

# Chapter

Danny Dynamite  
**MY COWBOY ROOMMATE**

Realm: *Forsythia*

Hi, Teddy here. Before you get into the crazy tales of the seven seas with the soon to be best monster hunter in existence, or, wait, maybe not, crap, spoilers- eh forget it- it's all in the prophecy so you'd know at some point anyways. I'm keeping it in. Moving on, I have a little tale for you that makes me laugh and I hope it will for you too. I present to you the brief period a literal cowboy moved into our shed- a bizarre experience from beginning to end...

I'm not kidding. A literal cowboy, with the spurs on his boots and holsters at his hips, all accompanied with the classic cowboy hat like he was ripped straight from a cowboy serial from when I was a kid. How he got all the way to the suburbs in Forsythia I could not tell you, but he was tough, rugged and had clearly seen a lot. At the end of the experience I can honestly say I will never forget the time when I made such an odd friend.

Me and my buddy Jax have lived here in this cozy town just north of the capital of Forsythia for a few years now. Picture suburban hell with no chance of escape but combatted by a comforting amount of guaranteed safety. Nothing ever really happens here, we elect presidents, we go to work, we get wives and we settle down.

In a world as crazy as the Kryptoverse some of us less adventurous folks like the security of a nice and easy life. We don't have the bright neon lights of Neo-Salem, nor the world class warriors like in Crowjo. Who am I? The very same bloke who refuses the constant call to adventure that the Kryptoverse provides. I have been described as a run-of-the-mill kind of guy.

My parents paid my tuition to Forsythia tech where I learned computer sciences and cyber security. In other realms you have to worry about vampires and monsters constantly attacking, but here? All you have to worry about are

hackers and online criminals- a little less exciting I know.

My favorite food? Chicken nuggets. See? boring. But that all changed very recently.

My cushy and safe job is great and pays extremely well, but we're going through a little bit of a housing crisis due to poor work regulating from the bureaucrats up top here in the realm. Because of this- out of college I moved in with my lifelong friend out here outside of Fieldland City- the most populous city in Forsythia.

It was not long until we decided to add another member to our house, and this is where things took a turn in a way I cannot explain.

We set out an ad in our local papers talking about our new opening for a roommate. And when I say local, I mean *local*. It did not even make it to Fieldland City, just to our little town hall down the street.

Could not have been seen by more than ten people before we had our first offer. We were sitting out on our couch in our living room watching an old western when we heard.

The slow marching of cowboy boots up our porch stairs right outside the front door.

"Is that the movie our something actually happening?" Jax asked, to which I returned a light shrug and tilted my head to hear better.

**Meanwhile:** Really quick during this whole ordeal with finding a roommate there is some other pretty important things going on. After months of tireless efforts I finally landed a date with a coworker of mine from the IT department. She's relentless, sweet and most important going on a date with me. It was near impossible to book but it is actually tonight, so if I seem on edge at any point in the following interaction that might be why. Or it might be the stranger breaking into my house...

Anyways, a light whistle then began to surface through the door. The song I didn't recognize but it felt old.

"A roommate offer?" I added to try and relieve the tension.

"Already? No chance" Jax chimed. I love his optimism.

Then, after a moment of silence no knocks were heard.

“Did.... Did he leave?” I asked hesitantly.

“Howdy” Thundered from the door.

I darted my eyes to Jax in a look for what to do. I mean, what a bizarre way to introduce yourself. Do people even say ‘Howdy’ anymore?

“Uh, Howdy?”

I sat looking for a response, to which I received none. The door then slowly crept open.

“That door was for sure locked” Piped Jax in one last moment before our mysterious visitor forcibly entered.

Standing there in the doorway was someone truly unforgettable. A man draped head to toe in cowboy garb- just like the old western we were watching.

“What was in our food?” I said over to Jax, thinking that what I was witnessing was one massive hallucination. Could you blame me? He had black skin which was dripping in sweat like he had ran here, which was odd considering he was not panting, or showing any other sign that he had been running for that matter. He had a large black hat and a blue bandana hanging under his chin.

He carried a cigar in between his lips, which was weird considering it was completely unlit.

“The name is Danny Dynamite.” He roared. Following the mere mention of his name was the cry of an eagle’s Kakow.

He then marched right into the living room with little to no regard to what we thought of him.

“Hi I’m Rancor, nice to meet you.” Jax said, extending his hand out to the stranger for a forced handshake. Why he lied? Not sure but whenever Jax got in trouble ‘Rancor’ was the fake name he’d give officials to throw them off. Jax was a little bit of a trouble child but we don’t have time to go into that here.

“I know who you are pilgrim” The cowboy, who I guess is named Danny Dynamite, spouted through his grimace.

“Saw your ad in the paper,” His Cowboy accent was so strong it took me back initially.

“It absolutely did not include an address, how did you find us” I finally said-

which changed his head as he darted it towards me.

‘I am, was, one of the final members of the Cowboy Coalition, stationed up in Scorpion II, any of this mean anything to you boys?’

Absolute nonsense, but I had heard stories growing up about a syndicate of highly trained outlaws that protected the realms. It was all just stories so I was hesitant to just immediately believe the spur-shoed man.

“It’s a big world with a lot of realms, we kind of just hang out”

“Tell me, son, what does this ‘hanging out’ entail, any kind of treacherous adventures?” Him referring to me as ‘son’ was interesting considering he could not have been more than one year older than me.

“Not particularly,” I responded back, a little bitter.

“Well that’s peachy, I’ll take the shed in the back.”

“I’m sorry?” Jax spoke. “That’s not really how this works sir.”

“My credit score is through the roof,” He then grabbed a bunch of files inside his jacket and through it down onto the coffee table.

“You’d be surprised at how much I’ve done in my life boy. But it’s very important to me you do not put my name on any papers or leases, I will pay in cash at the beginning of every month. Here is the first payment.”

He then threw down what looked like thousands of Forsythia Dollars onto the table too.

“Dude that looks like way too much,”

“The extra money is for a hot-tub, I want one, I’ll be in the shed.”

Jax turned to me, “How did he know we had a shed?” I shrugged back to him as Danny quickly made his way to the back exit and left the main house. We then proceeded to sit in complete silence for what felt like years.

“I liked him,” Jax spewed, which prompted me to look at him in pure astonishment.

“Are you serious? That man had literally so many red flags. And what kind of fake name is Danny Dynamite?” “I don’t know, I told him a fake name so who am I to judge?”

Fair point. But I still was not about to let this go. I had a hot date and was not gonna let some stranger ruin it.

“Jax you’re being fooled by the money, like always.” Not surprising, Jax would sell my soul to Dontralax for enough money.

“I’m not being fooled, yes I like the money part of this, but there’s enough money here for his rent, a hot-tub, and a new TV.” A funny statement, considering we were currently watching a western movie on a platinum 8K 65’ smart TV. I elected to ignore him.

“If it bothers you that much, why don’t you go to his room and talk to him,” “You mean the shed? I hate we’re already calling it his room, he is not staying here.” I felt like jerk but the fact that Jax was so immediately on board was frustrating.

Our house was quaint and I think the entrance of a guttural and portly cowboy with an accent and probably multiple guns was a bad call to have around. So fine, I was going to have to kick him out myself. Before leaving, I looked over at Jax, who was seemingly playing in the pile of money.

“Don’t get too used to that, it’s not staying long.” I chimed with a little bit of attitude but mostly determination before leaving the house. I was going to talk to Danny out in the shed.

After exiting the house I came up to the shed and halted. I do not know what it was about Danny but my palms were getting sweaty. This random man had entered and took claim to our shed. Who does that? I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I had no reason to finish that western we were watching, as far as I was concerned, we were in one now and we were about to have a duel.

After a few moments of working myself up, stopping and wanting to go back, then working myself up again, I finally swung open the door and entered our back shed. In hindsight, I may have come in a little too hot. The second I opened the door, I blurted out:

“Danny Dynamt-”

I immediately stopped and started to profusely cough. It had taken a second to get into my system but I quickly realized that the room was swelled up with smoke, almost instantly. I looked up to Danny standing by the window, almost completely vanished due to the fog, he looked almost ethereal.

“Danny?” I asked softly, like he was a deity from another planet.

“What can I do for you, Teddy?” I grew a perplexed look, I have a terrible pokerface.

“I never told you my name...” “Didn’t have to, my years in the Coalition taught me to investigate, that’s how I knew you were the perfect match for my exile.” A bizarre statement, but I quickly wised up and got my barring gathered once more.

“Listen, Danny. Your weird wisdom is not going to work on me. It’s just not.” Danny stood stoically, for the first time it looked like he was listening.

I gathered my thoughts, I had a funny feeling he does not do this often.

“You seem like a great guy Danny Dynamite,” Another eagle cried out at the sound his name, which was another weird thing on top of the already weird thing that was Danny Dynamite.

“But I feel like we never vetted you, we know nothing about you dude...” Job well done if I say so myself. But he stood there unresponsive.

I couldn’t help but check my phones clock, had to make sure I was on time. Oh, right, people from other realms always freak out when I talk about my phone and I have no idea which realm you’re from so basically I have this little rectangle and I can call and text people as I please but it also lets me do a bunch of little things like check the time and set reminders and tell me the weather and stuff, it’s really nothing crazy. Anyways, I was just making sure that the date was still a ways away. Considering how nervous I was, I had to make sure the homeless cowboy was nowhere to be seen.

“Ah...” He said, like he had come to some eureka moment. “What?” I chimed back, hoping he had finally listened and was about to swiftly make his departure from our house and life.

“Why didn’t you say you were having girl problems?” Completely out of nowhere, was he an Old God? Someone from the expanse, some kind of wizard or witch? How could someone possibly know all of that.

“Wha- how-?” “No one checks their phone with such speed that is not awaiting a response from a crush, rule number one”

“That’s rule number one?” “Silent, my specialty is charm so you came to the right place.”

“Danny, I didn’t come for that, can you please listen.” He was very charming and naturally charismatic, but I still wasn’t ready to look past the whole ‘cowboy’ thing, and I definitely was not going to let him help with my dream date.

“I think you need to leave.” I said, feeling a little bad but if I was not going to do it than who would?

‘I will make you a deal, Teddy, if I can make a date so good and so dag gone tasteful that you get a second date you have to let me stay.’ He stated with the unbroken excitement of a betting man. I could not believe he was making a deal with me, and what I couldn’t believe more was that I was actually considering it. But I have some success with the ladies, so I immediately passed on the cowboy offering to help me.

“I think I’ll be okay on my own, Danny. We were going to watch movies and hang out.”

“WHAT?” He screamed at me, “why the hell would you do that you yellow bellied coward?”

“Excuse me?” I uttered back, a little offended but mostly confused. “I think that is a fun and low-key night and she’ll enjoy it.”

“I promise you this. She won’t. You know how many guys take her on movie chill dates? That would be all of them. You worked your tail off for this date the least you could do is make her feel special and try to stand out. Otherwise she’ll completely forget about you.”

I contemplated for a moment. “Okay solid point, so what did you have in mind?”

Danny for the first time turned to me. Up until that point he had only looked out at the slowly darkening sunset like he was deep in thought.

“What realm is the lady originally from?” He asked, tone serious and inquisitive.

“Claire Dunway,” I snapped, correcting his tone towards my soon to be lady. No no, I’m getting ahead of myself. “Claire is originally from Nashtak, she

moved here when she went to college. Why?" I asked to no answer, just a deep in thought Danny staring off into space for what felt like eternity.

I could not help but break the silence. "Danny if I'm gonna let some random Cowboy who claims to be from the old Coalition just march in and plan a date for me you are going to have to give me a little bit more..."

He held up his fingers in a 'shushing' manner, which probably shouldn't have worked but it silenced me almost immediately. He then proceeded to *storm* out of the shed and back into the main house, I had to keep a brisk pace just to keep up.

Once we reentered the house we saw Jax still on the couch.

"Oh hey guys, happy to see you made up," He said.

Danny didn't answer, he just scoped out the house like he was a detective and deep in an investigation.

"Leave." He ordered Jax.

"... Okay" He then got up and made his way to his room down the hall. "But not because you told me to but because I want to," He let out before finally exiting to his room.

"You're a good man," Danny affirmed before turning his focus back to me.

"Now what?" I inquired.

"We're gonna design a night under the stars of Nashtak" He spread his arms wide as to say "Look at our canvas, we have so much to do"

"Danny, what?" I said with the disappointment in my tone apparent. Or at least I thought it was before hearing how not deterred he was from it. He then proceeded into his coat pockets where he retrieved a weird looking kit. Once popping it open it revealed a significant amount of materials needed for arts and crafts. I am talking about strings, pins, glue, scissors, and more things than I could mentally chart in time.

"Wow you are full of surprises," He smiled.

"By the end of this night you will have a girlfriend, partner." "Just a second date is fine, I really don't want any labels right now," "I do not understand you young people," he commented, again he was not more than a year or two older than me so I found it a tad bit comical.

Not dissimilar to the classic movie montage, my life for the following three



hours were a blur accompanied by music, where we worked constantly to making the whole house look like the very place Claire grew up- Nashtak. If you've never been it's a hell's cape of neon and synth. Rumor has it out of all the realms in the kryptoverse it is the most populated. I've only heard stories about a single city that goes on for hundreds of miles, with bright lights and a thick culture of the underbelly of so many densely packed people. But I also elaborated to Danny that I distinctly remembered her mentioning that she was from 'the Plateau' which I didn't know but I could tell Danny was well traveled because he knew it all like he had been there his whole life.

"The realm has a famous steam-based technology that makes the whole realm a beautiful post-industrial," He reassured me as he but greyed spider web cotton on the ceiling to mimic the smoke streams that emit from the tower-tops.

At first I wasn't sure where his mind was going but as he ran around building a set-like world mimicking Nashtak I slowly started to see the beauty of it.

He draped Christmas lights over the ceiling, not because it was anywhere near Christmas, but to recreate the people night sky there. He was so intricate with it, so precise that when he stated how they were exactly in the spot it is in real life. I sat in bewilderment.

"Wow the stars are beautiful in Nashtak," I couldn't help but comment.

Danny sighed, "That they are, friend, that they are." I then looked at everything else he had accomplished during our montage blackout, and I couldn't believe it.

A toy train that ran around the house, made out of gears and old cans, swerved in and out of the kitchen. I have no idea how he did that.

Old candles from 'his stash' draped the room in the perfect amount of light- not too much and not too little. he even built his own phonograph out of trinkets he found in the shed and stuff he had with him.

With one last touch- he went into the town antique store and got a Nashtak local swing record for the phonograph, something classic that was sure to take her back to her childhood.

It was starting to feel like a romantic dinner. *But that did not last long.*

We sat taking in the beauty of the environment, which was accompanied by

the classical jazz of Nashtak's culture. Something to behold.

"Whoa" I uttered, "You really are good,"

Danny nodded.

"The best, friend" I looked at him, confused, "I hardly know you, but it's a great start."

"What, friend?" He snapped, which caused me to realize, "Oh you meant best, comma- never mind, forget it." We sat in awkwardness for only a moment before...

*Knock knock knock...*

"She's here. What do we do?" I cried out to my new cowboy friend for advice.

"It's dinner time." He chimed, which caused my hearty to absolutely drop.

We got so caught up in the task of making the atmosphere we completely forgot the Nashtak hen we were going to get and cook for her.

Danny noticed the sudden rush of anxiety, "WhAt?" He barked.

"The hen, I can't believe we forgot all the food- we have to eat something! I knew you were going to mess this up." I started to pace to let out my energy, it didn't work.

"Listen cowboy-" He started, but I had had enough. I turned my head to him with my eyes shooting like daggers.

"Danny. You ruined my one chance with this girl" "I know you're stressed but I have this-" He held out his hand with these pods on them. I had no idea what they were but I was so sick of him I didn't even stop to ask.

"Leave, Danny. Now. Out of the shed, out of here for good." Danny looked down, saddened at my yelling.

"Okay, partner. For what it's worth, I'll leave this here, it's an earpiece that translates and gives you conversation starters, state of the art." As he leaves with one final good gesture, he puts the piece on the table.

"It was my final piece in getting you your second date, but you can do what you want with it." He spoke as he tilted his cowboy hat as a way of saying goodbye.

He turned and made his way out the back, and out of my life for good. And now it was game-time.

Had I colossally screwed up? Yes. Was I going to let that get to me? Absolutely not. I had pictured this moment for too long. So I sprayed some minty spray into my mouth, collected myself, and ran to the door.

When I made it to the door, I took a deep breathe in and opened it up, revealing the beautiful Claire Dunway.

A brief description: she stole the attention of every room she was in. She was the only thing in cyber security I actually liked coming to see everyday and getting the chance to see her outside of that and having her attention all to myself felt like some sort of cheat code. I was not going to let Danny mess it up. She had long flowing smooth black hair, like those models from those cheesy Krypto-Conditioner commercials. She had big brown eyes, and wore just a t-shirt and sweats.

“Hey Teddy” She said with a glowing smile.

“Hey Claire...” I said, with my accompanying smile looking a lot dumber. Either way, she quickly moved in for an embrace, one which was unexpected but off to a great start. I was dressed in a classic Nashtak tie and vest. She quickly grew a confused face and looked back up to me.

“What’s with the Halloween costume, I thought we were watching a movie?” Dammit, really should have anticipated that, but she already threw me off. It’s not my fault I get nervous! It was then a surprise hit. As she stood there waiting on my answer in pure awkward silence, a noise.

Static? Am I passing out? Losing my mind? No and no, it was my earpiece. Through it I could barely make out a solid noise, until.

“Yeehaw, you think I’d let you off the hook that easy?” Danny. Fricking Danny. “I put the piece in your ear on the way out, you gotta pay more attention partner.”

My first reaction, pure rage. I wanted to scream in anger at him ignoring my leaving. But it’s not exactly attractive to yell at nothing so I played it cool and was forced to hear him out.

“Okay this is important, say ‘Just wanted to surprise you on our first date’ implies a second date,” which felt cheesy, but I had waited too long so I went ahead and said it. To which she blushed. It worked. I then guided her into my

kitchen where she stood speechless. After a few more beats she let out a laugh.

"This is the nicest thing anyone has done for me," She said through her smile, which hadn't faded since opening the door.

"And this is only the first date," Danny suggested. A great thing to say, no doubt. But I was pretty sure I could handle this, I mean, I already made her smile with the opening line.

"Yeah I had all this stuff lying around, in fact one of my exes was from Nashtak." I said, hoping to show her that I didn't think too hard about the date, didn't want to creep her out.

"What!?" Danny screamed. "You coward!"

Her smile almost immediately disappeared. I knew I messed up... so I let out an awkward laugh to try to ease the tension. Did not work.

"Never bring up your ex, soldier. You're in the dog house now, but it isn't too late. Just say you're kidding and that she is the *only* person you know that's from Nashtak and that you hear it's beautiful. It makes her feel special again but also sparks a conversation about her home town. Classic." He suggested. Another good one, but I got into this so I can get us out. So I thought for a moment, then slowly reached into my ear and took the piece out. He truly gave great advice, but this was my chance.

"Sorry, I don't mean that. I actually spent a lot of time doing this. Worked on this for weeks. I've thought about nothing but you for weeks now." Make her feel special, right? She then let out the awkward laugh. Dammit. The good news is I had the whole date to make up for this.

### **Ten Minutes Later**

On the kitchen floor sat me and Danny, the amazing decorations we spent they setting up slowly falling off the walls and ceilings as we just processed it all. After what felt like forever in silence: I sighed.

"It's okay, you'll get them next time," Danny said. I nodded.

"Danny, I owe you an apology. You did nothing but help me the only one who messed it all up was me."

"No, being yourself was a good decision, you just need to work on saying what comes to your heart. don't say whatever you think will get her to like you.

And one day you'll find someone."

"Thanks, random cowboy."

He looked forward and grinned.

"You can obviously stay, if I had listened I probably would have gotten the second date. I misjudged you."

"Thanks, partner." Which let out a smile from me. Maybe being roommates with a cowboy won't be so bad, at least his specialty is charm. I'm sure that will come in handy a lot.