

Stephanie slowly regained consciousness as she opened her eyes, blinking a few times as her vision blurred.

At first, Stephanie thought she was back in her room but paused a little when she noticed it all looked different.

She softly groaned as she sat up from where she was lying, rubbing her forehead with her hand while sitting in a 'W' position with her left hand on the ground.

Her head was pounding against her skull as if someone had implanted a sound speaker into her brain and put it all on full blast like it was a party.

Luckily, the 'volume' went lower and lower, and soon the pounding stopped as she removed her hand from her forehead.

Deciding to look at her surroundings, Stephanie glanced up from looking down at the ground, seeing everything was still blurry.

Her vision returned after a few minutes had passed before she jumped when she saw a bundle of recognizable colors appear in front of her.

After seeing the colors, Stephanie's eyes popped wide when she recognized those colors and instantly glanced up as a shadow loomed over her.

'Oh no!' Stephanie thought to herself as she shook like a leaf. 'Now I remember!'

It was the same *kid* who had discovered her in the cafeteria pantry after she finished collecting food.

He was sitting in a chair in front of Stephanie and holding her backpack in his right hand.

Luckily, Stephanie's backpack had no signs of being crushed or ripped by the kid, expecting him to look at what she had inside.

He had a confused expression as he sat in a chair in front of her as Stephanie instantly backed away from him.

Noticing she was sitting near his bag, Stephanie instantly stood up to her feet and ran back into the pouch as the kid watched, moving his hand up a little as if he was about to stop her from running away, but stopped when she jumped in and pulled the flap down.

"I'm not going to hurt you," the kid spoke as Stephanie went close to the bottom of the bag.

"How do I know that?!" Stephanie defensively exclaimed as she glanced around for a weapon. "You just grabbed me!"

"I know, but you almost fell to your death if I didn't!" the kid protested as Stephanie paused thoughtfully.

"...True," Stephanie nodded in agreement before continuing with what she was doing. "But what will you do with me now, since you have captured me?!"

"Nothing!" the kid exclaimed. "I didn't capture you, though."

"You didn't?" Stephanie repeated with confusion as she stopped moving around to look for a weapon.

"Yes," the kid nodded. "I saved you from being discovered by the cafeteria lady since you had unlocked the pantry door."

Stephanie flinched after he had mentioned her careless move by leaving the pantry door open and getting herself captured.

“...You... saved me from being caught?” Stephanie slowly asked, not believing what her ears were hearing.

“Yes, I did,” the kid nodded. “If I didn’t, I would’ve placed you in a jar with screw holes in the lid for you to breathe or given you to the cafeteria lady.”

“Please don’t mention,” Stephanie winced, shuddering to herself in fear of witnessing those events.

“Sorry,” the kid apologized. “Would you like to come out of my bag?”

“I still don’t trust you!” Stephanie defensively responded. “So, no, I’m going to stay here until you move, so I’ll get out of this building!”

“But other people are wandering around!” the kid mentioned. “How are you going to get around them since you can’t make yourself invisible?”

“I have my way around the building!” Stephanie defensively huffed.

But Stephanie paused after the kid mentioned ‘make yourself invisible,’ asking, “What do you mean ‘make yourself invisible,’ though?”

The kid paused after Stephanie asked and asked in return, “You don’t know anything about invisibility?”

“No,” Stephanie shook her head as she had a confused expression on her face.

Then, she remembered the term “*Psychonauts*,” recalling their special abilities like kinesis and other talents.

“Oh, wait!” Stephanie slightly sarcastically spoke. “You are one of those ‘*Psychonauts*,’ and use your ‘powers’ to ‘save the world’ and stuff to show that it is all real?”

The bag suddenly lifted, which caused Stephanie to yelp as she lay on her side on the bottom as the kid moved the sack forward and placed it down in front of him.

Luckily, Stephanie had avoided all the items moving around her and sat up on her bottom, shaking from head to toe as she quickly went to the nearest corner inside the bag.

“It is all real,” the kid frowned as he placed Stephanie’s backpack down near him and crossed his arms over his chest. “And I can prove it to you.”

“How?” Stephanie asked without the sarcastic tone in her voice, trembling slightly from being startled by the movements.

“Well,” the kid explained as he paused a little. “Think of something in your head, and I’ll answer what you said.”

Stephanie crossed her arms over her chest after the kid had suggested it, thinking, ‘What *should* I think? I’m way too nervous about being around that kid and-’ Stephanie paused a little as her stomach growled loudly. ‘I’m starting to feel hungry.’

Stephanie paused in her thinking to allow the kid to say what she had said in her head.

Then, the kid responded in a way that surprised Stephanie from what he had told her, as a shocked expression appeared on her face, “You are still nervous about your new surroundings, and there are some *Oreos* in there. But please don’t touch the *PSI-Pops*.”

A confused expression appeared on Stephanie's face after the kid explained what she was thinking in her head.

She thought to herself as she looked in the semi-darkness of the bag, finding the bag of *Oreos*, deciding to use them as a late breakfast.

'How did he know what I was thinking of?' Stephanie thought to herself in confusion as she opened the package for two *Oreos*. '...Is it true that the members in the building *can* do all those powers?'

'*Yes, and we can speak in someone else's minds too,*' the kid spoke, startling Stephanie as she flinched. '*It's just me speaking in your mind.*'

More anxiety piled in Stephanie's mind as she panicked to herself, almost opening the *Oreos* bag and getting the food.

Now it all confirms everything about the strangeness around the building and about how different accidents were happening.

'This is not good,' Stephanie thought to herself in worry and began to stress eating the *Oreo* the kid had given her. 'Not only that, I am in an area where there are more people, but they also have powers too! Am I going to be stuck here?'

'No,' the kid responded as Stephanie flinched. '*But why is it so scary to be around humans? Aren't you a human too?*'

Stephanie stopped eating for a moment after the kid asked, glancing away as she thought to herself about her feelings.

Should she tell this kid everything about the rules of what a borrower follows or stay silent and wait until she figures out a way out of this mess?

But if she stays silent, Stephanie would not escape and get out of the building before she could get herself into more trouble.

So Stephanie *had* to explain everything to the child to get herself out of trouble.

‘I’m... not a human,’ Stephanie paused as she shakily sighed, still shaking from head to toe. ‘I am a Borrower.’

‘*‘A Borrower?’*’ the kid thoughtfully spoke as Stephanie continued eating. ‘*What is a ‘Borrower?’*’

‘A Borrower is a smaller being than the average human at the size of six inches,’ Stephanie explained to him. ‘I am only a child, so I am only four inches tall.’

Stephanie stopped as she wiped the crumbs sticking to her fingers against her hand-stitched and slightly ripped shirt, adding, ‘And we hide behind the walls of the house we live in with the human to ‘borrow’ what they have for what we needed.’

‘*Wait a moment,*’ the kid spoke as Stephanie glanced up slightly to the entrance of the bag. ‘*Are you one of those ‘small people’ Nona has been talking about?*’

Stephanie nearly choked on the *Oreo* chunk in her mouth as she coughed a few times but swallowed hard.

“You’ve heard of us?!” Stephanie exclaimed, now speaking instead of thinking.

“A little,” the kid answered as Stephanie’s stomach clenched with worry. “Nona has been talking about Borrowers ever since I was a young kid. I thought she was in one of her fantasies until you explained to me what a Borrower is.”

‘Ohhh, frick,’ Stephanie thought to herself in worry. ‘Now I have dug myself a bigger grave!’

Stephanie continued to eat in worry as she chewed nervously, sometimes accidentally biting her bottom lip a few times.

“Is there a reason why you are hiding behind walls?” The kid asked out of curiosity.

“Because we are afraid of what humans might do to us if we reveal ourselves,” Stephanie explained as she stopped eating the half-eaten *Oreo*, flinching slightly from the dark memories in her head. “They might use us for experiments, keep us forever, harm us, or even worse things!”

Stephanie clutched the sides of her head with her hands, shaking from head to toe in fear as the memories flooded her mind, causing her to hyperventilate.

“I don’t want to get myself harmed!” Stephanie whimpered in fear. “I’m too young to be experimented on or killed!”

As Stephanie was panicking and hyperventilating, the bag’s flap moved away, and a gloved hand reached inside, carefully scooping Stephanie up from the bottom.

The kid looked down at the young child in his hand, looking worried as she continued to shake like a leaf and hyperventilating.

Being careful, the kid gently hugged Stephanie against his chest, causing her to flinch from the sudden hug and look around, somehow snapping out of her shaking and hyperventilating.

“It’s okay,” the kid softly spoke, causing Stephanie to flinch but stopped when she heard his heartbeat along with his voice gently rumbling. “No one is going to hurt you.”

Stephanie stayed silent as she gripped his shirt with her hands, still shaking like a leaf while gently pressing against his chest.

‘He might be lying to you,’ a dark voice whispered from the back of her head.
‘Just give up trying to think of a way to get out and stay with him! He might be good at keeping a little pet!’

Stephanie winced from all the voices in her head and curled against the kid’s chest, feeling more overwhelmed by the thoughts and emotions.

However, the kid notices the problem with Stephanie, thinking to himself about what he could do to help the little Borrower against his chest.

The way she looked at her new surroundings, and even with him around, she would freeze or have a panic attack.

Then, he remembered something in his bag that she did not notice since she was staying inside.

Using his telekinesis, the kid lifted something out of his bag, revealing it to be a small door with the *Psychonauts*’ symbol.

‘It’s a little too big for her,’ the kid thought to himself without using telepathy.
‘So, how am I supposed to use this on her?’

Then, the kid remembered during one of his classes with one of the *Psychonauts*’ teachers, teaching them about Mégethoskinesis, the ability to manipulate the size of anything and everything.

He was hesitant to use the ability, worried about accidentally shrinking the door down to nothing if he focused too much on it.

But the kid took a slow sigh and focused on the door in his hand, using his new ability to shrink the door just enough to place it on the Borrower's head.

After he had used his ability, the kid placed the somewhat small door against the Borrower's head, as she was still shaking and curled against his chest.

Single-handedly, the kid placed his goggles over his eyes as his mind entered through the small door with ease as it shut behind him.