

Project G.H.O.S.T. Chapter 1- Possess

Mia Ray, a very kind young mother, has returned to her apartment from the grocery store as usual. The front door of her apartment closed behind her as the barrel of a gun was pointed at the back of her head. Mia slowly placed the bags on the kitchen counter and raise up her hands as the gun moved closer to her head.

The shooter spoke first, "Mary had a little lamb."

Mia smiled, "Its fleece was white as snow." The shooter lowered the gun as Mia turned around. "Maya! My goodness, I haven't seen you in forever."

Maya hid the gun in her clothes and smiled back. "Haha. You never change, do you, Mia. I'm taking a little time off of work so I can to visit my favorite sister."

Mia blushed. "Oh you. Please come in and make yourself at home. I know, let me make your favorite cookie." Mia moved into the kitchen as Maya took a seat at the counter. "Anyways, how have you been? Mom and Dad will be happy to see you again. Even Elliot wondered about you sometimes."

Maya stretched out on the counter. "My work has been killing me. I travel too much and meet too many people. I couldn't get any vacation time because my company didn't have enough international businessmen. Can't I be like you and work at a pet shop?"

"Well, I guess you had fun," Mia laughed. "I don't think you would like to clean up after animal. It can be a whole crap load of work."

Maya sat up and laughed. "Haha. You're probably right. So, how is everyone?"

"Elliot just turned 16 last month and he is in the top 50 of his class," Mia informed. "Mom and Dad are planning a cruise in the summer. The grandparents are still at the farm as always."

Soon, a young man entered the apartment. "Mom, I'm home," he called out.

"Welcome back, Elliot," Mia smiled. "Don't you remember Aunt Maya? She's here on vacation for a little while."

Elliot sat next to Maya and smiled. "Hey, Aunt Maya. How long are you staying?"

"About two weeks," she answered. "My gosh, Elliot. You had gotten taller since I last saw you. Now I can't call you a mouse anymore."

Elliot laughed. "I'm almost taller than you. Maybe I could beat you up this time."

Maya smirked. "Keep dreaming kid. Aunt Maya won't lose to a big mouse."

"Oh Elliot," Mia said. "Can you do the laundry for me? I'm busy cooking right now."

He nodded. "Okay, Mom." Then he moved into the next room.

"I'm surprised you raised him well without a man," Maya smiled.

"That's because I'm the older sister," Mia joked. "I got experience from you."

"Well, I'm glad to be your guinea pig," Maya laughed.

Mia took the tray of fresh cookies from the oven and placed it on the counter. She spoke in a soft voice, "But, Maya, is it true?"

"True about what?" Maya asked as she took a cookie from the tray.

Mia leaned closer. "About the... ghosts that are around you..."

Maya smirked. "Would you like to see?" Mia hesitated. "Don't worry. They won't hurt you. I promise."

“Alright,” Mia smiled. “I trust you.”

“Show yourself, spirits,” Maya commanded. Soon, three orbs of light appeared and surrounded Maya. Mia was speechless as Maya took a bite out of the cookie. “So you like it?”

Mia smiled again. “Thank you, Maya... But doesn’t it freak you out?”

“Nope,” Maya answered. “But you do.” Suddenly, Maya pulled out her gun and shot her sister in the head. Green ooze was spilling out of the body as it fell to the ground. Parts of the kitchen were covered in its green blood as Maya took another bite of the cookie. “You damn alien.”

Elliot ran out into the kitchen. “What happen? I heard a loud bang-” The sight of the body, the green substance, and the weapon in Maya’s hand caught his eye. “Mom...”

The orbs vanished as Maya turned to him. “She’s not your mother.” Elliot was shocked by her words. “This is an extraterrestrial. An alien I was ordered to kill.”

“So I have been living with an alien this whole time?” he spoke. “What about my mother?”

Maya shook her head slowly. “She died a week before your birthday...” Elliot dropped to his knees. “I’m very sorry, Elliot... I couldn’t save her in time. I can only save you.”

“Maya...” he began to cry. “Why didn’t you tell me sooner? She’s your sister, isn’t she?”

She sighed. “I was told to keep all of this a secret from the innocent people. You have to understand why I didn’t keep in touch for a while.” She moved closer to him. “But listen to me. Stay in your room and do not come out until morning. The C.I.A. are going to clean this up later. And do not speak any of this to anyone. There might be more of these freaks in the city.”

“What are you going to do, Maya?” he asked.

She frowned. “I got some unfinished business to take care of. Just listen to my instructions and you won’t get hurt.” She began to move to the front door.

“Maya!” he called out. “You can’t leave me like this.”

She smiled over her shoulder. “You’re a big boy now. I think you can handle yourself. Stay out of trouble, though.” Then she exited the apartment, leaving Elliot alone with the corpse.

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As the night fell upon the city, Maya arrived at the top of a tall building. She whispered in the night breeze, “You guys can come out now.” The three orbs appeared and each morphed into a human body. One was a buffed man and dressed in a battle dress uniform; another was a scientist in a lab coat and carried a laptop, and lastly a beautiful female with long bangs that covered her eyes. “Colt, can you analyze the green fluid from the apartment?” Maya asked.

The scientist nodded while he starts up his laptop. “Right away, Maya.”

The buffed man walked up to Maya. “Are you sure the kid will be okay?”

“You worry too much, Andy,” the beautiful woman smiled as she patted him on his back. “As long as Maya believes in him, there’s nothing to worry about.”

Maya folded her arms. “I wouldn’t believe in him just yet. He’s still a kid.”

“Then why would you leave him behind?” Andy asked.

Maya pulled out her phone. "Because I have my reasons. You can always return back and watch over him, Andy. But now I must contact the boss." Then she turned to the woman. "Bina, you're on look out." The woman nodded and moves towards the ledge of the building and began to hum a tune. Andy sat on the ground as Maya dialed a number.

A man picked up at the first ring. "What's your status, Miss Maya?"

"You're right. There was one in this area, Dr. Malcom," Maya replied. "A very ugly one, too. However, this one is very strange."

"How so?" Dr. Malcom asked.

Maya explained, "Since these extraterrestrials can take the image of humans, they were easy to find. But this particular one has altered the memories of my sister and those around her."

"A memory alternation? How can you be so sure that this is not a trick up their sleeves?" Dr. Malcom's voice became serious.

She sighed. "Because my sister hates ghosts and she will never want to see one... Even her son doesn't realize that it wasn't his mother."

The doctor paused for a minute. "Well, this is an important discovery. Good work, Miss Maya, and I am truly sorry about your sister. Keep me updated." The phone call was ended.

Bina's melody echoed in the breeze as Colt continued analyzing the data. Andy stood up and stared at Maya. "What did the boss say?"

"We are going to stay in this city longer than I expected," she answered. "I fear that we are going to see the other members sooner, too."

Colt glanced at Maya. "I think you should come and look at this." She walked over to him and stared at the screen. "The substance is different than before. The DNA structure is rearranging itself as if-" Soon Bina stopped her singing and coughed violently to the point where she fell to the ground. Andy ran and helped her up.

"It regenerated," Maya growled under her breath. "That little shit!" Then she turned to them. "We're going back! Andy, possess me now." The three transformed into orbs again and one flew straight into Maya. Her muscles grew bigger as her voice was combined with Andy's voice. "Let's go!"

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Elliot locked himself in his room, not because of Maya's instructions, but from plain fear of what might happen next. He held his phone tightly and checked the time for the C.I.A men to come. It was nearly 11:45 at night and he hasn't eaten yet. "This must be a dream," he told himself. "Maybe, if I can wake myself up, then this will all be over." He pinched himself over and over again. But he was still in the same position.

Suddenly, there was a light knock on his door which he nearly jumped out of fright. He moved closer to the door but remembered what Maya said. The knocked was heard again and a voice was spoken. "Elliot, you should eat your dinner... The food is getting cold." Chills ran down his spine as he heard her voice. "Elliot...?"

He slowly backed away from the door and whispered in fear. "No... This can't be real... You're not my mother..."

Something tried to turn the doorknob but it was locked. "Elliot, open the door..." He didn't move from his spot as the knocks grew louder each second. "Elliot, are you there? Please open the door." Then the door shook violently as the voice got angrier. "Open this door right now! Elliot! Listen to your mother! Don't make me come in there!"

Elliot moved back until he was against the wall while his heart was beating. The door stopped shaking and the voice got quiet. He took deep breaths to calm himself down. Then he grabbed his phone and dialed the police.

The operator answered. "Hello, this is the police. What's your emergency?"

Elliot panicked. "There's an alien in my apartment and it's trying to kill me!"

"I don't understand what you're saying, sir," the operator spoke.

He screamed louder, "There's a creature from outer space!"

The door was shattered open as the body of his mother smiled at him. Large tentacles grew out of her back as she walked in his room. "There you are, Elliot..." she smiled like a maniac. Elliot couldn't speak to the operator as he shivered in fear. "As punishment, you won't have your phone for a while." The mother took his phone from his hand. "Goodbye," she said to the operator and crushed his phone. The creature picked Elliot up by his shirt collar and growled. "Why didn't you listen to me? You don't love your mother anymore?"

Elliot tried to pull away from her hands but she was too strong. "L-Let me go..." he struggled to speak.

"I cannot do that," she told him. "The Queen won't allow any humans to live." She held him up higher as the tentacles wrapped around his limbs and began to pull him apart. The mother smiled. "One of our kinds will take care of your body. Goodbye, Elliot..."

Suddenly, a figure flew through the window and smashed against the alien as the kid was dropped to the floor. The figure grabbed Elliot and pulled him out the room as the creature rolled around in pain. "Elliot, get away from here now!" Maya shouted.

Elliot couldn't comprehend fast enough as he stared at his aunt who looks slightly different than a few hours ago. "Maya, what's going on?" he asked.

Maya glared at him. "What does it look like? We are having a damn tea party with a nice alien! Now run!" The creature leaped on top of Maya and pinned her to the floor. "Get off you ugly freak!" Maya shouted and kicked the alien off and flew across the room.

The alien hissed. "A G.H.O.S.T. soldier! How dare you interrupt me? Die you pathetic human!" Then the alien ran towards Maya.

Maya raised up her fist and punched the alien in the face with an incredible force that caused a few teeth fly out. She pulled out her gun while the alien struggled to get up. "Heh. Who's pathetic now?" Maya pointed her gun at it.

It growled as one of its tentacles knocked the weapon out of her hand in an instant and jumped on top of her again. This time all the tentacles held Maya down as the alien's hands grabbed onto her throat. The gun fell near Elliot as he was frozen with fear. "You are the very pathetic one!" the alien yelled in her face.

Maya shouted to Elliot. "Get the gun and shoot her, Elliot!" The kid snapped back into reality and stared at the gun by him. "Shoot her now!"

He grabbed the gun but his hands were shaking too much to aim at the alien. "I-I can't!" Elliot whined. "I'm too scared!"

"Damn it, Mouse!" Maya yelled. "Be a man and shoot it!" Elliot backed away slowly in fear. "You little shit!" Then she struggled to free one of her arms out of the tentacles and punched the alien again. The alien snatched her arm and twisted it until a loud crack from her bones was heard. Maya screamed Bloody Mary as the alien

continued to twist it even further. “Elliot! Shoot the God damn alien already!” she screamed louder. “Forget about that damn fear of yours! SHOOT IT!”

Elliot couldn’t watch her under extreme pain. He held his breath and stood firm as he pointed the gun at the alien’s head. The trigger was pulled, a bang was heard, and a second later, the alien was on the ground. “I did it...” A smile appeared on his face. “Maya, I did it! I killed the alien!”

Maya got up to her feet and grabbed the gun out of his hand. She shot a few more rounds at the corpse until the head is completely gone. “This is how you kill an alien,” she spoke as she put the weapon away. “And as for you, Elliot.” She turned to him and punched him repeatedly in the head with her uninjured hand. “When I say shoot, you shoot it! Stop being a little girl! Can’t you follow a simple instruction! You little shit! You cost me an arm!”

He rolled up into a ball. “I’m sorry! I’m sorry!” he cried. “This time I’ll listen!”

Maya stopped her punches. “You better, damn Mouse. The C.I.A. are coming here soon as well as the police.” She glared at him. “I have no choice but to take you with me.”

“Really? You are going to be my legal guardian,” Elliot spoke in surprise.

“Nope,” she smirked. “You are going to work for me until you pay off all the medical bills for my arm. But you can’t be a killer like me. You really suck at shooting in the first place. In fact, I have a better job just for you.” Elliot crouched in fear of the thought of horrible jobs she will force him to do. “Pack up, Elliot, you are now my new housekeeper.”

Project G.H.O.S.T. Chapter 2- Soul

Maya Ray roamed around in the night while holding her injured arm. She only wrapped a towel over her arm and hope it would not get any worst. Elliot followed behind her until they stopped in the back of a 5-star hotel in the middle of the city.

“What are we doing here?” Elliot asked. “Shouldn’t we go to the hospital first?”

“I hate hospitals,” Maya growled. “I rather fix it myself.” She unlocked the back door and sneaked into the hotel. “Anyways, we’re taking the stairs. It’s going to be a long flight.” They took about 15 minutes climbing up the stairs and Elliot was completely out of breath.

“Maya...” Elliot gasped. “Why are we at this hotel again?”

She smirked. “This is where I live for the moment. I got the biggest suite here at the top.”

“Wait. So I’m not working to pay off your medical bills?” Elliot pointed out.

“Nope,” She smiled. “I need someone to clean up the room. I don’t like the hotel maids touching my stuff.”

He whined, “You killed my mother so you can have your room clean.”

She nodded. “Pretty much. The suite isn’t that bad. I just don’t have time to clean up. And you seem like a perfect housekeeper, especially after what happened to me.”

Elliot sighed in defeat. “You’re an evil aunt, you know that?”

Maya laughed. “Cheer up, Mouse. We’re almost there.”

After a few more flights, they finally reached the 30th floor. The halls were empty as they walked down. Elliot got an uneasy feeling on this floor. Not even a single employee has showed up. "Is this really where you live?" he asked.

"There is a reason for me to choose this hotel," Maya explained. "Even though it's famous for its fancy decorations and celebrities' parties, this hotel has many reports of paranormal activities."

Elliot moved closer to her. "Like ghosts? You live here because of that?"

"Exactly," she smiled. "You see, Elliot, unlike your mother, I really like spirits. And what better way to see one is to live in a hotel that's full of it." They stopped at a large, red door with a gold theater mask painted on it. "Well, here we are. Room 3025."

Elliot stared at it until the mask began to move. "Welcome back, Madame Maya..." the mask spoke as Elliot jumped back. "Miss Keller has tried to contact you since you've been out..." Then the mask stared at Elliot. "Madame Maya, who is the human? Is he safe?"

Maya laughed, "Yes, he's my nephew, Abel. And thank you for your work. May we please come in?"

"You may, Madame Maya..." the mask spoke as the red door slowly open. Maya entered as Elliot scurried behind.

"W-What is that?" Elliot asked as the door closed after him.

"That's the doorkeeper, Abel," Maya informed. "He's one of the spirits that lives with me."

"Spirits! You mean there are more of them?" he cried. Three orbs of light appeared around Maya and then transformed into their human image. Elliot stumbled to the floor from fright. "Holy crap! They're real!"

"Of course, they're real," Maya said. "Why do you think I like ghosts? Anyways, Colt, please, tend to my arm, Bina can assist you, and Andy is on look out for now." The three ghosts nodded and vanished into thin air. Then Maya turned to the kid. "Help me get into my room, Mouse." They moved into the bedroom and unwrapped the towel. Elliot carefully laid Maya on top of the bed as two of the ghosts reappeared with a first-aid kit.

The ghost that's dressed up as a scientist examined her arm. "This is bad. You have five fractured bones as well as torn muscles," he said. "Are you sure you don't want to see a live doctor?"

Maya joked. "You are close enough to one, Colt. Just make it quick as usual."

Colt sighed. "As you wish." He held her arm up and began to twist it in multiple directions. Maya held her tongue down so she won't scream in pain as her bones cracked even louder. Elliot held her other hand to reduce the pain but she was stronger than he expected and nearly had his hand crushed. Once the final crack was heard, Colt gently laid her arm down. "I reconnected all the fractured bones and torn tissues together. It will take time to heal and gain movement again. I would recommend to not run into any fights for a few weeks."

Maya huffed in pain as the female ghost wrapped bandages around her arm. "Thank you, Colt. Please send the data to Dr. Malcom." He nodded and disappeared.

Once the female ghost was finish, she smiled at Maya. "All done, Maya. Is there anything else you want me to do?"

“Thanks Bina,” Maya smiled back. “Do you mind showing our newest member around the place? Maybe give him something to eat, also.”

“Okay. Please get well soon,” Bina spoke in a soft voice. She turned to Elliot. “Please follow me...”

Elliot followed the spirit outside the room. He didn’t realize how big the suite was until now. There was enough room to have a pool table, a drink bar, an arcade room, a complete dining room table set, and a Jacuzzi. “Wow. I can’t believe this hotel have so much cool stuff,” Elliot said in amazement.

The ghost laughed. “I’m glad you like this place. The scenery up here is wonderful, too. Would you like anything to eat?”

He shook his head. “I lost my appetite at the apartment. But thank you.”

“Very well,” she smiled. “Would you like to rest, too? There is an extra bedroom. I believe it would suit you more than us”

Elliot sat in one of the chairs. “Maybe in a few minutes, I just have too many stuff running around in my head right now.”

“I see. Well, if you need anything, don’t be afraid to ask us,” Bina said and she started to walk away.

“Wait,” Elliot said. “There was something I want to ask you before I forget.” The ghost sat next to him and waited. “Why are you working with my aunt? I mean, what does she really do? Fighting aliens seem pretty skeptic, especially at this time.”

The ghost giggled. “Maya’s right. You really ask a lot of questions. But we all have our reasons to do what we have to do. In fact, all four of us made a contract with Maya.” Bina moved up her bangs to show Elliot her damaged eyes where the veins were dark enough to see. “I lost my eyes from an alien parasite. The doctors couldn’t save me in time and I died on the operating table. Soon, your aunt found me and made a deal. She let me use her eyes anytime I want as I continue to serve her.” She moved her bangs back down. “The other three have their own contracts with your aunt. I know it’s weird, but it’s Maya’s job to eliminate the aliens. She agreed to do it. Please don’t blame her for killing people who were close to you.”

Suddenly, Andy popped up in the room. “I found another one nearby.”

Colt popped up next to him. “But Maya is unable to fight right now. We have to find a different approach.”

“I know,” Andy said. Then he turned to Elliot. “We are going to use the kid for now.”

Elliot panicked. “Wait! I just got here! I don’t know what’s going on?”

“Too late!” Andy spoke as he ran into Elliot’s body. His muscles tensed up as Andy spoke through Elliot’s mouth. “You’re our only choice. Colt, come with me. Bina, you stay here and watch over Maya.” Then Elliot jumped out of a nearby window while Colt followed behind.

They free-fall for a few minutes and then landed on top of another building without breaking any bones. “Holy crap! Are you trying to kill me?” Elliot whined.

Andy laughed. “Don’t worry. I’m from the military. You’re safe in my hands.” They leaped between buildings like a free-runner. “Plus you need more muscles in your body. I can’t work with a weakling like you.”

“Hey! I had no choice! You came into me first!” he cried.

“Oh, shut up, you two,” Colt scolded. “The faster we get there, the faster we will come back before Maya wakes up.”

Soon they arrived at a junkyard and hid between the piles of scrap. They sneaked around the place but didn’t find any aliens. “Are you sure there’s one here?” Elliot whispered.

“My instincts are never wrong,” Andy whispered back. “Maybe we’re not looking in the right place.”

Colt appeared in front of them. “There’s a human coming this way. I don’t believe he’s an alien.”

They looked closer as a drunken man wobbled around the junkyard. Elliot spoke first. “That’s Mr. Ellis, my history teacher at school. But what is he doing here?”

Colt explained. “I knew him before he was a teacher. Mr. Harlan Ellis, a former member of the C.I.A. He was once a bad-ass agent but he accidentally shot another member and got kicked out of the agency.”

“He never told us that,” Elliot said. “I can see why he started drinking.” The drunken man fell to the ground. “We should help him.” They moved over to the man as he began to sing random tunes.

“Hey, I just met you...” Harlan sung. “And this is crazy!”

“Great. Now we have to find the alien while having this karaoke guy with us,” Andy complained. “Maya will kill us if she knew about this.”

The drunken man stared at Elliot. “Hey, it’s you. Haha. Umm... Elliot Ray, the smart one in that class. Ha. What are you here? Want to sing with me?”

Elliot sighed. “You’re right, Andy. She will kill us. But we have to move Mr. Ellis to a safer place.”

“...But here’s my number...” Harlan continued. “So call me-” He pulled out a desert eagle pistol and shot something at one of the large crane machine. “Aliens!” Elliot jumped back as Mr. Ellis got up to his feet without staggering back. He smiled at Elliot. “If you’re here to kill one of these mother f*ckers, then welcome to the party, Elliot.”

Elliot panicked. “Mr. Ellis, what the hell is going on? I thought you were really drunk!”

The teacher pulled out a sawed off, side by side, break barrel, pistol grip with a ten gauge shotgun from the pile of junk. “Ah, here’s my shotgun, “Mr. Ellis said. “I could ask you the same thing. I only drink on the weekends. But these mother f*ckers only attack weaker humans so I had a few drinks tonight.” He loaded his shotgun and aimed at the crane machine again. “Care to join me in this fight, Elliot?”

Andy forced Elliot to pull out a sharp piece of metal from the pile and waved it around to get the feel of it. “I’m ready,” Andy spoke for him.

“Good. I’ll give you some extra credit for this when we come back,” Mr. Ellis smiled. One of the crane machines began to move toward them. He shot a round at the control seat and a figure fell out afterward. “We got to get up that crane!” he shouted.

The guys ran across the junkyard as more giant machines came to life. A huge magnet machine piled more scrap metals around them to prevent them from escaping. A pair of metal claws slammed between the guys, stopping them in their tracks. “You go on first!” Elliot shouted. “I’ll catch up later!” Mr. Ellis continued running as Elliot climbed onto the metal claws. The claws were pulled up all the way to the arm, then spin around to get the kid off. Elliot managed to hang on until he climbed onto the arm of the machine

and ran towards the control seat. Andy struck the piece of metal into the alien's head and kicked the body out of the machine. "One down!" he shouted as another crane moved close toward them. The alien smashed its metal claws into the side of Elliot's machine. "Crap! This isn't good!" Elliot screamed.

A third machine rolled next to the alien and crushed the entire control seat with a large metal ball. Mr. Ellis smiled from the machine. "Hey kid, you're still alive. That's great! Climb aboard!" Elliot leaped from one arm to the other and climbed down to Mr. Ellis.

"I didn't know you can work this thing," Elliot said.

Mr. Ellis laughed. "You'll be surprise at what we learned in the agency. There's one mother f*cker left. Ready to end this shit?" Elliot nodded as Mr. Ellis drove toward the last remaining crane. Mr. Ellis swung the metal ball at the alien but suddenly got tangled with the alien's claws. The two machines began to pull back with full force to break free. But the objects were nearly stuck together. "Well, this is a problem," Mr. Ellis said. "There's only one way to solve this." He turned to Elliot. "Can you fly, kid?"

"What?" he asked.

"Better fly now!" Mr. Ellis kicked him out of the machine. He put the machine in forward drive and climbed onto the arm with his shotgun. The alien dragged the entire machine back as Mr. Ellis ran across the arms and shot more rounds at it. "Die, you piece of shit!" The alien tried to escape as Mr. Ellis came closer until one of the bullets pierced through fuel tank and created an explosion. Pieces of burnt metal fell from the sky as the remaining parts of the machine were engulfed by the fire.

Elliot landed on the clear ground when the explosion was heard. He quickly got up to his feet and stared at the giant flames. "No, this can't be..." Elliot began to cry. "We have to find him! He can't die like this!"

Andy wouldn't let him go. Instead, he shook his head. "It's no use. Nothing could have survived that kind of explosion..."

Colt appeared next to them. "Harlan was a good man... More crazy than good..."

"Let's go home. We have already made a big mess here." Andy said and they left the junkyard. Elliot didn't say anything once they reached the hotel and stopped in front of Abel.

"Mister Elliot, what happened to you?" the mask questioned.

Andy spoke for him. "It was a long night. May we come in?"

Once the door opened, Maya was standing on the other side with an angry expression on her face while Bina hid behind her. "You stupid ghosts! How dare you leave without telling me? And on top of that, you dragged our only housekeeper into a dangerous situation! I shall punish you guys with all the firepower I have!"

Andy leaped out of Elliot's body as he fell to the floor. "We're sorry. It was a sudden idea and we're stupid to do it," Andy said.

Colt stood beside him. "We couldn't involve you under your condition. However, we did bring him back in one piece. Let's be thankful for his well-being."

Maya sighed in frustration. "Just put the kid to bed. I'll deal with all of you later."

"Oh, and just to let you know, we met Harlan Ellis at the site," Colt informed.

"I'm surprise he's still kicking more aliens' asses. How is he?" Maya asked.

The ghosts looked at each other then back at Maya. "He's dead, Maya," Colt said.

She stood straight up. “Well, that is a surprise... He was a great teacher. He would never let his students use his shotgun though... Thanks for informing me.” The ghosts nodded then moved the kid into the room as Maya jumped into the couch and buried her face into the pillow. “Him... of all people, he has to die...” she mumbled into the pillow as Bina sat beside her.

“Everyone dies, Maya...” Bina spoke. “That’s how life works... We can’t change it.”

“I know, I know...” she mumbled again. “One of G.H.O.S.T. rules: Accept it and move on.” The rest of the night continued to remain silent for the loss of their dear friend.

Project G.H.O.S.T Chapter 3-Ghost

Elliot Ray lied tiredly in bed as his aunt slowly entered the room. She placed his tray of breakfast on the nightstand as she sat next to him. She nudged him to wake up.

“Get up, Mouse. It’s already 12 in the afternoon,” Maya said.

“I’m so tired,” he mumbled. “Can’t I stay in for the whole day?”

“No!” she shouted as she jumped on top of him. “Your work starts today, so get up, you lazy bum! This is punishment for last night!” Then she pulled his ears.

Elliot jumped directly out of bed. “I’m up! I’m up! Just don’t hurt me again!”

Maya stood up. “Good. Now eat your breakfast and start cleaning up.”

He nodded. “Well, since you’re here, can you at least explain to me what’s going on?” She glared at him as he continued. “I mean, the stuff about the ghosts you have and the aliens that have been appearing lately. Even my mother’s final moments before she was turned into one.” He stared at her. “Please, I just want to know something.”

She sighed and crashed onto his bed. “Fine, I’ll tell you everything, but I will only explain this once.” He smiled at her. “It all started with the alien coming to Earth around 1941, during the Second World War. None of the countries realize this because they were too busy fighting and whatever your damn history teacher said. Soon there were strange reports of humans, who were thought to be dead, to have been walking around as if they weren’t. Some of them managed to return home and surprised their loved ones.”

“Alien zombies?” he asked.

She threw a pillow at him. “This isn’t a joke! Others also reported that these humans acted unusual than ordinary, such as, staring up at the sky at certain times in a day, digging into the ground with their bare hands, and eating cat food... lots of cat food. Somehow, this concerned the American government for the safety of the future. They managed to capture a few aliens to analyze their reason to come to Earth.” Maya turned to him. “It turns out that these aliens are going to wipe out all the humans and use Earth as their second home. As a result, the government finally did something good and created a project to annihilate all aliens. Thus, forming Project G.H.O.S.T. a team of superhuman soldiers dedicated to fulfill this mission.”

“I see, but why the ghosts?” he asked again.

“Because I like them,” she smirked. “Project G.H.O.S.T. stands for Generic Humans Obliteration Systematic Team. It doesn’t have to be actual spirits, as long as it’s beyond human performance. The reason I choose to have ghosts as my weapon is because of their spiritual energy. Aliens can easily mimic a human from their voice,

thoughts, and actions. With technology these days, it's difficult to detect an alien without mistaking them for a human. This is where spirits are helpful; they can feel a human presence rather than an alien."

"So, these aliens don't have a soul?" he questioned.

She nodded. "The government explained that these creatures' bodies perform differently than humans. I recommend keeping it like that to be easy for us soldiers to find. After killing what seems to be your mother, their Queen must be pissed off right now. Heh, she might want to meet us sooner than we expected." Then she dug in her pocket and handed Elliot an envelope. "This was from your real mother way before your 16th birthday. She kept feeling uneasy as if someone was watching her for a while and told me to save it for you. I believed her but I didn't know until I received the report." Maya stood up and patted Elliot's head. "She was glad that you weren't the one being target by them. I would rather keep it like that, too."

He smiled back. "Thank you, Maya..."

"Now you know everything," she said. "You can read that later, as of now, I am your legal guardian and my first order is for you to get off your lazy butt and start cleaning."

He laughed. "That's not how parenting skills work but I'm going to do it."

"Good," she smiled and then she left his room.

∞

Maya was sitting at the table drinking a cup of coffee and reading a newspaper while Andy surfed through the channels on T.V, Colt typing on his laptop, and Bina pulling tricks at the pool table. Elliot finally finished cleaning up the entire kitchen and stared at them. "This is probably why this place is so messy," he complained. "Because you guys are lazier than me!"

Andy laughed. "We, ghosts, are not supposed to do chores. It's not in our contracts. Besides, you're used to this stuff."

"But you're working so hard, Elliot," Bina smiled. "I would help you but Maya would yell at me again."

Maya stared back at him. "Think of this as a form of training. You got to start from the bottom and work your way to the top. And there are no short cuts."

He cried. "Maya, you really are evil!"

Bina appeared before him. "I know a way to cheer you up." She suddenly jumped into Maya. Soon her expression on her face changed into a cuter feature. Even her hair color has changed from brown to pink.

Maya smiled as a child. "Fill your dreams with sugar and rainbows!"

Elliot was shock. "No way! You're the famous pop singer, Princess Lollipop!"

"Yup, it's me Princess Lollipop," she giggled in a cute way. "And as a reward for your hard work I'm going to sing a song for you-"

Maya suddenly punched herself in the face as Bina flew out. "Like hell I would do that for him!" Maya shouted. "Don't ever possess me like that, Bina!"

"I'm sorry," Bina cried. "I thought it would cheer him up."

"The kid doesn't need cheering, he's not finish cleaning yet," Maya said.

"But I just realize something," Elliot spoke. "Your personality changes when one of the ghosts possesses you. I wonder what kind of person you are when Andy and Colt possess you."

Maya sighed. "Fine, after this you better start cleaning again." Andy flew into her first. Her muscles began to grow as she glared at the kid.

Andy spoke for her. "Even your aunt has more muscles than you, weakling."

"Stop calling me a weakling!" Elliot shouted. "So Andy gives you a high school jockey personality, I expected something like that."

"He's from the military," Maya explained in her own voice. "Now is Colt's turn."

The two spirits switched positions as her muscles grew smaller. Maya put on a pair of glasses as Colt's voice spoke through her. "Greeting, Elliot. It took you precisely 1 hour, 21 minutes, and 32 seconds to clean the kitchen. However, your progress is 1/8th of the suite."

"Umm... Thanks for that information," Elliot replied. "And Colt gives you very nerdy personality."

"I would say a very intelligent person," Maya explained again as the spirit flew out of her. "Now you have seen all of my personalities. Get back to work!"

Elliot pointed at the door. "What about Abel? Can he possess you, too?"

She thought for a moment. "Actually, he has never possessed me. Maybe it won't hurt to try now." They move toward the door as the mask appeared.

"How may I assist you, Madame Maya?" Abel greeted.

"Abel, can you possess me?" she asked.

"I can but it's not in my contract," he explained. "I can only become your doorkeeper, Madame."

"Just this once that you can break the contract," Maya said. "That's an order."

"Yes, Madame Maya. But I fear you won't like the personality I have," Abel said as he stretched out of the door. The mask turned into an orb and jumped into her. Maya stood still while Elliot and the ghosts waited.

Her eyes instantly shot wide open and punched Elliot in his face. Then she ran underneath the table and growled at them. As they moved closer to her, she growled even louder. "Get away from my table! This is mine!"

Elliot held his nose from the attack. "Maya? What's happening? It's like an opposite personality from Abel."

Soon, Abel flew out of Maya but she caught him in mid-air. She straggled and threatened him. "Abel, what did you do to me? If you ever do that again, I will rip the door of its hinges and throw it out the window!"

"My apologies, Madame Maya," Abel cried. "I was a guard dog in my previous life. This is why I agreed to be your doorkeeper. I only feel at peace when I am guarding something." Then the orb jumped back into the door.

Maya stood up and glared at Elliot. "Are you happy now? You got what you wanted. Now get back to cleaning!"

"Yes, ma'am!" he replied and then ran into the next room to clean.

A few hours later, Elliot cleaned half of the suite and leaped onto the couch to rest. Bina hovered above him and smiled. "How are you holding up?"

"I'm so tired," he mumbled. "Who would make such a big mess?"

"Maya, of course," she answered. "We ghosts don't eat or sleep. But we may move a few stuff around. So don't be scared if something goes missing."

"As long as I don't have to clean it up, it's good." He slowly sat up. "But I've been thinking about all of this"

She sat next to him. "Thinking about what?"

"About the aliens and the G.H.O.S.T. soldiers that Maya is in," he explained. "If I would have known this sooner, then my mother and Mr. Ellis wouldn't die... But now I was wondering if there was any way to prevent this from happening to innocent people. I'll do whatever I can to stop the aliens."

"But Elliot, you seen it yourself," Bina said. "The danger of these aliens is very serious. Not everyone can be a hero. It's safer for you to stay as a housekeeper."

He sighed. "It's hard enough to have the people I care about die in front of me. And the only thing I could do is watch. I wish I have the strength like Maya to protect them." Then he laughed at a thought. "Maybe, all I need is Andy's military training or Colt's smart brain to get by."

Bina cried. "What about me? You don't want my talent?"

"Umm... It's beautiful but I rather keep my hair color the same," he joked.

"You're so mean!" she cried louder as her punches flew straight through him.

Soon, Maya stood in front of them and glared at Elliot. "If you really want to have the strength like me, then you don't need my ghosts."

Elliot asked in surprise. "What do you mean? But Maya-"

"You are getting your own spirit," she answered. "I just finished talking to my boss and he allowed you to become a part-time G.H.O.S.T. soldier, due to my condition, but as long as you are under my supervision in all times."

He smiled happily. "Thank you, Maya. But where do I get my own spirit?"

"At Wal-mart. There's a demon who sells souls at a low price," she explained.

"Really? That's amazing!" he said.

She pulled his ears again. "No, you idiot! We are going to a church after school tomorrow. I'm dropping you off early in the morning, but be ready for a surprise."

He stared at her in confusion as Bina giggled. "What surprise?" he asked.

∞

The next morning Elliot was dropped off in front of his school as Princess Lollipop smiled and waved at him. "Have a great day at school, little Elliot!" she cheered. A few students pointed and laughed at Elliot as majority of them ran to the singer to ask for her autograph.

Elliot felt extremely embarrassed as Princess Lollipop continued to call out his name. He mumbled under his breath. "I think you're doing this on purpose, Maya. You must be enjoying this."

Princess Lollipop glanced at him and smirked. "Of course, I am enjoying this."

More students crowded around them until a girl's voice called out Elliot's name. Elliot moved out of the crowd and spotted the girl who was lightly running toward him. The girl stopped in front of him and gave him a kiss on the cheek. "Good morning, Elliot," the girl smiled. "I see that you have brought a lively crowd with you." Maya glared at them from the crowd of students.

He smiled back. "I didn't mean to. But this is my Aunt... Princess Lollipop."

Soon, Maya escaped from the crowd and joined Elliot. "Yup, it's me! I hope your morning is filled with sugar and joy," she smiled.

"Aunt, this is my girlfriend, Emily," Elliot introduced.

Maya was suddenly shock that he actually got a girl, and she's not even a bad one. Emily stared at the celebrity. "Omg! It's really you. I'm a big fan, Princess. I can't

believe that you and Elliot are related,” she squealed like another fan girl. “I feel so special that I’m dating a relative of a celebrity. I got to post this on facebook! May I have your autograph, please?”

Maya faked a smile. “Sorry, I’m super-duper busy today. Maybe I’ll catch you at another time. Have a wonderful and bubbly time at school.” Then Maya quickly jumped into her car and drove off as the crowd ran after her.

Elliot sighed in relief. “Finally, she’s gone.”

“Awe... I guess I can wait to get her autograph later,” Emily said. “But did you hear? Mr. Ellis is missing for two days now. The police couldn’t find his body anywhere.” Elliot stared at her in shock. His head replayed the scenes for the junkyard that night. Elliot couldn’t believe that he was completely gone. “There were rumors going around the school saying that he was taken by aliens.” Elliot gasped. “...Or probably move to another state. I don’t really pay attention to these things,” she smiled.

He sighed again. “Anyways... we should go before the bell rings. I already missed a day of work. Mrs. Gene will give me extra work because of it.”

Emily wrapped her arm around his and giggled. “She’ll probably triple the work since you have a celebrity for an aunt.”

Once Maya finally escaped from the group of fans, she stopped the car in the middle of a parking lot. Bina flew out of her and sat on the passenger side and smiled. “Well, wasn’t that fun?”

“Are you kidding me?” Maya glared at her. “He didn’t tell me that he have a lover. I don’t trust her one bit.”

The ghost laughed. “Are you jealous, Maya?”

She folded her arms. “I’m never jealous. I don’t care either as long as they don’t do anything bad.” Then she checked her phone. “My biggest concern is the limited amount of time Dr. Malcom gave me. Only 4 weeks to train Elliot into a full G.H.O.S.T. soldier. It won’t be enough time until the queen to arrive and destroy mankind.”

Bina stared at her. “Is it that’s why you let Elliot be involved in this project?”

Maya sighed. “It’s Dr. Malcom’s orders. I can’t refuse it no matter how much I hate it. But how would I cram 6 years of training into one month? He can’t even shoot a gun correctly!”

“Maybe just teach him the basic stuff,” Bina suggested. “I believe it would be faster if he meets other G.H.O.S.T. solders and agents, too. There’s got to be a few of them in this city.”

“Hopefully I won’t see the people I don’t like, especially those Cursed G.H.O.S.T.S ones,” she replied.

Bina giggled. “Aren’t you one of them, too, Miss Cursed Maya?”

She glared at her. “I’m the strongest one in the project. I don’t care about the other two Cursed idiots.”

“If Elliot can learn fast enough, maybe you won’t have to see them,” Bina smiled.

Maya started up the car. “Maybe if I beat the kid up faster than he learns, I don’t need to. Now let’s get to work, Princess Lollipop.”

Bina flew back into Maya. Then the celebrity giggled. “Oh, how I miss being alive again.” They drove back into the city to speak with the record producer and waited until the final bell at Elliot’s school.

Project G.H.O.S.T. Chapter 4-Cross

Emily Robertson kissed Elliot on his cheek once school has ended and soon went their separate ways. Elliot hopped into the car as Princess Lollipop smiled at him. “So, did you have a great time at school?”

He nodded. “It’s good. But I still can’t believe you would embarrass me like that. Now everyone is asking me for your autograph.”

Maya smirked as Bina flew out of her body once they pulled out of the parking lot. “Welcome to the life of popularity. Enjoy the fame until everyone forgets. However, there are rules you can’t break. And if you do break them, I will have you punished on a whole new level.” Elliot stared at her in fear as she continued. “The first rule is to keep all of this a secret. Don’t tell your friends about this project or the aliens. We would like to keep society under control for such crisis as this. The second rule is to not jump into every fight.” Then she glared at him. “It would be a waste of time. There are agents and soldiers lurking everywhere. One of them will take care of it. The third rule in any situation is to LISTEN TO ME!” she shouted in his ear. “I don’t care if the alien is dead or not. If I say shoot, you’ll pull the trigger. And if I say run, you’ll run like hell.” He nodded as she stared back onto the road. “And finally, the fourth rule is to never mix your feelings in a fight. These aliens won’t stop and cry because you’re human. They won’t hesitate to kill you either.”

“This sounds like a cold-blooded killer life, Maya,” Elliot pointed out. “Are you sure you’re not shooting people for fun?”

“Heh, if I was one I would have killed you a long time ago,” she joked.

“Anyways, these are the basic rules of the project. It should be easy for you to remember. If not, let me drill it into your head with pure torture.”

Elliot faked a laugh. “Hopefully, I won’t forget. Being a housekeeper for a relative celebrity who kills aliens with ghosts is torture enough.”

“Don’t worry. I can make it even worse for you,” she smiled evilly as they stopped in front of a small church. “Anyways, this is where we are going to get your own spirit, the Church of the Holy Spirit.”

They entered the building as a middle-age man holding a bible stopped in front of them. The man smiled kindly. “I never thought I would see you again, Maya. Are you here to give in to the life of peace with the rest of society?”

Maya quickly bowed. “Oh Presley, you know I couldn’t find my own peace just yet. But I came here for a favor from you.” Then she pointed at Elliot. “He wants to make a contract with a spirit for an important reason.”

The man glanced at Elliot then turned around. “Please come into my office. It’s safer to discuss this matter.” Maya and Elliot followed the man into another room. He locked the door behind them and then took his seat behind his desk as the two took their own seats. “Let me introduce myself to you, young man, I’m Father Presley Gannon of the Church of the Holy Spirit.”

Elliot introduced himself. “Elliot Ray, Maya’s nephew.”

“I’m surprised to hear one of Maya’s relatives is doing well,” Presley said.

“Hey! What are you trying to imply here!” Maya shouted, and then she turned to Elliot. “Did you know that Presley used to be a G.H.O.S.T. soldier too? He was one of the best people that I liked. If he would have been the strongest out of all of us.”

Elliot gasped as the priest replied. “However, I retired before that would have happen. I do not wish to continue down the blood-stained path. Violence is never the answer. I am a man of peace now.”

Maya folded her arms and stared at Presley. “So what is the real reason for your new life? I thought you would be in a bigger church surrounded by nice people.”

Presley stared back at her. “The Lord has created every living being for a reason and the aliens are a part of his creation. This concludes that the war against these aliens is pointless. So I have decided to become a man of God to repay for my sins. A church is still a church for God’s people.”

She glared at him. “Or is it that you can’t escape from the government? There are a few agents around to monitor you. Is that why you have brought us into your office? Face it, you can’t escape the life of a G.H.O.S.T. soldier. Maybe it was a sign from God.”

“Stop it, you two!” Elliot snapped as the two adults stared at him in shock. “There’s no point in arguing like this.”

Presley sighed. “He really does take after you, Maya. Still, I do not wish to work for the government.” Elliot frowned. “However, if a friend of mine asks for my help, I cannot refuse their request.”

Elliot smiled in joy. “Really? Thank you very much Father Presley!”

“But it won’t be an easy process,” Presley explained. “Finding a compatible spirit may take weeks to complete if you done all the instructions correctly. So, Elliot, are you sure you want to go through with this?”

He nodded. “I’m ready.”

The father stood up and walked over to the door. “Please follow me outside.” Maya and Elliot followed him to the back of the church. Elliot gasped at the site of a graveyard that was ten times bigger than the church. Rows of tombstones and crosses all stood firmly into the harden ground. “Welcome to the cemetery of the church. There are a limited number of souls that may help you. But I doubt you would find the one you need.” Presley took a bowl of holy water and drew a cross on Elliot’s forehead. “This will prevent any souls from possessing you. Now listen to my instructions. Walk around the cemetery and find a spirit. Do not be fooled by their appearance or their words. An aggressive spirit will drown you into madness and a weak soul won’t do any better.”

“Don’t forget the contract,” Maya added. “You need to negotiate with the spirit. These souls are stuck on Earth because they have unfinished business.”

Elliot nodded. “Wish me luck then.” He started walking through the graveyard. Spirits, shadows, and orbs appeared around him as he walked by. Most of the ghosts stared at the human as a few ignored him. The brave ones moved up to Elliot and began to speak.

“Looking for something?” an ugly spirit asked. “Pick me and I will help you find it.”

“No!” shouted a shadow. “Pick me and we can rule the world!”

An ogre size ghost stopped in front of him and growled. “Give me your soul!”

Elliot ran away from them as the spirits chased after him. “No! Get away from me!”

Maya laughed at Elliot. “Haha. Look at him run! This may be my new punishment for him. I like it.”

“This may take longer than I expected,” Presley spoke. “Are you sure this will be best for that kid?”

Maya sat on the steps of the church. “Nope but this is the safest way for him. He is now a G.H.O.S.T. soldier in training. Besides, you’re good at stuff like this. I can’t think of anyone better than you.”

“Or maybe you’re just lazy to help him,” he smiled. “You never change, do you? Well, if he really becomes a soldier, do me a favor as a fellow companion.”

She stared at him. “If you’re asking me to turn him into a priest, I won’t do it.”

He laughed. “That’s not what I wanted but good choice.” Then he got serious. “You know the consequences of being one of the strongest soldiers very well. Once the title was earned, there is no way to end it. Don’t make him be a Cursed soldier like you.”

“I know...” she sighed. “I don’t plan on making him into one. He’s not into the life of ruthless killings or violence. All he wanted was a simple prevention for society.”

“I won’t blame him,” Presley said. “That’s what everyone wanted.”

Elliot wasted about an hour and a half walking around the graveyard as the ghosts continued to talk to him. “I’m not going to pick you guys,” Elliot said. “Now leave me alone.”

“Pick me! Pick me!” the ghosts pleaded. “We can help you. We want your soul! We won’t eat you. Please pick me!”

“No!” he shouted again. “So stop following me!”

The ghosts became angry. “If you don’t choose us then we’ll eat your soul!” Then the ghosts rushed toward Elliot. He began to run again through the cemetery until a figure stood between him and the angry spirits.

Elliot stopped to see a large dog growling at the spirits as they stopped too. Soon the ghosts turned back around and returned to the field of tombstones. “What just happened?” Elliot asked. Suddenly, the dog collapsed to the ground as he ran to it. Elliot looked closer at the dog and realized that it wasn’t an ordinary animal. This creature had white fur with tattoo-like symbols in a shape of flames on its head. It huffed in pain. “You’re hurt,” Elliot said. “Let me help you.” The dog slowly stood up and walked away from him.

“That creature doesn’t belong to the church,” Presley spoke behind Elliot. He glanced at the priest. “However, he did protect you from those spirits.”

“What was that?” Elliot asked. “He looked pretty injured.”

“I can’t be too sure but the creature is always waiting by a certain grave nearby,” Presley explained. “None of the other spirits would be near it which is pretty strange to me. Well, it’s getting dark. You should go home and rest and continue another day.”

He shook his head. “Can I at least check it out? I want to help him.”

The priest glanced at him. “Fine, if your aunt doesn’t mind waiting a little bit longer for you.”

Elliot smiled again. “Thank you, Father Presley.” Then he searched for the dog until he reached the end of the cemetery. The dog sat in front of a grave with a concrete cross above it. As Elliot moved closer toward it, the creature growled at him. He held his hands up. “I won’t hurt you. I’m just here to thank you for saving me earlier.” The dog turned back to the grave as Elliot slowly moved closer until he can read the engravings on

the cross. "Here lies Francis M. Louis, a father, husband, and friend." He sat next to him and stared at the grave. "So, this must be your master?" The dog glared at him. "It's okay. I've lost a few people myself. My mother was one and so has my history teacher."

Suddenly a voice echoed in his head. "...Are you sad?" Elliot was shocked as the dog continued to stare at him.

Elliot replied. "A little bit." The dog turned back to the grave. "But I have others who are still alive and I'm glad to have them by my side."

"... What if they left you, too?" the voice spoke again. "... What will you do?"

He thought for a moment. Maya and her ghosts, Emily, and his other friends flashed in his mind. Then he answered. "I will be even sadder... But I know I have to keep on living for them."

"...Wise choice..." the voice said. "... However, I could not do the same..."

Elliot stared at him. "...My master promised me that he would return so I can be free..."

"I don't think waiting for him is worth it," Elliot spoke.

The dog suddenly pushed him to the ground and growled. "How dare you mock my master!"

Elliot got up to his feet. "Sorry... but no one could return back from the dead. So, basically you're already free." The dog stopped growling and sat back down.

"... You're a weird human..." the voice spoke again. "I won't believe you..."

He couldn't help but to laugh. "As long as I'm not scary like my aunt."

Soon Presley appeared and ran towards them. "Elliot, we have to go back to the church. A large group of aliens are on their way here. Maya just left to fight them."

"At a time like this? Let me fight too," he demanded.

"No, Maya left you in my care. You can't fight without a spirit. We have to leave now," Presley explained.

Elliot didn't refuse. He glanced at the dog who sat silently by the grave. "Fine, let's go back to the church."

Bina waited back at the church once the guys made it out of the cemetery. The larger spirits emerged out of the ground and moved into position as if they were ready to fight also. "Maya can't hold the aliens off. There's too many of them and not just the regular ones. They have stronger reinforcement than ever before," Bina informed.

"There's no time to barricade the windows and doors," Presley said as they entered the church. "The spirits of the cemetery won't hold the enemies as much either. That leaves only us to fight back." Presley ran into his office and pulled out a large box with the label G.H.O.S.T. on top of it. He opened the box to see the collections of firearms and daggers.

Elliot gasped. "I thought you were a man of peace!"

"I am," Presley answered as he handed Elliot a revolver. "Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 12, *If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city.* Meaning a man of peace can fight back." The man quickly equipped himself and walked over to the middle of the church. "Now, if you don't mind to stay low for a while, I shall eliminate the enemies of my church." Soon, screams and crashes were heard from the cemetery and grew louder and louder each minute. Elliot and Bina hid behind the last pew as the priest said a little prayer. "Our Father... who art in Heaven, hallow thee thy name..."

Suddenly, all the windows shattered instantly as six large figures crashed into the church. These were no ordinary aliens; these were tank-size monsters with a large mouth that can eat an entire human. Elliot panicked. “What the hell are those? They’re hideous than the other ones!”

“It’s the reinforcement,” Bina explained. “Now keep quiet and watch the professional do his work.” Elliot shut his mouth and stared at Presley as the monsters began to run toward him.

“Thy Kingdom come...” Presley continued as he pulled out two pistols and shot the first monster in its mouth as it collapsed before reaching him. “Thy will be done...” Then he pulled out a dagger and struck the second beast in its throat as green blood spilled onto the floor. It shrieked in pain as Presley drove the dagger straight up through the monster’s head. “On Earth as it is in Heaven...” The third monster flew above him but Presley dived out of the way and shot a few more rounds at it. “Give us this day our daily bread...” The fourth monster torn one of the pews and threw it at the priest. “And forgive us our trespasses...” Presley shot the pew in half and threw a dagger straight at the fourth monster. The dagger pierced into the monster’s head as Presley ran towards it and forced the dagger deeper into its skull. “As we forgave those who trespass against us...” He pulled the dagger out of the monster as the fifth creature ran towards him from behind. Presley shot at its legs until the monster face-planted into the ground and slid toward him. He pulled out a second dagger and stabbed into both of the monster’s eyes. It roared in pain until Presley sent more bullets into its brain. “Lead us not into temptation...” The last monster smashed into the ground and shook the entire church. “But deliver us from evil...” The creature roared and threw large pieces of the broken concrete at him. The priest dodged all of the pieces and jumped high into the air as if he was flying with a third dagger in his hands. The monster was too slow to catch him. Soon, the dagger began to cleanly tear through its head and continued straight down the body as a wave of green blood gushed out of it. The final monster fell onto the ground as Presley stood up without any problems and smiled at Elliot. “Amen.”

Elliot hopped up onto his feet and cheered to see such actions. “That was awesome! All six monsters were dead in ten minutes! No wonder Maya liked you. You fight like a true soldier!”

Presley laughed. “Well, thanks but now I’m covered in their blood. How am I going to explain to the dry cleaners when they see this?”

The kid laughed too. “You’re a man of peace. I hope they would understand.”

Suddenly, a regular alien appeared behind Elliot with a sharp piece of glass in his hand. Presley or Bina couldn’t save Elliot in time as the alien held the glass above him. “Die, human!” the alien screamed. In a split second, a white figure leaped from the broken window and attacked the alien to the ground as the glass fell out of his hand.

Elliot instantly turned around to see the large dog with the flame tattoo as it tore the flesh out of the enemy. “It’s you!” Elliot gasped. Once the alien stopped moving, the dog glanced at Elliot. He couldn’t help but to smile. “You saved me again. Thanks.” The dog rubbed its fur against Elliot’s hand.

The voice echoed in the air. “Indeed, you are a weird human... But you’re the one who saved me... Thank you...”

Presley looked closely at the dog. “I see you both gotten really close in a short time. But something has been bothering me about the dog. What kind of spirit are you?”

The dog turned to the priest. "I'm a Guardian Spirit that once protected a shrine for God... But now I'm a free spirit..."

"That explains why you're a powerful spirit," Presley said. "Well, you are always welcome into my church... or what's left of it anyways." The church was half damaged as well as the cemetery behind it. The ghosts in the graveyards were happy that they fought the aliens as a few cowered in fear.

The dog nodded. "If it's possible... I wish to fight along side with this human..."

Elliot was shocked by the dog's words as Presley smiled. "That's fine. But as long as you both agree to fight for peace and attend Sunday mass."

"Don't worry," Maya's voice spoke from the torn door. They glanced at her as she walked in with a smirk on her face. "I will force them to help rebuild this church, too, as a payment for your service, Presley."

Bina jumped for joy as Elliot shivered at the thought of more punishment from her. "Welcome back, Maya," Bina smiled. "How did the fight go?"

"All I got were a bunch of weaklings," Maya said. Then she stared at the dog. "So this is who you pick, Elliot?" Her nephew nodded. "What's your name, spirit?"

The dog stared back at her. "Sentinel..."

"Nice name," Maya smiled. "Now hurry up with the contract so we can go home."

"Pushy as always, Maya," Presley joked. Then he turned to Elliot and Sentinel. "I would like you two to meet my very own spirit." Soon a beautiful angel appeared next to him. The angel glowed brightly as she stretched her wings out. Elliot and Sentinel stared in surprise as the angel smiled at them. "This is Grace. She's the one who actually defeated those aliens."

"It's a pleasure to meet you," Grace smiled. "Now we're going to begin the contract." She summoned a piece of paper and a pen and handed it to Elliot. "This will state that you and your spirit are bonded under any organization you are in. You and your spirit have the right to cancel this contract for any reason. Now sign your name and your spirit's name to complete the contract." Elliot signed his name as Sentinel stomped his paw on the paper. Grace rolled up the contract and smiled again. "The contract will be safe with me. Now I pronounce you human and spirit. You may now destroy all aliens."

Elliot laughed. "That was easy."

"Of course, it was," Maya said. "She's an angel for a reason. Anyways, it's getting late and you have school tomorrow." Then she dragged Elliot by his ear. "Say bye to Presley and Grace. We're leaving now."

Elliot spoke from the pain. "Thanks for everything! Ow, my ear!"

Presley laughed. "Well, it's great to see you, Maya, Elliot, and Sentinel. Don't worry about rebuilding the church. We can fix it ourselves. But my offer still stands for a peaceful life, Maya."

"I wouldn't count on it," Maya replied as she dragged Elliot out the door as Bina and Sentinel followed behind. "I'll see you later, Presley."

Presley and Grace waved once they hopped into the car and drove out of the parking lot. "They're really funny people," Grace giggled. "No wonder you like them"

"I know," Presley smiled back. "That what friends are for."

Project G.H.O.S.T. Chapter 5-Phantom

Sentinel and Elliot spent the next eight days training to become G.H.O.S.T. soldiers. However, Maya's trainings aren't very easy to overcome. Each day, the guys have to do house chores in the morning before school and then run five miles after school. Next, they must complete a series of tests which includes running through an obstacle course with a maze made up of electrical fences, dodging fireballs that are flying towards them, and shooting cut-outs of the aliens all while carrying a 75 pounds doll on their backs. The course takes nearly three hours to complete and finishes off with a boss fight with Maya in her possess form. Unfortunately, the guys couldn't beat her every time they made it out of the course. Maya laughed at them as they lay on the ground tiredly. "Is that all you got? Hahaha. Even with a strong spirit, you can't win against me."

"A weakling will always be a weakling," Andy joked.

"But Maya," Bina cried. "They have been training more than a week now. Shouldn't you let them take a break?"

"They did progress a lot in a short amount of time," Colt added.

Maya folded her arms. "I suppose so. You guys did make it this far, except the fact that you guy didn't complete the entire course. And I have to catch up on Princess Lollipop album." Bina smiled as the guys slowly sat up. "So tomorrow you guys will have your every first break."

Elliot cheered. "Seriously? No more torture for us! Yeah!"

"What a great day it will be," Sentinel spoke.

"But I wouldn't waste that day if I were you," Maya glared at them.

They replied in agony. "Yes, Maya..."

On the first day of their break, Maya allowed them to sleep in for one hour. It wasn't much but they enjoyed their sleep. Once their time was up, Andy appeared and abruptly threw them both out of the bed to wake them up for breakfast. They manage to get to the dining table before being bullied by Andy again. Bina served their breakfast as Maya drank her coffee while reading the newspaper. "Good morning, you two," Maya smiled. "I hope you're enjoying your break so far."

Elliot stared at her while being half-sleep. "Have you ever considered an alarm clock that doesn't throw people out of bed?"

Maya laughed. "Don't be silly, Elliot. Andy was just doing his job. Now eat your breakfast. We have a big day today."

He took a bite out of his plate of pancakes. "What's today? I hope it's not going to be more training."

Maya stared at the time. "Wait for a few seconds and you will see."

Elliot and Sentinel waited in silence until a woman in a business suit busted through the front door of the suite without talking to Abel. She shouted. "Maya! This is where you were hiding the whole time! How dare you didn't contact me when you came to the city?"

Maya smiled back at her. "And hello to you, Kendra. I was busy with my work and forgot to tell you."

"Geez, making me run around the entire city like that." The woman walked over to the table and took a seat across Elliot. "And who is this kid? I hope you didn't kidnap him to become your slave."

“Hahaha. Not even close!” Maya laughed. “This is my nephew, Elliot Ray. Elliot, this is Princess Lollipop’s manager and C.I.A. member, Kendra Keller.”

Kendra looked closely at him. “Nephew, huh? This gives me a new idea for Princess Lollipop.”

“Oh crap, not again,” Maya said as she shook her head.

Elliot glanced at the woman. “What is it?”

“You’re going to be Princess Lollipop’s sidekick who defends the Sugarland Kingdom,” Kendra explained. “And your name will be Sir Eat-a-Lot!”

Instantly, Elliot violently choked on his breakfast as Maya refused. “No. Besides, Princess Lollipop can defend the kingdom herself, even if I have to shoot the other competitor in the face.”

Kendra laughed. “I was just kidding there. But still...” She stood up from her seat and shouted at Maya. “WE HAVE A CONCERT IN THREE DAYS! And you’re not even preparing for it! What have you been doing all this time?”

“Don’t worry. The concert will be easy, at least we took some of the alien problems,” Maya said.

Kendra whined. “And you’re not taking this serious, Maya... The purpose of you being a famous pop star is for the alien problem. The agency will fire me if you continue to run around the city without telling me. And they’re waiting for your new album.”

“Fine,” Maya sighed. “Let’s go to the record producer so you can stop crying.”

“Yes! You’re the best, Maya,” Kendra cheered.

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Princess Lollipop entered the record producing building while dragging Elliot along. Everyone in the building stared at the pop star as a crowd of paparazzi surrounded them. The idol poses for them as Elliot was getting blinded by the flashes of the cameras. “I told you we were going to have a big day,” Maya whispered to Elliot. “Now smile and wave.”

Elliot automatically waved as he whispered back. “How long do we have to do this? This was supposed to be our day off.”

Princess Lollipop struck more poses with Elliot. “Don’t be silly, Sir Eat-a-Lot,” she said cheerfully for the crowd. “Together, we will take over the world with sweets and joy!” The fans cheered louder as the cameras flashed even brighter.

“Not so fast, Sugar Brain!” a female voice spoke from the other side of the building. The crowd became quiet as a blonde girl moved closer with an evil smile on her face. “Better shed off those extra pounds before you take over. I wouldn’t want a fat woman to be my leader. Heh, here’s a better idea. I will rule this world for you!”

The crowd cheered for her as they ran toward her. “It’s Dark Butterfly! She’s strikingly beautiful! We love you!”

“Dark Butterfly?” Elliot whispered to Maya. “The famous alternative metal singer?”

She smirked. “Yup and Princess Lollipop’s arch rival.” Princess Lollipop stood firmly and smiled at her. “Oh, Dark Butterfly, I’m happy to see you here. I hope that little break-up with the guitarist didn’t rip your tiny wings off. Face it, you can’t handle this world.”

Everyone gasped in horror as anger built up inside Dark Butterfly. She stood face-to-face with Princess Lollipop and grinned. "Huh, what did you say, Princess Fatty? Are you trying to start a war?"

"If I was starting a war, you'll be the first one to die, Dirt Worm," Princess Lollipop fake smiled. The tension in the room grew tense as the crowd cheered for them to fight. Elliot thought about stopping the fight but Maya would probably beat everyone in the room in matter of seconds.

Soon, Kendra walked into the building after taking a phone call and spotted the crowd of people surrounding the two singers. "Oh crap, not again," Kendra sighed.

A few minutes later, the two singers ended up in a conference room without starting a fight. They sat away from each other and never made any eye contact as Kendra and Elliot sat between them. The president of the building entered the room with a smile. "Welcome back, you two. I do enjoy that lively scenario in the lobby earlier."

"You were in the crowd, too, President!" Kendra shouted.

He laughed. "I was? Hehe, it was so good I couldn't help myself. Now let's get down to business. I know the concert for Princess Lollipop was scheduled in three days but I have an amazing idea to make it more special."

Both Princess Lollipop and Kendra shook their heads. "Oh crap, not again."

Dark Butterfly and Elliot stared at the President as he spoke. "Would it be great if we have the two of the best singers in the nation to participate at this concert? It will be a big surprise for the audience."

Dark Butterfly folded her arms. "No. I rather date the guitarist again than to sing with her."

"We have only three days, President," Kendra said. "How are they going to sing one song together on such a short notice?"

"I don't know," the President smiled. "Anyways, I got other business to attend to. You girls are very smart, make something work. Sir Eat-a-Lot can help too. Have fun." Then he exited the room leaving them in silence.

"Why am I still being called Sir Eat-a-Lot?" Elliot asked.

"Great. More work for us to do," Kendra complained as the two singers never looked at each other. "Ugh... Can you guys stop with this ego crap and get serious?"

Princess Lollipop sighed. "I guess the gig is up. Shall we end this charade?"

She nodded slowly. "Fine. But I won't lose to you next time." Soon the spirits escaped out of their bodies as the girls transformed back into their original selves. Maya's hair became brown again as Dark Butterfly's hair changed from blonde to black. Even her facial expression changed from being aggressive to a shy young girl.

Elliot was shocked. "Dark Butterfly can transform, too!"

"She's also a G.H.O.S.T. soldier," Maya answered. "She's not one of the strongest but she is very helpful."

Suddenly, the girl hid behind her chair and cried as Maya glared at her. "I'm sorry, Maya! Please don't punish me!"

"Heh, I'm not going to punish you," Maya spoke. "Well, as long as that spirit of yours is under control."

Suddenly, a pure white unicorn appeared beside the girl. "Then you can kiss my fairy tail ass!" the unicorn threatened her. "Don't you dare hurt my master!"

"A real-life unicorn!" Elliot shouted in surprise. "And it cursed Maya out!"

“Haha, not to worry,” Maya laughed. “By the way, Elliot, I would like you to meet little Miss Ava Nyx, a third ranking soldier in the project and her spirit, Scarlet. Ava, this is my nephew, Elliot.”

Elliot calmly smiled at the girl. “Nice to meet you, Ava.”

She slowly moved from the chair and bowed toward him. “It’s nice too meet you too. I apologize for Scarlet’s actions.”

“Don’t sympathize for them,” Scarlet scolded. “I can control myself.”

Kendra jumped into their conversation. “Wonderful! Now what about the concert that’s coming up? The President wants an awesome concert from you two!”

Maya pulled out a notebook and tossed it to her. “Ava and I already planned out the event before we came here. Every detail is in the notebook so all we need to do is set everything up.” Then she smiled at Kendra. “You worry too much. Maybe you should take a vacation after this.”

Kendra cried into the notebook. “Maya! Why are you doing stuff behind my back? This is stressing me out.”

“Sorry, Kendra,” Ava spoke softly. “Maya wanted to surprise you about it.”

“Well, just to sum things up for you guys, Ava will have her own solo in the middle of the concert. Scarlet’s magic will trap the innocent people in another dimension and will erase their minds afterward. That is when Elliot and I attack the enemies,” Maya explained.

Elliot stared at her in surprise. “Really? I get to fight this time!”

“Don’t get too excited, kid,” Maya answered. “We have to kill them quick. Ava’s magic won’t hold a large crowd of people over 20 minutes. She can’t defend herself when the song is still going on. Yet, we don’t know the exact number of aliens that are attending. Just follow my signal and everything will work out fine.”

“Let’s better hope so,” Kendra said. “Everyone’s lives are in your hands now.”

∞

On the night of the concert, the stadium was filled with over 400 people who were cheering for Princess Lollipop. Elliot and Sentinel watched the crowd from backstage as Princess Lollipop was getting ready. “You like the crowd tonight, Mouse?” Maya asked.

“I can’t believe you have so many fans when Bina is with you,” Elliot replied. “If you didn’t have her, you’ll probably punch everyone in the face right now.”

Maya laughed. “Andy and Colt are dying to do that to the fans. They hate to share Bina’s beauty with the enemy. Anyways, the show is about to start. Remember to wait for my signal or else I will punch you in your face for every enemy that escaped.”

“Yes, Maya,” he said. Then Elliot and Sentinel move to their position.

As the lights in the stadium dimmed down, the music began to start and the colorful lights flashed and moved across the audience. Suddenly, Princess Lollipop was lowered down by a platform and began to sing her song. The crowd roared louder and waved glow sticks in the air. “Let’s get this party started!” she sang. The fans even sang along as Elliot and Sentinel enjoyed the music.

After the first song has ended, a girl’s voice echoed through the stereos as the lights flashed dramatically. The fans gasped in horror once they recognized who the voice was. “Muhahaha!!! We meet again, Princess Lollipop! How about I destroy your Kingdom and all of your people!” the voice laughed.

“Dark Butterfly!” Princess Lollipop shouted into the microphone. “I won’t let you destroy my kingdom! Come out and fight me!”

“Well, if you want to fight,” she smiled. Suddenly, a smoke bomb exploded on stage that scared half of the audience. Once the smoke cleared, the girl stood in the middle of the stage with her large butterfly wings. “I’m right here!” The fans cheered louder.

“I challenge you to a sing-off battle!” Princess Lollipop said. “The fans will decide who will win!”

Dark Butterfly smiled. “Don’t cry if you lose, Princess.” Then she started singing her famous song, *Blood Wings*.

“Not bad for a Butterfly, but I believe my voice is better,” Princess Lollipop smirked. Then she sang her *Gumdrop Party* song. The crowd cheered equally for both singers. “What? It’s a tie. You know what that means. Everyone is a winner! Hooray for everyone!” Princess Lollipop said happily.

“Whatever, I’m going to take over your concert,” Dark Butterfly spoke as she pushed her off the stage. “There can be only one winner here!” Then she began to sing her solo as Princess Lollipop hid backstage and signaled Elliot to be ready.

“We trained so hard for tonight. I won’t let this moment pass by.” He loaded his revolver. He glanced over at Sentinel. “Ready to kick some aliens butts, Sentinel?” The dog barked back and moved into position for the next signal.

Dark Butterfly continued to sing as the audience was fully caught into her song. “...Pour your blood out...And...” she sang. “Disappear!” Suddenly, the lights flashed brightly and blinded everyone. Once the flash was gone, half of the audience has vanished. Those who remained began to panic.

“Now, Elliot! They’re the enemies!” Maya shouted as she jumped off the stage and crashed into the audience. Andy flew into her as she snapped the bones of the aliens. Dark Butterfly continued to sing as if nothing was happening. The enemies began to morph into their ugly forms and fought back. Elliot and Sentinel both jumped off the stage too and attack the aliens who were running towards them. Sentinel clawed two aliens open as Elliot shot bullets into their heads. Green blood was splattered everywhere as they ran through the rows of seats. Maya was on the other side of the crowd where she took down over 50 aliens. But there were too many of them. Soon, she spotted a few aliens running toward the stage where Dark Butterfly was singing. “Shit!” Maya shouted. “Protect Ava!”

He turned to the stage where the aliens were climbing over the railings. Sentinel stood beside Elliot after he ripped one of the alien’s arms off. “Get on, Elliot!” Sentinel commanded. “We don’t have enough time to kill them all. We have to save her.”

Elliot hopped on his back and then they ran toward the stage, leaping over aliens and chairs to get there faster. Ava backed up slowly still singing her song as the aliens got on the stage. Soon a bullet flew straight through one of the aliens head as another was crushed by a large, white dog. “Ava, are you alright?” Elliot asked. She simply nodded as more aliens climbed onto the stage. Sentinel knocked five of them off the stage while Elliot shot the rest in the heads.

Soon, Maya jumped onto the stage and stood beside Elliot. “Her song is about to end. We got to finish this quickly,” Maya said. “If you got any special moves, do it now.”

Then she transformed into Princess Lollipop and grabbed a microphone. “Or else stay back and enjoy my show!”

“Don’t worry. We have one,” Elliot smiled as black flames appeared around Sentinel and him. The flames grew bigger and bigger that struck fear into the aliens. “Let’s go, Sentinel!” They ran through the crowd of enemies as they burned from the flames. The large dog tore open their flesh, spilling their blood on the floor. Elliot shot more bullets at the aliens who suddenly caught on fire. They eliminated majority of the enemies once Ava’s song began to end.

Princess Lollipop smiled at them. “You guys are doing a good job. But let the professional handle the rest.” Elliot and Sentinel returned to the stage as the black flames vanish from their bodies. The remaining aliens stared at Princess Lollipop and started to run toward her. Princess Lollipop began to sing the first note. “Velvet... Explosion...” Suddenly, the remaining aliens exploded as if there was a bomb implanted within them. Their blood and guts splattered everywhere as the missing audience returned back to existence. They didn’t notice the blood and guts around them as they cheer for the singers. Princess Lollipop and Dark Butterfly smiled at the roaring fans as Elliot and Sentinel stood on the side of the stage. Princess Lollipop spoke into her microphone. “Let’s party all night long!” The fans cheered louder as the girls sang another song together.

Once the concert was finally over, Ava, Elliot, Sentinel, and Maya rested at the hotel. The guys cleaned the aliens’ blood off of themselves as the girls sat at the table, drinking coffee. “Tonight was a success,” Maya said proudly. “I really like that special move, Elliot. Too bad you didn’t defeat me with that. And Ava, I’m glad you helped us out tonight.”

“I enjoyed working with you both. And so is Scarlet,” Ava smiled. “In fact, we will be station here for a few weeks.”

Maya smiled back. “I wonder why the boss put you here when there’s already a strong soldier like me.”

“The boss didn’t actually put me here,” Ava answered. “I’m here because the boss put Cursed Ryder here. And I’m his apprentice.”

Instantly, Maya choked on her coffee. “Ryder!? Why is he here? Why are you serving under him for?”

“The boss told him that you were here, too. So he moved into the city,” she replied. “He’s pretty cool for a master. Plus, he really wants to meet you again, Cursed Maya. He sent me here to invite you to our place.”

Maya folded her arms and mumbled angrily. “That kid doesn’t know when to stop following me. It would be a hassle to move again. Fine, I’ll accept your invitation.”

Ava stood up and smiled at her. “Great. I’ll see you later, Maya and Elliot. Bye everyone.” Then she left the room.

Elliot stood beside Maya. “Who’s Ryder? Another G.H.O.S.T. soldier? And what’s up with the whole Cursed thing?”

She nodded. “The Cursed soldiers are the strongest member in the project. Their only main purpose in life it to eliminate the target at all cost. There are only three members who gain that title.”

“And you’re one of them,” Elliot pointed out. “Ryder, too. But who’s the third one?”

“I rather not let you meet him,” Maya said. “He’s the biggest idiot in the project. I wouldn’t waste my time finding him. Now clean up and get to bed.”

“Alright,” he smiled. “Goodnight, Maya.” Then he went to his bedroom.

Maya rubbed her eyes as Colt appeared in front of her. “This maybe a faster way for Elliot to get stronger, don’t you think?”

“I know, but do I really have to depend on that fool?” Maya asked.

Colt sighed. “It can’t be helped. The queen might be coming sooner than we think.”

“Argh... Whatever, I’m going to beat him up anyways,” Maya complained and then she stood up from her seat. “Well, I’m going to bed. Night everyone.”

Project G.H.O.S.T. Chapter Six-Demon

Ava Nyx waited for Maya and Elliot to arrive by a popular celebrity club the next night after the concert. The place was blasting loud music as colorful lights flashed constantly. The people inside were dancing along with the beats while Ava move pass through them. She smiled at Maya and Elliot. “Welcome, it’s great to see you both again. Please follow me.”

They followed the girl toward the back of the club and entered a black door where the music stopped in an underground tunnel. “What is this? I didn’t know this city have an underground tunnel,” Elliot asked.

“This tunnel travels all over the city. This was meant for a way to escape the epidemic on the surface back in the 18th century,” Maya answered. “As of now, it has no use for anyone. Just another part of history to be forgotten.”

They moved further down the tunnel until Ava led them into a room with a few people wearing black hoodies and white masks. In the center of the room was a skinny man in skin-tight jeans and dark make-up lounging in a throne as if this was an underground cult of gothic people. He didn’t look up once they arrived. He sighed, “Ava, I thought I told you to buy more snacks for everyone. You took too long-” Then something caught his eyes and he stood up quickly. Suddenly, the man’s face grew a happy smile as he ran towards Maya. “I must be dreaming, am I? My Queen, my angel, my love has finally came for me-”

Maya drop-kicked the man on his head. “You’re so annoying!” she shouted.

Elliot half-smiled. “So this must be him.”

Ava nodded. “Yes, this is my master, Ryder Lilith. He controls everything in the tunnels.”

The man stood up and smiled again. “But Maya, I wanted to see you again. Did you miss me, too?”

“I’m not here to have a crappy reunion with you!” Maya replied. “We’re in a tight situation here, if you haven’t heard.” Then she pointed at her nephew. “This is my apprentice, Elliot. He needs to progress his training within the next two weeks.”

Ryder stared at the kid then back at Maya. “So this means...” Then he leaped towards Maya with a hug. “You really thought of me when you were away, Maya! Oh, how kind of you. My Queen, we should celebrate!”

Maya punched him in his guts to stop his hug. “Does anything get through that thick head yours?” she yelled. “I knew this was a bad idea. Elliot, we’re leaving now!”

“That was fast,” Elliot thought out loud.

“Wait, Maya!” Ryder pleaded while Ava helped him up. “I promise I will be serious from now on.”

She folded her arms. “Good, now you can drop the queen crap. The targets are still roaming around in this city.”

Ryder laughed. “You have a sharp eye, Maya. That’s why you’re my number one soldier in the project. But not to worry, I’ve already gotten some information on a few aliens. And the boss filled me in on the dire situation.” Then he looked at Elliot. “Since you both are my special guests, let Ava and I show you to our collection.”

Maya glared at him. “What collection?”

He smiled bigger. “It’s a surprise! Come and follow me.”

They walked deeper into the tunnels as they pass by more guys in black hoodies and masks. Elliot turned to Ava and asked, “Who are those people?”

Ava giggled. “These are humans who serve Master Ryder until the aliens disappear. Unlike Ryder and me, they don’t have any special spirits with them.”

“So they’re just regular humans,” Elliot pointed out. “What happen if one of them was target by an alien or turn into one?”

“That’s one of the main reasons they’re here,” Ava explained. “To be used as bait for the aliens.” The thought of sacrificing humans made Elliot frighten inside as Ava continued. “I do regret losing our members to the enemy, but it’s Master Ryder’s order.”

“Ha-ha. Don’t jump to conclusions like that,” Ryder laughed as her wrapped his arms around Elliot and Ava. “I made sure I recruited those who have nothing else to live for, even if I have to erase everything they have left.”

Elliot moved away from the guy. “What are you talking about? Putting innocent people in the enemy’s hands is wrong! Wasn’t this project meant to protect humans?”

Maya shook her head. “Elliot, don’t even bother asking him. He is called the Cursed Demon for a reason.”

Elliot stared at Ryder in surprise as he laughed even louder. “That’s a nice way to put it but not every one of my men is innocent. Majority of them are criminals who were thrown out of society. I made a few mind tricks here and there and soon I got myself a cult. So don’t feel sad for these people, they deserve to die for everyone’s sake.”

“He is a sick, cruel, and annoying man,” Maya added. “If I could kill him now, I would. But the agency needs him alive.”

Ryder cheerfully leaped toward Maya. “So you do like me!”

Maya punched him in the face. “Shut up! Hurry and get this over with.”

“Right away, my Queen,” Ryder said happily as he hopped toward the front of the group.

Elliot leaned over to Maya and whispered, “If you hate him so much, then why does he still like you? Is he a masochist?”

Maya sighed. “It’s because we went to the same high school together and I saved his life once. Now he won’t leave me alone. He is definitely a masochist without a doubt.”

“And I am forever in your debt, Maya,” Ryder added. “Even though, I saved your life, too.”

“That’s because you’re the one who put me in danger!” she snapped at him. “I told you not to follow me into that gang territory and you got in my way! I got suspended from school because of that!”

“Oh no, my Queen is angry again,” he frowned. “I bet this would cheer you up.” They soon stop by a large metal door where two of the masked guys were standing. One of the guys unlocked the door and slid it open to a jail cell hallway where both side of the halls were made up of cages. The entire room reeked of rotten flesh as a few of the lights were dimmed to match the mood of the area. Each cage had a deformed human with alien’s figures or bleed with green blood. Some sat motionless inside the cage as if they were already dead while the rest moaned in pain or attempted to escape but failed each time. “My Queen, this is my greatest collection. I call it the Thousand Freaks of Misery,” Ryder smiled. “Do you like it?”

Maya glanced around the place as Elliot tried not to vomit due to the horrible smell. “You collect aliens for your enjoyment by using your own men as bait, how messed-up are you?” she asked him. “However, you really exceeded my expectation ever since you joined the project.”

“So does this mean you will finally accept my love?” Ryder asked.

She refused. “No. I still hate your guts.”

“Maya...” he whined. “Well, if you’re still not happy about this then there’s something more you should know. I was pretty shocked when I found out about this.” Maya glared at him while Elliot and Ava waited in silence. “Their very own Queen has already arrived on Earth before the G.H.O.S.T. Project started.”

Maya’s eyes grew wide. “You mean to tell me this now that their Queen is already among us? But Dr. Malcom said that she will arrive in two weeks! This damn war could have ended sooner!”

Ryder held his hands up and smiled. “Sorry, Maya. But I recently found this out too. All these aliens I’ve captured were speaking in their own language and it took us awhile to decipher it. But to sum it all up, their Queen is missing and they’re here to find her. It was just a coincidence that this city became a hot spot for the aliens.”

“Missing?” Elliot asked. “They lost their Queen? How is that even possible?”

Ryder shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t know either but whoever this Queen is has caused a lot of trouble for all of us. I believe we should rephrase our motto from ‘destroy all aliens’ to just simply ‘kill the Queen’.”

Maya spoke next. “Does Dr. Malcom know about this?”

“He probably figured everything by now,” Ryder smiled. “Then we can have the whole team back together and destroy the entire race of aliens if we have to.”

Maya folded her arms. “In your dreams, Ryder. I refuse to work with you.”

Suddenly, a loud alarm went off and echoed in the tunnels. Maya and Ryder jumped into action as Elliot panicked. The masked men ran throughout the tunnels as Ava put on her headset to listen. She spoke, “Ryder, an intruder has broken into the west wing of the tunnel. It seems to be another species of the enemy but this one is very powerful.”

“If it’s that slender, flexible type then let our guests have fun with it,” Ryder smiled again. “I heard those don’t need any human disguises to begin with. But if our guests are up for the challenge, I won’t mind.”

Maya smirked. "You're very annoying, you know." She pulled out her guns as three orbs appear around her. "Making your Queen do all the dirty work, how pitiful are you?"

Ryder laughed. "You're heartless as ever. But I still like you." Soon a large scythe appeared in his hands. "Let's meet our other guest." They exited the collection room and ran toward the west wing where they heard a few of the men screamed in terror. Red blood splattered over the concrete walls and floor as the creature stood in the middle. It had no face and its arms were formed as blades. Somehow the creature managed to growl as it turned toward Elliot and Maya.

"Holy crap! What is that?" Elliot panicked.

"Don't know, but I rather have it dead," Maya answered.

The creature dashed toward them at an incredible speed that Elliot's eyes couldn't keep up. He managed to jump out of the way as Maya pointed her weapons at it and shot a few rounds. Sadly the bullets didn't affect the creature as it dashed toward them again. Maya growled, "Damn! My bullets aren't working. Andy, it's your turn!" One of the orbs flew into her, causing her muscles to expand. When the creature ran toward Maya for the third time, Maya punched the creature in its no-faced head and it flew back nearly 20 feet away.

Ryder stood on the sideline, laughing like a psychopath while Ava used her magic to help the masked men escape. "I would like to have that ugly freak in my collection," Ryder smiled. "But it seems more of their kinds are coming."

"If more are coming, that means their queen must be here too," Elliot pointed out.

"Bingo!" Ryder replied. "But you're still wrong. We checked the entire tunnel but there is no queen here."

Maya dragged the alien's corpse back. "Unless the queen was here before you came and probably left some clues behind." Then she stared at Elliot. "Summon Sentinel."

Elliot nodded and summoned his spirit. His shadow rose up like flames as a large white dog leaped out of it. "The clues of their queen? It sounds impossible to find," Sentinel spoke.

"I don't care," Maya replied. "We will split up into groups. Elliot, Ava, and Sentinel will search for the clues. Ryder and I will take care of these pieces of crap."

Ryder jumped for joy. "Really? Maya and I will be fighting together! This is my best day ever!"

Maya kicked Ryder in his stomach. "Just shut up and go! We will meet you guys later." Then she ran off into the direction where the alien had broken into while dragging Ryder behind.

Ava summoned her unicorn and jumped on top of it. "Let's go!" Elliot and Sentinel followed her in the other direction.

A few minutes later, Maya and Ryder stopped in their tracks as an army of aliens blocked a part of the tunnel. The slender ones, the tanks, and the regular aliens growled and stared at the two soldiers. "These little pieces of crap are so annoying," Maya said.

Ryder smiled, "Don't be angry, Maya. It looks like we got a party down here." Then he raised up his scythe. "But I don't like parties at all. And neither does my Leviathan." Soon a large sea monster appeared around Ryder and Maya as it roared at the

aliens. “Devour them, my demon of the sea!” The sea monster flew toward the group of enemy as they were crushed under its body.

Maya folded her arms. “You can’t have all the fun, Cursed Demon.” The three orbs that surrounded her merged into her body as she glowed in a bright light. Soon her entire outfit has changed into a more aerodynamic design with larger and powerful weapons by her side.

Ryder smiled at her. “Still beautiful as ever, Cursed Trinity.”

“Whatever,” Maya said. “I still hate you.” Then she charged into the crowd of aliens while slicing their heads off. Ryder laughed even louder as he hacked more aliens up.

Meanwhile, Elliot and Ava continued running through the tunnels. Soon they were stopped by one of the masked men who staggered toward them like a drunken man.

“Help me!” the man screamed.

Sentinel and Scarlet backed away from the man. “There’s something wrong with him,” the unicorn explained. “I can’t sense anything from him.”

“Please save me, Ava!” the man screamed again.

Suddenly, Sentinel ripped the man apart as the green blood spewed out. “An enemy, which means there are more coming from this side,” the dog spoke. Soon a riot of footsteps echoed in the tunnel as it came near them.

“I guess we have no choice but to fight,” Elliot said as he pulled out his revolvers. Ava and Scarlet began to chant a spell while Sentinel crouched into position. They waited as the riot appeared from the darkness of the tunnel. Elliot shot a few rounds but only took down the first row of aliens. Sentinel charged right through the crowd while Ava’s and Scarlet’s magic engulfed some of the enemy. However, the riot was too much for them. Elliot was knocked back by one of the alien while Ava and Scarlet were surrounded by the enemy. Sentinel ran to Elliot’s aid but one of the alien held Elliot by his neck ready to snap his neck in half.

“Stop it!” a voice shouted over the crowd. “Release these humans!” All the aliens froze and knelt down, dropping Elliot to the floor and moving away from Ava. Elliot caught his breath as he looked up at the unknown person. This person wore a white jacket as the hood covered most of his face. “Do not harm these humans anymore!” The aliens flinched at his commands. Scarlet and Sentinel remained in silence while Ava stared at the person.

“Who are you?” Elliot questioned as he stood up.

The person hesitated. “It’s none of your concern. Don’t worry about it.”

Elliot tried to move closer to study the person more. “This is weird. I feel like I met you somewhere.”

The person panicked and shove him away. “Ah! I don’t know what you’re talking about! I’m just an innocent bystander saving your life!”

Elliot was getting confused. “But-”

“You little piece of shit!” Maya shouted as she flew over the crowd of aliens and tackled the unknown person. However, the person barely dodged her attack as the hood of the jacket flew off.

“Maya, what are you doing?” Elliot asked. “This person saved my life.”

“You idiot!” Maya snapped. “This person is their queen.”

The aliens roared in anger but were stopped by a single hand movement from the person. The person straighten himself and turned around to face them. Elliot gasped in horror as he saw the face. “Emily...” he spoke. “Why?”

She avoided looking into his eyes. “Sorry, Elliot...” she said under her breath. “I didn’t want you to know...”

Soon Ryder waltzed in with a huge smile on his face. “Well, well, well, what a fine group of aliens we have here, especially, their queen which I am quite interest in. Maybe I should rename my collection to a Million Freaks of Misery.”

Emily backed away from them and growled. “I have no time to waste on you all. As Queen, I will give you humans 48 hours to surrender or else we will exterminate the entire planet.” Then she pulled out a tiny device that transports them outside the tunnel.

“Emily, wait!” Elliot called out.

She didn’t even glance at him. “Goodbye, humans...” Then in a mere second all the aliens vanished without a trace.

Elliot fell onto his knees due to shock. “I can’t believe this. My girlfriend... is an alien...” Sentinel sat next to him while Ava inspected them for injuries.

Ryder smiled. “What a twist, their Queen has taken the heart of a mere kid and threatened all of humanity to surrender. Now that’s a tragedy.”

Maya glared at him. “Shut up. The main problem is where are they going to appear next in two days?”

“Heh, I can tell you that it’s not going to be underground again,” Ryder answered.

“Then that leaves...” Maya said and then they both looked up at the ceiling. “The sky...”

Ryder frowned. “If that’s the case, then I can’t help you there. Ava might help you though.”

“Why can’t you?” Elliot asked once he calmed himself down.

He smirked at the kid and leaned in to whisper in his ear. “Because... I’m afraid of what I might find on the surface... The light changes people... And I don’t like change... The darkness is where I can truly be myself,” Then Ryder stood up and laughed. “This will be our little secret.”

“Great. Now that our business is done here, we will be leaving,” Maya said. “Let’s go Elliot and Sentinel.”

Ryder and Ava waved. “Farewell, my love. Come back anytime soon,” Ryder smiled. “If we have any time left, anyways.”

Once Elliot and Maya exited the tunnel completely, Elliot couldn’t stop thinking about Emily. Maya nudged him. “Stop feeling down, Mouse, or I will punch that frown off your face!” she said. “Not everyone is perfect, even if they happen to be the leader of an alien race and plans to destroy Earth.” He stared at her as if she was crazy. “But if that happens, then we will do whatever it takes to not let that happen.”

Elliot forced a laugh. “You’re right. We’re G.H.O.S.T. soldiers now. There are bigger things that we need to protect.”

Maya smirked. “You know what that mean.”

A sudden thought struck his mind. “Oh crap! More training!”

“Now run 5 miles right now or else no breakfast for you!” Maya yelled as Elliot began running down the street. Three orbs appeared beside her as she laughed.

“Are you sure Elliot have time to train in 48 hours?” Andy asked.

“Despite the circumstances of the situation now, is it even possible?” Colt questioned.

“Elliot can do it,” Bina smiled. “We just got to believe.”

Maya smirked. “Don’t worry, you guys. Their Queen is the biggest idiot ever by fighting against us. We’ll show her who’s boss.”

Project G.H.O.S.T.

Chapter 7-Ghoul

Kendra Keller burst through the door of the hotel room where Maya and Elliot were preparing for the final battle. Nearly 40 hours has passed since the alien’s Queen has appeared yet Elliot still has thoughts about his girlfriend. Kendra slammed her hands on the table. “Are you crazy? Attacking the enemy head on is one way to get you killed! And how are you going to enter the enemy’s territory if we don’t know where it is?” she yelled at Maya.

“You really need to chill out, Kendra,” Maya said calmly as she assembled her weapons together. “The agency already picked up what seems to be an unidentified spacecraft coming in this direction. They are not sure if it’s the enemy but there’s one way to find out. We have roughly 8 hours left to seize and destroy the target.”

“That is very likely,” Kendra thought. “But my only concern is how are you going to break into the spacecraft? It’s not going to drop a ladder out of the sky or beam you up so easily.”

Maya laughed. “You and your television shows, but we do have this.” She held up a device that the enemy’s Queen had before. “Ryder finally did something good once in his life and took this thing from another alien. We now have a transportation device that might transfer us to the spacecraft or anything close to it.”

“That’s awesome!” Kendra stared in amazement. “Well, I do wish you both good luck and please return back safely. I don’t want the agency to cry over anyone else.”

Maya smiled. “Thanks, Kendra.” Then she nudged Elliot to snap out of his depression. “Ready to kick some alien’s butts?”

He slightly nodded. “Yeah. I’m ready.”

Maya and Elliot moved to the center of the room as their spirits surrounded them. “If we don’t come back (if that ever happens), please feel free to write a very epic report of us,” Maya said as she held up the device in the air. “Well, see you later.”

Kendra couldn’t help but to smile back. “Yup, see you around!”

Maya pressed the button on the device and suddenly a bright light flashed between them. A second later, they were no longer in the hotel anymore. They were surrounded by walls of hard metal and solid steel floors. Maya ordered Colt and Andy to scan around the area but they haven’t found any aliens. “We should keep moving,” Maya said. The group carefully moved down the halls of the place until Elliot found a window. He glanced through it as he can see the entire city below.

“Are we really in a spacecraft?” he whispered to them.

“No, we’re in Disney World. Now let’s keep moving!” Maya answered as she dragged him away from the window. “This would be helpful if we have a map of the whole place. It would suck to waste 8 hours running around here.”

“Wait, I believe I have found something,” Colt informed as the group stopped walking. The spirit moved closer to a diagram that was sealed into the wall. “This must be an outline of the ship but the language is in their tongue.”

Maya smiled. “How convenient. The Queen must be hiding in a control room or maybe the very core of the ship. Either way, we should check both sites out.” The group nodded and turned around. Suddenly they found a small cat like creature staring back at them. It had no fur but the skin is dark green as its yellow eyes glaze between the humans and spirits. Then the cat began to shriek loudly that it could be heard throughout the spacecraft until Maya shot its head off. Afterward, the alarm of the ship went off, causing riots of footsteps to echo down the halls “Shit! Everyone run!” Maya shouted as the group ran in one direction. Next, they found an elevator and jumped into it. Maya pressed any button available until the doors finally closed and then began to move upward.

“That was so close,” Bina said while everyone was catching their breath.

“Just barely,” Maya added. “Anyways, we should be more careful. There might be more species of aliens what we don’t know about.”

The elevator doors opened to a human standing before them with a smile. The person looked like a normal middle-age human without any alien adaptation. “Like me?” the man asked. Maya glared at the man and stepped out of the elevator while Elliot and the spirits followed behind. “Ah, don’t worry. I’m still human. Maya, it’s a surprise to see you again. You even brought a tiny group with you. What are you doing on this ship?”

Maya folded her arms. “I should say the same to you, Luke. But I believe you won’t answer that question either.”

Elliot whispered to her. “Is he another soldier?”

The man laughed. “How rude of me, let me introduce myself. I’m Luke Gavin the strongest soldier in the entire project.”

“The other Cursed Soldier I’ve told you about,” Maya added. Elliot remembered what she told him about the third member, the biggest idiot in the project.

“Hm. So you did talk about me,” Luke said as Maya pointed her weapon at him. “Well, whatever you are doing I’m not here to stop you.”

“Fine. Elliot, let’s go,” she said as she lowered her weapon and began to walk past Luke. Suddenly, a blade was drawn out from Luke’s body and stopped Maya in her track. Maya glared at him as he smiled back.

“I said I’m not here to stop you,” Luke repeated. “But I didn’t say anything about killing you.”

Maya jumped back before Luke could slice her up. She landed near Elliot and the spirits. “Elliot, I need you to keep moving without me. I need to show this idiot who’s the strongest,” she ordered.

He pleaded. “But Maya-”

“No buts!” she shouted. “Just go, I’ll catch up later.”

Elliot nodded. “Be careful, Maya.” Then Sentinel and him ran past them and disappeared around the corner of the halls.

“Heh. Don’t tell me what to do,” Maya said with confidence. “I’m the adult here.”

Luke laughed. “Kids will always be kids. And speaking of kids, there’s someone you should see, Maya.” She pointed her guns at him again as a small child appeared from behind him. “Say hi to our beautiful daughter.”

Maya was completely frozen as the child stared at her with a smile. She lowered her weapons slowly while her voice became shaky. “Mary? Is that really you?”

The child ran toward Maya and gave her a hug. “Mommy! You found me!” the girl said cheerfully. “Let’s play hide and seek again.”

Maya snapped back into reality and pointed her weapon at the girl. “You are not my daughter. Mary is dead! There’s no way she could come back to life!” she shouted.

“Mommy? What are you saying?” Mary asked. “I’m right here.”

Luke smirked. “Well, that’s where you’re wrong, Maya.” Then he pulled the child away from the mother and started swinging his sword at her. One of the spirit quickly possessed Maya to help her dodge the attacks. “These aliens might be our enemy,” Luke explained. “But they have the ability to bring back the dead. So I made a little deal with them and our precious Mary is back on her two feet. Isn’t that great, sweetie?”

“Bullshit!” she growled. “Have you forgotten the main purpose of the project? An enemy is still an enemy! We have to kill each and everyone of these little shit until there is none left!”

“Daddy, why is Mommy so mad?” Mary asked as she nearly cried. “Did I do something wrong?”

“No, Mary. Mommy is very surprised right now that she yells very vulgarly out of love. Now please hide again, Mommy and I have to talk for a while.” Luke set the little girl on the side of the room then he stared back at Maya. “Violence is never the answer, dear. All you ever think about was Project G.H.O.S.T. There’s no real purpose for it. Now could you at least be a little more considerate for our little Mary?” He dashed toward her again with his sword as she shot more bullets at him. “She has been through a lot without you. As a mother, you should be there for her.” He knocked one of her gun out of her hand. “Can you accept her in your heart again?”

Maya kept her distance away from him as she angrily shouted. “You piece of shit! She died because of you! Can’t you see what you have done? You’re betraying your own kind!” She shot more bullets at him but it only grazed him. “She’s not my real daughter!”

He moved closer to her and soon grabbed her right arm. Luke smirked at her. “What a harsh thing to say, Maya. Everything I did was for you, for Mary, for all of us and you’re still not happy. What more can a husband and father do for his family?” Then he began to twist her arm back as she yelped in pain. “I believe this was the same arm that was injured before. Do you mind if I make it worst for you?”

“Get your filthy hands off of me!” Maya kicked Luke back before he could tear her arm off. The other two spirits combined into her and she transformed into her aerodynamic form. “I won’t forgive you for what you have done to Mary!”

“So we are getting serious now,” Luke said. “Two can play at this game, Cursed Trinity.” He raised up his sword in the air as a faint image of a Medieval knight appeared behind him. The knight merged with the sword as it grew twice as big.

Maya pulled out her weapons and aimed it at him. “Die, Cursed Knight!” She pulled the trigger and instantly a large explosion went off. The entire room was caught in the explosion as the spacecraft shook violently.

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Elliot and Sentinel continued running down the halls of the spacecraft as the alarm still blaring loudly. They haven’t encountered any aliens yet but they hope to find the Queen first. Sentinel stopped first and Elliot followed afterward as a huge explosion

was heard behind them. They felt the floor tremble beneath them. “Could this be from Maya?” Elliot wondered.

“Probably, let’s keep moving,” Sentinel replied and they began to move again.

After a few minutes of running, Elliot heard a faint voice calling his name. He stopped running and signaled Sentinel to do the same. They waited for the voice to speak again. “Over here...” it spoke. Elliot followed the voice to a slightly opened door nearby. A human hand appeared and motioned them to enter the room. Elliot slowly approached the door as Sentinel stood on his guard. Once Elliot was close enough, the hand pulled him in while the large dog leaped in automatically. The door shut behind them as they jumped into an attack position toward the person. “You can’t stay here,” the person said and turned around. Her sad eyes stared at the kid.

“Emily.” Elliot lowered his guard once he saw her face. “Why are you doing this? Why did you lie to me this entire time?”

“I’m sorry...” she spoke sadly. “I thought I was going to escape the life of being an alien for good. But they followed me here and caused a lot of trouble. Even if they have me now they won’t leave until the entire human race is destroyed.” Tears began to run down her face. “I didn’t mean to lie to you... You’re the nicest human I’ve ever met since I came to Earth. I didn’t want you to get hurt.”

Elliot wrapped his arms around her. “You don’t have to do this. If you like Earth so much, then don’t destroy it. You’re the Queen, aren’t you? They have to listen to you no matter what.”

She shook her head. “There is another Queen beside me. She is, what you human called, Mother.” Elliot stared at her in shock. “She’s the main one who can revive the dead and spawn more of our kinds. She’s the Queen of Creation as I am the Queen of Destruction. I exist to destroy all the enemy of ours.” Then she hugged him tighter. “Please, Elliot. You have to leave this ship and save yourself.”

Soon, Sentinel growled at the door. “Someone’s coming,” he informed. Elliot and Emily braced for impact as the door was pried open by a pair of human hands.

“So...there you guys were...” Maya said as she hunched over in pain. Her hair and clothes were a mess with blood stains and burnt marks. “You even found the Queen, that’s great. Let’s kill her now.”

Elliot stood between Maya and Emily. “Wait, Maya. She’s on our side,” he explained. “There’s another Queen beside her.”

Maya straightened herself and spoke. “Another one? Perhaps this one is lying so she can kill you first.”

“But I’m not lying!” Emily cried. “Please believe me; I don’t want to hurt anyone.” Maya stared at her as she continued. “I can deal with the other Queen myself. You guys must leave this ship immediately. You have 5 hours left before the main hyper-beam radiation cannon on the ship will erase the entire planet.” Suddenly the ship shook violently again. Emily had a frightened expression on her face. “What? It’s starting already.” Then she turned to Elliot and Maya. “I must go. Please escape safely.” Emily gave Elliot a final hug and whispered three simple words into his ear. Then she left the room and disappeared down the halls.

Elliot’s heart sank deeper while Maya spoke to them. “I guess we don’t have a choice. Escaping seems to be our only option.”

“No.” The kid pulled himself together. “There’s always a second option.”

Maya smirked at him. “Oh? Does this option involve dying along with the human race?”

Elliot smiled back. “Heh. I’m not crazy like you but we are still going to stop the destruction of mankind.”

His aunt laughed. “Ignoring your girlfriend’s wishes is a bad sign, especially if she is the Queen of an alien race. Anyways, let’s go stop this crazy piece of shit.” The group rejoined and ran out into the halls again. In a split second, Maya shoved Elliot and Sentinel to the floor as a large sword flew over them at an incredible speed and landed on the other side of the hall.

The middle-age man staggered behind the group while carrying a young girl in his arms. His clothes were half damaged as the little girl had blood dripping from her head. Luke huffed in pain as his sword returned to his side. “You can’t escape from me, Maya! Our little Mary is hurt now because of you!” He slowly moved closer toward them.

Maya stood up and glared. “Damn. How insane is this idiot? I wasted all my strength on him.” She turned to Elliot. “Change of plans, you must escape without me.” Elliot wanted to protest but she spoke over him. “That is an order!” He was completely frozen by her words. “As much as I enjoy kicking butts, your safety comes first. So take your broken-hearted self and your dog out of this ship!”

“What? Leaving already?” Luke smile as a psychopath. “I thought we should spend quality time together as a family again with the exception of your nephew.”

Elliot and Sentinel jumped in front of Maya on impulse to protect her from Luke. “We won’t run away! If you want to hurt Maya you have to go through us!”

Luke grinned. “How cute, you have a little hero with a fluffy sidekick protecting you.” Then he glanced at the girl in his arms. “Mary, can you wait for a little bit. Daddy needs to beat up these bullies.” The girl’s eyes flew open as a doll while Luke gently placed her on the ground. She stood firmly without any emotions as she stared at Maya. Luke held up his sword and quickly dashed toward the kid.

Elliot’s eyes couldn’t keep up with Luke’s speed until he felt another force knocking him and Sentinel to the side of the hall. They crashed into the wall as Luke’s sword struck into Maya’s left shoulder. Red blood dripped down from her arm as she growled. “You little piece of crap, disobeying my orders and putting yourself in danger.” Maya pried out the blade from her shoulder and pointed her pistol at Luke’s face. “Who do you think you are?” She pulled the trigger, causing Luke to move away from her. Soon, a bullet flew straight into his leg as he stumbled to the floor. Maya ran over to her nephew and dragged him up by his collar. “This isn’t a time to play hero, Elliot! When I say run, you run like hell!” Then she shot a bullet to shatter a nearby window. “And when I say fly, you fly as if you never flew before!” Maya tossed Elliot and Sentinel out of the broken window before they could say anything else.

“Maya!” Elliot screamed out as he and Sentinel were falling out of the night sky. The cold air rushed around them as they struggle to keep their balance. They saw the large spacecraft in front of them as it was getting farther away. It’s the place where his only relative he has left will die and the only person he loves will disappear. Elliot couldn’t hold back the tears as it flew into the sky with him along with the thoughts of everyone he really cared about.

Sentinel moved close to Elliot for him to grab on. “Elliot, we’re heading straight into the lake. Prepare for impact,” the dog spoke. He simply nodded without a word and

tightly held onto Sentinel. A few seconds later, they plunged into the freezing water below. Elliot's body became numb, not because of the water, but the actual nightmare that he is living in.

Elliot was soon dragged to the shore by Sentinel. He stared up at the tiny speck of the spacecraft in the sky as he spoke under his breath. "We're the biggest idiots alive... I feel so stupid now..."

Sentinel nudged him by his nose. "Elliot, there's no time to be depressed like that. Let's hurry back to the hotel and dry off." He helped the kid onto his feet and began to walk toward the city. After what seems to be an hour has past, they finally arrived at the hotel and entered through the back doors and climbed up all 30 flights of stairs. They stopped in front of the red door with a golden mask.

"Abel, may we please come in?" Elliot asked. They waited for his response but nothing happened. The spirit didn't speak and neither has the mask move. Fear struck into Elliot's back as he panicked. "Abel? Abel! Open up!" He knocked and tried to turn the doorknob but nothing worked.

Sentinel sniffed the door. "I don't sense his presence anymore... This probably indicate that-"

"She's dead..." Elliot answered as he collapsed to the floor. "Once a soldier dies, their contract is over and the spirits will disappear. So this really means... that Maya is dead..." Sentinel didn't say anything else as he wrapped himself around Elliot to keep him warm as he cried his heart out.

Footsteps echoed down the empty 30th floor while Elliot and Sentinel sobbed over their loss. The footsteps stopped beside them as they didn't bother to look up to see who it was. The person crouched down and smiled at them. "Hmph. I came to find one of my students to give him some extra credit," the man said. Elliot paused his cries and glanced over at the man as he smiled bigger. "But suddenly I found a crying kid and a dog sitting in front of a big suit on the highest floor in a fancy hotel, both soaking wet without an adult supervision. Now, what kind of crazy excuse should I hear from you for skipping my class?"

Elliot's eyes grew wide as he spoke in a surprising tone. "Mr. Ellis! You're alive!"

Project G.H.O.S.T.

Chapter 8- Shadow

Harlan Ellis busted down the door of the suite and helped Elliot inside. The place felt different without the other spirits roaming around or Maya yelling at them to clean up. Elliot and Sentinel went into the bathroom to dry off as Mr. Ellis scanned around the rooms for any hidden enemies. Once Elliot finished drying off, he moved to the window in the living room and stared at the tiny speck of the spacecraft in the sky.

"So that's where the leader is hiding," Mr. Ellis said as he stood beside Elliot and glanced out the window. "Nice work, Elliot. I will boost up your grades if you stop skipping my class."

"But Maya is still on that ship," he said but then spoke in a depressing tone. "Or was on that ship..."

The teacher elbowed Elliot on his shoulder. "And here I thought you would be smart. I trained Maya well enough to not die from an enemy." Then he laughed. "How do

you think I got here in one piece? That explosion at the junkyard was too strong that it knocked me back a few miles away. It took me a while to recover and now I'm back. Your aunt was the first person I thought of to assist me to take down the enemy but luckily I've found you first before you both froze to death."

Elliot slightly nodded. "Thank you Mr. Ellis. But I wished we weren't the only ones who were lucky... I wasn't strong enough to protect my only family or my girlfriend." Then he balled up his fists as anger build up inside of him. "I shouldn't have become a G.H.O.S.T. soldier! I shouldn't even be alive right now!"

Suddenly, a large fist smashed into Elliot's face as he tumbled to the floor. He stared up at Mr. Ellis who only smirked back at him. "Sorry, I can't stand crying teenagers, especially those who decided to be emo and give up everything." Mr. Ellis held out his hand to help Elliot up to his feet. "Plus, we can't be too sure if Maya is alive or not. That time when she saved you was probably meant for you to return the favor. Isn't she your aunt? You should respect your elders more often."

Elliot's anger vanished once he got back on his feet again. His teacher was right; Maya took him in, protected him from the aliens, and even trained him to become a soldier. She received serious injuries for his sake and still had enough strength to torture him. Elliot couldn't help but to smile back as the thoughts ran through his head. "Maya isn't even that old to be my elder... but that won't stop me from returning the favor." The large dog rubbed against Elliot's side as he laughed. "I mean, we both will return the favor to Maya."

Mr. Ellis smiled. "Awesome, but this won't be on the history exam though. Now for the difficult part, how do we get to that spacecraft? Either of us can't fly or have any transportation device."

Elliot began to think. "Then maybe we can ride on a helicopter or a plane to get up there."

"As if we have time to get them," a female spoke from the front door. The guys turned and saw Dark Butterfly grinning back to them. "Hello, boys, did you miss me?"

"Ava!" Elliot said surprisingly as the singer transformed into a girl and a unicorn.

She smiled at them. "I'm glad to see you both in one piece. But getting a plane from the agency will take too much time."

"Then what else can we do?" Mr. Ellis asked. "That spacecraft is over 100 kilometers up."

Ava giggled. "This is why I've brought my Master. One of his demons can fly us up there." She stepped to the side to reveal the Gothic man hiding under his hoodie.

"The light burns..." Ryder spoke as if he was in serious pain. "But I won't let my Queen suffer in the enemy's hands... My love burns more than this light."

Another voice laughed inside the suite as a mist of light formed in the middle of the room. A pair of white wings stretched out from the mist and soon Father Presley and Grace appeared before them. Presley smiled, "I see everyone is having a great time but we would like to accompany you on this mission. A man of peace won't tolerate this violence."

"Then it's settled," Mr. Ellis said. "The team is almost back together again."

Elliot realized how much Maya means to everyone as much as it means to himself. But she isn't the only one on his mind. "Thank you, everyone," he smiled.

After a few minutes of planning, the team arrived at Elliot's school. Due to its good location, lack of innocent bystanders, and plenty amount of space on the track field, the school became the perfect place to take flight. "We have less than 3 hours to pull this off. Is everyone ready?" Mr. Ellis said.

Ryder pulled off his hood as his scythe appeared in his hands. "Summon thy dreadful Lord of the Flies, Beelzebub!" he called and soon a large being emerged out of the darkness as it spread out its 50 miles wings of a fly. The giant being landed roughly on the ground which caused a mini earthquake as Ryder stroke its face. "My demon of gluttony is hungry for some alien's blood."

"Scary as usual, Ryder," Presley spoke. "But I wouldn't judge a book by its cover. My angel is pretty scary, too, when she is a Seraphim." Grace giggled as two more pairs of angel's wings grew out of her back. She spread out all six wings as the team gazed at her beauty.

Scarlet neighed angrily. "You guys are pitiful! Let me show you the true meaning of fear!" The unicorn kicked up her front legs in the air as her entire body changed colors from white to black while a pair of dark wings morphed out of her back. Ava's spirit became a combination of between a unicorn and a Pegasus.

Ava pointed out. "This isn't the time to compare the level of terror, you guys."

Ryder laughed. "She's right. Maya will be very angry if we don't save her on time. Then, my Queen won't love me anymore."

Elliot rolled his eyes. "Anyways, let's go." Everyone nodded and began climbing on a spirit. Elliot, Sentinel, Mr. Ellis, and Ryder hopped onto Beelzebub while Presley will be carried by Grace and Ava leaped upon Scarlet's back. "Operation search and rescue while kicking some E.T. butts begins now!" Elliot shouted. The giant fly flew off of the ground first and soared toward the spacecraft above. The angel and the unicorn flew beside it as they kept up with Beelzebub's speed. Everyone can see the spacecraft getting bigger along with the distance. The spacecraft was structured as futuristic battleship with three large metal rings orbiting around the center. Elliot didn't realize how big the actual spacecraft was when he fell out of it. This ship was twice as big as Beelzebub.

"Brace for impact!" Ryder said as everyone on the giant fly held on to its back. Beelzebub vomited green slime onto the side of the ship which caused the area to melt. Soon the large being flew straight into the opened area and crashed into 5 layers of metal walls. The other spirits followed behind and landed gently beside the fly. Nearly 100 aliens were killed in the process as the rest ran toward the humans. The team leaped off of the spirits to fight off the remaining aliens. Mr. Ellis and Elliot shot most of the enemies in the heads. Presley and Ryder sliced up the aliens until it began to rain green blood. Sentinel tore open their flesh and used his black flames to burn their flesh. Ava, Scarlet, and Grace used magic to erase the enemies faster. The giant fly let out a loud roar and began to disperse into a million tiny flies and surrounded incoming aliens eating their skin until the aliens stopped moving.

After what seems to be 30 minutes of the massacre, Mr. Ellis stood over the pile of corpses. "These should be the last of them for now," he said as the team took a short break.

"Now to find my beautiful Queen and live happily ever after," Ryder smiled.

Presley asked. "But where have they taken her?"

The team thought for a moment. Only Elliot and Sentinel knew the map of the ship. “According to Maya before she was captured, the alien’s Queen should be hiding in the control room or the core of the ship,” Elliot explained. “But I don’t know the whereabouts of Maya.”

“It would be difficult to search the entire spacecraft due to the time limit, even if we split up,” Sentinel added.

In the middle of their conversation, they heard a little girl humming the “Mary had a Little Lamb” tune from one of the upper levels of the ship. Elliot spotted her first as she walked past an opening on the wall above them. He recognized the little girl before they were thrown off the ship. “I remembered her, she was with the other Cursed soldier,” Elliot answered.

The team looked up as the little girl continued strolling down the hall while humming the tune. Presley spoke first. “Did you say the other Cursed soldier? That can only mean Luke and then this young girl must be their child.”

“Lies!” Ryder angrily snapped as the team stared at him. “That girl isn’t real. My Queen wouldn’t fall for his tricks. Luke shouldn’t be a soldier. He hurt Maya. He made her cry! I’ll rip his soul out and feed it to my demons!”

“Ryder! Calm yourself down,” Mr. Ellis commanded. “Looking for Maya is our first priority, you can fight Luke later. Right now, our best bet is that girl.”

“I got this,” Elliot said with confidence as he hopped on to Sentinel’s back. They leaped between the damaged walls to get to the same floor as the girl and landed in front of her. She stopped humming and stared at Elliot in fear as if she never saw him before. “I’m not here to hurt you,” he said with a smile. “Actually, I’m looking for someone. Can you help?”

“But my daddy told me not to talk to strangers,” she answered as she began to back away.

Elliot hopped off of Sentinel. “Please, this person is very important to me.”

The little girl paused for a moment then replied with a smile. “Okay, I can help you. But only if you play with me.”

“Play?” Elliot asked as Sentinel began to growl at her.

She nodded. “Yup. I have never met another human before and the aliens on this ship are too busy with work. So, please play at least one game with me.”

Elliot and Sentinel glanced at each other then back at the little girl. “Alright, I’ll play but just one game.”

She jumped for joy. “Yay! You’re my first best friend! I need to show Daddy this.” Then she tugged on his arm. “Come on, Daddy will be so proud of me on making my first friend.” Elliot was dragged down the hall as Sentinel followed behind.

Soon the team spotted them running down the hall. “Elliot, what are you doing?” Mr. Ellis called out.

“We’re going to meet her father!” he answered loudly before he was forcefully pulled around a corner.

“Luke?” Presley spoke. “I got a bad feeling about this.”

“Let’s follow them!” Mr. Ellis commanded and the team climbed up to that floor and tracked the little girl down.

As they were still running, Elliot realized that this girl isn’t normal. Her hands are freezing cold, much colder than the lake he crashed into. He remembered her face when

they were with Maya still. She didn't have this type of attitude before, she was basically a doll. But now she acted like a regular child. Soon they stopped by a metal door as the little girl smiled at Elliot. "We're here. I hope Daddy will like you, too." The door automatically slid open to a large room with multiple tree roots covering the walls and floors. In the center was a perfectly good tree that shined like a star. The little girl tugged Elliot closer to the tree until a middle-age man appeared. "Daddy, look what I've found! I made a friend all by myself," the little girl said cheerfully.

Luke glared at the kid and then smiled back at the girl. "Nice job, Mary. But I believe you can make more friends with the other visitors here." Elliot's spine began to shiver with fear from this man. A few seconds later, the team busted into the room and pointed their weapons at Luke. "Well, speak of the devil... the rest of the team is here. To whom may I give this pleasure to tonight?"

Elliot pried himself away from the little girl as he glared at Luke. "Where's Maya? What have you done to her?"

The little girl ran into her father's arms and cried. "Daddy, my friend is angry. Was it my fault, too?"

Luke smiled. "No Mary. Your friend is here to take Mommy away again."

She stared at Elliot and whined. "Mommy stays here! She's my mommy!"

Her father laughed. "Mary, let Daddy handle this. You can play in the other room."

Mary frowned. "Okay Daddy. But don't hurt my friend too bad." Then she walked out of the room.

"You heard the girl." Luke stared at the team again. "You won't take Maya away from here-"

Suddenly, a scythe flew towards Luke and struck into the tree behind him. Ryder materialized on top of his scythe and glared down at him. "You ungrateful son of a b*tch," the gothic man growled. "Maya doesn't belong to you!" Ryder pulled out the scythe from the tree and swung it at Luke but he dodged the attacks with ease.

"Oh no, have I anger the Cursed Demon already?" Luke said with sarcasm. "Hopefully, you didn't forget that we were married before."

Presley held Ryder's scythe back to stop him from attacking again. "That's enough, Ryder," he said and then he turned to Luke. "Now answer the child's questions."

"Persistent much?" Luke replied. "Do you see this tree here? This is called the Tree of Life, almost like a healing spring. As of now, Maya is unconscious due to the amount of blood loss from her fights. She is resting in the tree now as we speak." Then he frowned. "But Maya has been sleeping for a while. I sure hope I didn't hurt her too badly."

Rage boiled inside of Ryder as he quickly landed a punch to Luke's face, causing him to fly back a few meters. "I won't forgive you!" he roared as he raised up his scythe. "Slain this sinner by his throat and cast him into eternal Hell, Lucifer!" The ship began to shake violently as actual lava emerged from the ground. A red beast with long horns and black wings climbed out of the lava and roared loudly.

Luke stood up and held his nose from the smell. "What a horrible stench! Do you mind taking that ugly beast outside? I don't want my wife to wake up to this smell."

"BURN IN HELL, CURSED KNIGHT!" Ryder screamed. Lucifer flew straight toward Luke in a ball of fire. The man pulled out his sword and defended himself from

the beast. The flame began to surround the sword until a dagger flew by Luke's head. Luke leaped further back to evade their attacks.

"Two against one, that isn't fair Cursed Divine," Luke joked.

"Usually, I use violence as a form of protection," Presley explained. "But for you, it's a punishment that even God has already passed judgment on your soul." Grace appeared beside Presley with a mystical arrow that was aimed at Luke. The arrow pierced through the air while bullets from Mr. Ellis's shotgun were shot in a different direction. The clash of the arrow, bullets, and Lucifer's flames created an explosion around Luke.

In the midst of the smoke, Mr. Ellis turned to Elliot and Ava. "You both must find Maya and take her far away from here. The three of us will keep him busy."

They nodded and ran toward the tree. Elliot glanced up into the thick branches of the tree and spotted a hand dangling in the air. "I think I found her," he told them. Elliot leaped on Sentinel's back while Ava went on Scarlet and then climbed up into the tree. Within the branches, there was a flat area where Elliot can see an outline of a body laying down. As they move closer, they can clearly see Maya's face. "Maya!" Elliot cried out as he ran to her side. "Please, hang in there!"

Ava inspected her body for any major injuries and checked her pulse. "She's still alive without any damage," she said. "But she's in a coma state. It will be difficult to wake her up."

"We have to move her to a safer place," Sentinel suggested. "If the guys keep fighting recklessly, this entire room will be destroyed-" Suddenly, a loud crackling noise was heard in the center of the tree as it began to lean to the side. The branches were too thick for all five of them to escape together. Ava hopped on Scarlet as Elliot grabbed Maya and moved her on top of Sentinel while the tree tilted even faster.

"Go now!" Elliot shouted at them. "I'll try to keep up behind you." They didn't protest his command and moved around the branches to escape the falling tree. Elliot followed their path until he accidentally slipped off one of the branches and got his foot caught between a tight gap within the tree. "Shit!" he said under his breath. Elliot looked up to find the others but sadly they have already escaped the tree. He was completely trapped as he felt the gravity overtake him along with the giant tree. "I can't die here!" he shouted.

A few of the branches in front of Elliot were chopped off, creating a tiny opening for Luke to stand before him with a grin. "Oh, how unlucky you are," the Cursed Knight said as he held up his sword at Elliot. "You took my wife, so I will take your life." Elliot closed his eyes tightly from fear. The fear of the pain he will receive from Luke's sword, the fear of losing to an enemy, the fear of failure to protect those he loved, but he fears most of all... is his own death at this very moment. Elliot felt gravity dragging him deeper down... and soon he can feel the extreme heat surrounding him.

Sentinel, Ava, and Scarlet made it out the tree safely as they landed a few meters away. Ava laid Maya on the ground as the spirits looked behind them but couldn't find Elliot anywhere. Sentinel glanced back at the tree as it was halfway falling to the ground. "Elliot is still in there!" Sentinel informed. "I need to rescue him!" But Scarlet blocked his path. "Move out of my way!" he growled.

"Are you insane?" the black unicorn questioned. "You won't make it in time before the tree will completely crush your master!"

Suddenly, the falling tree was engulfed in a giant ball of fire as it collided onto the ground. Panic struck Sentinel as he ran toward the fallen tree. "Elliot!" the dog roared.

Luke walked out of the burning tree, unharmed by the flames as he spoke. "One down, seven more to go. Give me your worst, my friends!" Sentinel covered himself in his black flames and pounced on top of Luke. The dog growled in Luke's face as one of his paws was lifted up ready to claw out that hideous smile. Luke laughed. "Is that the best you can do? I said show me your worst!" Luke's sword appeared and flew straight into Sentinel's shoulder. The dog yelped in pain and moved off of the man. Luke stood up and pulled his weapon out of Sentinel. "What an untamed creature you are. I'm sorry to burst your bubble but... Elliot is dead!"

Maya's eyes opened up instantly with a sudden thought of her nephew. She moved around to get up onto her feet as Ava stared at her. "Maya, you mustn't move so quickly. Your body--"

"I DON'T CARE!" Maya snapped at her once she stood up firmly. "I promised my own blood sister everything... But everything is gone because of him." She pulled out her guns and the remaining ammo she has left. All four spirits popped out of thin air and stood beside her. "We'll kill him with everything we got!" Then Maya dashed towards the fight scene, leaving Ava and Scarlet behind.

Mr. Ellis aimed his bullets at Luke as Presley moved closer to slice Luke with his daggers. Luke backed up to dodge their attacks again until Ryder stood behind him and swung his scythe around. The sharp blade of the scythe caught Luke's arm and was pulled downward to create a long gash. Luke winced in pain for a few seconds and then laughed in their faces. "Now you're getting serious. I guess I can make this party even more fun." He lifted his sword in the air. "Excalibur, show your true strength and put these fools to shame!" The sword shined brightly as a large suite of armor as big as the tree manifested behind Luke. The giant crashed his blade down at the soldiers but they moved out of the way in time. Lucifer rammed into the giant's head while Grace shot more arrows at its legs. The giant tumbled a bit but kept its balance as it swung the sword around to keep the spirits away.

Luke laughed even louder as the guys scrambled around the room to avoid the giant's attacks. Soon his laughter was cut short when he felt a cold barrel of a gun pointed at the back of his head. He didn't turn around as her voice spoke in a serious tone. "When are you going to shut up for once?"

He smiled. "Whenever my wife loves me again." Maya pulled the trigger but the bullet only grazed his cheek as he swiftly moved away. "Did you have a nice nap, dear?" Maya swung her leg around to kick him but he blocked it with his arm. "I see you're still angry at me, Maya. But that wouldn't change a thing. Please stop this madness or else you will be hurt even more."

"You little piece of shit!" she screamed while she pointed her weapons at him again. "You're the cause of my madness!" Suddenly, she was pulled away before she could even blow his brain out. Presley stabbed a dagger into Luke's side as Ryder held the scythe to Luke's neck. The man stood perfectly still as he let the blood spill out of his body. Mr. Ellis was standing behind Maya while he aimed his shotgun at Luke. "What are you guys doing?" Maya shouted. "This is my fight!"

"Have you forgotten the most important rule as a G.H.O.S.T. Soldier, Maya?" Mr. Ellis asked in a calm manner.

Maya stared at him as she calmed down a bit. “A soldier shouldn’t fight alone.” Mr. Ellis smiled without leaving his eyes off of the target. “Good. I hope you don’t mind us helping out then.”

She shook her head as she pointed her weapons at Luke. “By all means, we are the strongest team in the project after all.”

Luke laughed again. “Strongest team? Have you forgotten, too, that I was the reason you guys made it this far? I was the first Cursed Soldier after Presley refused the title. However, you all seem to get this crazy war into your heads and look where we’re at right now. On an alien spacecraft while fighting a former teammate because some guy in a suite said so. Well, if you still want to play this game, then I will make the first move.” Luke head butted Ryder with the back of his head and kicked Presley away as he removed the dagger from his body and ran toward Mr. Ellis and Maya. The gunners began to spray bullets at Luke as it pierced through his body. Luke didn’t stop running as he pointed the dagger at Maya once he got close enough to her. The blade instantly pierced through and drew blood as it spilled onto the ground.

Maya’s eyes grew wide at the site of blood. However, the dagger never reached her body. She stared at the person in front of her who took the blade to the chest. She gasped in anger, “You idiot! What do you think you’re doing, Harlan! Didn’t you say don’t be a hero?”

Luke smirked at Mr. Ellis as he pushed the dagger deeper. “Heh, you never realize that you can never be on the same level as us soldiers. Sorry to crush your dream like this. But hey, you can get as much alcohol as you want wherever you are going.”

Mr. Ellis grabbed Luke’s wrist before he could move away and smiled in his face as blood dripped down from his mouth. “Then I guess I will see you in Hell.” Mr. Ellis pulled out a pistol and shot Luke in his knees so he won’t run away. “Now!” he shouted at the other soldiers. Presley carried Maya in his arms while Grace followed behind as they began to move away from the scene. Mr. Ellis glanced back at Maya as she was being carried away. He spoke under his breath. “I was never a hero... But I’m glad to teach the greatest group of heroes of all times...” Then he smiled back at her as she cried out his name. “Thanks everyone...”

Luke attempted to escape but was held down by Mr. Ellis. The demon, Lucifer, was dismissed by Ryder’s command as he summoned a more powerful creature. “Lord of all evil, hear my voice. Show these sinners no mercy by your hands, Satan!” A large gate made out of human bones and rotten flesh with red blood oozing out of the eye sockets of each skull emerged from the darkness in front of them.

The men stared at the gate as they felt fear running through them. Then Luke began to laugh like a psychopath while being confined by Mr. Ellis. “The Gate of Hell really does exist! Hahaha! What’s next? Narnia?”

Ryder glared at the insane man. “You really are annoying. But Satan enjoys humans like you.” The gate suddenly flew open as the bloody screams of the tormented souls from within were heard throughout the spacecraft. Luke’s laughter changed into fear as his giant spirit knight stopped moving due to the opened gate. Maya, Presley, and Grace didn’t escape the room in time before they trembled to the ground by the terrible shrieks. Ryder was the only one immune to the screams and continued glaring at Luke. “Enjoy Hell, former Cursed Knight.” A huge, red hand stretched out from the opened gate and grabbed the giant knight. With a simple motion, the knight was instantly crushed

into a million pieces. Then, the hand moved over to Luke and Mr. Ellis and snatched them up in a swift motion. Luke's skin began to burn in Satan's palm while Mr. Ellis was on the verge of death due to the wound in his chest. The Cursed Knight screamed along with the other sinners as the Devil's hand retreated to the gate. The doors of the gate closed automatically and the bloody screams were cut off by silence. Once the entire gate vanished back into the darkness, Ryder collapsed to the ground from exhaustion.

Ava and Scarlet ran toward their Master while the others recovered from the affects of the gate. Bina appeared beside Maya and nearly cried when she spoke. "Sentinel is seriously injured and... we can't find Elliot anywhere. We're so sorry, Maya..."

Fear has struck her mind as she spotted Sentinel lying on the ground and ran over to him. She checked his injury and ordered Bina to fix him. "Sentinel, what happened?"

The dog struggled to look up at her and answered in a depressing tone. "Maya... I'm sorry. I couldn't save Elliot in time... He ordered me to get you out of the tree before it was burned to ashes... He was only concern about your safety..." Maya bit down her tongue to hold her anger back as the team regrouped around her. Three people died tonight in front of their eyes. There was nothing more they could have done to prevent that from happening.

"Maya..." Presley spoke. "God has plans for everyone. It pains to lose those who value the most, but the only thing that matter is the precious moments we have with those who had fallen. This war has no meaning after all that has happened so far. We should reconsider-"

"No," Maya interrupted him. "We must find the Queen and end this war once and for all." She glared at him. "That's the least we could do for them."

Presley paused and then kindly smiled at her. "Well spoken, Maya. The Queen must be waiting for us with fear in her eyes."

"Then, it's settled," Maya spoke. "Our final battle will change everything."

Project G.H.O.S.T.

Final Chapter- Life

Mary's voice echoed in Elliot's head as she sang her song. "I had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb. I had a little lamb and her flee was white as snow." He slowly opened his eyes while his entire body was sore to move around. His vision focused on a little girl who stood in front of him. She smiled, "Elliot, you're awake! I'm so happy. Let's play a game."

He recollected his thoughts and remembered where he was last time. The falling tree, the crazy man, and the fire were replayed in his head. He could have died that very second but somehow he appeared in a different room. Elliot asked the girl as he sat up on the floor. "What happened? How did I get here?"

Mary giggled. "You don't remember? You promised me you'll play a game but Daddy got angry at you. So I sent you here before he could hurt you very badly." Elliot scanned around the room. This room was much larger than the other rooms he had been in since he arrived on the spacecraft. In the center was a large container with a ball of energy swirling in the middle. The walls and floors had colorful lines that glowed constantly and connected to energy ball. The girl giggled again. "I know a game we can

play.” Elliot stared back at her. “It’s called... Choices. You have a set of choices to choose from and I will tell you what will happen after.”

Elliot noticed that her attitude has changed since they met her father. Her child-like personality is still the same but he could feel a sinister aura around her. He got up to his feet and spoke. “So what are my choices?”

Mary glanced around the room and then turned back to Elliot. She pointed at the large container with the energy ball. “That thing over there is the energy source for this spacecraft. It can power this ship for another million years and also power up the weapons. Your first choice is to stop the weapon from firing at the planet.” Then she pointed up at the ceiling. Elliot looked up to find Emily tangled within the hanging cables.

His eyes grew wide. “Emily!” he cried out.

“Oh? So you do know the Queen of Destruction,” Mary smiled. “She was disobeying orders and couldn’t defeat me. But now she is part of my game as her punishment. Your second choice is to save her.”

Elliot glared at Mary. “What have you done to her?”

“I’m not even finish making up your choices, yet,” she said. Then she pulled out a smart phone and played a video to Elliot. It showed four people, along with spirit orbs, a large dog, an angel, and a unicorn, running down the halls of the spacecraft. He recognized the people in the video. It’s the team and their spirits. Elliot was relieved to see Maya finally awake. Mary laughed as she pulled the phone away from him. “I really like this toy. It let’s me see everything on this ship. And your third choice is to save these people. Those are your only three choices in this game. Choose wisely, Elliot, your family, the Queen, or the rest of the human society. You only have one chance to play.”

“This isn’t even a real game, you can’t put people’s lives in danger,” Elliot said.

The girl smiled. “Of course it is. This is my game and I can do anything I want. And I want you to play.”

“Elliot!” Emily shouted as she tried to struggle out of the cables. They stared at her as she shouted again. “Don’t listen to her! Take the others and leave this ship! That girl isn’t human!”

Elliot glanced at Mary and backed away from her. “You’re not Mary... What are you? Why are you doing this?”

“Stay away from her, Elliot!” Emily yelled from above. “She’s the other Queen!”

Mary giggled to herself. “You humans are so funny. Of course, I’m not Mary. She died a long time ago. I’m the Queen of Creation.” Elliot stared at her in horror. “A foolish human found me and begged me to bring her back to life. Then I realized how easy you humans can believe in a simple lie and wage a war against us. So I became this Mary to make the game even more fun.” Then she turned to him. “So Elliot, did you make a choice yet? The clock is ticking, you know.”

Elliot thought over his choices. Maya isn’t here to choose for him and he doesn’t want any more innocent lives to die. Everything rested in his hands. He stared into the Queen’s false eyes and answered. “I picked the fourth choice.”

Mary laughed. “What are you talking about? There is no fourth choice.”

“Yes, there is,” he smirked at her. “It’s my choice. And I choose you to fight me.”

She laughed even louder. “Hahahahaha! You choose to fight me? Then I will tell you what will happen next. Your silly family will die along with the rest of humanity and

the Queen up there will be banish from this ship and will spend the rest of her life on the remains of your planet. What a horrible choice you made, Elliot. You're no hero. You couldn't save anyone after all."

"Who said my choice was to become a hero?" Elliot pulled out his revolver as Mary glared at him. "I just want to fight you, Queen of Creation, unless you want to reconsider another choice for me."

She folded her arms. "Was that a bluff? Challenging a leader of the invincible race in the whole universe? There are no retry in this game. You really are a stupid human. Only an idiot would risk his life in something he has no chance of winning."

"But he is our idiot!" a voice echoed in the room. Elliot stood perfectly still while Mary and Emily looked around the room to find the voice. Mary glanced back at Elliot but suddenly faced a barrel of a gun. Maya stood in front of Elliot and smirked at the Queen. "And he's going to win against you, ugly Queen." Soon the rest of the team burst through the ceiling of the room, which also caused Emily to fall from the cables. Sentinel caught Emily before they crashed into the ground.

Elliot stared at the team in joy. "You guys made it! But where's Mr. Ellis?"

The team became silent as Maya spoke over her shoulder. "Let's just say he went out drinking and probably won't be back for a while." Elliot stared at her and realized the actual truth within that lie.

Elliot smiled kindly as he played along. "He's probably having fun where he's at right now." Maya smirked at his joke while she pointed her weapons at Mary.

Mary stomped her feet like an angry little child. "This is my game! Only Elliot has to play! The rest of you have to go away!" The energy ball began to shake violently due to Mary's anger. "I'm the Queen here! You have to obey me!" A sudden gust of force flew out of the energy ball and knocked Maya and the rest of the team back to the wall. Only Elliot and Emily remained standing in front of Mary.

"Maya! Sentinel!" Elliot cried out their names.

Mary laughed. "Now we can finish this game! No more help from your friends!"

Elliot held up his revolver while Emily stood by his side and whispered to him. "You can't be serious, Elliot. She's very powerful. You might not win against her so easily."

He smiled at Emily. "That's why I have you next to me, Emily. We will defiantly win against her." Emily stared at him as she began to blush.

"Heh, already talking like a true soldier. But you can't forget about us now," Maya said as she walked up to the other side of Elliot. "Plus, I have some important business with the Queen." The rest of the team formed a line beside them and readied their weapons.

"I pledge to never leave my master's side," Sentinel spoke to Elliot.

Presley smirked at the Queen. "If only you have found salvation in God, you won't resort to an ugly life. But now you will receive your last judgment from me."

Grace giggled. "You can't destroy our world when we're still here."

"Or else we'll kick that ugly ass of yours!" Scarlet threatened.

"Scarlet, that's very mean," Ava scolded. "We will only beat the Queen up until she surrenders."

Ryder laughed. "I wonder if the Queen tastes good for my other demons. They enjoy the fear within my preys."

Andy smirked as he held his fist up. “There’s no way we can lose to a little girl.”
Colt adjusted his glasses. “My calculations are never wrong when we have the strongest soldiers on our side.”

Bina cheered. “We can do this! The Sugarland Kingdom will never fail!”

Abel had on the golden mask when he spoke. “So we may all can return back home in one piece.”

Mary roared as the energy ball spun out of control. “YOU HUMANS ARE SO ANNOYING! JUST DIE ALREADY!” Soon, multiple tentacles grew out of her back as 1000 more aliens manifested in the room. The team charged into the battlefield while Emily stayed behind to watch the fight.

Sentinel, Grace, and Scarlet ran past the first line of defense and stopped by the wall of tentacles while the rest of the team killed nearly half of the aliens. Ava used her magic to freeze the enemy in place for Elliot and Maya shoot each of the aliens in the head as her spirits possessed the other aliens to make them go insane. Ryder summoned Mammon, a giant half-man and half-serpent being who greed’s cannot be measurable by humans. The demon thrashed through the army of aliens and grabbed most of the tentacles to rip them apart. Grace’s shined her angelic light to blind the enemies for Presley to slice them up. Then, Elliot hopped onto Sentinel and dashed toward the Queen who was distracted by the others. But the tank-like aliens blocked their path before they could reach her. Maya and Ava rode on top of Scarlet and leaped over the wall of tankers to finally reach the Queen. Maya aimed her weapons at Mary as Ava and Scarlet fought the other aliens around them. “Finally got you!” Maya smirked. She pulled the trigger and a bullet pierced through Mary’s head.

But Mary didn’t fall; she only tumbled back as the green blood dripped down her face and then glared at Maya. “You believe a single bullet could kill me that easily?” Then she laughed. “I know your weakness, G.H.O.S.T. soldier.” In a split second, Mary appeared right in front of Maya and placed her tiny hands on her cheeks. Maya couldn’t escape her gaze as Mary grinned. “And I can make it into your nightmare. Right... Mia?” Mary glanced to the side where a very kind young lady stood with a smile.

Maya’s body instantly froze up when she saw her sister. She couldn’t tell if Mia was real or not. She had every trait as the real one. Mia spoke in her own voice. “Maya, you seem to be in a good mood today. I hope Elliot isn’t causing you any trouble.”

Maya pried herself out of Mary’s grasp and aimed her pistols at her own sister. Mia’s eyes grew wide at the weapons as Maya glared at her. “You’re not my real sister. She’s dead like my own daughter.”

Mary laughed again. “Whether you would believe this or not, Mia is still alive.” Then she glared at Maya. “And she will be the next Queen of Destruction.” Maya’s eyes grew wide as Mia knocked her into the air with an invisible force. Maya flew back over the wall of tankers and was soon caught by Ryder.

Elliot caught a glimpse at the lady who stood next to Mary after he finished shooting a tanker down. His heart skipped a beat once he realized who the person was. He stuttered his word. “M-Mother?” The lady looked into his direction and smiled like she usually does. Elliot rubbed his eyes to make sure this wasn’t a dream. Once he opened his eyes, the lady was standing about 2 feet in front of him. He instantly jumped back from fright and then gazed at her.

Mia smoothed her hands upon his cheeks. Her voice is sweet as he remembered it. "My, Elliot, you have grown so much since I last saw you. I'm so sorry that I've left you all alone while these aliens were running all over the city. But you don't have to worry about them anymore, I'm here now."

Elliot had so many questions to ask her, but his voice only came up with one. "...How are you here?"

His mother stared at him in confusion. "What do you mean? I have always been alive-"

"No," he spoke with force as he moved away from her. "How did you get on this ship? Why are you working with the enemy? How are you even alive?"

Mia moved closer to him as she began to panic. "Elliot, are you okay? Are you doing drugs? Did Maya force you to do anything illegal?" The she gasped in horror. "It was Maya! I knew she was a bad influence on you."

"Maya isn't bad!" he snapped as Mia was frozen by his words. "She's the best relative I ever had. And only my real mother would never call Maya a bad influence" He pointed his weapon at the lady. "I killed you once and I can kill you again."

"Put that gun down right now!" Mia shouted as she dashed toward him. He shot the bullet as it flew straight through her. She collapsed to the ground. Elliot lowered his weapon and was relieved to see that it was over. "Ow, that hurt, Elliot," Mia complained as she got up from the floor. Elliot stared at her in fear as the lady turned to him with no bullet wound on her. "You shot your own mother. Did Maya tell you to do this too?"

Suddenly, a leg was swung around Elliot and smashed into Mia's face which caused her to tumble to the floor again. "You can never be his real mother," Maya spoke as she stood between them. "And my real sister would never raise her voice at her own son."

"Maya!" Elliot said in surprise.

"Hey Mouse, don't worry about me. I can handle this fake piece of shit anytime," Maya smirked. "Now go get your girlfriend or else I will beat you up in the afterlife."

He smiled back at Maya. "Be careful." Then he ran off to look for Emily. Among the gruesome scene of the fight, Elliot spotted her running toward the energy source. He called out her name but she didn't respond. Then he ran after her and finally grabbed her arm to stop her. She turned around to face him as tears streamed down her face.

"Emily..." Elliot spoke softly.

"Elliot, I'm sorry," she cried. "Everything is my fault. Your friends, your family, and soon everyone else will die because of me." Then she stared into his eyes. "But I can fix this. Everyone will survive and the alien race won't be a problem ever again." Elliot knew what she was going to do. The energy source controls everything within the ship. But it is also the life source of the aliens. Emily was going to sacrifice herself to end everything.

Elliot pulled her in for a hug and cried in her shoulder. "Emily, it can't end like this. There has to be another way. I don't want to lose anyone else. I don't want to lose you!"

"There is no other way," Emily answered softly. "So please Elliot... let go of me. This is the last chance you have to defeat the Queen." Elliot slowly released her as his heart began to sink deeper into his chest. Then he looked up to see her but was suddenly surprised by a kiss, even though it lasted for a few seconds it felt like a lifetime for Elliot.

Emily smiled for the final time. “Goodbye, Elliot...” She escaped his arms before he could even stop her again. Emily ran close enough to the energy source and leaped into the shining sphere. It began to shine brightly as the lines connected to it shined also. Everyone stopped fighting and became blinded by the light as it grew even bigger. Soon the entire spacecraft was engulfed by the light while the people down below in the city stared at a bright orb in the night sky. Within the light, Elliot can feel the warmth of salvation as if Emily was right next to him. Then the light was replaced by a burst of energy that demolished the spacecraft, thus finally ending the long war against the aliens. The soldiers who fought this night were honored the next day in the project. Many agents and soldiers cried for the loss of the brave and the strong.

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Three months after the incident of the final battle, the U.S. government discontinued Project G.H.O.S.T. due to the lack of amount of aliens on Earth. The soldiers within the project either returned to the military or back to civilization. Sadly, the spirits who were bounded by the contracts were set free.

The door to the suite 3025 opened as two young teenagers entered the room. “We’re back from school, Maya!” Elliot smiled as Emily followed behind him.

“Hi, Maya,” Emily said cheerfully.

Maya emerged from the game room. “Hey you guys! How was school?”

“Boring as usual, but I did pass my history test,” Elliot informed as he handed Emily a drink.

She popped the cap open and took a sip. “Oh, and I finally finished my song for music class.”

“That’s great!” Maya said. “Feel free to do anything before 10 and no funny business.”

Elliot laughed. “Now you sound like a true parent, Maya.”

Maya put him in a head lock and growled at him. “I better be the greatest parent in the whole universe after all that has happened, Mouse.”

Emily giggled at them. “You might snap his head off, Maya.”

Maya smirked as she released Elliot. “Fine. But if I catch you both doing something gross, better be lucky if you have all your limbs attach the next day.”

“I will remember that,” Elliot said and then he dragged Emily to his bedroom before Maya could threaten them. He crashed onto his bed as Emily stared at the photo of his mother and him on his desk. Elliot sighed in relief. “I can’t believe it has been three months since you blew up the spacecraft. It feels like it just happened yesterday.”

“I know,” Emily added. “So much has happened that very night. I can’t believe the energy source didn’t destroy my life. But I have lost a few of my alien traits which is still a good thing.”

“I’m just glad I can see you again,” Elliot smiled.

Emily smiled back then she spoke softly as she picked up the photograph. “Hey Elliot, do you miss your mother?”

He sat up on the bed and answered. “I only miss my real mother who didn’t threaten to kill me.” Suddenly, an envelop fell down from the back of the picture frame and landed on the floor.

Emily picked up the envelop and stared at it. “What’s this?”

“That’s the letter my mother wrote before she was... gone,” he explained. “But I haven’t opened it yet. Maybe I should do it now.” Emily handed him the letter. He tore open the top and pulled out the note inside. Elliot and Emily both gasped in shock to see the message.

A few minutes later, the two teenagers ran out of the bedroom to find Maya. The aunt was playing a game of pool until they interrupted her. Elliot held up the letter. “Maya, the letter is... blank! There’s nothing in it. Are you sure my mother send you this?”

Maya laughed. “Maybe she was scared and speechless to write you something. But you probably knew what she meant by now.” Elliot and Emily stared at the letter again. Soon, Maya saw a faint image of her sister as she wrapped her arms around Elliot.

Mia glanced back at Maya and smiled kindly as her voice echoed in Maya’s ears. “... Thank you...” Then she faded back to thin air.

Maya smiled back and spoke under her breath. “Anything for you, Mia...”

“Huh, did you say something?” Elliot asked Maya.

“Don’t worry about it.” She said. “Hey, let’s go to the Dark Butterfly concert next week. I can get some backstage passes, too.”

“You’re the best!” Emily stared at Maya with joy. “Will Princess Lollipop be there too?”

Bina popped beside Maya and smiled. “Of course, Princess Lollipop will never lose to Dark Butterfly.”

“Hey, don’t forget about us!” Andy smirked as the spirits appeared around the room.

“We are a family now,” Colt spoke. “Even without the contracts, we still love this place.”

“Madame Maya will always be our master,” Abel spoke. “No one can ever replace her.”

Sentinel nudged Elliot to move closer to Emily as their faces grew red. “Spirits or not, I believe we won’t leave each other for a long time.”

Elliot laughed. “Then it’s settled, we are all going to the concert and finally get to enjoy the music.”

The spirits cheered with joy while Maya separated Elliot and Emily. “More like a reunion with the other former soldiers,” Maya explained. “Everyone will be there. Hopefully, it won’t be a total mess like last time.”

Emily giggled. “Don’t worry. I’m not going to destroy your planet this time.”

“And I won’t be an idiot to play an insane game,” Elliot added.

“Great! Now who wants pizza for dinner?” Maya asked with a smile.

Everyone raised their hands and shouted in unison. “Me!”

Suddenly, Maya pulled out her pistol and threatened them. “Clean up this room first or else I will blow your brains out before pizza deliveryman arrives!” They panicked and scattered around the suite as Maya laughed. “Oh, how I love this family so much.”

Thus ends this epic story of the G.H.O.S.T. soldiers who saved the world of both reality and fantasy. The loved and the lost will forever be remembered in their hearts as they wake up each day with a positive thought in their minds. A team is the strength of a soldier. Whether it be human or not, they will never fall.