

That afternoon, the female was sitting on a clear sidewalk in the abandoned city as she had one hand on her cheek as her elbow was propped up on her knee.

She has been thinking about what the giant told her ever since her second encounter with him back at the campsite after trying to get her backpack back.

Was it true that they were not going to harm her?

She shuddered at the thought of having to *believe* him about what he had said to her.

If she had just naïvely trusted him without having a second thought about it, she would have been killed, captured, or any of those giants would have discovered her.

It would cause chaos in the campground to think she was a rat in front of Captain, someone wanting to keep her for themselves or...

Another shiver went down her spine at the thought of it, forcing herself to push the feeling down to prevent it from resurfacing along with the others.

Soon, a grumble from her stomach snapped her out of her thoughts and worries, noting it was afternoon.

After pushing her glasses into place, the female took her backpack off and placed it in front of her.

Once she had opened her backpack, the female reached into her bag to move some items around to get to her snacks.

After moving some items around to look, she found her snacks in a spare bag as she took them out of her backpack.

As she placed the bag on her lap and zipped it open, she winced when she realized there were only a few snacks inside.

‘I need to get more,’ she thought to herself as she picked out the chips to save the rest for later. ‘Are there any stores that still have food?’

She continued to think to herself about food as she ate the chips, wondering what she could do to keep her stomach from gurgling the entire time?

Then she remembered gum could help her stomach until she found some snacks to keep herself from getting hungry.

Reaching into the pocket of her blue jeans, the female turned her phone on and typed into the search bar for any ‘nearby stores.’

To her luck, there were stores from where she was standing, making a mental list in her mind to herself to find what she needed.

However, if she could not find any food around, she would go to the forest parts of the city and look for any berry bushes growing.

Nodding to herself, the female placed her trash in one of the backpack’s pockets and zipped her pack closed.

Then she placed her backpack back on her back and stood up on her feet, holding her phone in her right hand.

Looking at the first store on the list, the female headed in that direction as she walked down the street.

As she walked down the street, she could see that everything was overtaken by moss, vines, trees, and bushes.

The cars that used to be run by humans were empty and worn down, with most crumbling from rust and falling apart.

Other cars, however, were crushed into the ground as if they were toys with a shoe print trailing around them.

Trucks were flung in some directions as if something massive had picked them up and played with them like toys.

The female shuddered as she looked at another truck, seeing it halfway destroyed with the trailer still connected to it.

There was even a dented *handprint* on the top of the trailer that entirely destroyed the roof.

Not wanting to scare herself more, the female quickly rushed past the almost trashed truck to quicken her pace.

Soon, she turned around the corner of a street and walked down it, pausing for a moment to look at her phone.

The GPS on her phone indicated she was a few feet away from where her destination was.

‘I must be close,’ she thought to herself as she looked up from her phone in hand. ‘Let’s just hope there are no gangs around in Pennock.’

She continued to walk in that direction and turned around the corner again, soon coming across a store with an old sign.

‘Ah, here is the store!’ she thought to herself with a smile as she turned her phone off and placed it in the pocket of her blue jeans. ‘Let’s see if there is anything here.’

Pushing her glasses into place, the female walked over to the door and placed her hand on the handle.

But she did not open the door as she paused a little before opening it and looked around for a moment.

There were no wires or any signs of anyone else inside, so the store was entirely abandoned.

She did not see the owner either, as she continued to glance around for any signs of a break-in.

Sighing, the female opened the door and poked her head through, looking around for a while to double-check.

After double-checking, the female stepped into the store and carefully closed the door behind her back.

Everything looked empty but a little trashed with items littered everywhere, and, to her luck, there was enough food on the shelves that would last for a long time.

‘Finally,’ she thought to herself as she sighed. ‘Now I can pack all the food items into my back.’

She slung her backpack over her right arm after taking it off her back and went into collecting, picking up the food items from the shelf.

But she did not randomly shove them into her backpack but looked at their dates before continuing.

Hydrogen peroxide, snacks, gum, and gloves were the items she needed for survival, and they were collected reasonably.

She had just finished gathering the items she needed when she noticed something that caught her eye.

From the packaging, the necklace has a silver chain with a crystal pendant and is waterproof too.

The ‘crystal’ pendant is a LED that glows in a light blue color when turned on after a single press of a button at the top.

‘Ooh,’ the female thought to herself. ‘That looks like a good necklace to wear during the nighttime.’

The female took the package off the wall and opened it, removing the necklace from inside and placing it around her neck.

The necklace reached down to her chest and was about the size of her palm, which made her feel lucky.

She placed her necklace into her shirt after pulling the collar of her garments back and released it once her new jewelry was inside.

The female was about to turn around to exit the store when she saw something else that had caught the corner of her eye.

It was a handmade graffitied symbol on the wall of what seemed to be a picture of a hog surrounded by money and food.

After a few minutes of staring at the graffiti with a confused expression on her face, she realized what it was.

“Oh, crap!” she softly cursed after a moment of thinking. “The *Hog Soldiers* were here!”

As quickly as she could, the female zipped her backpack up from being open and placed it on her back but froze when she heard the *backdoor open*.

‘Shit!’ She quickly ran towards the door and opened it, but froze in fear when motorcycles drove up in front of her.

Each of them has black jackets with piercings on their ears, nose, and lips, even with rings and necklaces as well.

Most of the members had beer guts, and others were muscular while smoking cigarettes in their mouths.

They noticed the female standing outside the store as she cursed to herself after realizing she was trapped.

Instantly, they got up from their motorcycle as the female stood there with a worried expression on her face.

“What are you doin’ in the boss’s store?” One of them asked with a slightly angry tone.

“I was just walking past it,” the female lied, trying to get herself out of trouble, but froze when one of them stood behind her. “Nothing wrong abo-!”

Before she could finish her sentence, the big man behind her picked her up by the backpack as she yelped, shaking it a few times.

Unfortunately, the items she had collected inside crinkled from the shaking as she whined worriedly.

The leader frowned a little after hearing the crinkling coming from the backpack and said, as he stood in front of her, “You were stealin’ the boss’s food?”

“You have plenty of food in there!” she protested as she squirmed a little. “At least let me have some to survive!”

One member snorted after she had protested, and the leader turned around to the others before saying, “Take her with us. King Pig will decide what your words have to say against him.”

The female winced after hearing the name ‘King Pig,’ knowing that name belongs to the gang member’s true leader.

Then, she was being shaken a few times by the taller member holding her before popping out of her backpack’s straps and landing on the ground on her feet.

With one hand, the big brute pushed her forward roughly as she stumbled a little but eventually followed the leader to his motorcycle.

The leader put his helmet over his head and waited for her to sit behind him, as she sat behind him without fighting back.

Instead of wrapping her hands around his body, she gripped the seat with her hands as she did not have a helmet put over her head for protection.

After she had sat on the seat behind him, they started their motorcycles and left the store while she held on.

The drive lasted for an hour as they reached a massive garage northeast of the city as it had the same graffiti on the metal door.

A bad feeling sat in her stomach as they pulled up to the massive garage and parked their motorcycles with the others.

After removing the helmet from his head, the leader got up from the motorcycle, and she followed, only to stumble and fall to the ground.

Several members laughed after she had collapsed to the ground as she chuckled along with them and stood back up to her feet.

Once she had gotten off the motorcycle, she followed the leader as the giant man was behind her with her backpack in one hand, hunching her shoulders a little as the leader knocked on the metal door.

Then he knocked twice and knocked once, repeating the process for a few minutes with several knocks.

A confused expression appeared on the female's face after hearing the knocks from the leader before noticing it was morse code!

Silently counting the knocks to herself, she coded the morse code into one single word, 'Chicken.'

A more confused expression appeared on her face after trying to figure out what the knocks meant in morse code before realizing the leader had stopped after a minute.

Another minute passed, and the metal door unclicked from the other side and moved up, revealing another member, but a little skinny.

He wore the same black jacket like the rest of the members and had jet-black hair, but with a tattoo of the symbol on the back of his left hand.

"You're back already?" The skinny man snorted. "I thought you were going to get food for King Pig."

“We were,” one of the members huffed before the big man pushed the female forward from behind him. “But we had a little mouse taking the food.”

The skinny man stared at the female for a moment before saying, “Alright, come inside.”

That same uneasy feeling grew in her stomach as she walked into the base after the door was moved up a little more.

As soon as she entered, she was surprised to see *chickens* inside cages that decorated all the walls, along with different packaged food.

The chickens were all clucking and bawking as they were in their cages with eggs in cartons with shells decorating the floors.

Even roosters crow in their cages, causing the female to wince as she listens to all the noises.

But in the middle of the massive garage was a *very* obese man sitting on a throne eating chicken legs in a bucket.

He had many gold rings on his fingers, gold bracelets, gold necklaces, and gold piercings on his body, and the same tattoo on the back of his left hand.

He wore a black jacket with a dirty white shirt stained with grease from the chicken he was eating.

Admittedly, *he* looked like a pig from her point of view at how he was eating his chicken legs, which probably was why he was called ‘King Pig.’

The leader walked over to King Pig and knelt in front of him as she stopped in the middle.

“Your Highness,” the leader spoke as King Pig stopped eating. “We were going to bring some food for you, but we recently encountered someone breaking into one of your stores and stole your food.”

King Pig cocked an eyebrow after the leader spoke before asking, speaking with a mouth full of food, “Well, what were the items this mouse was stealing?”

The female mentally winced at how slobbery his manner was but watched as the giant man unzipped her backpack and emptied it onto the floor.

All the items that she had collected landed on the ground in front of King Pig as he looked angry after seeing the amount of food she had gathered.

He instantly sat up from his throne and shouted, after swallowing some food in his mouth, “HOW DARE YOU STEAL MY FOOD?!”

After he had shouted at her, she winced and continued to scream as he smashed his fists against the arms in a fit, “NO ONE GETS TO STEAL ALL MY FOOD WITHOUT MY PERMISSION!”

He angrily pointed a chicken leg at the female and began, as the female panicked, knowing what will happen to her, “TAKE HER TO-!”

“Your Majesty, wait!” she spoke as she interrupted his sentence as he stopped as the leader looked over at her with a faintly confused expression. “What if I can repay you for stealing all the food from your store?”

King Pig cocked an eyebrow after she suggested it before moving his chicken leg down from pointing at her and demanding, “What is your name, Mouse?”

She paused a little after he had demanded but answered, “Stephanie, Stephanie Allen is my name.”

King Pig snorted after Stephanie answered his question and said, “Alright, Mouse, you will pay me back for stealing my food from my store.”

Stephanie nodded her head after King Pig agreed with her and bravely asked, “What do you want me to get for you to pay back?”

King Pig paused for a moment after Stephanie asked and thought to himself while chewing on a chicken leg until the skinny man, who had greeted them earlier, walked up next to King Pig and whispered something into his ear.

Stephanie watched as the skinny man continued to whisper something into King Pig’s ear as he listened to him before nodding his head in agreement.

“I have a more proper bargain with you instead,” King Pig calmly spoke as the skinny man moved away from him. “The Tankmen have a tank in their army camp, and I want *you* to go fetch it for me so I can sell it on the black market.”

A surprised expression appeared on Stephanie’s face after King Pig mentioned a tank, exclaiming, “A-A tank?! Your Majesty, with all due respect, how can I, a six-foot-tall human, drive that monstrous ta-!”

“Did I stutter?!” King Pig roared as she instantly stopped stuttering. “No, I didn’t! I want you to get their tank from their camp and bring it to me without getting yourself caught. Am I clear?!”

Stephanie stopped stuttering after King Pig roared with anger as the chickens stopped clucking and softly answered, “Y-Yes, your Majesty.”

He nodded his head after Stephanie stuttered and said, “You may go get the tank whenever a battle begins between them and the Henchmen. There, you’ll get the tank and drive it here to me.”

King Pig giggled as he placed the bucket of chicken on the small table next to him and added, “The last person who attempted to bring me that tank I ordered had failed and ended up becoming my breakfast when he returned empty-handed.”

He snapped the chicken bone in his hands in front of Stephanie as she flinched, thickly gulping as he threw the broken chicken bone over his throne.

The leader winced as he glanced away from King Pig, feeling disgusted as he shook his head a little.

“To make sure you go with the deal,” King Pig added as Stephanie listened to him as one of the henchmen picked up all the items and placed them all in the backpack. “I’ll keep your precious backpack with me until you get me that tank. Understood?”

After the henchmen placed her backpack next to King Pig’s throne, Stephanie opened her mouth to argue, but not wanting to be his breakfast, she simply nodded once she closed her mouth.

“Good,” King Pig chuckled as the skinny man smirked deviously. “Take her out of my garage, and don’t come back until you have my tank.”

Stephanie nodded her head and turned around, following with the leader to exit the garage as she slumped with sadness, not believing herself getting into trouble again.

As soon as she stepped out of the garage, the leader paused for a moment before following her.

Then, before she walked away, he placed a hand on her shoulder as she stopped walking.

Stephanie flinched after he had placed his hand on her shoulder but turned around to him as she glanced up at his beryl yellow eyes.

“Hey, uh, ‘bout gettin’ that tank,” he spoke as she glanced up at him with a confused expression. “No one has been gettin’ that tank for a long time. If you do get that tank and bring it over here, don’t give it to him. He’ll...” He paused before finishing his sentence before sighing. “Just be careful, okay?”

Stephanie paused a little after listening to him explain to her and glanced away, thinking about what he had told her before nodding her head.

“Good,” he nodded. “If you want to come over and perhaps talk to me about what issue you have with King Pig, just remember my name.”

“And what is your nickname?” Stephanie asked, moving a hand up as a mention.

He knelt to Stephanie’s height and whispered, “I’m not supposed to tell you my name, but I will give you my nickname.”

She nodded her head after he had explained and answered Stephanie’s question, “My nickname is Balivard, and don’t use it around other people, okay?”

Stephanie nodded her head after he had told her his nickname and turned around, walking away from him as he watched her walk away.

As soon as she disappeared, Balivard sighed as he gently placed his forehead against the metal door as one of the members walked over to him.

“Hey, Bali?” he asked as he perked up after hearing his friend speak. “Somethin’ wrong?”

Balivard paused a little before answering his friend's question but responded with a lie, "No, nothin' is wrong, Daimh. Get the others to go find some food for the boss."

Daimh nodded his head after Balivard explained and turned around to get the others, leaving Balivard to think to himself.

He thought about Stephanie's massive problem that King Pig had gotten her into, now feeling a bad feeling inside his stomach about her decision to stand up to the king.

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Meanwhile, sitting in the same spot as before, Stephanie was complicating her problem in her mind.

She had her fingers in her hair as she was clutching her head in her hands and had her glasses off and hanging from her sweater.

"What am I going to do?" she moaned to herself. "How am I supposed to drive that massive tank when I am too short for it?!"

Stephanie groaned again as she ducked her head down a little, as Stephanie felt even more stressed thinking to herself about what she was supposed to do.

She can not go into battle either because she does not have anything to protect herself and can get herself killed or mistaken for an enemy.

Even to make matters worse, she can not do anything without her backpack and would end up getting herself into a situation she cannot get out of.

But she did not want to become King Pig's breakfast, so she *had* to get the tank or else she would not survive through the days without her backpack.

So, Stephanie had forced herself to accept the deal she had made with the gluttonous devil himself and had to leave during the battle to get the tank he wanted.