



DON'T KILL BILL,
JUST CHILL 2

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INTRODUCTION

You remember him, don't you?

That quiet little boy, frozen in his bed while the shadows crept closer. The one who whispered a mantra like a prayer his mother left behind: "Don't kill Bill, just chill." You were there when the world stopped being safe. When nightmares bled into daylight. When sleep became dangerous.

You watched him mourn. Watched him stare at the ceiling, wondering if her voice would ever come back. Watched him scream silently into the darkness—too afraid to close his eyes, too exhausted to keep them open. You saw the moment innocence died... and something else was born.

He didn't have superpowers. He didn't have answers. Just a book full of riddles, a room full of shadows, and a growing sense that he wasn't crazy—he was chosen and even then, at nine years old, he made a decision:

He was going to learn how to fight. Not with his fists and rage but with awareness. With patience. With understanding. With chill. The world let Billy grow up in the dark and now that he's grown? He sees it. It's been ten years. He's nineteen now and a sophomore at Grant University. Psych major with notebooks full of dream fragments and astral coordinates. His dorm room? A war bunker in disguise—runes taped behind posters, sigils etched into the back of his desk, and a journal so layered in symbols that even the shadows read it in silence.

But he's not alone anymore. He hasn't been for a long time. You remember the first DeAndre, the kid in the back of the library who saw the same symbols in his sleep. The one with the dream journal wrapped in chains and the eyes of someone who's already been to the other side and made it back... mostly. You remember Maya, too. The retreat counselor turned into a cosmic lookout. She's been guiding them from the edges of the veil, sending warnings and tools from places no GPS could reach. Then there's Her—the digital echo of his grandmother. Not a ghost. Not AI. Something in between. She waits for him in the dreamscape like a sentient riddle, reminding him of who he is—and what's at stake.

Together, they've been tracking the Compass. A myth to most. A weapon to some. A test for Bill. It doesn't just point—it reveals and when it activates, it doesn't just show you the truth... It shows you yourself. The same symbols that haunted his childhood are back—this time in classrooms, on phone screens, and inside other people's dreams. The veil isn't just thin anymore—it's tearing. As for Bill? He's not running, not hiding or hoping someone else will save the day. He's been preparing. Quietly. Carefully. Relentlessly. Because now he knows: He's not just a survivor. Not just the boy who made it out of the dark. He's the one who's going to reverse the curse and he won't do it alone. The Compass is calling and this time?

The Circle is listening.

CHAPTER 1: THE COMPASS WAKES

It started again on a Wednesday.

Rain drizzled over the campus of Grant University, soft and steady like it didn't want to draw attention to itself—just quietly soak into everything. Bill sat in his dorm window, hoodie up, legs tucked in, staring past the glass like he was waiting for something. Or maybe trying to feel it coming.

Inside his room, nothing looked out of the ordinary.

Posters on the wall. Desk cluttered with textbooks. Empty ramen cups stacked like trophies. But underneath?

Runes carved into the back of his dresser.

Sigils etched into the baseboards in chalk.

An astral protection grid—hidden under a rug—that even the RA didn't notice.

Bill didn't decorate his room. He warded it. Ten years had passed since the shadow first whispered his name. Ten years since his mother's voice became a mantra and still, every now and then, just before sleep...

They called to him.

Lately, they've gotten louder.

More insistent, more... coordinated.

He felt it in his spine that morning when he woke up gasping. A dream?

No. Not a dream.

A summoning.

The Compass?

It pulsed in his dreams like a heartbeat made of glass and static.

The symbols from the Book of Shadows—the ones only he and DeAndre recognized—were rearranging. Moving. Converging.

Something had changed

Bill stood, crossed the room, and opened his closet. Not for clothes. For the journal. Black leather. Bound tight. Inside were ten years' worth of dreams, sketches, astral maps, conversations with his grandmother's echo, and clues only his circle could understand.

Page after page of evidence. Patterns. Signs and this morning, one new line had appeared on its own.

“THE COMPASS IS AWAKE.
SEVEN SIGNS. SEVEN DAYS.”

Bill stared at the words. He hadn't written them. Neither had DeAndre. He could feel the ink. Still fresh. Still humming. Still watching him back.

His hands trembled.

“Guess that's our wake-up call,” he muttered.

The rain hadn't stopped. DeAndre leaned against the doorway of the campus cafe, hoodie soaked, dream journal clutched tight under his arm like it might try to escape. Bill approached from across the street, dodging puddles, his own notebook stuffed under his jacket.

They didn't say much at first. They didn't need to.

Both of them had seen it.

The Compass.

Not in visions—but in dreams they hadn't shared yet.

Same shape. Same symbols. Same sound.

“Mine showed fire,” DeAndre said as they walked.

“A house burning in reverse. The Compass was spinning backward.”

“Mine showed a girl,” Bill replied. “Eyes like static. She said I had seven days.”

They exchanged looks.

Same dream. Different pieces.

“Think it's starting?” DeAndre asked.

“No,” Bill said.

“It's started already.... We're just catching up.”

The two headed downtown after class to clear their heads—and maybe check one of the locations from their coded map....

A forgotten alley behind an old metaphysical bookstore. It wasn't a planned meet-up.

But she was there.

Maya.

Still cloaked in mystery. Still calm as ever. Still... watching.

She looked at them with eyes that seemed to carry decades of sleep deprivation—but no fear.

“Took you long enough,” she said, stepping out from under the awning.

“The Compass is moving. The veil's already thinning. I figured I'd see you today.”

Bill raised a brow. “You knew it would wake up?”

Maya smiled faintly. “It never really sleeps. It only calls to the ones who are ready.”

She pulled out two pendants—black stones, just like before, but cracked down the middle.

“They're breaking.”

DeAndre blinked. “What happens when they do?”

“The Compass fully activates,” Maya said. “And when that happens—every entity still tethered to it is gonna come looking.”

Bill tightened his grip on his notebook. “For us?”

“For whoever's still breathing.”

Silence. The kind that sinks into your bones.

Then Maya added, “You'll need more than each other. You'll need to finish the Circle.”

“Others?” DeAndre asked.

“Already dreaming,” she said. “They just haven't realized yet.”

Bill looked out past the alley, past the rain, past the city. He could feel them—others like him.

That night, the journal pulsed again and when Bill opened it, a new page had been added. In the middle: A compass, pointing in seven directions. Each tip... labeled with a name he didn't recognize—yet. The Compass wasn't just awake, It had already started hunting.

CHAPTER 2: THE LUCID ONE

The Compass pulsed again on the third night.

Bill couldn't sleep—not because he was afraid, but because he could *feel it vibrating* in the dreamscape. Like a bell being struck in another dimension. Its frequency buzzed through his teeth, his ribs, the back of his skull.

At exactly 3:33 AM, the journal flipped itself open.

This time, it didn't show a name.

It showed a garden.

Lush. Overgrown. Unreal.

And at the center of it—a girl standing in the rain, laughing with her eyes closed.

"She's trapped," Bill muttered.

"She doesn't know she's dreaming."

DeAndre leaned over the page.

The Lucid Dream Trap

The garden was beautiful—too beautiful.

Every color was too saturated. Every scent is too sweet. The grass shimmered like glass, and the clouds didn't move unless you watched them. It was the kind of place your mind built when it wanted to stay numb. Naya stood at the center of it all, floating an inch above the ground, wrapped in sunlight like it worshipped her.

"She's not trapped," Bill whispered. "She built this."

"Worse," DeAndre muttered. "*She made herself the god of it.*"

The Garden Turns

The second her eyes opened, the illusion cracked like bone. The birds fell from the sky mid-song, turning to ash before they hit the ground.

The swing creaked and melted into vines.

And the sky—peeled back like skin to reveal something pulsing and black behind it.

"You want me to leave this?" Naya hissed, her voice no longer human. *"You want me to wake up to that corpse of a world? "Where my mom died in front of me, screaming my name through shattered glass?"*

The trees screamed with her. They wrapped around DeAndre first.

DeAndre's Battle: The Burial

The roots didn't just grab him, they dragged him down! Fast and violently. Within seconds, he was underground, trapped in a pocket of earth shaped like a coffin. The walls pulsed—breathing with his fear and then... he wasn't alone. He turned his head and saw himself. But this version was pale. Rotting. Eyes gone. Mouth sewn shut with golden thread.

"You could've stayed asleep," it whispered. *"You could've lived in the garden. But now you die in the dirt."*

DeAndre tried to scream. But dirt filled his throat. Hands clawed through the soil—his own hands—trying to bury himself.

"This is the dream," he told himself. *"This is HER dream, not mine."*

But the fear was so thick it felt like the truth. Until he remembered Bill's voice.

"The Compass found you because you're not supposed to survive alone."

DeAndre focused and in a final act of defiance, he opened his dream journal inside the coffin.

The words on the page burned into the soil—sending a psychic shockwave back through the garden.

Bill's Battle: The House That Hates

Bill wasn't pulled underground like DeAndre. He was *yanked sideways*—thrown into a hallway that looked like his childhood home but something was off. The walls pulsed, the paint bled and the floorboards breathed beneath his feet. At first glance, it was just memory but deeper down?

It was judgment.

"Billy..." his mother's voice called from behind one of the doors.

"You left me."

He reached for the knob—*instinct*—but when he touched it, the door handle turned into teeth, clamping down on his hand. He yanked away, heart pounding. Then, the hallway split—not like a fork in the road, but like it cracked open. He watched as the walls peeled apart like skin, revealing rooms that didn't exist in real life:

Bill goes into a room and finds himself standing in the rain, but it wasn't wet. Everything around him was desaturated—gray sky, gray grass, gray silence. Even the wind moved in frames, like a glitching video stuck between seconds. He was alone in a graveyard that looked like the one from his memory—but stretched, warped, like the land itself was mourning.

Then he saw it.

Her grave.

Helen.

His mother's headstone sat crooked in the dirt, half-swallowed by vines that pulsed like veins. The letters carved into the stone rearranged themselves as he approached.

“LOVING MOTHER” became **“FAILED PROTECTION.”**

“BELOVED” became **“BLINDED.”**

Then the worst part—A hand broke through the soil. Not clawing, not reaching but Offering.

His mother's hand. Dirt-caked. Open-palmed.

Waiting.

“Take my place...” he whispered.

“Take my place,” the grave replied in his own voice.

He dropped to his knees, begging the dirt to swallow him instead. His hands clawed at the soil, tearing it open, screaming:

“LET ME IN. TAKE ME. LET HER OUT.”

The hand retreated, the ground closed and the gravestone changed one last time:

“Too Late.”

The wind whispered, "You waited too long." His mother's voice echoed:

"You were always meant to outlive me... that's the curse."

The scene shifted with one blink and Bill was upside down, dangling by his ankles in a blood-red sky. Except... he wasn't the one dangling. His grandmother was.

Her body spun slowly, suspended in the void by a noose made of light.

She was upside down, arms stretched unnaturally wide, neck bent at an impossible angle. Her mouth hung open—but instead of breath, shadows poured out like smoke.

Her eyes were gone and in their place: two hollow sockets burning with astral fire, flickering between blue and black.

“Granny?” Bill whispered.

She twitched.

Then her lips moved—slow, mechanical, like a marionette being forced to speak:

“L-L-I-B... T’N-O-D.”

It took a second to realize—She was saying his name in reverse.

“Bill... don’t.”

Suddenly the world stuttered. Each time she blinked, the sky changed color—purple, green, static. Her skin began to flake off in strips of energy. She convulsed—then screamed.

But the scream didn’t come from her mouth. It came from *inside* his own head—so loud it felt like his skull would split open. She reached toward him, but her arms extended like liquid, wrapping around his neck. Not choking him—*anchoring* him.

“You’ll do what I couldn’t,” her voice said inside him.

“But you’ll pay what I wouldn’t.”

The sky fractured.

She dissolved into dust... then reassembled upside-down again—resetting the cycle.

Bill blinked again.

Now he was in a college lecture hall—but nothing made sense. Every seat was filled with silhouettes of people he *almost* recognized. No one had a face. Their eyes were just black holes, staring through him. His professors stood at the front of the room—but their bodies were wrong. Limbs too long, necks bent at sharp angles and skin too smooth. One of them smiled without teeth. Then yelled:

“FAKE.”

The others followed.

“FAKE.”

“FAKE.”

“FAKE.”

Over and over. Their voices layered until they became a chant—a spell—a curse.

“FAKEFAKEFAKEFAKE—”

Bill looked down, his fingernails were falling off. His skin peeled back in slow curls, revealing pulsing veins and exposed bone beneath. His teeth began to loosen, one by one, falling onto his desk with soft clicks. He reached up to his face, but his cheek caved in under the pressure.

“You don’t belong here,” one professor hissed, approaching.

“You’re just the dream,” another whispered.

Bill tried to stand—but his knees shattered like glass. His legs collapsed under him as he fell to the floor, coughing up blood that turned to ash mid-air. His skin was no longer decaying.

It was disappearing—like his very identity was being erased from the dream.

One voice rose above the chant, slow and deliberate:

“You can’t fight what’s inside you, Bill. Because what’s inside you... is us.”

Then silence...then screaming from every direction and just like that, he was back at the first door. The hallway reset, the grave waited again and the cycle was beginning again. Until, he turned and ran *backward*—a move that defied the dream logic, cracking the illusion.

Each step in reverse took him *older*. Stronger. Sharper. Until he was back at nineteen, heart racing, standing in front of a door made of *obsidian and glass*. He opened it—And stepped into Naya’s mind.

Naya’s Battle: The Mirror Garden

When Bill entered her consciousness, it wasn’t peaceful. It was a frozen battlefield. The garden was gone. What replaced it was endless—mirrors as far as the eye could see, stretching into an astral sky with no stars.

In each mirror, Naya stood—a different version of her, in different dream-worlds she had created over the years. In one, she was six years old, playing with her mom under a sunset. In another, she was a warrior queen, ruling a lucid empire. In another, she was burning—screaming for someone to wake her up. In one mirror, she was floating face-down in a bathtub, still and silent. Each reflection whispered a different truth:

“You’re safest here.”

“You’re God here.”

“You’re nothing out there.”

“They will kill you if you wake up.”

Bill stepped forward. “You’re not these mirrors. You’re the one who built them.”

She turned to him slowly, eyes glassy.

“If I break them... I will lose them forever. My mom. My childhood. My peace.”

“No,” Bill said. *“If you stay here, you lose yourself.”*

The mirrors started talking—all at once. A sonic storm of lies, grief, fear. Naya screamed. Bill covered his ears, but even that wasn't enough. The sound wasn't physical—it was emotional.

“YOU THINK YOU KNOW PAIN?” a voice boomed.

“WATCH HER BREAK.”

Suddenly, Bill was forced into her memories—first-person. He felt it...The seat belt tightening around her body as the car flipped. The glass slicing into her face. The scream of her mother calling her name—then the sound of her neck snapping on impact. Bill fell to his knees, weeping, shaking. It wasn't a memory anymore. It was happening—inside him.

“She was my only reason to stay,” Naya whispered behind him.

“So I made a place where she never died.”

Bill stood, face streaked with tears but he didn't try to argue. He walked to the mirror with the bathtub and smashed it. The shockwave shattered every mirror in the realm. The sky collapsed and in the middle of the wreckage, Naya fell into his arms—sobbing. Not because she was weak. But because, for the first time... she was free. Back in the dorm, the three of them lay on the floor, gasping for breath. Naya sat up first, her eyes no longer glowed gold but her aura did. Pulses of soft violet energy rippled off her skin. She looked at her hands, turned them over and blinked slowly....

“I remember everything,” she whispered. “Every world I made. Every loop. Every version of myself and the one thing I could never build...”

She looked at Bill and DeAndre.

“Was someone who understood.”

She closed her eyes and the lamp in the corner flickered, not from electricity—but her emotional field. They instantly felt her power. It was not raw, not violent but deep. It's creative, ancient and intuitive. They sat for hours. DeAndre shared the dream trap he'd been buried in. Bill spoke about the house and how it nearly regressed him into a child again. Naya told them about the voice that convinced her she was better off asleep—and how it would whisper new illusions every time she tried to break free.

Naya laughed....“So we're the trauma trio now?” Bill smirked. “*The dreamwrecked.*” DeAndre added: “*Nah... we're the ones who woke up.*” They didn't say it aloud...But in that moment, they felt it. The Circle wasn't just forming, it was *remembering itself*. Hours passed as they trauma bonded until the journal flipped on its own. The Compass symbol for Naya pulsed violet and green—wrapped in vines, mirrors, and shattered glass.

Underneath it, in glowing ink:

“She is the Architect. The dreamwalker. The memory who remembers us all.”

“Five remain. The deeper you go, the more of yourself you must give.”

CHAPTER 3: THE SOUL TRAP

The Compass burned red when it pulsed. The page in the journal crinkled under its own heat.

DeAndre stared at the new symbol—a twisted hourglass leaking light.

“This one’s already been in too long,” he muttered.

“How can you tell?” Bill asked.

“Because it’s not showing us a name. It’s showing us a *routine*.”

“Whoever this is... they forgot they’re stuck.”

The astral pull was violent. They didn’t descend into this dream—they were sucked in like debris into a vacuum. When they landed, they hit the pavement. A sunny cul-de-sac with birds chirping, lawns trimmed and school bells in the distance. Too... *normal*.

“We’ve seen illusions before,” Bill said. “But this? This isn’t trying to make him happy. It’s trying to make him settle.”

Inside the house, Zeke sat at the kitchen table, eating cereal. Again. and again and again.

Bill tried to speak to him but Zeke’s response repeated every third sentence, like a broken NPC in a corrupted video game.

“You going somewhere?”

“Yeah. Just heading to class.”

“You going somewhere?”

“Yeah. Just heading to class.”

Then the reset. The spoon dropped. The cereal refilled. The same bird chirped. Then again and again.

“He’s looping,” DeAndre said. “*Hard*.”

Billy's Descent

The moment Billy tried to touch Zeke's shoulder—he vanished. The house shattered into glass confetti, spinning through endless white. Bill landed on the tile—hard. School floors, a classroom and the bell rang.

He stood in front of a whiteboard, holding chalk. Students stared at him. His mouth moved, but he couldn't hear the words.

"Mr. Reynolds," said a voice behind him. "*What's the lesson today?*"

That wasn't his name. Was it? He looked down at his hands. Older, calloused and ink-stained.

Wait... what am I teaching?

He turned around. Now, he was at a podium wearing a suit. He's applauding as a bride walks down an aisle toward him.

Wait.

No, now he was in the crowd, holding a child.

No—now he was the child, being held.

"Who am I?" he asked aloud.

The world didn't answer. It morphed again.

Flicker.

He was working at a computer. Spreadsheets, budgets and a tie he hated. Coffee he didn't order.

"Just keep your head down," a voice said.

"This is what everyone does."

Flicker.

Now he was at a grave, placing flowers. He didn't know who was buried there. His hands were shaking. His eyes wouldn't stop crying.

"This is life," a voice whispered.

"This is all there is. Work. Sleep. Grieve. Repeat."

Flicker. Flicker. Flicker.

Loop after loop. A thousand lives, a million roles but no *name*. No Bill. He looked in a mirror—and saw no reflection.

“You’re just a placeholder,” the voice said. “*You’re no one. You never were.*”

He believed it.

“BILL.”

DeAndre’s voice ripped through the illusion like thunder. The world around Bill *glitched*, shaking violently.

“BILL. WAKE UP.”

Bill was in a hospital bed now. Machines beeping and a doctor saying “*Time of death...*”

“This is real,” the voice said. “*You’re gone. Just let go.*”

“BILL, YOU STUBBORN ASSHOLE, IF YOU DON’T SNAP OUT OF IT I SWEAR—”

DeAndre appeared in the dream—on fire with black and gold light, his dream journal levitating around him. He grabbed Bill’s wrist. It felt solid. Real.

“Come back.”

Bill blinked.

Then again.

“My name...”

“My name is...”

The world exploded in light.

When they came back to the original dream, Zeke was still stuck—pacing in the kitchen.

Bill grabbed him by the shoulders.

“You’re in a loop. A soul trap. You’ve been here *forever.*”

Zeke blinked. “I’m... what?”

“You’ve lived this fake morning *over a thousand times.*”

Zeke stepped back, eyes darting.

“I thought... this was just my life. Nothing weird ever happened. Just cereal. Just school. Just... gray.”

DeAndre walked up, dream sigils glowing from his palms. “This ain’t living, bro. This is maintenance mode. You’ve been drugged on repetition.”

Zeke dropped to his knees. “I can’t remember who I am.”

Bill sat with him, took his hand. “You’re Zeke. You broke 112 loops before this one. You were fighting, even in your sleep.”

Zeke looked at his own hands—light cracking through his skin like he was made of stained glass. He whispered: “I feel it now. Something... waking up.”

They all jolted awake in Bill’s dorm. Zeke gasped, clutching his chest. “I saw myself. All the versions. I was always giving up.”

Bill shook his head. “Not this time.”

Zeke’s eyes sparked with electricity—literal arcs of energy dancing across his irises.

“I don’t know what I am,” he said.

“But I know I’m done being nobody.”

Later that night, Naya joined them in the common room. Zeke paced while explaining the dream. Bill sat with his head in his hands, still shaken. DeAndre was silent—watching everyone, as always. Naya listened. Then she whispered:

“They tried to erase me too. Made me live in paradise so I wouldn’t question it.”

She reached out, touching Zeke’s arm gently. “They bury the powerful the deepest.”

He looked at her then at Bill and DeAndre. “So... we’re all freaks?”

“Nah,” DeAndre said. “*We’re the broken ones that didn’t break the way they wanted.*”

Bill looked up, smiling weakly.

“Welcome to the Circle.”

The Compass opened on its own.

A new symbol burned red and silver:

A broken hourglass reshaped into a spiral.

“He is the Disruptor. The Reset. The one who remembered.”

“Five remain.”

CHAPTER 4: THE DEALBREAKER

The Compass didn't pulse this time.

It screamed. The symbol on the journal page appeared scorched—burned into the paper like it had been branded instead of drawn. A twisted scale tipped off-balance and written beneath it:

“They made a choice.”

The Signal Leads South

The dreamscape that opened wasn't subtle, it was loud. Red skies and thunder that cracked like glass breaking. Ash falling like snow. DeAndre muttered, “Oh, this shit already hostile.”

They touched down on scorched earth. Far in the distance stood a cathedral made of bones, floating above a pit of fire. The Compass dragged them forward. Inside the cathedral, a figure stood at the altar. They wore a black jacket stitched with runes. Their eyes glowing faint gold, arms crossed and waiting.

“You're late,” they said, voice sharp, bored, cocky.

Zeke stepped forward. “*You know us?*”

“I know what you're doing,” the figure said. “*Building your little Circle. Thinking you're chosen. Cute.*”

Bill narrowed his eyes.

“You're one of us.”

“Was,” they corrected. “Then I saw the fine print.”

Their name was Rowan.

They were powerful—easily the strongest aura Bill had felt so far.

But something about that aura...Didn't feel clean.

They explained it like this:

“I was recruited years ago. Not by you. By something deeper. Something beneath the Compass.”

“They said I didn't have to be a pawn. I could be the board.”

“So I said yes.”

“You sold your soul,” Naya said, stepping forward, fury rising.

“No,” Rowan said, “*I bought my freedom.*”

They raised their hands—The walls of the cathedral exploded outward, transforming into an arena of flame and shadow.

“Now if you want me back...”

“...earn it.”

The Battle Begins

The ground cracked. Spikes of bone rose from below. Flaming statues came to life, screaming sermons. Rowan’s body blurred with motion—their attacks a mix of dream-magic and raw telekinetic force.

- They ripped Zeke’s memories from his head and threw them at him like weapons—moments of shame looping midair.
- They pulled Naya’s paradise from her past and used it to cage her, whispering “Don’t you miss the peace?”
- They sent DeAndre’s own shadow to fight him.

And then they came for Bill.

Bill vs Rowan

Rowan didn’t attack with fire. They attacked with truth.

“You think you’re the hero?” they spat. “You’re the biggest lie of all. You think the Compass *chose* you? It marked you. Branded you like livestock.”

They rushed him—their aura locking with his like two stars colliding.

Bill fought back with everything—mantras, sigils, memory, even pain.

But Rowan moved like someone who already knew his next move.

“You’re predictable. You’re a bleeding heart and you’re gonna get everyone killed.”

Rowan’s hands glowed black—and suddenly, Bill was choking on smoke, pulled into a private illusion.

Bill's Inner Trap

He stood alone in the dark. A voice—Rowan's, but deeper—echoed around him.

“What if you just let it go? Gave in. No more weight. No more prophecy.”

“You could wake up tomorrow with a normal life. No Compass. No Circle. No war.”

A door appeared in front of him.

Through it:

His mother. Alive.

Smiling.

Making breakfast.

“Walk through. It's that easy. Leave the Circle. Leave the burden.”

He took a step.

Then another.

Then...

“Bill.”

Zeke's voice.

“We're still fighting.”

That one sentence broke the spell.

Bill stepped backward.

“I didn't come this far to take shortcuts.”

The illusion shattered.

The Turn

Back in the real dreamscape, Bill returned with fire in his aura. Zeke broke his own memories apart and turned them into shields. DeAndre's shadow knelt before him. He'd won his inner war. Naya shattered her cage and turned its pieces into projectiles. Together, they surrounded Rowan and finally... Rowan dropped to their knees. Not in defeat, in release. Their glowing eyes dimmed. Their jacket unraveled and the dark energy?

Left them.

Rowan gasped as if breathing air for the first time in years.

“It was never freedom,” they whispered.

“It was a leash dressed as power.”

They looked at Bill.

“You still want me in your Circle? After what I did?”

Bill nodded.

“Because you’re still here and you chose to let go.”

Rowan smiled—just slightly.

“Guess I’ve got some making up to do.”

Back in the waking world, the four sat in silence. Zeke broke it.

“They offered me peace.”

“They offered you power.”

“Wonder what they’ll offer the next one.”

Rowan looked up.

“It doesn’t matter.”

“Because now they’ll have us coming for them.”

Naya nodded.

“No more lone battles.”

Bill smiled—finally—because the Circle was starting to feel like family.

The Compass opened.

A new symbol burned black and silver—a broken crown split down the middle.

“They are the Fallen. The Redeemed. The power that chose purpose.”

“Four remain.”

CHAPTER 5: THE MIRROR LABYRINTH

The Compass didn't blink.
It reflected.

The new symbol looked like a perfect circle of glass—cracked from the inside out.
When they stared too long, they saw their own eyes staring back, distorted.

Underneath, one word pulsed:

“Shattered.”

Entering the Labyrinth

No wind.
No sky.
Just endless silence.

They entered a space made of pure reflection—a shifting maze of mirrors that pulsed like it was alive, breathing around them. Every wall showed a version of the self. Not the ideal. Not the truth. Only the fragmented ego—projected through trauma, fear, and repression.

“This is a psyche,” Naya whispered, her breath fogging the glass.
“Not a place. A person.”

Zeke looked at his reflection—then looked away.
It grinned at him. He wasn't smiling.

“Something's wrong,” Rowan muttered.
“The walls... they're watching.”

Suddenly, the mirrors shifted.

A thousand Averys appeared.

Each one is different.

- One smiling and polished—like an influencer, dripping with charm.
- One crying and bruised, hiding in a corner.
- One screaming, teeth jagged, eyes pure static.
- One in full armor, no face at all.

They all said the same thing at once:

“I’m the real one.”

Then chaos hit.

The Labyrinth Fractures

Each member was pulled into their own mirror. No warning or time to fight back. Then suddenly....

They were alone.

Avery – The Core of the Labyrinth

At the center stood Avery but they weren’t whole.

They flickered between forms every second.

- Boy.
- Girl.
- Masked.
- Faceless.
- Beautiful.
- Broken.

“I don’t know who I am,” they whispered.

“So I became *everyone*.”

The Circle stepped into the light—each of them changed, bruised but whole.

Bill reached out. “You don’t have to choose right now. Just... be.”

Avery stared. “But what if I’m nothing without a mask?”

“Then we’ll help you build a new one. From the inside.”

Tears fell. Their form stopped shifting.

They became... still.

DeAndre's Trial: The Silent One

DeAndre stood in silence, his mirror didn't show anything. Just emptiness. Then—slowly—his reflection appeared, but it was *his dad*, pointing at him.

"You don't speak unless spoken to. That's why you're always ignored."

"You think they need you? You're just background noise."

"Let them talk. Let them lead. Stay in the shadow where you belong."

The mirror crack'd with every insult. His younger self appeared. Eight years old. Crying behind a locked bedroom door.

"I used to scream," young DeAndre said. "*No one ever came.*"

Tears welled in his eyes. But then? He kicked the mirror in.

"I hear myself now."

Rowan's Trial: The Temptation of Power

Rowan stood in a mirrored throne room. Their reflection sat in a black velvet throne—wearing a golden crown shaped like horns.

"We could have been gods."

"Power was never the curse. *Regret* was."

"You gave up control for... *forgiveness?*"

"Weak."

The reflection waved its hand, and all the mirrors showed the other Circle members dying, screaming.

"They'll fall. Just like you did. Might as well *own it* this time."

Rowan approached the mirror, eyes glowing.

"I don't need power to protect them."

They crushed the crown in their hand. The throne cracked and the illusion bled black light.

Naya's Trial: The Fractured Memory

Naya's mirrors showed her every dream she ever built. A thousand paradises. A thousand lovers. A thousand mothers. She reached for one. Then another. Each one disappeared as she touched it.

"You keep building worlds to run from pain," her reflection said, gently.

"But what if the pain is the map?"

"What if it's the only real thing?"

She stopped reaching. "Then I'll use it. I'll turn it into light."

Her mirrors burned clean.

BILLY'S MIRROR TRIAL

In the mirror, Bill saves her. She doesn't die in her sleep. He wakes her up just in time. He grabs her hand and time slows to syrup. They're standing in a golden field now—sunset bleeding into the sky, warm wind brushing his cheek.

She's smiling.

Alive.

Whole.

"You did it," she says. "*You changed everything.*"

For a moment, he lets himself believe it. Something's off though... "Where's Grandma?" he asks.

His mother looks confused. "*Who?*"

The sky shudders. The wheat around them starts turning black. A shadow walks forward.

"You altered the loop," says a voice. Her voice.

"Now you'll never find me again."

His grandmother, but younger. Pre-death. Wearing all white. Her eyes are ancient—like she's seen too much. She walks past him, kisses his mother on the forehead and whispers something in her ear. His mother's face changes, terrified. Then turns to *ash*, dissolving in his hands.

"You were never meant to save her," his grandmother says.

"You were meant to survive her."

Before the mirror shatters, she mouths something:

"Look deeper in the bloodline..."

Mirror Two: The Villain

This time, the mirror shows Bill draped in gold and black.

He's older. Taller. Cold. Crowds kneel before him. The Compass is carved into his chest like a sigil. He raises his hand—people burn alive in silence.

DeAndre, Naya, Zeke, Avery, Rowan... all shadows behind him. Dead. Forgotten. Echoes.

"You became what they couldn't stop," a voice says.

His grandmother appears again—*this time blindfolded, hands bloodied.*

"You wanted to end the war. So you ended the world."

He walks up to her, rips off the blindfold—

She has no eyes.

"This was my path too," she says.

"And it always ends in blood."

His reflection turns and grins.

"They won't make it. You will. That's what legacy means."

The throne behind him is made of *burned mirrors*. He screams and the mirror implodes into smoke.

Mirror Three:

Bill is older now. Maybe twenty-five. He grew up living with his dad. Got his College degree. A fancy job, casual friends and a girl he loves. No nightmares No shadows. No Compass.

Just... peace.

Until he visits his father one night and finds him drunk, rambling.

"Your mom used to talk about sleep demons," he says.

"Crazy woman. Said you'd be the one to break it."

"But look at you now. You're normal. Like me."

Bill feels something crack. He walks to his childhood bedroom and looks under the bed.

Finds an old journal.

The Book of Shadows. Covered in dust.

Untouched.

“You gave it up,” says a voice behind him.

He turns and sees his grandmother again—this time pregnant, staring at him with hollow eyes.

“You were the first in three generations to be born without the sight... because you never needed it.”

She holds out a baby. Wrapped in fire.

“But your daughter will.”

The baby opens its mouth—and whispers the mantra.

“Don’t kill Bill, just chill.”

He starts screaming.

Reality fractures like broken glass.

Mirror Four:

He’s nine again and this time? He never makes it out of the first sleep paralysis episode.

He’s still in that childhood room—stuffed animals. Nightlight. Frozen. The shadow is at the end of the bed, it’s wearing his mother’s voice like a mask.

“Just give in, Billy. It’s easier. No pain. No weight.”

The mantra doesn’t work. He tries to say it—but the words slip from his tongue like sand. His grandmother appears in the corner, sitting calmly in the rocking chair.

“You’ve been here before,” she says.

“How do I get out?” he whispers.

She doesn’t answer. Instead, she opens her mouth and screams silently, eyes rolling back. The room stretches, distorts—like it’s trying to suck him into a dream deeper than dreaming. He sees himself, older, still in bed. Unmoving. Decaying. No one ever finds him. No Circle. No story. Just silence.

“This is where I died,” his grandmother says softly.

“Not in the body. In the forgetting.”

He claws at the sheets. Chokes on stillness. For a split second—he *believes* this is the real world. Then Rowan’s voice cuts through—

“BILL! REMEMBER!”

He blinks, the room shatters. Bill drops to the ground in the real dreamscape, sobbing. His hands are shaking. His voice was raw.

“I saw everything. Every version of me. Every outcome.”

“What if I’m not good enough in any of them?”

Avery kneels beside him—still flickering, still raw.

“None of us are enough alone.”

Naya touches his back. Rowan offers him water. Zeke just sits beside him in silence. They all breathe together.

Back in the real world, they all sat in silence. Even Avery. Zeke was first to speak.

“I saw every version of myself I hated.”

“And I think... I needed that.”

DeAndre nodded. “*Same.*”

Avery looked up. Voice soft. Honest.

“I didn’t think I deserved a place in anything. I just wanted to disappear.”

Naya took their hand.

“You’re part of this now. Even the broken pieces matter.”

Rowan added: “*Especially the broken ones.*”

Bill looked at them all.

“Every trial is preparing us.”

“Not just for a fight. For a *reunion* with who we really are.”

The Compass opened on its own.

The new symbol was a **mirror cracked into seven pieces**... now glowing, joined by golden threads.

“They are the Mirror. The Identity. The piece that brings unity through reflection.”

“Three remain.”

CHAPTER 6: THE ECHO

The Compass pulsed... then stopped. The journal didn't open.
It shivered.

Zeke reached for it and pulled back.

“Yo. That thing just *twitched*.”

Naya knelt down, placed her palm over the cover.

She flinched.

“This one's not trapped.”

“This one's... **broken**.”

Astral Entry – The Split Mind

The dream didn't pull them in—it fractured them inward. There was no gravity. No orientation. No color. Just a pulse—like a heartbeat under water.

Then, they were inside a hallway made of shattered thoughts, floating in chunks.

It wasn't a location. It was a schizophrenic episode.

Bill landed alone. He stood in a room made of static and stained carpet. The walls whispered phrases on loop:

“You're still dreaming.”

“They're watching you.”

“Don't look in the mirror.”

“He never existed.”

On the wall: Photos of people he knew—faces scratched out.

In the corner: The recruit.

A girl, maybe 18. Wearing layers of clothes that didn't match. Talking to herself in fragmented sentences. Her name: Eli. She was drawing on the walls with her fingers—*but there was no paint*.

“Can't sleep. Can't wake up. He's not real. She's not real. The walls are breathing. I see them blinking.”

Bill stepped forward. She flinched and screamed.

“You’re part of it! You’re the hallucination! They said you’d come wearing his face!”

Bill froze.

“Whose face?”

Eli pointed at him. Then her eyes rolled back. The room collapsed inward—and Bill fell into her mind.

Billy’s Descent – The Ancestral Echo

He’s walking through a hospital hallway now. Lights flicker. Every nurse looks like his grandmother in a different outfit. A voice over the intercom repeats:

“Code 13. Patient is lucid. Patient is lucid. Terminate contact.”

He tries to scream—but he can’t speak. He opens a door—He’s inside her suicide note.

Written across the walls in astral fire:

“I don’t know what’s real anymore. If this is dreaming, I want out. If this is waking, I want out. I see myself in mirrors and I don’t recognize her. She tells me she’s me. She tells me she’s GOD.”

A rocking chair sits in the corner. His grandmother is in it. Younger. Still alive.

She smiles.

“Billy... you finally made it.”

Grandmother’s Confession

“They called it schizophrenia. The visions. The paralysis. The voices. But it wasn’t sickness. It was leakage. The veil got too thin too fast.”

“I wasn’t ready. I saw her—the me I was supposed to become—and I ran.”

“You’re stronger than me. But you’ll break too, if you don’t learn to **stay calm through the chaos.**”

Bill looks into the mirror beside her.

He sees:

- A version of himself *in a straitjacket*.
- A version of himself *locked in a room, alone*.
- A version of himself *smiling... as he injects something into his own arm*.

He falls to his knees.

“Am I sick? Am I just... sick like you were?”

His grandmother kneels beside him.

“Maybe. Maybe you inherited a gift no one understood. Maybe you’re both.”

She touches his chest.

“But you’ve got something I didn’t.”

DeAndre... or Not?

Suddenly DeAndre bursts through the door. “Bro, come on! Snap out of it! It’s not real!”

Bill runs to him. Clings to him. “You’re real, right? Tell me you’re real.”

DeAndre smirks.

“Course I’m real.”

Then his eyes shift.

“Or maybe I’m your coping mechanism.”

His skin peels back and reveals his grandmother’s face beneath.

“But I still love you.”

Bill screams. The world spirals.

He falls back and lands in the asylum room again. Eli is in the corner, rocking.

She looks up at him.

“You saw her too...”

The Real Eli

Back in the real dreamscape, the Circle appears. Eli clutches her head.

“I don’t know who I am anymore. My brain lies to me. My dreams scream at me. I don’t know what’s real.”

Bill kneels down.

“You are. Right now. This is real.”

“How do you know?” she whispers.

“Because you’re not alone.”

Zeke holds her hand.

Rowan conjures a sigil for grounding.

Naya wipes her tears.

Avery nods in silent understanding.

Eli breathes for the first time in what feels like years.

“I’ve been hearing the Compass since I was twelve.
But I thought it was schizophrenia.”

Bill grips her shoulder.

“It’s both.
But now we’re gonna teach you how to *ride it*.”

The journal opens on its own.

The symbol: a spiral interwoven with a human brain, cracked and glowing.

“They are the Echo. The Confession. The madness that hears the truth.”
“Two remain.”

CHAPTER 7: THE ONE WHO HEARS THEM

The Compass didn't pulse, it whispered. At first, it sounded like a voice in the wind. Then, it became a chant.... it started calling each of their names.

One by one.
Even Bill's.

And it didn't come from the journal this time.

It came from a human mouth.

They Find Her First

Her name was Salem.

She walked into the Circle's camp like she belonged there.
Barefoot. Pale. Eyes unfocused but glowing like she saw everything.

"I've been dreaming of you," she said.
"But it wasn't me dreaming. It was *them*."

She looked at Bill and smiled.

"They say hi, by the way."

The Compass glowed without being opened. Salem stood in its aura like she was being charged by it. DeAndre stepped back.

"Yo, I don't like this. She ain't just another recruit."

Salem laughed. A little too loud. A little too long.

"I'm the sixth. The one who remembers the others before me. The failures. The ones who saw too much and... folded."

She looked at Eli.

"Your grandmother sends her regards."

Eli's body shivered.

Naya tried to scan her aura—but it was interrupted mid-scan. Her power bounced back and hit her in the chest. Salem’s body convulsed once, twice and then she froze. Her eyes rolled back. Arms raised. Her voice dropped 4 octaves:

“He’s listening.
He wears no face.
He speaks in reflections.
He builds rooms inside you before you’re even born.”

“He knows Bill.”

“He remembers the first time you *disobeyed the script*.”

“He’s... proud of you.”

Without touching anyone, Salem pulls the entire Circle into a shared dream. The environment is a cathedral of shifting flesh, mirrors turning into eyes, walls breathing like lungs. In the center of the cathedral:

A throne made of broken Compass pieces and a figure made of smoke, static, and unfinished code sits on it. The Circle can’t see its face but it knows their names.

One by one, it calls them.

Reveals their secrets.

Whispers futures that haven’t happened yet. Then, it leans toward Bill and speaks directly into his chest:

“You almost saw me once.
But your grandmother blinked too soon.”

Salem’s Internal Struggle

Salem is trapped in a spiral—her body flickering with glyphs, ancient symbols crawling up her skin like tattoos trying to write scripture.

She screams.

Not in fear.

In clarity.

“I was supposed to break! But I didn’t! I HEARD HIM TOO CLEARLY AND HE GOT INSIDE!”

“And now he’s not talking anymore... he’s *waiting*.”

Bill grabs her.

Pulls her into a vision only he can see.

The Shared Mindspace

They stand in a void of broken clocks.

Bill sees her past:

Salem, as a child, screaming in her sleep while the Compass glows under her bed.

Salem, drawing spirals with blood during class.

Salem, trying to silence the voice in her head by stabbing herself with a pencil—only to wake up laughing.

“He told me I was the mouthpiece.
That when he arrives, I’ll be the bell that rings.
I didn’t want it.”

Bill steps forward.

“Then we change the frequency.”

The Cleansing

With Rowan’s help, they create a seal around her. Zeke begins chanting—using the rhythm of the first loop he broke. Avery projects every version of Salem’s self-image onto the walls. Eli stabilizes the room by absorbing the overload. Naya channels light through the Compass itself—risking her mind to filter the static. Bill kneels beside Salem, who is now glowing red-hot, veins turned to symbols.

He says one thing:

“We see you. But we won’t let him keep you.”

Salem screams and the cathedral implodes.

Back in Reality

She wakes up. Tears streaming. Eyes clear. Voice soft.

“I can still hear him.
But now I hear... *you* louder.”

She collapses into Bill’s arms.

“Don’t let me go.”

“Never.”

They sit with her in silence. Rowan speaks first:

“That wasn’t a dream. That was an introduction.”

DeAndre lights sage. For once, he says nothing.

Eli whispers to Salem:

“You’re not broken. You’re just early.”

Salem nods, trembling.

“He’s close. Closer than you think. When he shows up....”

She looks at Bill.

“You won’t be ready.
But you’ll still have to try.”

A symbol appears:

A mouth with an eye inside, surrounded by shattered glass.

“She is the Herald. The channel. The mouth that refused to shut.”

“One remains.”

CHAPTER 8: THE ONE WHO WASN'T CHOSEN

It started before the Compass pulsed.

It started when Bill opened his eyes... and wasn't sure if he had ever closed them.

Time was wrong.

The journal was gone.

The Circle was gone.

Even his own hands looked unfamiliar.

“You're not asleep,” said a voice.

“But you're not awake either.”

He turned around.

And there they were.

The final one.

They didn't give a name.

Didn't need to.

They already knew his.

They knew *everything*.

“You've been walking a path designed to test your mind, your spirit, your memory.”

“I've been walking *outside* of it.”

“You called seven but the eighth called you.”

Their presence shifted reality around them. The world flickered—images of the Circle members as children, Bill being born, his grandmother screaming in her sleep, his mother whispering the mantra in reverse. Everything went still and the final one leaned forward.

“This isn't a circle, Bill.”

“It's a lock.”

“And you're the key.”

Bill's nose started to bleed.
His thoughts began collapsing over each other.

"You're not hallucinating," the final one said. "You're remembering too fast."

He saw flashes: A hidden 8th symbol burned into his spine as a child. Dreams he forgot having—screaming

"I didn't agree to this!" in a language he's never spoken. His grandmother dying... not from suicide, but from something reaching through her reflection.

"They didn't go mad," the final one whispered.

"They remembered. All at once. You thought the Circle would protect you from him but the Circle awakened him."

Each member represents a seal. Each one, when awakened, sends out a pulse and now?

All seven have been activated. The Circle is complete. The one waiting on the other side... isn't a demon. It's a version of Bill that was built from fear, trauma, and power he tried to bury before he was born.

"He's been waiting for a body," the final recruit says. "And you've just built him one."

Bill wakes up in his room. Sweating. Gasping. Everyone is there. Laughing. Eating. Normal.

"Good dream?" DeAndre asks.

"Yeah..." Bill says. *"Yeah I guess so."*

He blinks. Naya is now Salem. Zeke is now his mother. Avery is now his grandmother. And DeAndre?

"I told you," he says, eyes fully black.

"You were always dreaming."

Final Page of the Journal

The Compass appears.

But it's not a symbol.

It's a sentence:

"PART 3 has already begun."

The page catches fire and the screen goes black.