

TASKET

Return to Dìlunna



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by Deborah Cidboy

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Collapsing Dimension

The Viper's brakes squealed with impatience, as the sleek, black vehicle pulled to the curb. The car's door opened and a tall woman unfolded, dressed all in black. In her long leather pants and tight-fitted vest, her athletic frame seemed to emanate the feral strength of a cat. Her pale face lifted and her slanted, black eyes connected with those of the boy, staring down from his bedroom window. Her bright red lips parted in a satisfied grin as he jumped backwards and out of sight.

"Henrietta is here." Denny whirled about, eyes wide with panic. "I can't do this, Tasket. I just can't."

The boy's gaze was directed at an ornate credenza, a recent acquisition his grandparents had presented him before taking off for Europe. On its uncluttered surface stood just one object, a seven-inch statue of a Leprechaun. The tiny figure was dressed in a bright-blue coat and tall, brown boots. A wide-brimmed hat, sporting a feather on one side, topped the curly red hair, one would expect on such an image. Only the patch over one eye seemed out of place, giving the carving a slight, piratical flare.

At mention of the woman's name, the statue's head turned and its emerald-green eye swiveled in the direction of the boy. "Calm yerself, lad. The lass didn't come here with the intention of killing ye, after all."

"That's as much as you know. I don't trust Henrietta and I'm certainly not going to spend two whole weeks alone in her company. As soon as my father takes off, I'm out of here. I'm sure one of my friends will let me crash at his house, until dad gets back." Denny rubbed the side of his head and gave a grunt of pain.

"Even if that's true, do ye think it's wise, leaving just now?" Tasket studied the dark circles under the boy's eyes and the unnatural paleness of his cheeks. "Xendro's tonics don't seem to be giving ye the relief they once did. Yer headaches are getting worse."

Denny sagged onto the bed. He was tall for his age with a handsome face, framed by straight brown hair, streaked with blondish highlights. His eyes were large and expressive, especially when he frowned, as he was doing just then. "You're right about the headaches. They're worse than I've been letting on. I'm worried, Tasket, but not just for myself. My doppelganger has been too quiet, as of late. After we merged last year, I couldn't shut him up. Now, I wish he'd say something, anything."

"That is concerning. Something happened when yer da pulled ye out of Xendro, last year. At first I thought it was a miracle ye both retained yer separate identities after ye fused. Now, I'm not so sure it was a good thing."

"What do you mean? You're not actually saying, it would be better, had I become one with my doppelganger? You wouldn't say that, if you knew what he was like. He's a spoiled, under achiever who whines day and night. He thinks the world owes him, because his mother died and no one else understands him, poor baby."

Tasket shrugged. "Be that as it may, there's more at stake here than just a poor attitude. In this reality ye've become a paradox. Yer individual personalities go against the basic laws of physics, which state, no two objects can occupy the same place at the same time." Tasket forced himself to speak lightly, to calm the fear he saw enter the boy's eyes. "That's why I think, we need to visit a friend of mine. She might be able to help ye with—"

The doorbell rang, interrupting what he was about to say. “Better let Henrietta in before she makes a fuss. We’ll speak of this later, after yer da leaves.”

Denny took a step toward the door, then stopped and turned around. “There’s something else you need to know. I found a box in the attic yesterday, while retrieving dad’s suitcase.” He paused and wet his lips. “It was labeled with my mom’s name, but the date written on it was seven years after her death. There was a quilt inside.”

“So? Ye said yerself, yer ma made quilts.”

“Not in this reality, she didn’t. In my world, she started quilting after we moved to Colorado. Here, she died when I was a baby and never got that chance. The quilt in the box was the same one she made for me when I was seven.”

“Ye must be mistaken.”

“I’m not. I know that quilt well. I grew up with it, remember?” Denny heard the doorbell ring a second time. The sound spurred within him a sense of urgency. “Don’t you see, Tasket, this is the appearance of a second paradox. Like me, its here, but still linked to the world from which we came.” He saw Tasket frown and pushed his point. “I’ve noticed other things too, things that make me believe the barrier between the two realities is beginning to unravel.”

“Poppycock.” Tasket shook his head. “Something like that just doesn’t happen. There’s a logical explanation for the quilt’s existence, if indeed it exists at all. We just need to find it.”

Denny backed away. The pain in his expression was that of a child struck by a trusted friend. “You of all people should know, I wouldn’t make something like that up.”

“I didn’t mean that ye did. But, ye said yerself, yer headaches have gotten worse as of late. Perhaps yer mind is playing tricks on ye and ye mistook one of yer gram’s quits for the one ye remember.”

Denny shook his head. “I’m not mistaken. The design was unique. The fabrics were the exact ones used by my mom, block for block.”

Tasket said nothing, just squinted, as he’d done so often in the past month to study and assess the boy’s aura. The golden rays surrounding Denny’s body were the same distinct, glowing pattern they’d been since their first meeting. The color, he knew, depicted energy, optimism and strength. He narrowed his vision further to bring up the second, weaker aura, the one belonging to the boy’s doppelganger. The deep purple of that aura had faded in the past week to a pale violet. Its edges were frayed and unraveling. “Come back after yer da’s gone,” Tasket said abruptly. “We’ll talk, then.” Spinning on his heels, he disappeared in a puff of smoke.

Denny sighed and closed his eyes. He supposed Tasket was right. His headaches were making him imagine trouble where there was none. He heard the bell ring a third time, longer and more insistent. Leisurely, he left the room.

He paused along the landing to study the stack of schoolbooks he’d piled on the narrow, console table, in hopes of discussing his classes with his father. But as usual, Rob had been too busy. He pursed his lips and descended the stairs.

“I know you’re in there,” Henrietta’s voice hissed through the letter slot. “I can see you, brat. Get over here and unlock this door.”

Glancing at the woman’s figure, silhouetted through the door’s lead-glass window, Denny wished he could just turn around and head back up stairs. The bell chimed again, one long, continual note. He leapt down the remaining stairs, hurried to the door and threw it open. “Really?” he said, imbuing the word with all the loathing he felt. “You couldn’t have waited just a few more seconds? Have you roused all the people in the neighborhood with your stomping and screeching, or only half of them?”

Henrietta took a step back and glanced around at the neighboring houses. Shaded by giant oaks, the street wasn’t typical of midtown Savannah. These older houses had been built more than two hundred years before and the contrast of bright sunlight and deep, secretive shadows gave them a timeless feel. Cobblestone walkways bespoke of by-gone days, of strolling couples, parasols, and horse-drawn carriages.

The door of the adjacent house to their right stood partially open. The neighbor, a woman in her sixties with short, gray hair and thick, wire-rimmed spectacles, stood raking Henrietta’s black-clad figure with her suspicious gaze. Seeing her unblinking stare returned, the lady’s nose tilted and her nostrils flared, as if smelling something foul. She opened her mouth to speak, but halted as a crude gesture was tossed in her direction. Shock and anger replaced her expression.

Henrietta smiled at the woman’s reaction. She stuck out her tongue and was rewarded when the old dame ducked into her house with the speed of a turtle sensing danger. The door slammed shut and every window blind facing the O’Connor’s porch was quickly pulled down. “You can stop worrying about the neighbors. No one appears to have heard a thing, or if they did, they must be otherwise occupied.”

Backlit by the sun, Henrietta’s body appeared to alter and shift, as if her flesh was an artificial covering over a metallic substructure. The illusion lasted for only an instant. Then, the light changed and she appeared normal once more.

Denny backed away, shook by the feeling he’d seen something alien, something he’d not been meant to see. Perhaps Tasket was right and his headaches were making him delusional. “Dad is upstairs, but he should be down soon,” he said softly, hoping the quiver in his voice wasn’t noticeable.

A flicker of anger flared in Henrietta’s dark eyes. “He should have come himself to greet me, not sent his lackey.” She slammed the door closed. “Maybe, that will bring him down.”

Denny winced at the noise. “I know you’re angry, but dad really is running late. The last time I saw him he was busy, packing and his taxi will be here any minute.” He started up the staircase. “I’ll go and let him know you’re here.”

“Don’t bother. We both know he’s not the reason I’m here.”

Arrested by the unspoken threat, Denny turned. “What did you mean by that?”

“Only that I came to baby sit you, not your father. What did you think I meant?”

“Technically, I’m not a baby,” Denny said, strength returning to his voice, “So, I really don’t see any reason for

you to stay. I can take care of myself while dad's away."

"You'd like for me to leave, wouldn't you?" Henrietta sidled to the stairs with the fluid motion of a predatory snake. "I made a promise to your father and I plan to keep it." She cocked her head and studied the boy above her. "Why aren't you going with Rob? School is out and a trip to Maine this time of year sounds delightful."

"I missed too many days of class and, unless I wish to repeat my freshman year, I have to attend summer school." Denny pointed to the book-laden table on the landing.

"And your grandparents? Where are they?"

Irritation showed on Denny's face. "Not that it's any business of yours, but they're in Europe, purchasing antiques for the shop."

"Ah. Now, I understand why you're so upset." Henrietta climbed the stairs, until she was level with the boy. "It must be so upsetting to know everyone around you thinks you're a failure. As for myself, it's no surprise. I half-expected it would happen."

"For your information, I passed my freshman year with high honors. The only reason I have to retake these classes is because I missed too many days. And, we both know, that wasn't my fault."

Henrietta's brows rose. "Did I say I blamed you? Rob had something to do with it as well, I'm sure. He's always too busy to spend time with anyone. It's always art, art, art with that man. How does that make you feel?" She watched the flash of pain register on the boy's face and smiled. "Go, if that's your wish. Once your father is gone, we'll have that discussion you've been dodging for the past year. It's high time we got some facts straight and came to an understanding."

Denny's heart began to race at the implied threat. Henrietta was right, of course. He had managed to avoid her for almost an entire year, what with his grandmother's dislike of the woman and his father's withdrawal into his painting. He turned and raced up the stairs two at a time. At the top, he stopped long enough to say, "Go home, Henrietta. I have no intentions of discussing anything with you, not now or ever."

Henrietta's cat-like eyes gleamed darkly in her narrow face, as she turned to look up. "Really?" She ran a hand down the banister's newel post. "What do you think Rob would do, if I turned and walk out, right now? He wouldn't leave you, not alone for two weeks. He'd be forced to call the gallery and cancel his trip. He's worked hard for this exhibit and is banking on the publicity to advance his career. Do you really want to take that dream away from your father? Are you that selfish and uncaring?"

Denny winced, feeling her words slice through his defenses. He lowered his gaze, so as not to see the triumph in her eyes. "Do what you want, Henrietta. You always do." He turned and headed for his room.

"I think I'll stay right here and talk to your father when he comes down."

It wasn't until the bedroom door closed behind him that the import of Henrietta's words caught up to Denny. What had she meant by that last comment, he wondered? He closed his eyes and leaned against the door, suddenly too tired in mind and body to fight any longer.

To the casual observer, the boy's room looked much like any other teenager's. A tall, four-poster bed sat against one wall, covered by a multitude of pillows and a faded bedspread that had seen decades of use. Flanking either side of the bed were side-tables with matching lamps. A long, low dresser stood against the wall across from the bed, supporting a wide mirror. At the back of the room, an ancient, black chest with roughly engraved panels looked out of place against pale-blue walls, festooned with brightly colored pennants and the more delicately carved credenza.

Denny opened his eyes and stared through the dimensional curtain that would stop an ordinary person from glimpsing the true occupants of the room. He was a Corr. And, since he's thirteenth birthday last year, had inherited the ability to see and hear that which others could not even begin to imagine. He waited until every eye turned in his direction, then declared, "Henrietta is officially head of the house for the next two weeks. Any ideas on how to get rid of her?"

The rabbit on the bed, which only moments before appeared stuffed and motionless, clawed the air with its paws.

"Nice try, Dee. But, I doubt that will intimidate her."

A disembodied head, floating above the antique chest, grinned. "I could chase her around the house, snapping my lid. That should get a reaction."

"Yeah, one you'd probably regret. I doubt you'd relish having your hinges torn off for the effort, Xendro."

From his perch on the dresser, Tasket frowned. "Ye're paler then when ye left. Is the headache worse?"

"Not really. It's Henrietta. She wants to talk to me, after Dad leaves. She called it a long-awaited discussion, or something like that. I didn't like what she implied."

"Yer worries are for naught, lad. She won't get the chance to sink her claws into ye, not if I have anything to do with it."

Denny straightened, suddenly alert. "Really? Why not?" The depression that had weighed him down all day, lifted as he crossed to the bed and straddled the footboard. "Have you devised a plan to get rid of Henrietta? If so, please, tell me what it is."

Tasket squinted once more to study the boy's aura. The split between the two conjoined life forces had widened dramatically in the short time Denny had been gone. Relaxing his vision, he came to a decision. "We're headed for DiLunna."

Denny's brows shot up. "You're kidding, right? Why, that's great." He was surprised when no one else echoed his opinion. His gaze moved over the solemn faces of the others in the room. "What's wrong? Why are you all looking at me like that?"

Tasket forced a smile. "They're just overwhelmed by the suddenness of the request we just received." He opened his hand to reveal an object in it. As thin as paper, as supple as cloth, the single strip of communication glowed with a pale, inner light as it writhed and curled around his fingers. He shook it out and held it up. "It's a message from Queen Gelda. She requests our attendance at her palace in DiLunna as soon as possible."

Denny collapsed upon the mattress to study the squirming message. His eyes widened as he noticed short bursts of rainbow-colored sparks emitting from it. He'd seen that myriad of flashing lights before, on DiLunna, though at the time he'd thought he was hallucinating. "So, this trip has nothing to do with me?"

"Yes and no." Tasket cleared his throat. "Remember me telling ye of me friend who might help ye with yer headaches? I was talking about Queen Gelda. On her world there are great physicians called Nahmads. They're—"

"You're not referring to those spidery freaks, are you?" Charles interrupted, his tone echoing his disgust. The tiny cane flexed his twig-like fingers and pushed away from the corner of the mirror where he'd been propped. "I wouldn't consult with those bugs about a toothache."

Denny frowned and glanced from Charles to Tasket. "What does he mean bugs? What's a Nahmad?"

Charles opened his mouth to explain, then closed it, seeing Tasket's threatening glare. He pointed to his master. "Ask him. Apparently, I'm not supposed to talk."

Denny narrowed his eyes. "Why don't you want Charles to tell me about the Nahmads?"

"I don't want him giving ye the wrong impression, is all. Charles is a bit jaded on the subject of insects, which is only natural, considering his fear of wood rot." Tasket pulled out his watch. "Has yer da left, yet? 'Tis getting late."

Denny's gaze flew to the bedside clock. He shook his head. "Not yet. His cab isn't due for another five minutes."

"Good that should give ye time. Before ye go down to say yer goodbyes, there's something I want ye to do." Tasket snapped his watch shut and stuffed it into his pocket. "Gather up the garments ye wore home from DiLunna and put them on under yer clothes, then give what ye can't wear to Xendro. He'll secure them for our departure."

"We're leaving that soon?"

"Immediately after yer da's taxi drives off," Tasket said firmly.

"But—" Denny caught a shadow of something indefinable in Tasket's expression. His eyes narrowed. "What aren't you telling me?"

Tasket lowered his gaze. "Best we discuss it once we're away from here."

Denny felt a cold shiver of fear run down his spine. "It's worse then I thought, isn't it? You don't intend for us to come back." He thought about his family and the ordeal they'd been through the year before when they thought him dead. "What's to stop Henrietta from calling dad after I disappear? If he thinks I've run away again, he'll rush home and ruin everything he's worked so hard for."

"He won't. Ye forget, yer doppelganger will be here in yer stead."

“Then, what aren’t you telling me? Something must be wrong, if you insist we leave this quickly.”

Tasket’s expression hardened. He turned away from the pleading in the boy’s eyes. “Collect yer things and be prepared to leave within the hour.” He popped from view.

Denny smashed a fist into the mattress of his bed. “I hate it when he does that.” He stood, legs trembling, and moved to the dresser. Wordlessly, he opened the top drawer and pulled out the clothing he’d worn on his previous trip. Without a word, he shed his shirt and jeans and pulled on the jerkin and leggings. Then, he redressed and lifted a wooden box from beneath a pile of socks. He opened it and extricated the emerald necklace Tasket’s brother, Turnkey, had designed. He looped the heavy gold links around his neck and tucked the pendant beneath his clothes. His hat and boots, he pulled from his closet and was in the process of handing to Xendro, when a rap on his door and the sound of a suitcase rolling past, signaled his father’s eminent departure.

Denny froze. His eyes brightened with unshed tears. He released the clothes, but continued to hold Xendro’s gaze. “I’ve got to go down, now. I’ve got to say goodbye to my father.” He broke eye contact and turned his back on the sympathetic face, “Will I ever see my father again? Will I ever see any of you after today?”

Xendro patted the boy’s retreating back. “Perhaps. It’s not for me to say. Be quick with your goodbyes and come right back. Tasket is only doing what he thinks best for you. He didn’t cause this. You need to remember that in the upcoming days.”

“I know.” Denny straightened his shoulders and marched to the door with the air of a condemned man. Through the guardrail, he could see his father talking with Henrietta. He gulped back the emotions threatening to overwhelm him and proceeded down the stairs.

Henrietta saw the boy first. She wrapped her arms possessively around Rob’s waist and whispered into his ear. After a long moment, she straightened and released him. “You will call me every night, won’t you?”

“I..I’ll try.” Rob turned to watch his son descend. He frowned, seeing the boy clearly for the first time in weeks. Den looked dreadfully pale and there were deep shadows beneath his eyes that would alarm even the most inattentive parent. “Are you okay, son?”

Two long honks sounded from outside the house.

Denny looked up and for a long moment said nothing, as he imprinted his father’s face in his mind and heart. “I’m...I’m fine. Just tired. I didn’t sleep well last night, that’s all. In case you didn’t hear, your taxi is here.”

Rob shook off Henrietta’s hand and stepped closer. “I know I haven’t been good company lately, what with all the last minute preparations for the show and all, but things will change when I get back. I promise. We’ll have more time together. We’ll go fishing. You’d like that, wouldn’t you, son?”

Denny lowered his eyes. “Yeah. That sounds great.”

Rob lifted his son’s chin and noticed the tear rolling down the boy’s cheek. He brushed it away. “What’s this? I’m only going to be gone for a few weeks, not forever. You’ll be so busy with your studies, you won’t even notice I’m gone.” He turned to Henrietta. “It would be a great help to me, if you’d run through his homework each night with him.”

“Oh, don’t you worry about that,” Henrietta said, bestowing a frigid smile on Denny. “He’ll get more than his share of loving support from me.”

The taxi honked again.

Rob looked from his son to the door. “I’ve got to run, or I’ll miss my plane.” He gave Den an awkward pat on the head. “Be good and listen to Henrietta.”

Denny didn’t trust himself to speak, simply nodded stiffly.

“He’ll be fine,” Henrietta assured, seeing Rob’s sudden concern. “I’ll make sure of it.” She clamped one arm around the boy’s shoulder and dragged him with her to the door. “You can count on me to keep this guy in line.”

On the porch, they stood and watched the taxi driver lift the cases into the trunk, then open the side door for his passenger. Rob looked up before slipping into his seat and they all waved goodbye with stilted smiles and forced laughs.

Denny waited until the vehicle had turned the corner, then wrenched out of Henrietta’s grasp and spun around to confront her. “You nauseate me, you’re so fake.”

“I’m a fake? Look who’s talking.”

Denny’s eyes opened wide. He took a step back. “What do you mean by that?”

Henrietta advanced on the boy. “I’m talking about time travel, invisible aliens, living someone else’s life. Ring any bells? Does your father know anything about that little horde living in your bedroom?”

Denny’s eyes went wide with shock. “How did you—?” He bumped against the edge of the open door, grabbed it with one hand and yelled, “Get away from me. I’m going to call the cops.” He slammed the door in her face and threw the bolt. “She knows,” he whispered, as fear all but paralyzed him. Forcing himself to move, he stumbled toward the stairs. Halfway up he stopped, hearing a grating sound in the lock. What color was left in his face, drained away. “Oh my God. I forgot she has a key.”

He ran to his room and with trembling hands, closed and locked his bedroom door. His eyes were wild with panic as they turned to the dresser. “Tasket?”

Hearing the terror in the boy’s voice, Tasket dropped the needle he was attempting to thread. “What’s up, lad?”

Two blue eyes opened on the face of an ancient coin lying beside him and an impish twinkle entered Bluttonio’s expression as his tongue snaked out in an attempt to capture the spool of thread, left so carelessly close.

“It’s Henrietta. She...she can see you and the others. I think she knows everything. How’s that possible?”

They heard the slam of the front door. Denny ran to his window and looked down. “She’s going out to her car. Maybe she’s leaving.” Relief was palpable in his voice. He slumped against the windowsill and waited for the sound of the vehicle’s engines starting.

But the car did not roar to life or pull away. Instead, Henrietta opened the driver's door and reached in, extracting something heavy and black. Her glance traveled up the exterior wall of the house, until it reached the boy's window. Then, she held up her hand, to display the object in it. She smiled, a taunting grin.

Denny gasped. "She's got her taser and she's coming back in."

Tasket lifted Charles and tucked him under his arm, then nodded calmly to Xendro. "I believe that's our cue to leave."

Xendro nodded in return, then descended through his lid. A moment later, the ancient chest yawned open like a great maw, revealing a swirling, green mist within.

"'Tis time to bid adieu to this world. Come along, Dee." Tasket waved his hand and the rabbit on the bed floated into the chest and disappeared from view. "Ye're up next, lad."

Denny hesitated, looking around his room. The sudden rattle of the doorknob interrupted his silent goodbye. "Come back in an hour," he called, hurrying to Xendro. He donned the snug-fitting cap, then dragged off his shoes and slipped his feet into the soft leather boots handed to him. As the doorframe shook violently from a well-placed kick, he lifted his leg over the side of the chest. "Go away. I'm not done studying."

"Don't give me that. You haven't touched a single book. I know, because they're still out here on the landing. Now, let me in," Henrietta demanded.

"I...I'm changing. I spilled something on my pants. I'll let you in when I'm decent." Denny lowered himself over the side of the chest. He floated in the mist for several seconds, listening, but the corridor outside the door remained ominously quiet. Whatever Henrietta was up to, she'd changed tactics and was no longer conducting a direct assault. He caught sight of Dee, floating below him, and allowed the currents to draw him down. Grabbing hold of the rabbit, he held him tight and began to descend.

Tasket patted the edge of the chest and smiled at Xendro's luminous eyes within the shadowy curve of his ancient lid. "'Tis been a pleasure working with ye, me friend. Close and lock yerself once we're away. If our paths never cross again, be safe."

"We'll meet again. It may be a different plane of existence, but I'll still feel your presence. We're all connected, you know."

"Aye. I do." Tasket saluted Xendro, then tucked Charles into his waistband and took the plunge with the grace of an Olympic diver.

He caught up to the boy and rabbit just at the lid banged shut and the light from the room above was extinguished. In the darkened space, Tasket watched in both amazement and fear as the two auras surrounding the boy split apart.

The purplish aura silently expanded, forming a shadowy replica of the boy who continued downward. He stared at Tasket for a long moment in recognition, then extended one hand. Whatever the doppelganger was about to say froze on his lips. He opened his mouth in a silent scream and clawed at his head, as if trying to dislodge some entity attacking his brain. Then he gasped and his eyes rolled back in his head.

Tasket watched the boy's vision cloud over. He touched the limp body gently and gave it a gentle push upward. Was he dead? Was Denny fated to die as well, because they'd disregarded the laws of nature? He shook his head. "No. I won't let that happen." He fumbled a handkerchief out of his pocket, dabbed the moisture from his good eye, then descended, his expression determined.

Fascinated by the play of light, shining through the chest's planks, Denny appeared oblivious to the loss of his doppelganger. "It's been a while since we were down here," he said as Tasket joined them. "The holes in Xendro's planks have gotten so wide, I can see the lights of the nebulean gap through them. No wonder Gelda's message got through. You'd better let him know, his bottom needs mending."

"I'm sure he already knows. Best keep moving, lad. We've got a fair distance to cover today." Tasket hesitated, then gave Denny an anxious look. "Are ye feeling up to this trip, lad?"

Denny rolled his shoulders and smiled. "Surprisingly, yes. I feel lighter than I have in months and my headache is gone." His heels struck wood and he felt the planks dissolve under their touch. The realization he might never see his home again struck him once more. He raised his face and searched Xendro's upper regions for one last glimpse of light from the room above. To his chagrin, the view appeared pitch black. A deep sadness filled him. "Is this really happening?"

"Aye, it is."

"Will I ever see my family again, I mean, my real family that is?"

Tasket's green eye blazed brightly at the question. "I wish I could comfort ye with a definite answer, lad. I wish I could lie and say yes. But, there's too much between us for that. So, I'll give ye the truth and we'll take it from there. I honestly don't know the answer to yer question. But, I do promise ye this, if there's any possibility of reuniting ye with yer family, I'll make it me mission to do so, no matter how long it takes."

Denny nodded. "That's good enough for me. Come on. Let's go."