, duct tape, and an air pump. She is not as advanced intellectually as her brother but is smart nonetheless. Mabel yearns for a steady relationship, but can be so overbearing most cannot stand her. Mabel also is constantly trying to find “the one” for Dipper, saying he is too much of a “recluse” caught up in his “nerd books”.

Dipper stares out the window, eyes blindly following the endless line of trees. ‘Junior year and they do this to us?! We’ve been in Piedmont since preschool and now this,’ He thinks angrily. Mabel sits next to him with her head leaning on Dipper’s shoulder. Loud snores occasionally slip from her, breaking Dipper's thoughts. ‘She passed out an hour ago from exhaustion. Well, what can you expect when you are in a constant state of vibrating excitement?’

The brunette can instantly feel the shift of the asphalt to gravel, accompanied by his mother announcing that they were nearly there. ‘I wonder what Great Uncle Stanley and Great Uncle Stanford will be like…’ The twins’ parents told the them that Stanford is a professor at a nearby university and has won awards for his research and breakthroughs. Stanley on the other hand, runs a tourist trap called the Mystery Shack, and can swindle a clam out of its pearls.

Despite having never met them, both twins are excited to see their great uncles. The one thing Dipper is worried about is how big the new town will be. Stanley and Stanford live in Gravity Falls, Oregon, a town three times the size of Piedmont. Getting around Piedmont on his own was challenging enough the first seventeen years of his life, and Dipper is not good at adapting to change. A new, bigger town seems oppressive to the poor teen.

At last, the car pulls to a stop. Dipper shakes Mabel awake, the latter switching from irritably groggy to a bubbly excited when she sees where they are. “Dipper! Dipper! We're here; we're at the Mystery Shack!”

The female brunette flings the car door open, jumping out and pulling Dipper with her. “Woah!” The boy gasps, trying to find his balance.

“You two can go ahead and explore your father and I will unload your bags,” Mrs. Pines tells them after casting a sharp look to her reluctant husband.
Mabel gives a hyper nod, taking off and dragging Dipper with her. “DipDop, this place is so cool! The Mystery Shack is a log cabin with, like, two floors and an attic,” Mabel informs her brother while mounting the porch steps. “Watch you step~” She knocks on the wooden front door, balancing on the balls of her feet. Dipper is still trying to get a sense of his surroundings, irritated that Mabel didn't let him get his walking stick from the car, and shakily grasp for her sleeve.

The door opens, revealing an old man in a black suit with a cane topped by an eight-ball. “Hello and welcome to the Mystery Shack! I am Mr. Mystery! Tours are ten bucks a person.”

“He has a voice as gravelly as the road we came in on,” Dipper comments dryly.

Mabel guffaws, finding her brother's sense of humour absolutely hilarious. “I'm Mabel, and this is my twin brother Dipper,” she chirps once her laughter eased, pulling Dipper into a side hug. “And you must be our Great Uncle Stanley!”

Stanley grins, switching from business mode to a casual one, and ushers them inside. “Come in, come in! You got here earlier than you said you would. I'll show you guys around before you settle in. Maybe if we're lucky, we'll get to see that elusive brother of mine!” Stan wiggles his fingers to emphasize his words, earning another chuckle from Mabel. Dipper, to Stan’s disconcert, shows no change, merely staring oddly at the ex-conman. “W-well, this is the gift shop. I might have you two help in here on busy days.” Mabel ogles the room while Dipper keeps his neutral gaze on Stanley.

The twins are lead around the house, Stan showing them the living room, kitchen, bathroom, and the attic that would become their bedroom. During the tour, the twins’ parents had dropped off all their stuff in the kitchen- thankfully including Dipper's walking stick -before leaving for Washington D.C.

“Well, uh, that's the Mystery Shack! I'll leave you two to settle in. Dinner will probably be around six,” Grunkle Stan says. (During the tour, he'd gotten sick of being called “Great Uncle Stanley” and insisted on being called Grunkle Stan. It made him feel less old.) The sixty-something old man exits the room, unsettled by Dipper's stare.

“Do you have to do that to every new person we meet?” Mabel demands once Stan is out of hearing range, lightly glaring at her brother with her hands on her hips.

Dipper cocks his head to the side an innocent look plastered on his face. “Do what?”

“You know what I mean! Staring at them but staring through them at the same time! It freaks them out.” Annoyance laces Mabel's tone.

“Sorry.” Dipper shrugs, not looking sorry in the slightest. Mabel sighs, throwing her hands up in the air hopelessly before setting to work on dragging their luggage to the base of the stairs that lead to the attic. Dipper, wanting to be helpful, grabs the suitcases, taking them by the handles and rolling them to the stairs… or not. The blind boy accidentally makes a wrong turn and enters the gift shop, where he run into a solid object. “Oof!” He groans, falling onto his backside.

“Are you okay,” a familiar gravelly voice inquires. The person Dipper ran into holds out a helping hand expectantly.

“Y-yeah, sorry Grunkle Stanley,” Dipper apologizes while awkwardly scrambling to his feet, oblivious to the hand.

The man frowns, looking down at his hands and saying, “Stanley is my brother. My name is Stanford. Are you sure you’re alright, boy?”
Dipper freezes momentarily, rubbing the back of his neck bashfully. “Uh, yeah.” The blind male holds out a hand. “Sorry for running into you; I didn't see you. We haven’t been introduced yet, my name is Dipper.”

Stanford takes Dipper hand and gives it a firm shake. Dipper in turn pauses and tilts his head to where their hands meet. “Your shake is unusual. What's different about your hands?”

“I am wearing my work gloves?”

“No… your fingers!” Dipper takes a second to count them. “There are more than five.”

“Yes, I have six fingers on each hand. And I can safely assume you are blind, given your strange stare.” Stanford concludes. Dipper yanks his hand back, unconsciously reaching for his sightless eyes.

“Y-yeah… you seem more observant than Grunkle Stan. I’m guessing you’re my Great Uncle Stanford.”

Stanford grins at his great-nephew. “Yes, nice observation. You can call me Grunkle Ford, since Stanley has made up that ridiculous nickname already.”

Dipper unknowingly mirror Ford's expression. “Alright then-”

“Dipper! DIPPER!” Mabel's voice cuts through the air, worry tingeing it.

“In here!” The brunette calls back. “You’ll never guess who I ran into!”

Mabel bounces into the gift shop, intrigued Dipper actually met somebody. “Who is- Oh hey! He looks like a nerdy Grunkle Stan!”

“Mabel, this our great uncle Stanford,” Dipper introduces, motioning to where he thinks the man is. “Grunkle Ford, this is my twin sister Mabel.”


Stanford chuckles at the twins’ antics, remembering his younger days with Stanley when they were that energetic. “Stanley and I are twins like you; though I was the only one born with an abnormality. Well, I see Dipper dropped these suitcases, so you probably are still moving in. I’ll leave you to it then. See you kids later.” Stanford heads for the vending machine, giving a six-fingered wave before punching in a code and slipping behind the door-like machine. Both twins cheer a unanimous “bye!” before the elder man vanishes from sight.

‘Cool! A secret door disguised as a snack machine!’ The female twin swoons before turning serious. “Dipper, what did I tell you about running off?!” Mabel turns and scolds him.

Dipper merely shrugs sheepishly, holding his hands out helplessly. “I was trying to help you with the stuff and accidentally took a wrong turn.”

Mabel sighs and turns away, unable to stay mad at her twin. “Whatever. Let's finish getting unpacked. And I will be carrying the stuff upstairs.” The brown-haired girl adds the last part sternly when she sees Dipper reaching for the suitcase handles. She snatches the luggage away and storms toward the staircase, muttering grievances under her breath. Dipper huffs and follows her upstairs, almost tripping on the first step.

Why did he have to be born blind?
New School

Chapter Summary

It is Dipper and Mabel's first day at their new school! Who will they meet? >:D

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Jostling students fill the long, tiled hallways of Gravity Falls High. One in particular stands out though. It is a boy, a junior, who surveys the crowd with a mild interest, trying to find somebody interesting to mess with. The boy has semi tanned skin and blonde hair so yellow is can almost be called gold. His eyes match his hair perfectly and are complemented by the yellow jacket he constantly wears. A shimmery gold backpack is slung from one shoulder.

‘There.’ He thinks, noticing a person he had never seen at the school before. It is another boy, this one wearing a deep blue jacket and a brown trucker cap firmly planted on his head despite the school’s “No Hats” policy. It isn’t the blatant dress code violation that captures the blonde’s attention. No; it is the proud jaunt of the boy and how his gaze seems to pierce into and through everybody around him. Normal students shuffle down the halls, slouched and comparable to zombies while making painfully obvious efforts to avoid eye-contact with the people around them. But not this kid, nope. Heck, he doesn't even have a backpack! He must be pretty confident in his abilities.

At the hat boy’s side is a girl wearing a light purple sweater with a shooting star emblem across the front. A matching purple headband is planted proudly atop her head to keep her long, curly, brown hair out of her face. The girl is holding the boy by the crook of his arm, as if guiding him through the sea of students.

“They might be fun,” the blonde hums to himself, a large grin splitting his face while he slips into the flow of zombies to follow them.

“Alright, here's your A.P. Chemistry class Sir Dipping Sauce,” Mabel announces, grinning cheekily at her brother.

“Thanks Mabes. Try not to be late to your next class,” Dipper says, giving her a grateful smile.

Mabel turns to bounce away. “No prob, Bob. Oof! Sorry I didn't see you there.” The girl apologizes, looking up to see a boy several inches taller than her and decked out in gold standing in front of her. “Droooooool,” Mabel whispers under her breath, awed by the male’s appearance and semi-obvious buff.

“Oh, it's no problem. Are you new? I haven't seen you before,” the boy asks in a voice higher pitched than most guys have.

Mabel can barely nod, the living work of art before her completely breathtaking. “Y-yeah. Willyouletmesketchyousometime?” The words tumble of of her mouth without Mabel fully aware of them.
The boy smirks. “Sure, why not. By the way, name’s Bill Cipher.” He holds out a hand for her to shake.

Mable takes it, large doe eyes staring up at him. “Mabel Pines~” ‘He is definitely “the one”!’

Bill’s grin widens even more while he turns to Dipper. “And what about you? What’s your name?” Mabel makes to answer for her brother but Dipper got the gist of the situation from Mabel’s general reactions and intervenes.

“Sorry, but my sister and I need to get to our classes before we’re late on our first day.”

Mabel snaps out of her drool-worthy-boy induced stupor and nods her head vigorously. “You’re right. See ya later, DipDop!” She squeezes his arm encouragingly before she bolts down the steadily emptying halls for her first class. Dipper heads inside the classroom once he hears his sister’s prominent footsteps fade away.

A spark lights in Bill’s eyes when he follows the younger of the twins into the Chemistry room. ‘Well who woulda guessed? We both share the same first hour. He’s already proving to be interesting.’

Dipper takes a seat in the row closest to the door, unknowingly right next to Bill, pulling a pencil from his jacket pocket and chewing on it while waiting for class to begin. He only keeps the pencil for the rare case that Mabel loses all of hers and needs one. Dipper never actually uses the writing utensil.

Students trickle into class, followed by the teacher Mr. Barkly once the automatic bell tolls. The teacher heads to his desk, lifting up an attendance chart and glancing at the list. “Okay, this is week four so you should all know the drill. I call your name, you say “here”. Jackie McLang.”

“Here.”

“John Sullie.” Silence meets the teacher. “Gone… again,” he sighs, making a note on his attendance paper.

The teacher continues on, checking off names of absent students. He reaches one name, barely having to look up to spot the brightly dressed student. “Bill Cipher.”

“Here~!”

Dipper groans for two reasons, one) he is sharing a class with a person who gave him a bad first impression, and two) said person is directly to his right.

“Oh hey. Class we have a new student: Mason Pines.”

Dipper sullenly raises his hand, grumbling a low-toned “here”. His level of apprehension for everything as of recently steadily rises. He hates being singled out like that. The boy can already feel the stares on him.

Mr. Barkly finishes up roll call and moves onto the first order of business. “Okay class, we began our group projects last week, so most of you should be halfway through by this point. I expect to see models completed by tomorrow. Get to work!” The class groans, clumping desks together and retrieving supplies and research. Dipper sits expectantly at his desk, wondering at least WHAT the project is. “Oh, and Mason,” the teacher says. “I am adding you to John and Bill's group since you are new and John isn't here today… again.”
Nodding in acknowledgement, Dipper curls his hands into fists. ‘Could today get any worse? First I have to change schools, then I meet a kid I already don't like, and now I have to be in the same group as him!’ Dipper scowls, swiveling his head to glower at where Bill should be.

“Boo!” Dipper jumps and swipes the air behind him where Bill’s surprising voice came from. “Yeesh, Mason. Chill out!”

This earns a glare from the blind male. “I’ll get right on that,” Dipper snaps sarcastically at Bill. “And don’t call me that.”

“What’ll I call you then? I'm pretty sure I heard that sister of yours call you Sir Dipping Sauce—”

“No!”

“-or maybe DipDop—”

“No!”

“Fine. Then what do I call you?” Bill frowns at the stubborn boy, waiting for an answer.

Dipper huffs and finally relents. “Just call me Dipper.”

Bill snatches the nearest desk and drags it next to Dipper's. “Alrighty, Dipper! Let's do this project of ours.” He grins widely at the defeated boy next to him, who merely stares blankly ahead with those pale, brown eyes of his. “John and I got all the research done last week and- lucky for you - most of the model too! All we need to do today is a few final touches. Oh, and if you’re actually helpful, we might get the prototype started!”

“I don't even know what this dumb project is for!” Dipper exclaims, getting fed up with the upbeat, sarcastic, sort of rude blonde known as Bill.

Bill pauses and gives Dipper a strange look. “The entire assignment is written out on the board…” He says it slowly, as if it is the most obvious thing in the world.

The brunette’s irritation morphs into horror when he realizes his mistake. ‘Of COURSE the teacher would have it written on the board!’

Meanwhile, clues begin clicking together in Bill’s mind when he notices patterns in his partner’s behavior. The girl guiding him to class, not seeing the assignment written plain as day on the board, the abnormally pale eyes, the lack of writing utensils and books. “You're blind!” Bill exclaims.

Dipper slaps a hand over Bill's mouth with an unnerving accuracy. “Shut up.” If anybody heard, they might treat him differently; like he was fragile or something. Even worse, it would draw more attention to the recluse. Mabel enjoys the limelight. Dipper does not. “Tell anybody, and I will personally see to it Mabel makes your life a living hell.”

Despite Dipper's threat, Bill finds himself grinning maniacally. “Pfft... haha! ‘‘See’ to it’,” the blonde snorts, trying not to break out in full-blown laughter. Dipper fumes, retracting his arm and instead opting to cross them over his chest. Finally, Bill calms himself enough to speak normally.
“You have my word. I won’t tell a soul-” Dipper sighs in relief, “-as long as you do something for me.”

The Pines twin slams his head onto the desk. “And what could you possibly want?”

“For you to be nicer to me~” Bill responds, smirk obvious in even his voice.

Dipper considers his options.
1) Be nicer to the idiot and not have anybody treat him differently.
2) Say no and deal with the consequences.

It really is a no-brainer for the brunette. “...No.”

“No?” Bill asks, finding himself more and more entertained by this boy. “NO?”

“No,” Dipper finalizes in a resolved tone. “I don’t like you, and it isn’t even enough of a secret to be worried about.”

“No…. hmm. Are you positive about this?” Cipher cracks a slightly insane grin when he see Dipper isn’t going to change his mind. “I like you, kid!”

“We’re the same age,” Dipper says in deadpan.

“So?” Bill challenges.

“... Whatever. We have a project to get done, asshat.”

“Ooh, ssssassy~”

“Shut. Up.”

“-and then he expects me to take the deal!” Dipper finishes his rant. The twins are having their lunch period sandwiched in between their fourth and fifth hour classes. Mabel found a small, abandoned table in the corner of the lunchroom for them to claim. Their two homemade lunches rest between them.

“Maybe you should give him a chance. Not all first impressions are right,” Mabel advises.

Dipper gives her the best deadpan stare he can muster. “Mabel, I share the first three hours with him. He has been a complete jackass in every one of them.”

“Yeah? Well I have him in my class before lunch, and he seems nice!” Dipper groans and leans his head on the table while Mabel fumes. The lunches Mabel packed that morning no longer seem tempting.

“Well well well. Look what we have here; fresh meat,” a snobby voice cuts the tension between the twins. Mabel looks over to see a girl about her own age dressed in top designer clothes, an overly expensive phone resting in one finely manicured hand. The girl's silky blonde hair hangs down her shoulders, looking like it has recently been professionally done.

Mabel sighs irritably, looking glaring down at her cat themed lunch box. “Hi…”

Dipper says nothing.

The rich girl raises an eyebrow at the two stiff figures before her. “Geez, first day here and it is
already bad? I bet you ran into Bill, by the looks of it. He has that effect on some people.” Again, the Pines twins do nothing. Arguments between them usually leaves them like this: Mabel becomes angry while Dipper refuses to interact with anybody. “Whatever,” the rich girl snips. “My name is Pacifica Northwest, of the extremely rich Northwest family and descendent of the founder of Gravity Falls, Nathaniel Northwest. Since Bill already got to you guys, I'll let you off the hook for today.” With that, Pacifica spins around and stalks away on her expensive heels, entourage of other preppy girls in tow.

“Dipper.” Mabel breaks the silence between them. “I know you don't like Bill, but can you at least give him a chance?” Lunch is over, and the twins are heading to their one shared class, World History.

Dipper heaves a sigh, training his sightless eyes straight ahead. “Fine. I'll give him ONE more chance. Only because you're my sister though.”

Mabel instantly brightens, gripping Dipper in a bone-crushing hug. “Yay! Thankyouthankyouthankyou!”

“Mabel, air!” The blind twin gasps, trying to pry her off of him.

“Oops. Sorry, hehe,” Mabel says, grinning sheepishly and releasing him.

The twins walk into the History room, Mabel guiding Dipper over to a seat in the row closest to the door. Once both are settled, Mabel surveys the room, looking for any familiar faces. “Oh Dipper~” Mabel grins evilly, not matching her sing-song voice at all. “Guess who we share a class with!”

Dipper sighs and shrugs his shoulders, completely oblivious. “Bill!” Squeals Mabel in a whisper. The male twin slams his head on his desk, refusing to acknowledge the fact he shares another class with the gold-obsessed junior. “You said you'd give him a chance~” Mabel reminds teasingly. This elicits another groan from the poor boy.

Any more teasing from Mabel is interrupted by the bell. The teacher enters, class begins, and Dipper discovers that there is yet another group assignment. It doesn't take a genius to know who he gets stuck with.

“So Dipper,” Bill smoothly scoots a desk next to the brunette’s, “what is this? Five classes we share? It's like you asked to have the same schedule as me!”

“Hardly,” the sightless junior snorts.

“Dipper,” Mabel warns, turning her desk around to form their group's clump.

Dipper sighs and relents. “No, Bill, we share four classes so far. Look, I know we got off on the wrong foot, but my sister insists we get along.” At the “sister” part, Dipper shoots a hard look her way. “So, I would like to apologize for my… rude… behavior.”

Bill grins widely at this. ‘Oh this is just TOO rich! He only listens to his sister, who is more than happy to make people get along!’ He feigns composure, opting to clap a firm hand on Dipper's shoulder. The latter flinches in turn at the foreign contact. “Nice to know you won't be threatening to stab my eyes out with rusty forks!”

“I never said forks,” Dipper grumbles under his breath. Mabel kicks him from under the desks. “Ouch! Alright, I won’t threaten to stab your eyes out any more. Geez, happy now Mabel?”
“Quite!” The hyper girl replies happily, pulling out the history book and a couple sheets of paper. “Let’s get this assignment done so we have time to talk about “the one”, Dipper.”

“Lord save me.”

Chapter End Notes

I got the book name from my older sister. Thanks, Sis!

Updates will probably be infrequent since I have sports and school coming up.
Sincerest apologies.
The twins successfully finish their first week of school without getting into any trouble! This calls for a celebration! Who will they meet on their way home though...?

Mabel, Dipper, and Bill all stand outside the school doors, the twins having just officially finished their first week of school. “You guys haven’t gotten in trouble a single time this whole week!” Bill exclaims. “I’m impressed.”

Dipper snorts, rolling his eyes and crossing his arms. “Tch, it isn’t that hard when you don’t challenge the teachers at every turn!”

“Hey! Nobody can tell me what to do!” He counters, mimicking Dipper’s pose.

“Well, I agree with Bill,” Mabel pipes up. “That means we should TOTALLY go out and celebrate.”

The trio strolls away from the prison- sorry, school -with Mabel guiding Dipper by the elbow since he doesn’t like bringing his walking stick to school. “What would we do?” Asks the male brunette.

Bill smirks, already thinking of three different places they could go. “There’s a good pizza place in town. Or maybe the arcade? There’s also a decent burger joint not that far from here. I hear they have amazing shakes.”

“Oh, oh! Let’s do pizza!” Mabel bounces excitedly, flailing an arm in the air. “I haven’t had pizza in FOREVER.”

Dipper frowns, cringing internally at the thought of getting lost in an unfamiliar place. “Mabel, we had pizza not two weeks ago.”

“EXACTLY!”

A sigh from the blind one goes pretty much unnoticed. “I dunno, I don’t really like… new places all that much. I could just go to the Mystery Shack and you guys could go do whatever.”

Bill slings an arm over Dipper’s shoulder, catching him by surprise. “Not gonna happen! There’s no way you’re getting out of quality friend time!”

“Quality friend time? We’re “friends”?”

The blonde ignores Dipper’s questions. “Since you don’t want to stay out too long, what if we just grab some pizza, head over to the Mystery Shack, and hang out there? You guys probably have something interesting we can do there, and it won’t even cost anything!”

Mabel bounces energetically. “Yes! And I can finally get Bill’s measurements to knit him a
sweater!"

Bill raises an eyebrow, looking down at Dipper questioningly. Since this is pretty much routine at this point, Dipper knows what what Bill is doing without needing to see him. “Mabel has a ritual where she knits a sweater for every new person she meets and likes. Grunkle Stan and Grunkle Ford already have one,” Dipper answers, hands shoved in his jacket pockets.

“Doesn’t knitting a whole sweater take a long time? You guys just moved here this week and she has already made two?”

“Yup. Mabel’s record is six hours, twenty-three minutes, and forty-two seconds for an average sized sweater.” Bill whistles, impressed by Mabel’s ability. Of course, he decides he never wants to make Mabel angry when she is knitting. Those needles can be sharp!

Mabel suddenly stops and stares at Bill, circling him and mumbling under her breath. “Uh, what’s your sister doing now?” Bill asks, a little weirded out.

“From my experiences with her, she’s guessing at your measurements. It’s a little game she likes to play to see how accurate she can be. Of course, she can’t do it with me anymore since she already knows mine by heart,” Dipper answers offhandedly.

“Chest: 36 inches; waist: 30 inches; neck: 12 inches; biceps: 10 inches,” Mabel contributes. “And those are just the major ones!”

Dipper rolls his eyes as Mabel emphasizes his point. “Thanks, Mabes,” he states dryly.

“Anytime!” She does a once-over of Bill and points in the direction they were heading. “Onward!” And with that, the three continue walking.

They come up to an intersection where Bill has them turn right. “What other hobbies do you guys have besides Mabel being a knitting fanatic?” Bill inquires casually.

“Well, I like making totally RANDOM and SPARKLY things out of crafts supplies! Oh and matchmaking! It was kinda hard in our old town back where everybody knew everybody. I also like hanging out with my bestest pals ever~!” Mabel immediately responds with her usual overflow of pep.

“Don’t forget being silly at every chance you get,” Dipper reminds, shoving her playfully.

Mabel sticks her tongue out at Dipper. “I have NO clue what you’re talking about~!” She says sarcastically, pushing him back. Bill looks between them, smiling faintly at their familial bond.

“What do you like doing, Dipper?” Bill reverts back to his usual mischievous grin.

He shrugs uncertainly. “I like reading books. Finding ones in braille or that come with an audio version can be annoyingly hard to find, though. I’ve memorized a couple songs on the sousaphone, but I don’t remember where Mabel put in since we’ve moved into the Mystery Shack. Solving mysteries is always fun. I don’t know if self-defence classes count as a hobby exactly, but I’ve been taking them for a while now.”

“Self-defense classes?” Bill seems genuinely interested. “What would you need those for?”

Both Mabel and Dipper immediately glower. “Let’s not talk about that,” Dipper suggests in a way that should not be considered “suggesting” at any point in time. Bill catches onto their mood and uncomfortably looks away. He stares at the stores they pass, his eye catching on one in particular.
“Oh hey! The pizza place!” Bill points out.

Mabel perks up, banishing the previous tension. “Pizza! Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go!” She tugs insistently on Dipper’s arm, who laughs and allows her to pull him to the pizza place. Bill follows them inside, amused by their antics.

Approaching the counter, Mabel speed reads the menu and quickly relays it to Dipper. He makes to speak up, but a sudden thought occurs to him. “Mabel, do you have any money on you?”

“No...” she says slowly, checking her pockets. “I spent it all on yarn yesterday. I thought you had some.”

Dipper sighs, shaking his head. “No. If you would remember, you had me pay for your art supplies a couple days ago.” Both deflate unhappily, having been wanting the food sent by the gods.

“Um, guys? Didja forget about me?” Bill asks cheekily, throwing an arm over either of their shoulders. “I have plenty!”

“We couldn’t do that to you!” Mabel weakly protests.

“Psh, it’s fine. This one’s on me guys. Now, what should we get?” The female of the Pines twins gasps, pulling Bill into a hug strong enough to shatter a bear’s ribcage. Surprisingly, the boy seems almost completely unaffected. Even Dipper seems thrilled at the thought of “free” pizza, though he refrains from choking the life out of Bill like his sister.

Mabel releases Bill and tells the bored teenage cashier, “Could we get a large pizza with…?” She glances over her shoulder.

“Sausage,” Dipper contributes.

“The flesh of my enemies, duh,” Bill sasses. Mabel blanches, looking sick to her stomach. The blonde cracks up at her expression, waving a dismissive hand. “Nah, I’m cool with sausage.”

“Alright!” Mabel turns back to the cashier. “A large pizza with sausage and sprinkles!”

“Omit the sprinkles,” the male Pines twin calls from over his sister’s shoulder.

The cashier, obviously weirded out by the trio, simply nods. “One large pizza with sausage?”

“Yup!”

“That will be $6.99.”

“If you would please, Bill,” Mabel imitates a high-and-pompous voice, bowing and stepping out of his way.

Smirking confidently, Bill strolls up to the register. “Why thank you,” he replies just as imperiously, handing the cashier a ten and pocketing the change handed to him. The trio shuffles over to a row of chairs pushed against the far wall to wait for their pizza.

“Mmm! Can’t wait to get to the Mystery Shack. That pizza smells GOOD!” Mabel drools. They had elected Bill carry the pizza on the way back because Mabel looked like she would abscond with it any second and nobody wanted Dipper tripping and dropping it.
“Mabel,” Bill warns, hoisting the box higher to keep it away from the brunette.

Mabel scrunches her face up and mimics a high-pitched version of Bill’s voice. “Bill.” The two glare at each other until Mabel finally turns away to pout.

Bill sighs, running his free hand down his face. Mabel is a great friend but she does have her childish moments. “Mab-”

“Did you guys hear that?” Dipper suddenly interrupts, perking his ears up.

Mabel and Bill frown, sharing a look. “No…” Before either one can ask what he heard, Dipper dashes down the street, uncannily dodging obstacles, though he does stumble when making the turn around the corner.

“Dipper! Wait up!” Mabel scrambles after her brother, Bill right behind her. The two make the corner and scan up ahead. The street is empty with the exception of a short, black limo parked in front of an upscale store. Dipper is making another turn down the alley a little ways past the high-end shop. “Dipper!”

The two enter the alley, almost crashing into the blind brunette who is standing stock still. About twenty feet away are three figures in maroon robes. Standing in the middle of them is a platinum blonde girl dressed in expensive designer clothes, thrashing and screaming in spite of a gag and blindfold bound tightly around her eyes and mouth. “Pacifica?” Mabel wonders aloud. She recalls seeing the girl at lunch her first day at school.

“Shit,” Bill hisses under his breath. “Mabel, Dip, stay back. Those guys are part of a mysterious cult that has recently popped up and I don’t know how dangerous they are.” Dipper scowls, not backing down but not charging recklessly ahead either. “Whatever… Hey creeps! Let the girl go!” Bill calls out, catching the robed figures attention.

The one closest to the newcomers raises a hand. “Worry not, we shall not harm her. Simply go about your day.”

Bill scoffs, slowly setting down the pizza box next to him. “Not gonna happen. See, I know that girl and her family, and they wouldn’t be too happy if I just let you guys kidnap her.”

“We mean Pacifica Northwest no harm,” the same cultist says in a definitively male voice.

“Alright, then we’ll do this the hard way,” Bill growls, cracking his knuckles. “Mabel, Dipper, I’ve got this.”

“We’re not gonna let you take them on alone, Bill.” Dipper informs him sternly. “Right Mabel?”

“RIGHT! LET’S SHOW THOSE CREEPS NOT TO MESS WITH OUR TOWN!” Mabel launches herself at the nearest cultist, landing a hard blow in his stomach. The cultist folds in on himself and crumples to the ground.

The other two cultists see this and recoil. The one on the right reaches into his robe and pulls out a small, grey ball, throwing it down. A thick cloud of smoke rushes out, engulfing the alley.

“Mabel?”

“Dipper?!”

“Agh!!”
A few more scuffling sounds follow. A loud crash near Dipper scares the living daylights out of him. Footsteps bounce between the high brick walls, disorientating the twins and Bill. The moment the smoke clears, Bill scours the shadowy alley. Mabel is clutching Dipper’s hand in her own while helping Pacifica up. None of the cultists are anywhere to be seen.

“You guys okay?” Bill asks just to clarify. A jumbled reply of “yeah”s and general grunts act as confirmations.

Pacifica, seeming to have gotten a bearing of the situation, storms over to Bill and jabs a hand in his chest. “Who were those guys? You seemed to know, Bill! If they had gotten away with kidnapping, my father would be very upset!”

The golden-blonde deadpans. “Really Pacifica? Drop the act.” She seems taken aback at his statement. Nobody ever saw through her facade, nobody except for Bill. Maybe that is why she tended to hang out with him more in her spare time. “I honestly don’t know much about those douches other than that they suddenly popped up one day and have been extremely shady. Nobody knows their motives, which both concerns and irritates my-” Bill cuts himself off, shaking his head and amending his statement. “Nobody knows what their motives are.”

Dipper frowns thoughtfully, finding how Bill abruptly stopped himself rather suspicious. ’I’ll ask him later.’ Mabel, oblivious to her brother’s brooding, snags the pizza box and presents it to Pacifica. “We’re going to our house to celebrate our first week of school! Why don’t you come with us? We have pizzaaaa~”

Pacifica recoils slightly at the sight of the box, looking rather uncertain of herself. “Um, I was nearly kidnapped by some creeps and now you want me to come over to your house? Thanks, but no thanks. I need to get home, my father is expecting me back soon.”

“Oh lighten up,” Bill puffs, exasperated, placing a firm hand on the platinum blonde’s shoulder. “Just tell your driver to go back to your mansion without you. Give him some excuse and assure him you won’t be alone. Your father should be fine with it if he knows I’m there.”

She frowns, unconvinced. “I dunno. He is super strict.”

“Just have the driver say he dropped you off at a friend’s house. Your father should buy it. Even strict parents let their children hang out,” he pushes.

“Like you would know,” Pacifica snaps back, no real venom in her voice.

Bill’s expression flickers to a darker one. “Oh I know,” he mutters inaudibly. Then just as quickly, his expression changes back to his usual confident smirk. “Go on! We’ll wait… not right here. We will be waiting next to the shop, okay?”

Pacifica raises an eyebrow but nods. “Alright. Give me a minute then.” The four exit the alley and the blonde speed walks over to the limo waiting a little ways down. The window slides down and she tells the driver something, having the air of someone who owns the entire world. After a moment, the window slides back up and the limo pulls away. The moment it vanishes around the corner, Pacifica releases a pent-up breath.

“So, our house?” Mabel asks once Pacifica returns to the little group.

Smiling genuinely, Pacifica shrugs. “Sure. You guys live at the… Mystery Hack?”

“Mystery Shack,” Dipper corrects. “But I guess you could call it that. Hah, Grunkle Stan is a hack.”
Mabel snorts and agrees. "Definitely!"

“Let’s get going then!” Bill cheers, taking the pizza box from Mabel when he sees her sneaking a hand inside.

They make it to the Mystery Shack without incident. Up in the twin’s room in the attic, Bill finally breaks out the pizza and Mabel pulls out a mysterious drink she calls “Mabel Juice.” Pacifica is weirded out by most of the house, jumping every time a board creaks underfoot. This doesn’t keep her from joining in the fun though. Once they finish off the pizza, Dipper suggests playing a few board games. Mabel counters with Truth or Dare, and Bill prevents the impending argument by deciding that they would play one game of Monopoly and then do Truth or Dare. At this point, Stan comes in, gives them all a hard look, and warns them not to break anything.

The teens all promise they would be good and bust out the Monopoly once Stan leaves. Because of his obvious disability, Dipper has to team up. Usually, he would partner with Mabel, but the older twin has had a different plan in mind. She suggests to Bill that he partner with Dipper, a coy smile on her face the whole time, and sweetens the deal by promising that he would get to start in Truth or Dare. Bill accepts these terms, oblivious to the elder twin’s schemes.

Pacifica, Mabel, and Bill+Dipper all play a tough game of Monopoly, but surprisingly Pacifica is the one to come out on top. She claims it is because of her upbringing and learning her family’s business tactics. Bill whines that she only won because he and Dipper kept ending up in jail. Mabel innocently reminds him that they would have gone bankrupt much sooner if she hadn’t been feeling generous. Dipper scowls and reminds her who nearly lost in the first five minutes. Bill stops the borderline fight by bringing up the agreement on the game of Truth or Dare. Mabel brightens and announces that Bill should start. Dipper raises an eyebrow at this- Mabel always wants to go first.

Truth or Dare doesn't go much better than Monopoly. Bill starts it off by having Pacifica tell one embarrassing hobby of hers. After admitting to liking collecting old photos, Pacifica dares Mabel to successfully convince Stan to give her fifty dollars, no strings attached.

Mabel shrugs and heads downstairs. The other three follow behind to make sure she doesn't just steal it. Mabel skips up to her great uncle, musters the sweetest, most charismatic smile in her arsenal, and asks in a charming voice if she can have fifty dollars for art supplies. Grunkle Stan basically shoves the cash into her awaiting hands, demanding that she never use that on him again.

Back in the attic, Bill and Pacifica are astonished how easily she got it while Dipper recalls times before when she had used it on their parents to get stuff. A few more rounds pass. During one, Dipper dares Bill to chug the entire pitcher of Mabel juice. Bill is successful, but becomes completely wired for the rest of the night. At some point, Mabel dares Dipper to kiss Bill. Completely flustered and shaking with nerves, Dipper tries to escape with a less intimidating truth, but it is a far worse option. In the end, our awkward protagonist gets away with giving Cipher a chaste kiss on the cheek- to Mabel's disappointment.

Pacifica is the first one to pass out (at almost eleven thirty), to which Mabel responded to by giddily doodling a mustache on her face and promptly passing out as well. Dipper and Bill stay up a few more hours, the latter energetically asking all sorts of questions that range from personal to general. Dipper half-answers most, not comfortable with telling anybody about himself. His eyes droop and the boy eventually drops off closer to two.
“He’s so dense,” Bill mutters to himself, staring at Dipper’s sleeping form. His chest rises and falls slowly, his face so innocent. Curly brown bangs lift enough when Dipper shifts for Bill to catch sight of part of a mark. Bill curiously brushes the hair out of the way to see the Big Dipper standing out boldly on Dipper’s forehead. “So that’s where he got his name.” The blonde chuckles. “Though he doesn’t have the strangest birth mark.”

Dipper frowns in his sleep, weakly smacking at Bill’s hand and flopping to his other side. “No. Don’t. Don’t touch her.” This piques Bill’s interest. ‘He sleep talks? Pft, I’d learn more this way from him than when he’s awake.’ Dipper tosses a bit more, distress apparent on his face. “Le-leave her alone!” He curls into a fetal position, salty tears gradually escaping from his eyes.

Bill places a comforting hand on his back. “A nightmare, huh? I know plenty about those.” Cipher keeps an eye on Dipper until he quiets, nightmare subsiding. Bill knows nightmares as well as he knows the youngest Northwest. Both have been with him since childhood.

‘If only I was closer to him. Maybe he would tell me half of what he shares with Mabel.’ Bill laughs dryly. “I bothered you because you were interesting at first. You still have yet to disappoint. Blind but succeeding in advanced classes. Refusing to back down and let me fight alone in the face of danger. Heck, I thought you hated me, but you hold your sister so high in your opinion that you gave me an actual chance.”

At this point, Mabel snores loudly, rolling over and wrapping her arms around Dipper’s form. A mixture of jealousy and longing fills Bill. “A caring family, now that’s something I don’t know much about...”
New Mysteries

Chapter Summary

Time to find the weirdness in Gravity Falls~!

Chapter Notes

AHA! I am alive! I'm gonna blame my little hiatus on school, sports, and my other stories. Que the *le gasp* I know, I'm a two-timing author.

Anyway, a HUGE thank you to those who read and comment on this story! Any questions, criticisms and votes are welcomed! ^_^ Now enjoy...

Chapter 4

“Please?”

“No.”

“Pleeeaaase?! ”

“No! And that’s final!”

Dipper scowls, crossing his arms and dropping to the floor criss-cross style. His actions are reminiscent of a pouting child. “Why?” He whines. “It’ll just be the surrounding forest. I swear I won’t go too far from the shack!”

Stanford mirrors Dipper’s expression and holds the brunette in a hard stare- not that Dipper can tell though. “The woods around Gravity Falls are dangerous; full of wolves and, um, bears!”

“Please, Grunkle Ford!” Mabel jumps in after downing an entire glass of Mabel Juice. “I'll go with him to make sure nothing bad happens!”

Again, Stanford rebuffs them. “My answer is not changing. Besides, don’t you guys have school today?”

Mabel laughs good-naturedly. “Pfft, no! Today is Saturday; there’s no school on Saturdays. Where have you been living? The basement?”

Snorting, Dipper quips, “Where else would he live?”

“Who’s living where?” A bleary-eyed Bill questions, stumbling into the kitchen. “Wow, note to self: never down a whole pitcher of Mabel Juice ever again. What time is it anyway?”

“A little after ten,” Mabel answers peppily. “And we were talking about how Grunkle Ford lives in the basement.”
“I don’t live in the basement!” Grunkle Ford protests. “I have my own room; I just don’t use it very often because I’m busy finishing my research for the university.”

“Yeah, in the basement!” Dipper repeats. He pushes himself to his feet to take a seat at the kitchen table. He carefully feels around before finding his mug of nearly black coffee. “Hey Bill, you can be pretty charming; convince my grunkle to let me go out into the forest.” The brunet simply nurses the coffee then, waiting for Bill to cast his Enchantment of Convincing. He’s seen the boy use it on teachers to delay collecting homework or to push back test dates.

Bill falters, still flailing to a haze of sleep and Mabel Juice to catch up. “Oh, um… yeah.” He pauses for a moment to collect his thoughts, mind still muddled. “Okay then. Hey Fordsy, I know that it may be a bit dangerous, but you can’t keep Dipper locked up in the shack forever. He might just sneak out anyway and you would never know. It would be safer if you let him go now and work out his curiosity.”

“There are many dangerous creatures in those woods! Wolves, bears, bobcats! He would be better off exploring the town.”

“Give him a weapon he knows how to use, then.”

“Mabel and I’ve taken self defense classes,” Dipper inputs helpfully.

The eldest Pines in the room scowls, mostly to himself, while trying to come up with another rebuttal. “Well, he can’t go alone!” Ford blurts, still dominantly worried for his blind grandnephew.

“I’ll go with him then,” Bill counters, smirking confidently. “I know these woods like the back of my hand. Other than yourself, there’s nobody he’d be safer with.” Dipper scoffs at this- he can handle himself, thank you very much -but says nothing. It seems like Bill is winning this argument, which means that he’ll be able to go out in the woods.

Breathing out a sigh, Stanford finally relents. “Alright, fine. But, if anything happens, you two get right back to the Shack.”

“Yes!” Dipper cheers, throwing a fist in the air victoriously. “We will. Now, come on!” He jumps out of his chair and runs for the door, slamming his shoulder against the frame in his excitement.

Bill snorts, taking Dipper by the shoulder and pushing him through the doorway. “Let me grab something to eat first, then we can go. Okay?”

The brunette puffs out a begrudging “fine” and leans on the frame of the door, but can’t stay dispirited too long. He finally gets to explore the forest surrounding the shack! Bouncing with energy, Dipper absentmindedly wonders if Mabel spiked his coffee with Mabel Juice when he wasn’t looking.

“Have you ever wondered if the supernatural are real?” Dipper turns his head toward Bill at the blonde’s question.

“Well, yeah. Who hasn’t?” He laughs nervously before letting out a squeak. His foot had caught on a fallen branch and he tripped. Bill catches the brunet by his arm, chuckling at the boy’s general clumsiness. “T-thanks,” Dipper mutters, cheeks burning in embarrassment. ‘Great, soon he’ll be thinking that I can’t take care of myself and regret convincing Grunkle Ford to let me come out here!’
“You alright there, Dip?” Bill asks.

Dipper nods. “Yeah; peachy.” He bites the inside of his cheek, mentally berating himself. His steps are a little less sure than before.

“It’s just that you seem a little… off.”

“I’m fine.”

Bill knows something is bothering him, but seeing how the blind teen has stiffened up, he decides not to push it. The two trudge down what can barely be considered a deer trail for a bit longer in silence. Dipper takes extra measures to not give Bill any more reason to worry by pulling his white cane out of his bag and using it for its intended purpose. Bill questions whether this escapade will be safe enough for Dipper before he returns to his previous inquiry. “So, do you think all those supernatural stories and conspiracy theories could be true?”

The brunette shrugs absently, trying to conceal his nerves. So far, he can’t tell what Bill’s own feelings on the matter are, making this dangerous territory. “W-well, who doesn’t think they could be real? I m-mean, it would be kinda cool.” He winces at the stutter in his own voice.

“What if I told you that, here in Gravity Falls, all those weird creatures are real?” Bill smirks knowingly once he sees Dipper’s face light up a fraction.

Dipper locks his blind eyes forward but allows a grin to curl his lips. “That’d be awesome!” A moment later, Dipper’s enthusiasm is replaced by suspicion. “But I’d have to punch you for lying to me.”

“Good thing I’m not lying.”

Dipper shifts his head far enough to hold Bill under a “scrutinizing” gaze. “Prove it.”

In a playful lilt, Bill replies, “Good things come to those who wait~!”

Huffing, Dipper turns his focus back towards not tripping or colliding with anything. “Can you at least tell me if unicorns are real? Mabel would be ecstatic if she could see one.”

Bill’s expression becomes one of disgusted twisted by a sneer. “Oh yeah, they’re real alright. Sometimes I wish they weren’t though.”

“Why?”

Snorting, the blonde throws an arm around Dipper’s shoulders. “Childhood stories lie to you. Unicorns are the pure hearted, loveable, empathetic creatures they’re made out to be. The ones I ran into were self-centered jerks who played crappy rave music through their horns. They’re pretty manipulative too, so Mabel would be better off not even meeting them.”

The blind teen deflates slightly. “Oh, I was going to say we should bring Mabel sometime to see them, but not really any more. She’s gonna be so disappointed when she hears how her childhood favorite creatures are just annoying jerks.” Bill can’t quite sympathize.

“Well, we could just find another thing that she would love. I hear that Manly Dan’s cabin in the woods is haunted, if she’s into ghosts. I get a sick feeling she would be enamored with the Leprecorns as well… Oh wait!” Bill snaps his fingers. “I’ve got it! We should find her a plaidypus!”

Dipper’s face contorts with confusion. “A platypus? How will that be exciting?”
Bill shakes his head, “No no no. A *plaid*-ypus. It’s like a platypus, but its coat is plaid patterned. Lumberjacks *love* a flannel jacket made from plaidypus fur.”

“Cool,” Dipper cedes, the corner of his mouth curling up slightly.

The two teenagers finally enter a small clearing, the trees and underbrush contending with tri-colored crystals reaching up over thrice the humans’ heights. “So,” Bill begins, tugging on Dipper’s sleeve to stop him, “I decided that since gnomes are a *teeny* bit unpredictable and you definitely don’t want to get near the barf fairies, I’d show you something a little less… dangerous. Ever heard of crystals with magical properties?” A hyper grin has taken over Bill’s face.

“Yeeaaah….” Dipper skews his eyebrow up at this. Just what is Bill getting at?

Taking the boy by his hand, Bill leads Dipper over to a larger crystal where a multitude of smaller ones are bursting from its base. “In Gravity Falls, there are crystals with size-altering capabilities.” To Dipper, it almost sounds like he is quoting from someplace. Bill crouches down and snaps a smaller stone from the cluster while continuing to speak. “I figured since it wouldn’t maul you to death or totally disgust you, these crystals would be a good introduction to the weirdness of this town.”

Playing the part of the skeptic, Dipper plants his free hand on his hip and asks, “And how will I know you aren’t just pulling my leg?”

Bill grins mischievously. “Oh, you’ll know all right.” He holds the crystal ‘neath a beam of sunlight with one hand, repositioning Dipper’s hand from his hip to under the gem with the other. The light is colored a bright periwinkle blue. Dipper lets out a completely manly squeak of surprise when he feels his appendage quadruple in size.

“How are you doing that!?” He demands after Bill flips the crystal and shrinks the brunette’s hand back down to size with a pinkish light.

Placing the crystal in the palm of Dipper’s hand, Bill answers in an arrogant, know-it-all tone, “When light passes through or is reflected by these crystals, anything can be shrunk or enlarged. Pink light shrinks while blue grows.”

“Thanks for the lesson, Professor Cipher,” Dipper plays along with a snort.

Giving his widest shit-eating grin, Bill responds arrogantly, “You are *very* welcome, Mr. Pines.”

Dipper sighs and shakes his head. “Narcissist. You are nothing but an egotistical narcissist.”

“Thanks for the compliment~.”

“Whatever.” Hefting the magical stone in hand, Dipper asks, “Do I get to keep this? Is it even safe for me to keep it?”

“I don’t see why not,” Bill answers, shrugging. “Consider it a present from me.” Dipper being the skeptic his is, cocks an eyebrow before pocketing it. ‘*After Grunkle Ford stresses that this forest is dangerous, and Bill says he knows it almost as well as Ford, he goes and gives me something from this “extremely dangerous and very deadly” forest… Why do I even question this any more?”* Speaking of presents! Do I get a “thank you” for convincing your grunkle to let you go on this escapade?”

The brunette scoffs, “I already thanked you.”

“I don’t think you did~.” Using his slight height advantage, Bill rests his arm on Dipper’s head,
leaning his full weight into it. “It’s just two words, Sir Dipping Sauce!” Come on, say ‘em with me~!”

“No thanks,” Dipper grumbles indignantly, trying- but failing -to push Bill off.

Taking Dipper’s jaw, Bill moves it up and down while saying in poor imitation of Dipper, “Thank you, Bill! I completely and sincerely appreciate that you charmed my grunkle to let me frolic in the woods.”

Dipper smacks Bill’s hand away, growling, “You said it was only two words. And I’m not frolicking.”

“Hey!” Bill cries, “Is it so wrong to embellish a little?”

“Yes,” the blind male shoots dryly. “With you, it is.” Bill makes to feign hurt when an unsettlingly deep growl emanates from behind them. Both teenagers freeze in their movements, Bill cautiously peering over his shoulder. “What is it?” Dipper hisses.

Bill quietly chuckles nervously. “Hehe. You know those crystals I was telling you about?”

“Yes…”

“Looks like a mountain lion found them too.” Dipper glares in Bill’s general direction.

“Really now?” Sarcasm and irritation are prominent in his whispering voice. Worry seeps through as well, causing the boy to bite the insides of his cheek. “So, uh, h-how… big is this mountain lion, exactly?”

Bill slips his hand into Dipper’s so they can take off at a moment’s notice and not be separated. The mountain lion stares hungrily at its prey from between a tree and a tree-sized crystal. It licks its maw, eyes narrowed in predatory delight. “Big? Um, just a little smaller than the Mystery Shack, kind of big.”

“Compared to us?”

The blonde laughs without humor. “We’re about the size of its canines.” Bill feels the brunette tense next to him. Attempting to keep the situation as controlled as possible, Bill whispers in a steady voice, “When I say go, run as fast as you can. I’ll keep you in the clear.” Dipper nods in understanding. He may not be “best friends” with Bill, but he trusts him to at least keep them from being eaten by an extra oversized house cat. From the corner of his eye, the blonde sees the mountain lion tense and shouts, “RUN!”

In a mad dash, the boys take off between the thickening trees. Bill quickly spots the deer trail they entered on and guides them over to it. Behind them, the mountain lion tears through the towering crystals and trees. When a tree impedes its path, the feline merely bowls it over, entirely unaffected.

Cane long abandoned, Dipper trips on the fallen branches and random overgrowth that makes a forest wild. “C’mon, c’mon,” Bill mutters under his breath. He takes a sharp turn next to a trickling stream. Off in the distance, higher rising trees are visible.

Dipper doesn’t know how long or how far they’ve ran when his friend finally yanks them to a stop. A strong breeze pulls at Dipper’s brown hat until it is torn off, the blind boy failing to save it. “Why have we stopped?!” He gasps, hearing the mountain lion crashing through the forest behind
them. “We need to keep moving!”

Bill’s eyes dart around frantically, searching desperately for a way of escape. The two boys had somehow managed to stumble upon the cliffs overlooking the town and now the only way down is blocked by a ferocious cat. The sun—steadily sinking its high point—bathes the cliff in light. An idea forms in his mind, causing the blonde’s golden orbs to brighten. “Do you trust me?”

“I, uh—”

“Do you trust me?”

Dipper bites his lip. “Yes.” He sounds a lot more decisive than he feels.

“Alright, then give me your crystal.” Bill holds an expectant hand out impatiently. He bounces with nervous energy as Dipper digs into his pocket.

“Aha!” The boy cries, holding aloft the transparent stone.

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“Aha!” The boy cries, holding aloft the transparent stone.

Bill snatches at and instructs Dipper carefully. “This is gonna sound crazy, but I need you to stand in the middle of this clearing. No matter what it sounds like, don't run. In fact, I need you to be as distracting as possible.” He pushes his sightless friend into the middle of the open area. “I'll take care of the overgrown kitten. You just sit here and look tasty.” The blonde then darts behind some bushes, half blinded by the sun.

The crashing sounds grow louder, along with the low rumbling. This mountain lion isn’t letting its prey get away so easily. It finally bursts into the clearing, instantly catching sight of Dipper. The boy can hear its snarling, repressing his shivers as he waves his arms and shouts, “Hungry? Come get some!” It isn’t bravery that keeps him from running, moreover fear that he’ll screw up whatever plan Bill has. ‘Whatever Bill is planning, he better do it fast.’

If cats could smile, this one would be grinning savagely. Its prey is just sitting there, prime for the killing! The mountain lion stalks closer, body low to the ground, tail sweeping from side to side.

Over on Bill’s end, he positions the crystal underneath a beam of sunlight. Pink. ‘Good.’ He sees the moment when the feline emerges from the trees, waiting for the chance to strike. ‘If I shine the light on it too soon, the mountain lion will turn and smash me like a bug before I can shrink it down all the way.’ In the back of Bill’s mind, he notes that Dipper is flailing like a chicken and shouting to hold the mountain lion’s attention.

The mountain lion prowls closer, tongue swiping along its furry maw. When the cat tenses its haunches to pounce, Bill acts. He reflects the sunlight from the crystal onto the mountain lion, bathing the cat in pink. The feline—unaware of the magic—leaps at Dipper. Dipper continues in his distraction, oblivious to what is going on.

The light reflected by the height-altering crystal shrinks the mountain lion to the size of an eraser in mid-pounce. The miniature cat lands at Dippers feet, bewildered and wondering why its prey is suddenly so much larger than it. No longer hearing the threatening snarling, Dipper lowers his arms, calling out to Bill, “Did you get it?”

Bill emerges from the bushes, approaching Dipper and the tiny mountain lion. “Yup! It’s super tiny now.” He grins darkly. “We could chase it now…”

“NO!” Dipper smacks Bill with disconcerting accuracy. “It’s an animal that survives off of instinct; we aren’t.”

“Fine, fine.” Bill crouches down and scoops up the diminutive cat, depositing both it and the
crystal in Dipper’s palms. “And since you want to be the environmentalist here, you get to keep it.”

Dipper frowns, raising his eyebrow. “Why not just return it to normal size and release it back into the wild?”

“Think of it like this,” Bill throws an arm over Dipper’s shoulders, guiding him back towards the forest, “when you ruin Mabel’s image of a unicorn, you can soften the blow by giving her an adorable, tiny cat.”

“She’ll end up being more dangerous with the mountain lion than she already is,” Dipper mutters. Bill counters with, “Mabel will be dangerous when she learns the truth about unicorns.” Dipper can’t refute that.

The two teenagers manage to make it back to the Mystery Shack before nightfall, both hungry and exhausted from their excursions. The miniature mountain lion took to biting on Dipper’s thumb as a pastime until the boy banished the cat to his jacket pocket. From there, it curled up and fell asleep, surprisingly content. Bill teased Dipper by saying he would grow up to be a crazy tiny-cat-lady.

“Bro Bro!” A flash of yellow streaks down the Mystery Shack porch, across the lawn, and right into Dipper, throwing the poor boy off balance. “Whathappenedtoyou? Whywereyougonesolong? You look terrible!”

“Slow down,” Dipper chuckles, pushing his twin off. “We just had a little more excitement than what Bill planned.”

Mabel scowls, narrowing her eyes at Bill. “And that means what exactly?”

“We maaay have been chased byagiganticmountainlionforawhile…” He rushes the last part in hopes that Mabel wouldn’t freak out.

“ Whaaa - You had fun without me!” Mabel’s glower shifts to a pouty face and she crosses her arms indignantly over her yellow, sun-themed sweater. “Aw man, now my day isn’t nearly as cool as yours!”

Dipper snorts derisively. “Fun? Hardly. It was terrifying half of the time and annoying the other half.”

Bill leans his weight playfully on Dipper’s head again. “I have no clue what you mean!” Dipper shoves him off, scoffing and thrusting his hands in his jacket pockets.

The three teenagers stroll back to the Mystery Shack. “So what did you do while we were gone?” Dipper questions, petting the tiny cat in his pocket.

Mabel brightens, her previous walking switching to a hyperactive skip. “Weeeeeeell, when Pacifica finally woke up, we went out to a few of the shops in town and she bought me some SUPER cool outfits! I discovered she actually likes the food in Greasy’s Diner, though she refuses to admit it herself. She had to go a little after lunch because her limo showed up and the driver said that her father “was furious and demanded she go home”. Mabel uses over exaggerated air quotations on the last part. “She’s really nice underneath that high-and-mighty facade of hers!”

Bill grins knowingly. “I knew you two would get along! Either that or try to kill each other.”
Mabel and Dipper both give Bill a dirty look at the same time. Chuckling tensely, Bill excuses himself with, “Anywho! I believe I have places to be other than here. Dipper, why don’t you tell Mabel what you found out today? Toodles~!” And with that, the blonde absconds, disappearing down the road as the twins step onto the porch.

Mabel blinks in surprise, turning to her brother. “Well that was strange.”

“Everything in this town is strange,” Dipper retorts lightheartedly.

Sharing a short laugh, the two siblings enter the Mystery Shack’s gift shop. It is empty, the Shack having closed a few hours earlier. “So what was Bill meaning when he told you to tell me what you discovered?” Mabel hums cheerily.

Dipper’s mood turns to slight dread. ‘Aw man, she’s not gonna like this.’ “Okay, so you know how you love unicorns?”

“Absolutely! They are the best, most beautiful, positively magnificent creatures to ever walk the fantasy-earth!”

“Well, sorry to burst your bubble, but apparently they…. .”
New Pet

Chapter Summary

An elaboration upon the fate of our last chapter's antagonist. This is a short chapter; meant to act as a bridge. Please enjoy ^_^ (Inspired by my big sister- she wanted to know what happened to the fearsome yet small cat)

Chapter Notes

Okay, so I want to post an official thank you to those who comment, kudo, follow, etcetera and address my commenters.

roseoftranquility: I plan on giving PLENTY more ;)

EDeacilys: There is plenty more information on interactions to come~ Oh, and second, I hope it stays just as interesting to you! My goal is to entertain!

Imperfect_Apollo: I read your comment and my heart melted. It is literally lying in a puddle next to me.

HaganeOokami90: Thank you for the support~ Here is the next chapter

lillmuffin12: Holy crap, so much to respond to. First off, comment to your hearts content. That goes for all of you. I love you all! Second, I have a hard time deciding on my own view of Bill. Third, the 3rd chapter antagonist is purposefully creepy ;p More on that later. And lastly, I hope to make anyone who reads this laugh to themselves. Ford and Bill's relationship will be elaborated upon later.

I love every single one of you who reads this story and gives it support. Thank you, now enjoy this mini chapter.

Chapter 4.5

“Squeeeeee!” Mabel gushes, crushing the diminutive cougar in her arms. “I love them!”

Dipper chuckles nervously, “Hehe, yeah. That's the mountain lion that chased us. Bill shrunk it with these magical stones we found in the woods.”

“Aw yeah! This totally makes up for learning the truth about unicorns!” The female brunette raves enthusiastically, dancing around the gift shop. Dipper scoffs good-naturedly, a soft smile playing at his lips. Eventually, Mabel circles back around to Dipper, depositing the eraser-sized feline on the checkout counter and pulling her twin brother into an equally fierce hug. “Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

“Just make sure you remember to feed them,” Dipper cautions.
Mabel waves him off. “Pfft, of course I’ll remember. Anyway, Cupcake and I are gonna go upstairs to get them settled in. I wonder if cats can eat sprinkles…” The female brunette then scoops up her new pet and flounces over to the door leading from the gift shop to the rest of the house.

Dipper performs a double take, almost calling out too late, “Mabel?!”

“Yes, dear brother?” She pops her head back into the gift shop.

“What did you call the mountain lion?”

“Cupcake!” The older Pines twin answers gleefully. In return, the wee cat meows and nuzzles into Mabel’s arms. “See, they’re already responding to it!”

“Mabel,” Dipper huffs, rubbing the bridge of his nose, “you can’t just name a ferocious predator like a mountain lion Cupcake.”

“Why not?” She pouts, hugging Cupcake to her chest.

“Because!”

“Because why?”

“It’s just demeaning! I mean, seriously, that’s like looking at a huge, murderous wolf and deciding to call it Fluffy just because its fur is fluffed up,” Dipper defends, crossing his arms. “Call it Grimalkin or something like that. Just not… Cupcake.”

Mabel scowls and turns away with a “hmpf”. “They’re a sweet little cat, and cupcakes are sweet, so I named them Cupcake. And that’s that.”

Sighing, Dipper tries again, “Mabel, come on-”

“La la la! I can’t hear you~” Mabel interrupts, walking out of the room with Cupcake firmly in her arms.

“Mabe-”

“LA LA LA.”

Dipper heaves another sigh, slowly shaking his head and sitting down on a stool next to the cash register. “Yeesh, that was… interesting,” a person says. The young Pines yelps and jumps in his seat, whipping his head around to find the speaker. “Oh, sorry I spooked ya, Dipper.”

The boy relaxes once he realizes the person is just his Grunkle Stan’s cashier, Wendy Corduroy. Wendy is a redhead lumberjack, just like all the other Corduroys in Gravity Falls. Being three years older than the twins, she is twenty years old and is currently taking a break from college. Both Mabel and Dipper find her to be the coolest person they know, with the woman in a constant state of relaxed nonchalance. Occasionally, all three sneak up to the roof of the shack during Wendy’s shift to just chill and have a couple Pit Colas.

“Oh, hey Wendy,” Dipper greets. “And yeah, once Mabel has her mind made up, there’s no changing it. I guess we now have a miniature mountain lion named Cupcake.” Both Wendy and Dipper share a laugh at this.

“Wow, that’s not something everyone can say,” Wendy eventually remarks.
The blind teen shrugs his shoulders. “I guess not.”

The red headed cashier’s grin turns mischievous. “I wonder what Stan will say when he finds out he has to pay for another resident—no matter how small they are.”

Dipper blanches. “Oh no. I totally forgot about Grunkle Stan.”

Wendy, knowing she has Dipper right where she wants him, continues with, “I can’t imagine the look on Ford’s face when he sees Cupcake.”

“Great Uncle Ford,” Dipper squeaks, his face losing all color. With horror, he plays different scenarios through his mind about his grunkles finding out, none of them turning out well. “Aw man, both Grunkle Stan and Grunkle Ford are gonna kill me!”

“Heh, good luck dude,” Wendy snickers.

“Thanks. I get a strong feeling I’m going to need it.”
Alrighty, here's the next chapter! Advice, questions, constructive criticism, and general comments are all appreciated. Here are my responses to the comments on the last chapter-

Dill+with+it: Thanks ^_^ I have to agree on the lack of blind Dipper fanfictions out there. I try my best to keep personalities on point, so future advice for when I make mistakes is much welcome.

lillmuffin12: Sorry if the mountain lion's lack of gender is unclear. I won't have a chapter /dedicated/ to the grunkles' reaction, but it will be implied.

Your job as the reader at the end this chapter shall to vote on what Cupcake's gender should be, and if they should have a real role in LMBYE. Now ENJOY THE CHAPTER~!

Chapter 5

Mabel shouts excitedly, "Aww yeeaah!" She sprints out of the room with more energy than a generator.

"What's got her so hyper?" Grunkle Stan asks as he walks into the living room, jabbing a thumb in the direction of his grand niece. The teenage girl is dashing up the stairs two-by-two to get to the attic bedroom.

Bill, who is lounging in Stan's arm chair, replies with an off-hand, "She's hyped to finally go with us into the forest."

Resting against the front of the arm chair is Dipper, legs crossed, arms propped behind his head. "Mabel's been begging Bill to take her into the woods ever since we brought back Cupcake. I only made it worse by telling her about the other strange creatures we've encountered ever since."

"Like Steve?" Bill inquires, referring to a reclusive giant who lives in the forest near the mountains.

"Like Steve," Dipper chuckles lightly.

Grunkle Stan scratches his chin, deep in thought. At the sound of the twin's bedroom door slamming shut, the conman questions in his rough, gravel-like voice, "Is it safe for all of you to go? I mean, sure, Bill's been out there since he could walk, but Mabel sometimes is a bit too optimistic for her own good. Plus, heck, Dipper, you're blind! You might just wander off a cliff and we'd never know!"

Dipper shoots Stanley a scarily accurate glower. "I can take care of myself perfectly well, thank you."

Bill intervenes before the two other males can begin an argument. "I'm positive all of us will be
perfectly safe. Look at Dipper; he helped me take on a mountain lion the size of the Mystery Shack! And Mabel? When has her creativity never gotten her out of a jam? With me there to act as a navigator, all of us will be perfectly fine."

The elderly Pines holds the two boys in a hard stare, though Dipper can't tell and is focused in an entirely different direction. ""Be perfectly fine", huh? Just like how you two came back perfectly fine after the whole oversized cat shebang?"

Dipper groans, flopping his limbs all over. "C'mon! That was one time!"

"What about the werewolves?"

"We were okay!"

"And the scampfires?"

"... It was a little burn."

"And the Kill Billies?"

The boy throws his hands up in exasperation. "Alright, alright! I get it; we attract trouble. Just trust us when we say that we'll be fine."

Stan continues in his glaring. "No more "surprise" pets?"

"On my honor, Mister Pines," Bill answers, holding a hand in the air. "I solemnly swear that we will bring back no more surprise pets."

Giving them one final scowl, Grunkle Stan sighs in relent. "Fine. I expect you three to be back before the sun sets." Mabel enters the living room, a backpack slung over one shoulder. "Keep your brother safe," Stan mutters, clapping a firm hand on her shoulder before walking out.

Mabel raises an eyebrow at this. "That was oddly familial of him."

Clambering to his feet, Dipper shrugs uncertainly. "I guess. He mostly seemed overprotective to me, though." Bill watches this, a stony expression on his face. "Familial? I wondered what is was like for someone to be concerned for you without strings attached…"

The blonde jumps up from the recliner, clearing his throat before announcing, "All right, guys! Ready for an incredibly dangerous excursion into the forest of Gravity Falls?"

"Heck yeah!" The twins cheer back in unison.

The trio trumps through the trees, grateful for the branches overhead blocking the majority of the sun's harsh rays. "Yeesh, today's awfully warm for autumn," Dipper comments offhandedly. The boy navigates around a fallen tree in the path with the help of his new white cane that Bill "found" for him last week.

Mabel scrambles atop the tree's trunk, striking a funny pose before scanning the area around them. "There's a pond a ways off to our left," the brunette reports, hands cupped around her eyes to act as binoculars.

Bill vaults over the felled tree with practiced ease and then glances in the direction Mabel is pointing in. "That pond has no bottom last I checked. Either that, or it's the one with a leviathan-
like monster lurking in its depths." Mabel shudders at this information, sliding off the trunk and unconsciously veering to the opposite side of the path.

From here, Bill takes the lead, Dipper between him and Mabel as to not get left behind or lost. They walk for a few minutes longer, but that short period of time allows for Mabel to forget about a little something called "caution". "Ooh, what's this?" She hums, wandering over to a patch of strange, glowing mushrooms sprouting from the base of a tree. Pointing them out, Mabel calls out, "Look, Bill! I found tiny mushrooms that have a cat faces!"

"You probably shouldn't touch that, Mabel," the blonde advises. Carefully, Bill pulls Mabel away from the patch of cat mushrooms. "I see the barf fairies around them frequently, so I honestly don't trust them."

Dipper raises a skeptical eyebrow. "They have cat faces?"

"Uh huh! With short whiskers, the slit-pupiled eyes, adorable triangle noses, and the tiny mouths," Mabel describes to her brother, arms waving about to mimic her actions. "I kinda want to keep one to grow it…"

"Mabel, no," Dipper sighs, running a hand down his face. "Grunkle Stan said no more pets. I'm pretty sure fungi with cat faces count as pets."

"Boo," Mabel grumbles in response, deflating slightly.

Bill subtly guides Mabel back over to her brother's side. "Let's keep going," Cipher encourages. "It shouldn't be too far now."

"But we've been walking for hours! " The female of the trio groans melodramatically, falling against Dipper. Dipper, being his usual, loving self, steps backwards far enough to allow Mabel to fall against the dirt. "Traitor…" She pouts, gradually picking herself up off the ground. Her twin smiles innocently, whistling a casually ditty. Mabel throws Dipper a betrayed scowl before asking Bill, "So where are we going?"

The blonde hums thoughtfully. "I think that's for your brother and me to know and you to not."

"Cooome ooooon," Mabel begs, flopping herself onto Bill. "Tell me pleeeaaase~"

"Hmmm," Bill taps his chin, contemplating whether to tell her or not. "No."

"Blarg." The girl sulks, crossing her arms and deliberately putting Dipper between herself and Bill. They make it another five steps when- "Diiiiipppppppp!" Comes her groan, Mabel tugging insistently upon her brother's jacket sleeve. "Teeeeell meee!"

The blind teen cracks an impish smile. "Naw. You'll see when we get there."

"Traitor," Mabel accuses once more, her scowl prominent.

Dipper pulls her twin into a side-hug, tucking his white cane under his armpit and giving Mabel a noogie. "Just hang in a couple more minutes. I promise we'll be there soon enough. Bill and I made the journey to a place near it a couple days ago, so I should know."

Mabel gives a lighthearted laugh, pushing Dipper away. "Fine, fine. But I'll hold ya to that, ya know!" She returns her brother's noogie in full force, not holding back. Dipper snorts, bending under the brunt of Mabel's attack. "And for every minute longer I have to walk, I'm gonna steal one of your books."
Rolling his pale eyes, Dipper retorts, "Just keep walking. It'll take, tops, ten minutes."

"It better," the female twin warns, pushing a finger into Dipper's nose.

"Toldja." Dipper gives a proud smirk.

"Nooo!" Bill wails.

"Pay up~" Mabel holds an expectant hand outward, motioning for Bill to hand over the money.

Reluctantly, Bill extracts a couple fives from of his pocket and deposits them into Mabel's palm with a glower. "Man, and I even tried to go on a detour. Your brother has an eerie sense of direction," the blond whines.

Mabel nods sympathetically. "You're telling me… Once, when we were kids, we were playing hide-and-seek with some others. One of the kids thought it'd be a great idea to make Dipper, the blind one, the seeker. In less than five minutes, he found all of us. "Don't be so noisy next time," he told us."

Bill whistles appreciatively. "Wow. You must have super hearing or something, Dip."

Dipper shrugs noncommittally, saying, "I wouldn't know. I'm just trying to survive in a world I can't see."

"And that means you have to be the hearing version of a bloodhound?" Bill raises an eyebrow, holding Dipper in his stare. "Now that I think about it, you pulled this a couple weeks ago with Pacifica and those creeps in red. Care to explain?"

"Not really," the male brunette answers. "'Cause, you know, we have some exploring to do. We still have to show Mabel… the ahem."

Bill perks up at this. "Of course!" In front of the trio looms a mountain, dark and imposing. Its jagged peaks stretch toward the sky, forming what looks to be an unsurpassable barrier. Near the highest peak is a gaping hole of black; the threesome's destination. "Though it took us a couple hours to get here, it'll take another to climb up there," Bill warns Mabel teasingly.

The girl scrunches her face up, examining the obstacle before her. "I bet it'll take twenty minutes! Tops!"

"I'll take that bet!" Bill responds eagerly, hoping to earn back his money. "Thirty dollars you won't make it." Plus a little extra never hurt anyone.

Mabel and Dipper exchange a glance, both grinning slyly. "Fifty-fifty?" The elder twin offers.

"Fifty-fifty," Dipper agrees. He may not be able to see the mountain, but he's climbed it before. Both he and Bill actually climbed it the week before and the blonde glimpsed the creature they are currently aiming to find.

From Mabel's bag of tricks, she pulls out a nylon rope, tying one end around her waist. Dipper gropes blindly in the air for a moment until Mabel deposits the other end in his hand. The boy then ties it around his own waist. "Alright, dear brother, we have thirty dollars to win!" The Pines twins then take off for the naturally formed, yet rather precarious path stretching up the mountain's side, Mabel in the lead to keep her brother on track.
Bill watches in bewilderment for one, two, three blinks and then shakes his head. "Crazy twins," he mutters, taking off after them.

Akin to a mountain goat, Mabel springs from rock to rock up the mountainside. Dipper, the ever-uncanny boy he is, keeps up right behind her. Bill struggles at first to catch up to the quickly-moving duo, wondering how the heck they do it. 'As far as I know, Piedmont didn't have mountains for Mabel to climb, yet she puts most climbers to shame. And then there's Dipper; he manages to keep up with ease! I don't know how he does it, not being able to even see the path under his feet. I guess what they say is true, weird things are attracted to Gravity Falls.'

"Aw yeah!" Mabel cheers. "We're showing that idiotic Cipher!"

Dipper grins at his sister's enthusiasm. "I can't tell quite where we are now, but we're moving faster than Bill when he got me up here last time."

Shooting a smirk over her shoulder, Mabel cheers, "Sweet!" And then louder, "Take that, Bill! Even Dipper agrees that I'm better than you. Get ready to pay up~!" Bill merely sticks his tongue out in response, panting from the exertion he has to put out to maintain Mabel's nearly inhuman pace.

Mabel stands, hands posed on hips, staring into the inky cave before them. "So... What's supposed to be in here? A dragon who'll give us gold? A grouchy leprechaun guarding magical cereal?"

Dipper shakes his head. "Nope, none of those. Let's go in and see."

The young woman glowers dryly at her brother. "Wow, again with the blind jokes?"

"C'mon, c'mon! I can only keep secrets so long!" Bill interrupts before another sibling argument can break out. He dramatically motions for them to get moving.

"All right, Mr. Pushy," Mabel laughs, skipping inside. Dipper, still attached by the nylon rope, is dragged along behind him. "Let's go find some monsters, Dip'n Dot!"

The twins delve deeper into the cave, though the flashlight Mabel brought out proves to be ineffective. A light source of some sort glows in the back of the cave, illuminating the majority of it. Giving the place a once over, Mabel declares, "Well this was a waste of time. There aren't even any monsters in here!"

At the teen's words, a dark mound hidden in shadows rumbles rather loudly and grows. Mabel shrieks and Dipper pushes her behind him. "What's going on?" He hisses.

The mound releases a deep growl, the pale light revealing gray fur. "B-b-bear!" Mabel exclaims in a whisper. Half-baked escape plans and paths run through her mind.

To her surprise, Dipper relaxes and lets out a small chuckle. "Hey!" He calls out, raising an arm in greeting. The bear falls back to all fours, the lighting coming from the back of the cave allowing Mabel to the one... two... four... eight!... heads of the bear. "How are you doing?"

Mabel's jaw drops after the bear responds with, "It has been pretty good recently. Other than the occasional manotaur disturbance, I have nothing to complain about."

Dipper nods appreciatively. "Sounds cool. Oh! By the way, Bill and I brought my sister today."
The boy steps aside to allow the creature to see Mabel. "Multi-Bear, this is Mabel. Mabel, this is the Multi-Bear." He gestures back and forth between them during his introduction.

The junior gapes, her eyes blown wide, before she breaks out in a grin. "A talking bear! Sweet! This was totally worth the wait."

Bill slings an arm over Mabel's shoulder, smirking confidently. "I told you it'd be worth it~."

"That doesn't mean you're getting out of the bet you lost," Mabel snips knowingly. Bill wilts slightly, dropping his arm. "Anyways," the female teen holds out her hand. "It's nice to meet you, Multi-Bear!"

The main head of the Multi-Bear mirrors Mabel's smile, taking her hand with gentleness one would not expect of such a fearsome creature. "A pleasure, Miss Mabel." Dropping the handshake, the Multi-Bear turns away and lumbers deeper into the cave. "Could I interest you kids in anything to drink? Tea maybe?"

Bill takes a look over his shoulder to the cave entrance. "While I would love to say yes, the twins' great uncle expects them home before dark. It's a bit of a trek and we should get going soon."

All of the Multi-Bear's heads let out a soft groan. "Okay," he agrees reluctantly. After all, one does not receive pleasant company up in the mountains very often. "These woods can be rather dangerous after dark. Just make sure to visit again sometime, alright?"

"Of course!" Mabel chirps, launching herself at the bear and squeezing him in a hug. "You seems super nice!" The girl releases the bear and dances away to her brother's side. A thought occurs to Dipper, who leans over and whispers something in Mabel's ear. Mabel's eyes light up and she squeals, "Really!"

"Uh huh. Which means that we'll have to come back soon," Dipper says, casting an impish grin at where he thinks Bill is. "Does that sound good to you, Golden-Boy? Or was the trip up here too much for you?"

The blonde scowls darkly at Dipper. "I can make it just fine, thank you very much. And don't call me Golden-Boy."

"Why?" The brunette asks slyly. "All the other guys at school do."

Nostrils flaring, Bill growls, "You know damn well why! Let's get going so your grunkles don't kill me."

Dipper and Mabel follow Bill toward the cave entrance, though the male twin pauses and waves a final goodbye to the Multi-Bear. "See you later, man!"

"Goodbye, Dipper," the Multi-Bear responds, waving a gray paw back. "Travel safe, you three. And watch out for the gnomes."

"Will do," Bill answers enthusiastically, his irritation toward Dipper momentarily forgotten.

"You're late," Grunkle Stan grunts. The old man had been sitting on the couch on the front porch while he waited for the three kids to show up. Now he stands before the three teenagers, arms crossed imposingly while he chews them out. "Ford's told me all about what's out there, and it ain't no sunshine and rainbows. When I tell you to get back to the shack before sunset, ya get back to the shack before sunset. Am I clear?"
Dipper crosses his arms while Mabel puffs her cheeks out and looks away. "Yes, Grunkle Ford," they reply in unison. Bill grins sheepishly, snickering to himself and refusing to meet Stanley's stern gaze.

Grunkle Stan scoffs and finally steps aside to allow them to trudge into the Mystery Shack. "At least you didn't bring back any more pets," he grumbles under his breath.

Hearing this, Dipper smiles at a thought. 'Hah, we nearly did. If it weren't for Bill's quick thinking to discourage Mabel, we'd have a mushroom garden growing up in the attic before the end of the week.' Mabel looks over to her brother, the two's thoughts on the same level. Well, at least about the mushrooms.

From the couch in the living room, Ford glances out the window to see the darkening sky before directing his gaze to the gift shop. 'Well, they're home safe and sound. Stanley already scolded them, but it wouldn't hurt to remind them of the dangers of the woods. At least Bill's keeping the twins safe.' The elderly Pines chuckles quietly and shakes his head. 'Wow, never thought I'd see the day when Bill of all people would act as a HELPFUL guide. He's even more mischievous than the Lilliputtians when you're trying to get a hole-in-one.'

Ford watches the threesome pass the living room, talking and laughing between themselves. 'I'm just glad he decided to befriend Mabel and Dipper instead of terrorizing them like he does to most of the other kids at school,' he thinks, tapping his chin with a pencil. 'Though this means Dipper will be exposed to more danger given how frequently Bill goes into the woods.' Stanford locates a notebook from the folds of his trench coat, jotting down:

**Protections-**

*Charms*

*Spells*

*Curses*

*Armor*

*Helpful creature*

"No…” Ford mutters. "Dipper wouldn't go for any of these things." He shifts his position, eliciting a hiss followed by a growl somewhere near his feet. Cupcake's head pokes above a couch cushion, the miniature mountain lion baring its tiny canines. "Actually, a helpful creature wouldn't be such a bad idea…”
Bruises

Chapter Summary

Where the /real/ plot starts! Sure, we know Dipper's taken self defense, but how effective is it?

Chapter Notes

My sincerest apologies for my absolute tardiness! u_u I've had this chapter written for a while and I just was worried it wouldn't quite fit yet. When I got the guts to post it, my house's internet crashed, we got a new provider, but I had to go a week without internet/wifi to upload it.

Comment responses-
lillmuffin12: Thanks for your comments! I'll consider Cupcake's gender a bit more, but the input is lovely~ Also, of COURSE everyone is scheming! >:D It wouldn't be interesting otherwise.
Hexen: Thank you as well! I love the support I get from all of you readers, and honestly, this probably wouldn't have survived without you guys. I definitely agree on Dipper's independence and I can't really see him not being this independent. I don't know how motivational my story will be, but if it can be, that's awesome!

So, Happy Halloween to all of you readers! Cupcake's gender pole is still open, so lemme know what you think. Comments, questions, advice, requests, and kudos are well appreciated! Here is the awaited chapter six! Enjoy~!

Chapter 6

The days following the whole Mystery-Shack-sized-mountain-lion incident passes with more amicability between Bill and Dipper. Their relations improve further after taking Mabel on the trek to see the Multi-Bear two weeks ago. In fact, they are close enough that Dipper classifies Bill as an actual friend, which he can’t say for many people.

Pacifica gradually begins to hang out with the trio more frequently, though she generally opts to gossip with Mabel rather than going into the woods around the Shack with the boys. Mabel and Pacifica oft are seen together in Gravity Falls buzzing from shop to shop, searching for who-knows-what.

It seems as though our two Pines each have a friend to call their own in this strange town of Gravity Falls...

The final bell of the day rings, freeing Dipper from his fourth week of school. Dipper waits for the
The final bell of the day rings, freeing Dipper from his fourth week of school. Dipper waits for the majority of the students to leave before he ambles up to the teacher's desk. “Mrs. Primrose, could I get our notes from today printed out?” He asks, offhandedly picking at a stray thread on the cuff of his jacket. ‘Hmm, Bill said he’s free later today. I bet he’d be cool with checking out that supposed “Eternal Youth” waterfall.’

“Of course!” She replies cheerily. The first day, Mrs. Primrose had been wary to relinquish the notes, but when she realized the boy was blind, she gladly handed them over. Indeed, Dipper does not usually need them, but they are nice to have when he wants to be quizzed by his dear sister.

Dipper takes the freshly printed papers from her hands, thinking to himself, ‘Waiting until the end of class every day to get the notes is bothersome. Maybe it would be easier if I just have Bill photocopy his notes for me. We do share most of our classes.’

Leaving the classroom, Dipper heads down the hall where he and Mabel agreed they would meet up at, hand trailing along the lockers for direction. All of a sudden, he hears a loud slam somewhere before him and collides into somebody. “And where do you think you’re goin’?” A sharp, braggadocious voice demands snarkily. Instead of cowering like most people in a such a situation as this one, Dipper straightens and grips his notes tighter.

“Home,” is his salty answer.

The nameless delinquent chuckles humorlessly, grabbing the collar of Dipper’s jacket and pulling him closer. “Naw, I don’t think so. A boy who thinks he doesn’t need to take notes when he can get the teach’ to print ‘em out for him must deserve special treatment. Maybe I’ll escort you home.” A cruel smirk stretches across his face, betraying that it will involve much more than a simple escort.

Dipper scowls at the underlying threat in the bully’s voice. “How about no? And it is not special treatment. You don’t know anything about me.”

“I know you’re an uptight prick who thinks he’s all that. I’m gonna teach you some manners.” The bully lifts Dipper up a couple inches, using his free hand to aim a fist at his victim’s face.

Dipper rolls his pale brown eyes. During all the brute’s threats, he figured out exactly where the kid’s vulnerable places are. “I know my manners,” he scoffs. And with that, the brunette swipes out a leg, catching the backs of his tormentor’s knees and knocking him flat. The kid’s head smacks against the floor tiles, dazing him, while Dipper lands on his feet with surprising grace for someone who cannot see. ‘Maybe that will teach him not to pick on people,’ he muses, carefully stepping around the groaning body.

“Hey! Dipper!” A familiar spastic voice catches Dipper’s ear.

The boy grins, the failed bullying attempt pushed to the back of his mind, and looks toward his sister. “Hey Mabel.”

The energetic girl skips over to her blind brother and grasps him by the elbow, dragging him to the school’s entrance. “We got to make aprons in FACS and I embroidered a kitten on mine!” Dipper snickers at that, not surprised in the least. “So who was that back there?” Mabel asks, remembering the kid lying on his back not that far behind Dipper.

“Oh, just a kid who wanted a lesson in manners,” Dipper answers with a careless shrug, smiling at his inside joke.

Mabel beams at her twin. “Well, it’s a good thing our parents made sure you knew your manners then.”
“The self-defense classes were also nice,” Dipper adds. The twins laugh, strolling through the double doors in a side hug.

They jaunt down the bustling streets of Gravity Falls, heading in the direction of the Mystery Shack, when something catches Mabel’s eye. It is a small boutique on a fairly quiet street, an empty shop to one side and an alley on the other. “Mdm. Gwynevere’s Boutique,” Mabel reads while squinting her eyes. Brightening, she turns to her male look-alike “Dipper! Can I check it out? Pleeease!!” The seventeen-year-old girl begs, tugging on the sleeve of Dipper’s jacket.

Dipper sighs, reluctant to be drug around an unknown shop. “Do we have to Mabel? Grunkle Stan and Ford expect us home soon.”

Mabel pouts, leaning heavily on her brother. “Please? You can sit outside while I go in. I promise to be quick!”

The boy relents, unable to say “no” to his twin. “Fine. You have ten minutes.”

“Yay!” Mabel skips over to the boutique, leaving Dipper outside as promised, and pushes open the door. She squeals excitedly when the bells attached to the door jingle merrily. The fashion loving teenage girl then flounces inside.

Dipper sits on the steps leading to the boutique’s door, sighing and tracing patterns in the concrete with his index finger. ‘Of course Mabel finds the fashion store our first month here. She can sniff out a place with clothes patterns a mile away! ...Actually, now that I think about it, it might have been one of the shops Mabel visited with Pacifica a couple weeks ago.’ Memories of stiff, uncomfortable clothes along with the ones he knew to be too froufrou for a boy surface. ‘Well, I’m thankful that she doesn’t still insist on dressing me like when we were kids. *Shudder* I’m glad those days are behind us.’

Dipper rests idly until an obnoxious, self-centered person interrupts his semblance of tranquility. “Hey! There’s the punk!” A sharp voice calls from the end of the street. Dipper lackadaisically raises his head toward the source of the disturbance. Slight familiarity at the voice twists through the teen. ‘Where have I heard that voice before?’ Heavy footsteps march down the street; multiple people from the sounds of it. The brunette heaves a sigh and rises to meet them.

“Can I help you?” He asks, bored.

“Yes, you can.” A rough hand snatches the front of his jacket and jerks him forward. Dipper stumbles from the sudden, abrupt movement. “This,” a knee is jabbed painfully into Dipper’s stomach, “is for earlier.” Dipper’s knees tremble, the want to collapse annoyingly strong. Raucous laughter echoes from the other people around him. ‘The bully from the school,’ the brunette concludes. ‘It sounds like he brought his friends.’

The rough hands drag Dipper a bit a ways from the boutique, somewhere dark from the lack of warm sun on his skin. It is the dank alley next to the designer shop. “We’ll teach you to about fighting back,” the bully growls, punching Dipper’s face in retribution for earlier.

Blood trickles from his nose, snapping Dipper from the faint haze that had been coiling around him. The brunette shakily wipes away the blood with his forearm before quipping, “As if idiots like you could ever teach anything.” This earns him a blow to the ribs from one of the delinquent’s lackeys. Pain begins to fog up Dipper’s brain. ‘Gotta draw attention to myself. Hopefully somebody on the street will see me.’ The blind teen struggles, shirking the goon that had been restraining him before throwing wild punches and kicks out, occasionally catching some of the ruffians. All the while, he shouts and hollers, but the street remains as empty as ever. In return to his flailings, two bullies clamp down his arms and shove the boy to his knees.
The main troublemaker stalks up to Dipper, grabbing his chin and forcing him to look up. “Maybe messing up your face will teach you respect.”

“Yeah, respect,” one of the lackeys echo, cackling like a hyena. Dipper spits a mixture of blood and saliva at the delinquent’s face, furious about his restricted movement.

The bully wipes it away with a torn sleeve, rage building up in the pit of his stomach. “Bad move, punk.” He retrieves a pair of brass knuckles from his back pocket, sliding them on his fingers and making a fist. “I’ll make sure you remember this.” Then, he slugs Dipper in the face. Hard. A gash wells with blood on Dipper’s left cheek while tears build up in his eyes from the pain.

“You bastards aren’t gonna get away with this,” he pants, struggling against his restraints.

“Oh yeah,” the bully remarks snidely, “and who’s gonna stop us? That sister of yours?” He whistles lowly, grinning predatorily. “Now she’s a pretty piece of work.”

Dipper thrashes, trying to escape just so he can punch what is probably a smirk from the bully’s face. “Touch her and I’ll-”

“You’ll what?” The ruffian interrupts, taking on a taunting tone. “Beat us up? Seems like you can’t even do that now. How do you expect to protect your sister when you can’t even protect yourself.” The bully flexes his fists imposingly, “Face it. You’re just a useless. No. Good. Piece. Of. Trash.” He emphasizes each word by slamming a brass knuckled fist into Dipper’s stomach.

At this point, Dipper is on the verge of collapse. His head throbs from the blows it has received; he most likely has a concussion. Warm blood steadily drips from his nose and the gash on his cheek, his knees are like Jell-O, and his torso feels like Dwayne Johnson has been using it as a punching bag. The only thing keeping Dipper standing are the goons restricting his arms. Nevertheless, the fight still remains within Dipper. “At least-” He coughs up another splatter of blood. “At least I don’t sink low enough to gang up on one guy.”

The bully is red-faced with fury. He cuffs Dipper’s face again, snarling, “You little fu-”

“HEY!” Everybody in the alley freezes, looking toward the newcomer. “YOU GUYS; YEAH, YOU WITH THE NO SENSE OF STYLE! GET THE HELL AWAY FROM HIM!” Despite it not being his favorite person in the world, Dipper nearly cries with relief when he hears Bill’s high pitched voice ringing out in the dark alley.

“Just turn around and leave while you can, Golden Boy!” The main hoodlum warns, his lackeys brandishing their assortment of weapons.

Bill smirks darkly. “Not gonna happen. Ya see, that kid right there that you’re beating up, he’s a good friend of mine. You all are cowards for ganging up on the new kid.”

The bully rolls his eyes. “And what are you gonna do about it? It’s one versus eight, the odds aren’t in your favor.”

“And what do you know about odds?” Bill cackles, a manic light dancing in his eyes. “I bet you haven’t even gotten past eighth grade math!” One of the lackeys lets out a frenzied scream and charges at the gold-bedecked male, a switchblade in his hand. Bill’s grin turns inhumanly vicious. “Fun.” The lackey gets within two feet of Bill when he finds himself staring up at the sky, his legs no longer supporting him. Bill stops on his head, knocking the kid unconscious. One.

Two more lummoxes charge. Bill flips one over his shoulder and knocks the legs out from the other. He swiftly handles them in the same manner. Three. A bigger goon decides he wants to try
his hand, dashing for Bill. With the incredible deftness, the blonde dodges the blows thrown by the giant, maneuvers inside the goon’s defence, and lands multiple heavy hits in the larger male’s gut. The goon wheezes, falling to his knees where Bill smashes his head into the brick wall. Four.

The final three lackeys exchange nervous glances. “He took down Larry,” one whispers, his eyes wide.

The main antagonist snaps out of his stupor and glares sharply at his underlings. “Well? What are you waiting for? It’s three on one, get him!” This hardens the lackeys’ resolves, who all turn on Cipher.

Bill grins a little too wide, baiting them. “What’cha waitin’ for? I’m right here. Come at me… unless you’re chicken.” Growling like the neanderthals they are, the last three idiotic underlings start for him. The blonde knocks the first one flat, winds the second with a sharp elbow to the stomach, and punches the third directly in the nose. Taking the second and third by their heads, Bill slams the two goons’ skulls together. Six. The first one, who is groaning and just beginning to push himself back up, is taken out by Bill pounding his head into the bricked ground. Seven.

Cipher dusts his clothes off, removing the nonexistent specks from his person. “Looks like it’s just you and me, pal,” Bill mocks, bodies of moaning goons lying around him. Not a scratch is on him.

The main bully takes a step back, glancing between the dead end behind him and the open end of the alley behind Bill. The nearly frantic panic that lit the delinquent’s eyes fades to a murderous chill. “Then I guess I should make it just me then,” he says with a smirk. The bully slides a 5mm handgun from his back pocket. Bill catches this and narrows his eyes, suddenly finding the situation a lot more dangerous. ‘I guess that will finally come in handy.’

Bill takes a step forward, causing the bully to brandish his gun threateningly. “Any closer and I’ll shoot!” The male lacking a considerable amount of intelligence warns. Taking all variables into consideration in a split second, Bill sprints forward. The bully fires haphazardly. One bullet nearly grazes the blonde’s wild hair. In the blink of an eye, Bill is in the bully’s face, disarming him and knocking him out with a solid blow to the head. Eight.

While the fight is in progress, Dipper crawls away quietly as he can, curling up in a ball behind the lone dumpster in the alley and trying not to shiver too violently. He futilely presses his hands to the gashes underneath the rips in his jacket in an attempt to staunch the blood flow. Bill finds him on the other side of the heavily rusted trash receptacle, blood coating his face and dripping onto his navy-blue jacket. Tears criss-cross the jacket, blood welling out the cuts on Dipper’s abdomen. A ring of black is starting to form around his right eye and the cut over it is forcing Dipper to squeeze the mocha orb shut. Blood thickly cakes his bangs and clothes.

“Geez, when I thought you’d be interesting, I never thought it’d be dangerous too,” Bill says jokingly, reaching for Dipper’s arm. Dipper flinches away when he feels the blonde brush his skin, curling tighter in on himself. “Hey,” Bill’s voice drops to a gentle one, “let’s find that sister of yours and get you cleaned up.” Dipper nods hesitantly, shakily allowing Bill to help him up. They manage to get Dipper standing when they hear sirens in the distance.

The wailing grows louder until two police vehicles pull to a sudden stop outside the alley. “Hey! What happened?” One of the officers demands as she climbs out of the car.

Bill raises a hand to draw the attention to himself. “These guys were beating this friend of mine up.” Summoning the dirtiest look he can, Bill adds, “You certainly took your time getting here.”

The female police officer scowls, stepping past the unconscious teens to get to Bill. “And what’s a civilian to tell an officer what to do- Oh, Mr. Cipher!” The officer’s demeanor shifts from brusque
to fervent respect and worry. Bill sighs, rolling his eyes at what he knows is to come. “What are you doing here?! Imagine how worried your father would be if you had gotten hurt!”

“I know, I know. I get it, alright? But right now I don’t have time for rants. Dipper here needs medical attention.” Bill deftly steers the conversation from what is to be a berating to his injured friend. The officer looks over at the beaten, bruised boy as if she just now is noticing him.

“Of course! I’ll get an ambulance here right away.” She turns and shouts over her shoulder, “McPherson! Call an-”

“NO!” Dipper suddenly blurs, one hand reaching out as if to stop them while the other clutches his abused torso. “No,” he repeats, quieter this time. “I-I’ll be fine. It’s not as bad as it looks. I just want to go home.”

The officer looks at him skeptically. “Those guys got you pretty bad, kid. You should probably get checked up on to make sure you don’t have any lasting injuries.”

Dipper shakes his head a little too fast and nearly falls if it isn’t for Bill holding him up. “N-no. I just need t-to get home.”

“Listen to him, Officer Klein,” Bill tells her. “If Dipper just needs to go home, let him.”

“Is he walking all the way there? On his own?” The officer questions, crossing her arms as a minor intimidation tactic.

Bill shakes his head. “Of course not. I’ll go with him and-”

“DIPPER!” An earsplitting cry rattles the loose bricks in the walls. A frantic Mabel dashes past the officers and over the teens’ bodies to get to her brother. “Oh my gosh, who did this to you? Was it those punks? If it was them, I’ll make them regret even being born.”

Dipper holds up a hand to silence her. “L- let’s just go home. Okay, Mabel?” He tries to smile reassuringly, but it turns out to be more of a bloody grimace.

Mabel scowls, pulling him into a hug to keep her tears at bay. “Okay... BUT. I’m going to patch you up the moment we get there! Bill, help me with him.” Dipper winces in her grasp, Mabel’s actions upsetting his injuries further. Mabel releases her twin, eyes softening when she first notices this until they harden. “Let’s go home,” Mabel growls, glaring fiercely at the teens who beat up her brother. The juniors position themselves on either side of Dipper to support him. As the trio shuffles to the open end of the alley, the female teenager announces, “Oh, and Officer Lady, we are totally pressing charges.”

Bill nods in agreement. Amusement dances in his eyes as he contributes, “Yeah, that guy shot at me, too.” Officer Klein bristles, glaring at the delinquent Bill points out. “Bye, Klein.”

“Hold on, this is a crime scene. You can’t just leave. We need your statements,” she protests.

Cipher makes to explain when Dipper comes to the rescue. “I was out-side Madame Gwynevere’s Boutique when these guys assaulted me. They beat me up, I tr-ried to r-resist, and Bill came in and took th-them all down,” Dipper delivers his story about as thoroughly as anybody in severe pain can. “Can w-we go now?” Officer Klein slowly nods her head, so Dipper turns to Mabel asking, “Well? Can w-we?”

“Yeah, the officer lady says we can go.” Mabel is subdued, eyes raking over the unconscious forms of Dipper’s tormentors. “Prison security better be tight.” Both Bill and the officer scoff good-humoredly at the same time.
The trio reaches the end of the alley when the officer makes one final comment. “I’ll be calling and telling your father about this, Mr. Cipher.”

“I know,” Bill groans under his breath. “You always do.”
Boredom

Chapter Summary

In the last chapter, some goons from school ganged up on poor Dipper. Bill and Mabel certainly didn't react well, so let's take a look at the grunkly side of things. Oh! And chapter three finally gets some more relevance!

Chapter Notes

Hello, AO3! *Chuckles nervously* Here is chapter seven, as promised.... admittedly later than it probably should've been. Basketball and other clubs have been kicking my ass. Heh. School, am I right? No? Okay...

Boredom

Chapter 7

“Dipper!” Grunkle Stan rushes into the kitchen when he sees his great-nephew sitting battered and bruised on a stool. “What happened?”

Bill, who is standing next to Mabel as she patches Dipper up, speaks for the blind teen. “Some guys from school got pissed about something stupid and decided to beat him up. I called the police, took care of the idiots, and then Mabel and I got Dipper home.” Grunkle Stan reels at this. People stoop low enough to beat up blind kids?! Before the sixty-year-old man can get angry and do anything rash, the doorbell rings.

“We have a doorbell?” Mabel looks up and asks.

Stanley storms over to the door, fuming, and throws it open. “Sorry, no tours. We’re closed right now.” Before the old man can slam the door closed, a tall man dressed in a finely pressed suit forces his way in. “Excuse me, but I would like you to leave,” Stan snaps warningly.

“I’m here to pick up my son,” the sharply dressed man says. “I heard he would be here.”

Stan scrunches up his face, trying to recall where he had seen the man in front of him before. “Hey kids!” He calls. “Any y’all know a guy about six feet tall and dresses like he belongs to the FBI?”

A hissed curse comes from the kitchen, followed by a loud smack. “Nobody’s home!” Bill calls back.

Stan leads the mysterious man to the kitchen, aiming a frown at Bill. “Bill,” the man instantly says. Bill huffs loudly, crossing his arms over his chest. “If I hadn’t have intervened, they probably would have killed Dipper! I regret nothing.”
The man gives Bill a condescending look. “And what have I told you about recklessly jumping headfirst into a dangerous situation? From the report, I heard one of them had a gun.”

Acting like a stereotypical teenager, Bill rolls his eyes. “Yeah, but as you have so frequently drilled into my head, I assessed the danger and then disarmed it. Plus, I called the police first. I would’ve called you, but we kinda needed to get my friend some medical attention.” Bill and the man have a contest of wills, staring each other down. The tension in the air becomes so thick, it can be cut with a dull knife, causing Mabel to become nervous.

“SO! Who’s this guy, Bill?” The brunette exclaims with forced cheerfulness.

Without looking away, Bill stoically replies, “Matthew Cipher, chief of Gravity Falls police department. My father.” It suddenly clicks in Stanley’s head why the man looks so familiar. The man has arrested him before!

Matthew finally breaks off the staring contest, looking at Dipper instead. “You are the victim in the report.” It isn’t a question, but a statement. Dipper nods slowly, knowing he is the one being addressed.

“Y-yeah. Bill actually came to my rescue and took down the delinquents. I’d probably be in a lot worse shape if it wasn’t for him,” Dipper elaborates.

Bill snorts. “Probably is an understatement. ‘Would be’ is correct.” In spite of his injuries, Dipper still finds it in him to jab a boney elbow into Bill’s side.

“Sorry about all the trouble I’ve caused. I honestly had no clue that Bill would get caught up in it.” Dipper hisses sharply when Mabel pours some peroxide over the gash on his cheek. “You could warn me first,” he growls, slightly miffed.

“Maybe this will teach you to get mixed up with ruffians,” Mabel retorts snipply.

“They jumped me! How was I supposed to know the guy would bring a bunch of goons with him!”

The twins bicker, Matthew Cipher looking between them with thinly-veiled disinterest. “These… children … are your “friends”?” He inquires. Mabel and Dipper pause in their argument, Mabel glancing over to the older blonde.

Bill looks at Mabel and Dipper questioningly. Mabel nods encouragingly; Dipper- having no clue what is going on -does nothing. “Yes, Father, Mabel and Dipper are my friends.” Bill stresses their names, not liking how his father dismisses them so easily.

Another staring contest is initiated by Bill’s stubbornness.

“Um, Mr. Cipher,” Dipper speaks up. “If you came to get Bill, then maybe you two should go. It’s getting late, and as Bill can see, I’ll be alright.”

“Dipper!” Bill hisses in protest.

“I’ll be at school tomorrow, if you really want to check on me that badly,” Dipper reasons.

Bill’s eye twitches. “You better not go to school! In fact, you should’ve gone to the hospital!”

Dipper rolls his pale brown eyes. “Whatever. If I feel like crap in the morning, I won’t go. This is my first month at this school, I can’t start skipping.”
Bill wants to push the matter more, but a sharp glare from Mabel tells him not to. “Mabel, you have my number?”

“You!” She whips out her sparkly, hot pink phone. “I’ll text you if anything gets worse.”

The young Cipher snaps a grumpy “you better” before facing Matthew with a reluctant look upon his face. “Okay, let’s go then,” Bill tells his father.

Matthew Cipher smiles snidely at his son’s acquiesce. “The car is waiting outside.”

“It always is.”

The Ciphers exit the Mystery Shack, everybody releasing a sigh of relief the moment they are gone. “So,” Grunkle Stan turns to face the twins. “You’re friends with the police chief’s son.”

“Apparently,” Mabel says with a shrug. “But it’s not like we knew Bill was the son of Gravity Fall’s chief of police. He just seemed like an ordinary kid.”

“Obsessed with gold,” Dipper adds.

“Yeah, an ordinary kid obsessed with gold,” Mabel amends.

Stan huffs, “Well, you better convince the kid to get me let out if I’m arrested again.”

The twins instinctually share a confused and slightly worried glance.

“Arrested?”

“Again?”

A loud and irritating beeping shakes Dipper from his slumber. “Ugh,” he groans reaching blindly for the snooze button. The moment his arm is fully extended, Dipper’s brain registers the pain caused by the action, forcing a muffled gasp from the boy as he curls into a fetal position.

“Bro-bro, you gonna get that?” Mabel mumbles sleepily from her bed on the other side of the room. Dipper bites his tongue and clenches his eyes shut to prevent any sounds of pain from escaping. His whole body hurts. “Dipper?” Mabel asks, starting to worry that her brother hasn’t turned off the alarm yet. The girl slides off her bed and pads softly over to where her brother is lying curled up on his side. “Are you okay, DipDop?”

Dipper slowly nods his head to prevent any blood rushes to his head. “Y-yeah. Give me a m-minute, alright? I w-wasn’t expecting the p-pain.”

“Sure…” Mabel stares at her brother, feeling useless in her lack of ability to help him. “You don’t have to go to school today. We should probably get you checked up on at hospital anyway.”

“No.” Dipper struggles into a sitting position, hissing sharply at each wave of pain that accompanies his movements. “No hospitals.”

“I know you hate needles and being prodded by total strangers when you can’t even see what they’re doing, but you could have severe internal damage we don’t know about! Dipper please,” pleads Mabel, tears building up in her eyes. This should have never happened to her twin. He can’t defend himself! It’s those stupid guys’ fault... and it wouldn’t have happened in the first place if she hadn’t dumberd insisted upon going in that shop!
“Mabel, I know what you're thinking. I don't need eyes to tell that you are blaming yourself.” The fierceness in Dipper's tone takes her by surprise. Even when injured, Dipper has a lot of fight in him. “I pissed the guy off, and if he didn't come after me yesterday, it might've happened today! It might have happened when neither you nor Bill were there to help me after. None of this is your fault, so quit blaming yourself.”

Mabel laughs harshly at this, a sad smile on her face. “I guess you're right-”

“Like normal.”

She rolls her eyes and smacks Dipper's shoulder playfully, earning a hiss of pain from the boy. “Sorry!”

Dipper weakly waves her off. “It's fine. I'm just sore everywhere.”

“Well duh, silly. You were violently assaulted by a group of idiots! I'm still pressing charges.” Her tone is light and chipper, even as she speaks about a serious topic. Dipper manages a snort. Mabel has a special ability to joke around and still be serious. “You’re gonna stay home from school today.”

“But-”

“No buts!” Mabel stresses this as she forces Dipper back down onto the mattress. “I know its the first month of school, but they’ll understand. Just stay home today and we’ll see how you're feeling tomorrow. I’ll make sure Bill knows you are still alive, Dip.”

Sighing, Dipper complies with his twins wishes. “Alright.” The soreness fades to a minor discomfort while Mabel rushes about to get ready. ‘Great, this means I won't be able to explore any more of the forest until I'm better.’ He stews in a mix of pouting and fuming, listening as his sister gets ready for school.

Finished with her morning rituals, Mabel hoists her backpack up on her shoulders and heads for the attic door. “I'm off to school Dip!” She cheers, opening the door. Dipper groans in response, shifting deeper into his blankets. Mabel closes the door behind her but opens it ajar when a thought occurs to her. “Oh, and you're going to the local clinic as soon as school lets out.” This elicits a louder groan from her twin.

Mabel skips into the lunchroom, whistling a cheerful tune. She plops down at an empty table near the back and breaks out her home brought lunch. “Leftover pancakes, yum!” Kicking her feet back and forth, Mabel makes to tear into her first sparkle-covered pancake.

“Boo.”

“Ack!” She squeaks, flinging the pancake into the unsuspecting face of her surprise attacker. Turning around, Mabel glimpses gold and squeals, “BILL!” The blonde is then pulled into a bone-breaking hug.

“Good to see you too, Shooting Star,” Bill chuckles good-humouredly as he squeezes back.

Mabel releases him, taking her seat again and motioning for Bill to do the same. Then she socks him in the arm. Hard. “Yeesh, what was that for?” Bill whines, rubbing his arm where the Pines twin had hit him.

“Where were you this morning?! I didn’t see you in fourth hour!” Mabel demands fiercely, her
Bill holds his hands up in surrender. “Geez, I’m stuck at home for half a day and you make it a national issue.” The blonde exaggerates a sigh and shakes his head. “Well, my father had already left this morning. Between worrying about your brother and his lectures, I forgot to set my alarm last night. By the time I woke up, third hour was half over. My car wouldn’t start so I had to walk all the way to school.”

“Yikes,” Mabel eventually comments over a mouthful of pancake. “Not the best way to start a day…” Her frown drops away when the shine of her pancakes catches her eye. The brunette excitedly exclaims, “What you need is a Super Special Mabel Glitterbomb Pancake!” She extracts her final pancake from the baggie, presenting it to Bill with an eager grin.

A hesitant look upon his face, Bill eyes the breakfast food, wondering whether the rainbow of glitter it contains is hazardous to eat or not. “Is glitter even edible?” He finally inquires, prodding the fluffy food.

Taken aback, Mabel declares, “Of course! The bottle it come in even said it was safe for consumption!”

Giving the colorful breakfast one final hard look, Bill shrugs and returns Mabel’s grin. “Alrighty then~.” He takes the pancake and bites into it, humming thoughtfully at the eccentric taste. “Not bad, Shooting Star. Not bad at all.” Bill dusts the excess sparkles from his hands once he finishes the pancake before turning to the elephant in the room. “So… Dipper…”

Mabel’s smile crumbles at the mention of her brother. “He wasn’t able to go to school today. I’m having Grunkle Ford drive us to the clinic in town to have Dip Dop looked at.”

Bill scowls, hands clenching into fists. “I’m gonna kill those punks. Who even beats up blind kids?!”

“It won’t change what happened thought,” Mabel huffs in response, being surprisingly mature for once.

“It’ll make me feel better,” Bill retorts without much force.

The bell announcing the end of lunch rings, sending waves of reluctant students out of the cafeteria. “If you want to come with us,” Mabel says while she grabs her items, “Ford will be picking me up right after school. I’m sure he wouldn’t mind giving you a ride.”

“Thanks.”

The school day can not end fast enough for Dipper. He sleeps through about half the day and wakes up at what is the end of fourth hour. After that, the boy is stuck in bed with nothing to do. Grunkle Stan is downstairs in the shop giving tours and ripping countless people off. As per normal for Great Uncle Ford, he is down in the basement doing research, writing essays, and grading papers for the university he works for. The red headed cashier Dipper had talked to a couple times and found rather cool is busy doing her job- manning the cashier. Grunkle Stan’s handyman Soos popped in once to tell Dipper to get better soon, but that is about it. Even worse, Dipper can’t find his headphones and CD player for his audio books.

“So bored,” the blind teen moans, flopping back down into his pillows and wincing at the pain induced by his movements. He has no clue as to the time, leaving Dipper uncertain as to when
Grunkle Ford will be up to get Dipper downstairs. “Man, I can escape a mountain lion the size of the Mystery Shack, but not a handful of goons? Ugh.” Across the room, the miniature cougar raises its head and meows loudly for a creature its size. “Speaking of which… Come here, Cupcake.”

Cupcake, hearing its name, leaps off of Mabel’s bed and trots across the room to its former prey. The diminutive feline springs atop the mattress and clambers over to Dipper. The boy cracks a small smile and pets Cupcake, barely fazed when it bites into his thumb. By now, Dipper is used to it. “You know, Cupcake,” Dipper muses, “being beat up sucks. Of course, you probably don’t understand since you used to be the top of the food chain. Then again, there are a lot of strange things in these woods, or so I hear.”

Cupcake purrs in response, curling up on top of the brunet bruised and gashed stomach without causing much discomfort for the boy. Dipper sighs, continuing his ministrations while staring blindly up at the ceiling. “I wonder what would have happened if I wasn’t blind…” Cupcake yawns and rests its head on its front paws.

The next few hours are passed by Dipper attempting to abate boredom through conversations with a cat and what-ifs. When the door to his and Mabel’s shared bedroom finally creaks open, Dipper struggles to a sitting position and complains grouchily, “‘Bout time, Grunkle Ford. I’ve been bored all day.”

Instead of Grunkle Ford’s regular heavy, commanding footsteps, there are multiple, quieter shuffles. “Grunkle Ford…?” Dipper asks. Cupcake, who was shifted from their sleeping position, growls as intimidatingly as a miniature cat can at the intruders. The defenseless boy reaches out to the bedside table, grabbing a banana Mabel had left him to eat and raises it threateningly. “S-stay back! I’ve got… w-whatever this is and an angry mountain lion!”

The center of the triad of invaders gives a questioning look at the scene before him. “The girl isn’t here?”

“The girl?” Dipper mutters, frowning. “Mabel?” Taking a more defensive stance on his bed, Dipper demands fiercely, “What do you want with my sister?!"

“That isn’t for you to know. For now the next best thing is to take the boy,” the leader informs his two companions. Nodding, the right and left side people approach the bed Dipper is perched on.

Fear increases Dipper’s heart rate, the boy breathing much heavier than he should. “S-stay back!” He swings wildly, managing to catch the cheek of the left person with his banana. The person grunts but is otherwise unaffected. They make to grab Dipper, who slips under their wide, slow grabs somehow and tumbles off the bed. “Ouch,” Dipper groans before he struggles to his feet. Cupcake pounces on the chest of the right person and claws their way up to the person’s face. A couple of well-placed scratches sends the person screaming and crashing to the floor.

Ford looks up from his book. “Did you hear anything?”

Stanley shrugs, breaking his business personality for a moment to respond with, “Nope.” Stanford knits his brows together but gradually returns to his book on gravitational anomalies.

The person going after Dipper manages to catch the teen’s arm as he dashes blindly for the door. “Let. Me. Go!” Dipper, by the grace of Lady Luck, jabs an elbow into the solar plexus of his
attempted captor, winding them and freeing his arm.

The leader of the trio sighs condescendingly and steps forward, delivering a swift blow to the back of Dipper’s head. The blind teen crumples to the ground immediately. “Never send minions to do your job,” the leader huffs. “Grab him and let’s go.” The larger of the two minions—the one who was winded—struggles to their feet before throwing Dipper over their shoulders like a sack of potatoes. The minion who was brought down by Cupcake finally stops writhing in agony and stumbles over to the leader and buff minion. Much to the person’s disconcertion, one of their eyes is rendered useless by blood streaming from a gash above it.

The three intruders take their leave of the attic bedroom, the leader softly closing the door behind them. Cupcake claws uselessly at the closed door and lets out a high-pitched whine. Its ex-prey was taken suddenly, and there was almost nothing the puny cat could do besides minimally hurting one of them. The mountain lion whimpers remorsefully, curling up to the side of the door.

Stanford Pines raises his head again at another loud thump from the attic. “Seriously? I’m not the only one who heard that, am I?” Wendy, at the cashier, barely looks up from her magazine and gives a noncommittal grunt. Ford scoffs and puts his book down, standing. “I’m going to go check on Dipper. Just in case.”

The old Pines twin makes his way over to the staircase, performing a double-take when he sees a flash of maroon from the corner of his eye. “Huh?” Upon closer investigation, he finds that it is just the back door screen flopping open and closed. “Strange…” Ford hums to himself, turning and heading for the rickety stairs to the attic. He would soon discover the aftermath of the struggle in the empty bedroom, yet no clues as to the cause.
Byzantine

Chapter Summary

Mabel finds out her twin has mysteriously disappeared. What is she going to do now?

Dipper wakes up in a strange place much different than his room. Firmly bound, will our blind protagonist worm his way out of this one?

Chapter Notes

Hahaha! I didn't force you guys to wait too long this time! Anyway, my apologies for not replying to the Chapter 6 comments. I was kinda rushed while posting 7 and forgot. I'll do that now-

lilmuffin12: I didn't quite break the title naming theme, which you'll see later on. Each theme is basically what I consider to be an arc. // (last chapter) Close but not quite. On Fanfic.net, I have a person thinking along the same lines as you. You'll see eventually. Btw, I love your (& you dad's) saying.

Blackmoontiger: There will be plenty of adventures to be had! ^_^ // As to the suspense and cliffhanger, how else could I keep you readers hooked? Just remember, I could've made you guys wait much longer for this next chapter.

phantombullets240 and Pineapple (RandomPineappleAttacks): *Grins evilly* Oh, much will happen to our poor teen. So so much. >:D

Chapter 8

A sick feeling starting near the end of sixth hour gnaws persistently at Mabel’s stomach. She attempts to push it aside, but a slight amount of concern seeps through her barriers. Not even the teacher’s lesson on a rather interesting subject for the girl can capture her attention.

Even as she walks into her seventh period, Mabel knows deep down that there is something wrong. In an attempt to bolster her confidence- if only for a short while -the elder of the Pines twin tells herself, ‘I only have to survive this last hour and then I can know for sure Dippin’ Dot is okay. He’ll be fine; Grunkle Stan and Great Uncle Ford are both there. Nothing in the WORLD could make it past those two!’ Nevertheless, Mabel’s dark chocolate orbs are latched onto the clock affixed to the wall above the classroom door.

As it turns out, Mabel doesn’t even have to finish out the hour. With twenty minutes of class left, the intercom crackles to life and blares, “Mabel Pines, please go to the principal’s office. Mabel Pines to the principal’s office.”

The entire class swivel in their seats to stare at the girl. Even her teacher appears confused, looking to the brunette for an explanation. “Okay then…” Mabel mutters as she packs up her stuff, eyebrows knitted tightly together. The junior leaves the classroom, calling a last-second goodbye to her friends. Then she makes the long trek up to the front of the school where the main office is. The hallways are devoid of life and eerily silent, creating an ominous aura.
Mabel hesitantly enters the office, noting her Great Uncle Stanford sitting not so patiently on a couch against the back wall of the principal’s office. His leg is bouncing rapidly and the man’s left, six fingered hand taps repetitively on the armrest of the couch. Grunkle Ford rises immediately upon his grand niece’s entry. “Mabel, did your brother come to school today?” He demands.

“Come to school?” Mabel echoes before shaking her head. “Uh uh. Dipper couldn’t even get out of bed this morning.”

Scowling, Ford turns to the principal, a short, squat lady nearing her late fifties. “I’ll be checking Mabel out. Family emergency.”

“Okay…” the principal drawls, penciled-in eyebrow raised. “Please just sign this check out form.”

Grunkle Ford snatches the sheet from the woman, scribbling down his signature alongside Mabel’s name and a half-written reason, and shoves the paper back at the principal. “Let’s go, Mabel.” The sixty-something year old man grabs his niece by her arm and tugs her out of the office and school.

“Ho-hold on! What’s wrong? Is Dipper okay?” Mabel rushes out her questions while struggling to keep up with her great uncle’s long strides. Grim determination is etched into the lines and wrinkles of the man’s face. “Grunkle Ford, is my brother okay?” Mabel asks once more while trying to catch his eye.

The two reach the car before Stanford answers his great-niece's inquiries. He pops open the passenger seat and ushers in the brunette before finally saying, “Mabel, your has brother disappeared.” A split second before Mabel registers the implications on Ford’s words, the man snaps the door closed and braces himself.

“What?!”

Stanford skirts around the car to slide in on the driver’s side, still avoiding looking at the younger Pines. Meanwhile, Mabel is horrified, her eyes widening to larger than saucers. Ford starts the car, pulling out of the school before peeling off down the road. Mabel barely has time to fasten her seat belt. The aged man drills for more information while Mabel struggles with the belt clip. “I went to check on Dipper a little earlier and he was gone. Are you absolutely certain he couldn’t get up?”

“Positive,” answers the girl, conviction strong in her response.

"And he said nothing about going anywhere?"

Mabel shakes her head. "No. He planned on hiding up in the attic all day from what I could tell. In fact, the only reason he would have left is if you were bringing him downstairs so we could take Dipdop to the town clinic.

Mumbling a few things under his breath, Stanford asks another question, his eyes focused on the road. “Did you guys encounter anybody… different since you’ve been in Gravity Falls?”

“Different?” Mabel furrows her brow. “Well, there’s Bill, but he was at school today… oh wait! We ran into these creepy guys in maroon robes a couple days ago. They were trying to kidnap a girl who goes to our school named Pacifica, but Dipper, Bill, and I fought ‘em off!” Mabel boasts the last part, seeming proud until she remembers that she needs to stay on topic. “But nobody else other than them, really. And we haven’t seen them since.”

Ford grits his teeth, repressed memories slowly resurfacing. “Thank you, Mabel.”
“Are we going to find Dipper, Grunkle Ford?” The female Pines twin inquires uncertainly.

“Of course we will,” Stanford replies strongly. And then quietly to himself, “At least, I hope so.”

Dipper groans as he slowly comes to consciousness. His head pounds where the one person hit him while the rest of his body aches from the initial abuse he endured the other day. “Ah, he’s awake…” a definitely male voice comments. Dipper tries to demand answers, but a massive dryness in his mouth prevents that.

‘What?’ After prodding around in his mouth, Dipper discovers a cloth of some sort stuffed in between his jaws. Along with his mouth, the teen finds that his arms are bound as well. His wrists are tied behind his back, thick ropes encircling his torso and fastening the boy to the chair beneath him.

Dipper shifts his focus from his bonds to his captor, who is beginning to speak.

“You must wondering where you are,” the person continues. “Well, worry not, you are still in Gravity Falls. Or under it at least. The miners that worked here ages ago abandoned the place because, well, we convinced them to. We merely had to show them the Greater Truth.” He sounds rather smug, proud of the fact that he and whoever works with him could scare away a handful of miners.

The teen continues to struggle against the ropes, hoping to escape despite having no way to navigate out of wherever he is. Of course, had Dipper been blest with the gift of vision, he would see the vast ceiling of the mines and the pillars of tree sap preserving dinosaurs stringing off into the distance. Yet, he is not, and therefore cannot even view the chair he is trapped on, the base wedged firmly in a sap column containing a pterodactyl. Nor can he see the man who knocked him unconscious earlier standing a few feet away.

“Before long, we will show you the Truth as well,” the man says, eyes flicking to his captive. A dangerous, almost hungry look lights his dark orbs.

Stan jumps to his feet as the car containing his brother and grand niece pulls up. “Was he there?” The old conman asks worriedly. Mabel’s troubled expression, accompanied by Ford’s deep scowl, answers his question. Unable to sit around and wait for his nephew to magically show up, Stan immediately sets out a rough plan. “I’ll take Wendy and search the woods. Soos is already in town looking for Dipper.”

“What about the police?” Mabel interjects. “Don’t they help in this kind of situation?”

Grunkle Stanley mimics his twin’s scowl. “Dipper hasn’t been gone long enough to be declared a “missing person”, sweetie. Plus, we don’t have any physical evidence to prove he was kidnapped.”

Mabel turns a fierce red. “They think a blind kid is just going to run away!?!?”

Ford shakes his head, placing a placating hand on her shoulder. “We don’t have any evidence to prove he was kidnapped. For now, we’ll just have to do this without them.” The elderly Pines turns and addresses Stanley, “I know these woods better than you do. Take Mabel and search the town. I’ll go with Wendy into the forest. We’ll all meet back up at the Mystery Shack at five and go from there. Clear?”
“Crystal,” Stanley replies.

The three Pines go their separate ways, Stanley and Mabel in the car to drive into town and Stanford inside the Mystery Shack to fetch Wendy to search the woods.

Over time, Dipper’s initial panic at being kidnapped gradually fades. He has no idea how long he’s been in these “mines”, but given his level of boredom, Dipper concludes that it has been hours. The creep who had been there when he woke up blabbed on for a while about “big plans” and the “Greater Truth”. When he finally left to attend to something else, Dipper almost breathed a sigh of relief were it not for the man saying he was going to set up The Device for his captive. Still, Dipper can only busy himself with worrying before the endless silence brings listlessness with it.

‘Geez, they kidnap me and leave me at the mercy of my boredom. What a great bunch of people!’ Dipper thinks sarcastically. He doesn’t know the exact time, but the brunette figures it has been at least two and a half hours since the orchestrator of his kidnapping left. In this time he has failed multiple times to break his bonds, leaving him with nothing to do. A teenager’s worst nightmare: complete and total boredom.

Just when he is about to attempt slipping his wrists out of the ropes again, Dipper hears a swoosh of air off in the distance, followed by footsteps he familiarized himself with hours ago. The teenager leans away the best he can when his captor approaches. The man sighs and not-so-gently removes the gag from Dipper’s mouth before setting to untie the ropes around the boy’s torso. “Who are you?!” The teen instantly snaps once he can speak again.

Chuckling darkly, the man vaguely answers with, “The one who will show you the Greater Truth.”

“You've already said that,” Dipper spits vehemently. “Who are you? Why did you kidnap me? And why were you after my sister?”

His kidnapper loosens his bonds enough to get them off the chair and secures the rope binding Dipper’s wrists behind his back. The swiftness of his actions leaves Dipper unable to escape. “You can call me _____ for now, boy. And as to why you are here, my group of people have been watching you and that twin of yours. We've been keeping an eye on you ever since you foiled our attempts to show the young Northwest the Greater Truth.” _____ forces Dipper out of the chair he was tied to. Dipper stumbles forward a couple of steps before regaining his balance.

“Jerk,” the teenager grumbles rebelliously under his breath. _____ rolls his eyes at this and forcibly leads Dipper through the cavernous mine and down a smaller tunnel branching off. Dipper hears the change in his echoing footsteps and determines that, though the tunnel is smaller height-wise, it it much longer than the main mine. Due to the silence of their journey, Dipper has plenty of time to ponder on the tidbits of new information _____ gave up. ‘The young Northwest? Is he talking about Pacifica? … Oh! He was one of those creeps trying to kidnap Pacifica. Great, apparently they’ve been stalking Mabel and me ever since. My privacy feels so violated.’ Dipper then snorts to himself. ‘I’ve been taken unwillingly from my home and I’m worried about my privacy? Ha.’

“Do you find something funny, boy?” _____ growls dangerously.

Dipper flashes what he knows Mabel calls an “innocent smile”. “No, it’s nothing. Just…” He struggles for a moment in search of an excuse. “It’s just that you guys have been stalking me for weeks and you still don’t know my name.” ‘Weeeaaak,’ the teen mentally groans.
_____ buys it and bristles, shoving Dipper once again. The boy stumbles over a stray rock and inhales sharply. The jostling aggravated his injuries, particularly the gash running across his stomach. Dipper hisses but can do nothing else. ‘Ouch... I hope my injuries don’t tear open. That would be a pain to deal with down here, wherever I am.’ The brunette glowers and continues shuffling on at a purposefully slower pace than before, _____ poised tensely behind him.

For the next five minutes, the two trudge down the tunnel until it ends at an entrance to another room-like cavern. This new area is a tad larger than Dipper’s bedroom, with only a chair in the middle and a wooden chest against the wall behind the chair. _____ drags his captive inside and straps Dipper down in the sturdy metal chair disturbingly similar to an electric chair. Where the helmet would be to put on the victim’s head is nothing, though a multitude of cords dangle above from the ceiling.

In spite of his fighting to break out of his bonds, Dipper finds himself firmly held in place. Straps cross his shoulders, stomach, legs, and ankles and _____ had shifted Dipper’s wrists from behind his back to the armrests of the chair. “Why am I here?!” Dipper demands again angrily, glaring blindly at the far wall. The severity of the situation is just now occurring to him and he is trying to distract himself from the growing panic with anger.

“But there is a Greater Truth out there that few know about,” _____ repeats from earlier, his tone condescending. “There is a Truth and it is my job to show you the Light.”

The young Pines scoffs. “You won’t be “showing” me much of anything.” The sarcastic remarks aren’t covering the unease in his voice as well as he would like.

A dark, malicious grin creeps onto _____’s face. “Oh, I wouldn’t be too sure of that. We have ways of dealing with cases such as yours.” The robed man approaches the richly decorated chest against the wall behind his prisoner. Embossed upon its spruce lid is a perfect square, an eye with a horizontal slit for a pupil at its center. _____ unlocks the padded lock keeping it closed and throws back the lid, pulling out a strange device reminiscent of a helmet.

With loud, ominous steps, _____ stalks back over to Dipper. With the sobriety of a priest, the man lowers the helmet onto Dipper’s head. “H-he, what are you doing?!” Dipper protests when he feels the device being secured on his cranium. _____ ignores the question, reaching up to grab a handful of the dangling cords. He attaches certain ones to various ports on the helmet. The other ends of the cords run along the ceiling and out of the room, ending at a console in a distant chamber. _____ snaps the mandible-like pieces on the front of the helmet closed and then takes a step back to examine his handiwork.

“This will work nicely,” he purrs thoughtfully, crossing his arms and smirking.

Dread pools in the pit of Dipper’s stomach. “What will “work nicely”? W-what are you going to do?” Bound tightly by ropes, straps, and a strange helmet, Dipper finds himself growing increasingly worried about his lack of control of the situation.

“Oh young, sheltered boy,” _____ sighs and shakes his head, that evil grin still marring his face. “I already told you: showing you the Greater Truth.” That robed man walks to the single exit from the room while slipping a walkie-talkie out of his robes. Holding the TALK button, _____ orders coldly, “Activate the machine. Oh, and tell our benefactor his assistance will be needed.”

As he strolls down the long, empty tunnel, _____ hears Dipper’s tear through the very air. And smiles.
Mabel sits on Dipper’s bed with her back to the wall. The beginning of dark circles hang beneath her distant mocha orbs. The brunette has her knees pulled up to her chest, arms drawn tightly around them and head bowed. The alarm clock on the dresser between the twins’ beds reads 1:42.

The Pines family plus Wendy and Soos had been searching for Dipper since Ford pulled Mabel from school until about midnight. That adds up to ten hours of searching and absolutely no results. When the sun was long set and the fall chill turned their noses cherry red, Stan and Ford had agreed to call it quits for the night. They wouldn’t find much in the dark anyway. Mabel argued fiercely against this, but still reluctantly climbed into Soos’s truck with her great uncle.

When Soos’s rusted brown truck pulled up to the Mystery Shack, Mabel shuffled numbly inside, her thoughts swimming with worry for her brother and contemplation on where in the world he could be. By the time she reached the attic though, Mabel felt a determined headache making its presence known. The pressure behind her eyes grew even as she curled up on her brother’s bed, so she was forced to abandon thought until the headache receded.

So now Mabel sits, headache gradually ebbing away, in the darkness of her bedroom. As the clock approaches 2, she finds herself capable of thinking once more and resolves to connect the invisible dots that will lead to her brother. ‘He couldn’t have run away; he has no reason to and no place to go. But then… who would take him? Nobody in town actually hates us and Gideon is on the other side of the country last I chec-’

Thunk

The girl looks up, eyebrows furrowed in confusion as she searches for the source of the noise. It is silent. Maybe the lack of sleep is making her hear things-

Thunk

Mabel’s eyes zero in on the triangle-shaped stained-glass window. A third rock is thrown a moment later, hitting the glass with another audible thunk. “Huh?” The brunette slides off Dipper’s messy bed, hesitant until a fourth rock connects with the window. Mabel flinches, concerned that it actually broke the pane of glass. Thankfully, she opens her eyes to see the window still intact. After that, she hurries over and unlocks the latch on the window, opens it, and pokes her head outside.

“Heya, Shooting Star!” An unmistakable voice calls. Mabel catches a flash of gold in the dark of the night and grins through her exhaustion. A short break from her weighted thoughts will be most welcome.

“Hi, Bill,” she calls back, punctuating the greeting with a yawn. “What are you doing out here so late?”

The blonde shouts up, “I was wondering how Dipper is doing since you weren’t there after school and I couldn’t find you at your usual haunts.”

Mabel’s grin melts away. Oookay, no break then. Bill didn’t know yet. Of course he didn’t know though; she had been too caught up in searching for her missing (read: kidnapped) twin to fill him in. “Hold on. I-I’ll come down there. Meet me on the back porch.” Her words hold notes of exhaustion, remorse, and worry among their chords.

Down on the shadowy ground, Bill grows concerned. He caught the waver in Mabel’s voice. Something serious is going on if it makes Mabel uncertain.

The two make it to the back porch, each in their own way. Mabel slinks down the stairs and
through the kitchen, careful not to wake the sleeping Stan in the living room, while Bill navigates past obstacles hidden by the darkness and narrowly avoids stepping on a stray raccoon. Mabel reaches the porch first, taking a seat on the old, worn couch next to the door. When Bill finally finds the porch, Mabel tiredly pats the spot next to her, her face shadowed displaying her pensive expression. “Guess there’s some explaining to do, huh?”

“What do you know of the All-Seeing Eye?"

“Nothing."

"Where were you all day, then?"

"I went for a walk in the woods around town and fell asleep. I didn't realize how late it was until I walked into town and a person told me."

“Have you ever heard of _____?"

“I've never heard that name before."

"And what do you know of demons?"

"They are mythological creatures meant to scare humans into following a "good" lifestyle."

"But are they real?"

"Of course not."

"Excellent."

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