

## The Demon Pane

Dana Phillips gazed over at her elderly friend. It had been a week since Maureen's husband was laid to rest. Dana and her brother Ben had been like a daughter and son to Jim and Maureen Swain. It was much like burying a father. Now Dana deeply pondered what grief Maureen was going through. The church service was ending and Maureen looked tired and weak, like she had just run a marathon. Dana couldn't help but feel an overwhelming sense of sorrow and empathy for her friend.

As the congregation proceeded to leave the church, Reverend David Galainey offered each churchgoer a valediction at the church entrance. When he came to Dana and Ben Phillips, he pulled them aside for a special request.

"Dana, Ben, Mrs. Swain needs some help cleaning her attic out before she moves later this week. Could you stop by later today and help her out?" asked the reverend.

"We definitely will, Reverend Galainey," replied Dana.

"Maureen means a lot to us. We'll help her out any way we can," added Ben.

Dana and Ben arrived at the Swain residence around five o'clock. Maureen met the pair at the door and escorted them up into the attic.

"Most of what's up here belonged to Jim," declared Maureen. "Start by boxing up the clothes and collectibles in this corner. I still need to sort most of the other stuff up here." Ben surveyed the room, drawing particular attention to a corner covered in drapes. "Whatever you do, Ben...Dana, do not touch anything in that corner," Maureen commanded as she pointed to the draped material. "I'll be back in an hour to see how you're doing," said Maureen as she left the room.

Dana and Ben started gathering clothing and folding them to put into boxes. Some of the clothes seemed a bit strange, long flowing robes and gowns in bright shiny colors.

"What do you think Jim did while he wore these?" Ben asked.

Dana pulled a small dagger and a colorful round disk from the pile. "I dunno, but it might have something to do with these," she said. The pair continued to pack the eccentric stash of goods until Ben had an urge to look under the drapes.

"Ben, stop. Maureen's going to be back any minute."

"Just a peek. I can't stand the fact that there's forbidden material right here in front of us. I'm sure it's harmless."

"Ben, we don't know what's under those drapes. Ben...stop.."

Ben pulled down the drape just as Maureen Swain was coming up the stairs. Dana watched from the side as the drape fell. She didn't see much of what was behind the drape, all she saw was her brother Ben fade away in front of her.

"Cover your eyes!" Maureen shouted as she skillfully grabbed the drape and recovered the object without gazing at it.

Dana clutched her eyes with her hands and waited about ten seconds. She slowly opened her eyes to see Maureen positioning the drapes back in place. "Where's Ben? Where is he?"

Maureen turned toward Dana with an especially sad look on her face. "I told both of you not to touch this corner," she said in a somber, reverent manner. "Ben's gone. You can't get him back."

"What do you mean gone?" Dana asked frantically.

"He's gone. He's not on this world anymore."

"He's gotta be here somewhere. What's the trick? What's going on? Was Jim a magician? Where's the secret hiding place?"

"Dana...Dana." Maureen approached Dana holding onto her shoulders. "Jim was into the occult in his early years. What Ben gazed at is pure evil. It took him from this world. He's gone. You can't get him back."

"No. This has to be a trick. Where's Ben? Ben, where are you?"

Maureen held onto Dana's collapsing body as she broke down in anguish.

A week later Reverend Galainey encountered Dana at a local restaurant.

“Dana, how are you getting along? Is there any news on Ben?” asked the reverend.

Dana had reported Ben missing two days after the incident. Only she and Maureen knew what really happened to Ben. “There's no news yet, Reverend. I'll inform you as soon as we hear something.”

“Dana, I know you and Ben are particularly close, please come and see me if you need to talk to someone, please.”

A tear formed in Dana's eye and gently rolled down her somber face. “I will, I promise.”

Maureen Swain sold the house and moved into a nearby apartment complex. Dana convinced Maureen to give her the mysterious item as long as it remained cloaked. Dana figured if there was anyway to get her brother back, she would have to remain in possession of the item. Using a couple of leads she received from Maureen, Dana slowly developed a list of names Jim had performed his rituals with. After two months, she finally met with Harold Finche.

“Mr. Finche, I understand you used to be friends with Jim Swain?” asked Dana.

“Call me Harry. Yes, Jim and I went way back. It's a shame his passing last fall.”

Timidly, Dana posed her question about the item. “I need your help. There was an item in Jim's attic, a very evil item. Maureen said you might know what it is?”

“There were lots of evil things up there. We did some seriously stupid, dangerous....things.”

“This one is large, and it removed a person from in front of it.”

Harry bowed his head in sorrow. “Oh God, what have we done now?” He paused for a minute as he choked up, unable to talk. Finally, with a tear in his eyes and a tremble in his voice he said, “That's the R'yunob, the Demon Pane. It's a portal. If an entity was conjured that would get out of control, we would expose the surface and the entity would be removed. I never saw it used. It just sat there, under that sheet, like it was waiting.”

“Harry,” Dana replied with a stutter, “my brother was removed by that thing.”

Harry sat motionless and somber. He finally said, “I'm sorry. Your brother is dead. Forget that thing. Mourn your brother and put him to rest. Anything else would be madness.” Dana motioned to plead with Harry further but then Harry recoiled. “I'm sorry Miss Phillips, you'll have to leave now.” Harry's voice was breaking up with a torrent of sobbing building up. “Please leave, leave now....Just move on....Please.”

Dana moved several times in the following years. She held many jobs and slowly worked her way through school to become a paralegal. Five years after Ben's disappearance she moved to Boston and was hired by a major advertising firm. The whole time her hidden emphasis in life was to find someone who knew enough about the Demon Pane to get her brother back. The main reason she moved to Boston was to meet the Rabbi Joseph Grundman, who she learned might know something of this arcane occult device.

“Rabbi, I have in my possession an occult device that I need to know how to use.”

“Miss Phillips,” the Rabbi replied, “I cannot condone the use of any occult implementation for any reason.”

“My brother was taken by this device. I will get him back.”

The Rabbi grew a very serious, concerned face. “Do you know what the device is?”

“It's called a Demon Pane.”

The Rabbi looked down and his mouth clenched closed. He inhaled as though he was about to speak and then looked down again for a minute. As he spoke his voice slowed and deepened. “You say you have a R'yunob in your possession, a Demon Pane. I can tell you how to render it harmless and then destroy it. I cannot condone any other use of such a hideous item.”

“I need to use it to get my brother back. Please tell me how it works. Tell me how to use it!”

Dana said with commanding passion.

The Rabbi again paused for a considerable amount of time. He mentally battled the idea of delivering Dana the information she wanted against his own wealth of wisdom which screamed destroy the piece. With a slow, deep inhale, Rabbi Grundman started to tell Dana about the R'yunob.

“The R'yunob is a piece of glass which is painted black on one side. The glass is then mounted in a frame such that the black surface is seen through the glass. In a ritual, the practitioner makes a pack with a demon who then controls the device. It is through the power of this demon that entities in this world are removed from it.”

Dana pulled out a small notepad and quickly started to take notes. The she looked up and asked “How do I get the demon to give me my brother back?”

“You must confront the demon. Take a white candle. Using a mirror so that you don't gaze directly at the R'yunob, draw an upside down pentagram on the surface with the back of the candle. Then lite the candle before you go to sleep. You will confront the demon in your sleep. Make sure you keep your notepad handy when you wake up to write down the demon's instructions.”

Dana furiously jotted the information on her notepad. “Thank you. Thank you, Rabbi. You can't believe how long I been searching for this information.”

“Please, don't do it. Let your brother go, he's dead. Only evil can come out of this thing,” the Rabbi pleaded knowing his words were uttered in vain.

A few days later, Dana followed the directions precisely. With the pentagram drawn, she lit the candle and retired for the night. In her dreams, she encountered a creature that resembled a minotaur.

“Who are you who comes to Ky'eral?”

“I seek my brother Ben, he was taken from the world by the Demon Pane.”

“Why should I release your brother to you?”

“Ben simply gazed at the Demon Pane by accident. He should have remained in the world.”

“What do I receive for releasing him?”

Dana stared at the minotaur like demon with a puzzled face. “I don't understand?”

“I require the use of your soul for me to release your brother,” said the demon with an exaggerated smile and a long black nailed finger waving in the air.

“What....” Dana blurted trying to figure out what to say. “Will I die?”

“You won't sense any difference,” replies the demon. “At midnight of the next winter solstice, uncover the R'yunob and stand in front of it. I will release your brother to you at that time.”

Dana woke abruptly, her whole body was drenched in sweat. Her arms and legs were tingling with the sense of needles. She moved her arms and clenched her hands desperately to get blood moving through her extremities. Then she rolled on her side, grabbed her notepad, and started writing; midnight...winter solstice.....

The following week Dana felt progressively colder. Her arms and legs never seemed to warm up anymore. By the end of the week, Dana's joints became very painful from the cold sensation flowing through her limbs. She became increasingly irritable. She started snapping in anger at the smallest issue.

From his otherworldly realm, Ky'eral sat in s mild state of meditation. He sensed all the sensations in Dana's arms and legs. He could feel her heartbeat. He could see what she saw. He new her thoughts. He experienced the earth through Dana's senses and experiences.

Dana lost her paralegal position at the advertising firm. After failing to find further employment in the Boston area, she moved back to her hometown and moved into a small, rundown apartment. The Demon Pane remained an immense, draped object in her small apartment. She found work as a waitress at a local restaurant.

One day the Reverend Galainey encountered Dana at the restaurant.

“Dana, it's been several years since I last saw you,” said the Reverend.

“What do you want to make of it?”

“Dana, I know Ben's disappearance has had a dramatic affect on you. You need to move on. Why don't you stop and talk to me after service on Sunday?”

“Well, Reverend, not to be disrespectful but, GO TO HELL!”

Dana never attended a church service after that.

On the evening of the winter solstice, Dana paced the apartment in anticipation. She did not know what to expect, just that this night Ben would or wouldn't be back. As the midnight hour approached, she rigged a pulley system to cover the Demon Pane back up after Ben had walked through. The last hour before midnight she sat in a chair, staring at the draped behemoth. One minute before midnight, she sat up, hoisted the drape up with the pulley, and stood in front of the Demon Pane, waiting for Ben to emerge.

At precisely the stroke of midnight, Ben's image became visible in the mounted pane of glass, and then the image emerged into the room. Quickly, Dana released the pulley dropping the drape back over the Demon Pane.

Running up to Ben, Dana lashed her arms around him saying, “Finally, I've got you home. Things can be back to normal again. I'll never let you go away again, ever.”

Ben spoke in a strange, echoing voice, “Thank you, whoever you are. It's been thousands of years since I've walked the earth.”