

Stephanie slowly opened her eyes as she blinked a few times while her vision blurred, her head feeling somehow... *lighter*?

A slightly confused expression appeared on her face after noticing that her head felt lighter before moving a hand up when sunlight went through the window, blinding Stephanie's eyes from the brightness peeking through the curtains.

She squints her eyes after the sunlight hits her eyes, still feeling groggy after being asleep for a long time as she blinked a few times.

After a few minutes had passed, Stephanie's eyesight soon returned to her after being cleared... only to see she was *still* in the *Psychonauts* building.

And still in *the kid's room*.

A bad feeling sat in Stephanie's stomach as she glanced around nervously, double-checking if everything was the same as before when she first woke up.

After double-checking, Stephanie sighed in relief after looking around to check if she was somewhere else but then recognized that the kid she was talking to and was in her mind was *missing*.

A sudden shift underneath her caused Stephanie to flinch in startlement, causing her to glance down at what it was, only to see it was the kid's *hand*.

'Wait a moment.' Stephanie slowly glanced over to the left of her, seeing she was near a familiar blue-green with a surprisingly soft-to-the-touch sweater.

Nervously, Stephanie slowly followed the blue-green sweater and looked up at the kid's face as he was staring down at her, holding her close to his chest as she was... weirdly the size of a Borrower adult.

Rather than being terrified that she was lying in a human's hand and trying to get out of his hand, Stephanie instead stared up at him and instantly curled a little into his palm, feeling like a scared kitten.

The kid was holding a hand-sized door in his hand before placing it into his bag and glanced over at Stephanie after noticing that she was awake.

“Are you okay?” the kid asked after placing the hand-sized door into his bag.

Stephanie stayed silent after the kid asked her, glancing away from him as she thought to herself about what she was feeling.

“I...” Stephanie paused a little as she reached up with a hand and rubbed the side of her head as she closed her eyes. “I feel lightheaded.”

“That’s one of the side effects after having your mind cleared,” the kid explained as Stephanie glanced up at him. “It’ll stop after a few minutes pass.”

Stephanie nodded her head after the kid explained and blinked a few times as she sat in the kid’s palm, rubbing her temple with her fingers.

As much as she had lightheadedness, Stephanie’s mind was also added with a slight headache but started to feel like it was fading along with the lightness.

While Stephanie was trying to get used to her lightheadedness and her faint headache, Stephanie’s long hair was midway white from the roots.

The kid noticed Stephanie’s hair changing colors and blinked with confusion, now feeling more concerned for Stephanie.

Stephanie’s hair did turn purple when he found her in the pantry and when he was trying to reassure her, thinking it was her original hair color.

Even when he entered her mind to help her clear all the inner demons causing her anxiety, he saw her hair turn colors to represent her powers when she was fighting them.

He even sees her original hair color when she is calm without being nervous all the time.

But... now that he was out of her mind and she was clear of all the inner demons she had piled in her head, the kid could see that her hair *still* turned colors.

...Does that mean that Stephanie *truly* has kinesis powers instead of imagining it in her head?

The kid watched as Stephanie blinked a few times as she rubbed her right temple with her fingers, not noticing that her hair was midway white.

“How long I was out?” Stephanie softly asked, glancing up at him after staying silent.

“About a couple of minutes after I came out,” the kid explained after Stephanie asked, deciding to wait until it was the right moment to ask the question.

Stephanie sighed after the kid explained everything to her and stopped rubbing her temple, getting some of her hair tangled up around her fingers.

Noticing that she had her fingers entangled around her fingers, Stephanie removed her hand from her temple and looked at them with slight annoyance, but then saw the white color covering the natural hazelnut brown.

Stephanie’s eyes popped wide in shock after discovering her hair turning colors, even watching it turn into the purple that the kid had seen before.

“I’m *still* doing this?!” Stephanie exclaimed, grabbing the side of her head with her hands. “I thought it was all in my head!”

“I’m trying to understand that too,” the kid explained as Stephanie glanced up at him. “Maybe you were *born* with kinesis or have been around *Psitanium* when you were younger.”

A confused expression appeared on Stephanie’s face after the kid explained and asked, “What is ‘*Psitanium*?’”

“*Psitanium* is a psychoreactive mineral that crashed on earth five hundred years ago,” the kid explained. “It responds in psychic waves, focusing and amplifying them, allowing anyone who is in close range to become psychic.”

Stephanie listened to each word the kid explained to her as he placed her down in front of him on his table, sitting in a more comfortable criss-cross position.

“It becomes negative for anyone who is mentally unstable, causing them to go into more insane and experience paranormal hysteria,” the kid added after placing Stephanie down.

Stephanie winced slightly after the kid explained and glanced away from him, trying to think to herself about what would be the next question.

“What about you?” Stephanie asked after thinking to herself. “Were you close to *psitanium*?”

“No, I was born with it,” the kid explained before glancing away from Stephanie. “My entire family is psychic.”

A surprised expression appeared on Stephanie’s face after the kid explained, asking, “Your *entire* family?”

The kid nodded his head after he explained to Stephanie as Stephanie placed her hand on the side of her head, still not believing what she was hearing with her ears.

He noticed Stephanie's expression and felt worried for her, seeing she looked more nervous.

"You learned nothing about this?" he asks after explaining briefly to her about *psitanium* and his family's psyche.

"No," Stephanie shook her head as she glanced up at him, her hair in a mixture of yellow and orange. "I never *knew* anything about this!"

She grabbed the sides of her head and started blabbering while panicking, now adding a purple mixture of yellow, "When did all this happen? When did I have all these powers? Who else is psychic in this building? Am I going to be in more danger? Why didn't th-?!"

"Hey, hey," the kid spoke as he placed his hands on Stephanie's shoulders, slightly confused that she had now grown to his knee. "Calm down. You're going to have a panic attack."

Stephanie flinched when he placed his hands on her shoulders but noticed he looked a little smaller, asking, "When did you get smaller?"

"That's not the point," the kid sighed as Stephanie dangled her legs over the table, looking more nervous and confused. "You have to calm down. Take slow deep breaths."

Stephanie nodded her head after the kid explained and took slow, deep breaths, her hair changing back to her natural hazelnut brown color but with the purple color in the roots.

“Are you calm?” the kid asked after watching Stephanie calm herself down.

Stephanie nodded her head again after he asked before asking with a whine of worry in her voice, “Can you please tell me why all this is happening to me?”

The kid pitied Stephanie’s nervousness and confusion, deciding to help her with what she was going through.

“First, let me ask you questions to help you with your struggles,” the kid explained as Stephanie nodded her head. “But let me introduce myself, so you wouldn’t feel like a stranger.”

Stephanie nodded her head again after the kid explained to her as he introduced himself, “My name is Razputin Aquato, but I am called ‘Raz.’”

At first, Stephanie was hesitant to introduce herself to Raz, remembering he had already heard her name from one of the monsters speaking it.

But she wanted to understand why and how she was getting the powers, so Stephanie went with the flow.

“Pleased to meet you, Raz,” Stephanie said as she sat in front of him, still nervous around him. “My name is Stephanie, Stephanie Allen.”

Raz nodded his head after Stephanie introduced himself before asking, “First question: were you born with powers, or were you near some *psitanium* that gave you power but gave you anxiety and depression?”

Stephanie thought hard about when and where her powers first began but ended up with empty thoughts popping into her mind.

“I can’t remember,” Stephanie sighed as she glanced up at him. “I never had a childhood where I used my powers on anything or practiced either.”

Raz frowned slightly with confusion, thinking over the word ‘never had a childhood’ in his mind.

Why did Stephanie never have a childhood?

“Now, it’s my turn to ask,” Stephanie spoke after answering Raz’s question as he snapped out of confusion. “What were those monsters in my mind that attacked me?”

“Those were your anxiety and depression demons,” Raz explained as Stephanie listened to him. “Anxiety is a creature with a million eyes with a white appearance, but blackened because of how many dark thoughts pile up in your head that feeds it. Depression is the black creature that presses down on you to make you stay put in one spot, even whispering lines that hurt you. It must’ve taken a human appearance because of how dangerous we can be to you that caused you to hide away from us.”

A shudder went down Stephanie’s spine after Raz explained what the monsters were in her head, now understanding why she was haunted by the two creatures throughout her life.

“The rainbow ones were Panic Attacks,” Raz explained as Stephanie listened to him. “They appear out of nowhere and start attacking, even harder to pinpoint because of how fast they were.”

Stephanie thought to herself after Raz explained and asked, although wanting to wait until he asked a question, “What about that miniature guy wearing a suit with a stamp that had a circle with a line?”

“It was a Censor,” Raz explained as Stephanie listened to his words carefully, moving her legs up to her chest as she hugged them. “They stamp out whatever

was in your mind that does not belong, like intrusive thoughts, hallucinations, and even me if I stayed inside too long.”

Stephanie slightly winced after Raz explained before he asked, “Did your parents know anything about your powers, or did they hide them from you so you wouldn’t know about them?”

After asking, he then inquired before Stephanie could answer the first question, “And where *are* your parents?”

‘I knew that was going to happen,’ Stephanie thought to herself as she winced slightly.

Stephanie stayed silent for a while after Raz asked, glancing away from him while thinking to herself if she should tell him or should not tell him.

But she *wanted* to understand everything, even ask questions of her parents about why they did not tell her about her powers, so Stephanie answered as her shoulders sagged, “My parents were taken away from me.”

Raz’s eyes popped wide after Stephanie slowly answered his question before narrowing a little with confusion and concern.

His ‘big brother’s intuition’ of what one of his youngest siblings would put it was kicking again, and Raz felt there was something off.

“What happened to your parents?” Raz asked, his tone changing a little to a more stern pitch than the confusion he had.

Stephanie felt confused by the sudden tone change in his voice but answered, “I remember much of it, but not a lot.”

She hugged herself with her arms and began the story as she began to shake like a leaf, “It all started on a usual day, where Dad goes on his borrowing trip while Mom stays home, teaching me how to live by myself when I am older.”

A soft, sad smile appeared on Stephanie’s face for a moment as her hair was a mixture of yellow and blue before fading back to purple as Stephanie tightened her hug.

“Dad immediately came back before he could start his borrowing journey that day and told us someone had seen him during one of his trips that night,” Stephanie explained, moving her legs up close to her body.

Raz listened closely to Stephanie’s words as she spoke, now thinking to himself about her age as she continued.

“We were going to pack and leave our home because there was danger lurking,” Stephanie explained as she hugged herself. “But... that man... found our home underneath the floorboards.”

Raz listened to Stephanie as she continued, shaking like a leaf as her long hazelnut brown hair turned purple, along with her eyes.

“Mom quickly shoved me in the closet to protect me from the man who had red eyes,” Stephanie explained as short visions of the memory popped into her mind. “While Dad wore his handmade armor and had his weapon in hand to fight against that man.”

Stephanie placed a hand on her chest where her heart was and said, “I couldn’t hear what they were saying because of my heart, only watching them stare at each other as if they were planning a way to attack or grab.”

Stephanie closed her eyes as the faint memory of the scene appeared in her head for a brief moment before disappearing after she shook it off.

“Before I knew it, Mom was suddenly grabbed as my Dad tried to fight him to stop her from being taken away,” Stephanie explained as she clenched her hand on the sleeve of her shirt. “And Dad was suddenly grabbed as well.”

Raz’s heart sank to his stomach as he listened to Stephanie’s story, feeling confused and angry at why that man suddenly decided to grab Stephanie’s parents without thinking of the consequences.

“I panicked after watching my parents being grabbed and moved backwards from where I was peeking from,” Stephanie continued, feeling tears prick the corners of her eyes. “And fell into a tunnel that was an exit if any other exits were blocked off.”

Stephanie shuddered as she unhugged herself and placed one hand on the back of her head as the other hugged her legs.

“I escaped from that place while they were searching for others who were in the house,” Stephanie explained. “And did not look back as I ran away from that place.”

She shakily sighed as she placed her hand on her chest, continuing, “After my parents were kidnapped and taken away, I found the tracks that the man used to take them to somewhere, deciding to follow them to find them.”

But Stephanie closed her eyes as she hugged her legs, glancing up at Raz and said, “But... I ended up coming here during one of the rainiest days and stayed inside longer than I thought because I nearly drowned. When I turned ten years old after living here for seven years... I ended up getting caught by you before I could make the decision to continue my search.”

Stephanie glanced away from Raz after she had finished telling her story, and Raz’s mind was filled with many questions and suspicions.

He wondered who the stranger that found them was and why he took Stephanie's parents away from her?

But the most part that shocked him was that she lived by herself for *seven* years!

Seven years with no one to have a shoulder to cry on or teach her anything, seven years without understanding her powers, and seven years *without parents*.

If Raz had no parents for seven years, he would be more than a lost child but a confused one with uncontrollable powers.

Stephanie had her head ducked low as she continued to tremble, noticing she was on the verge of crying.

Instead, Stephanie moved her arms up and started wiping her eyes with her sleeves, using the bottom of her palms to wipe them away.

Suddenly, Stephanie flinched when Raz's hands were placed on her shoulders again, glancing up from looking down at her lap.

As Raz knelt before her, looking at her with solemn eyes, Stephanie moved her hands from rubbing her tears away, looking slightly confused about what he was doing.

"We can help you find your parents, Stephanie," Raz spoke with a soft, determined tone in his voice. "You can trust the *Psychonauts* in helping you, and we can reunite you with them."

Stephanie opened her mouth about trusting the *Psychonauts* to help her find her parents but stopped herself from speaking, noticing there was some *trust* in Raz's eyes.

Even though something was nagging in the back of Stephanie's head to not trust them all, Stephanie glanced away from Raz for a moment before nodding her head.

Raz softly smiled after Stephanie nodded her head and removed his hands from Stephanie's shoulders before standing up to his feet.

"We need to first help you get used to your powers," Raz explained as he gently scooped her into both of his cupped palms. "Sasha can help you with learning how to use telekinesis."

"Are you sure about that, Raz?" Stephanie questioned after Raz explained, moving her into his right palm. "What if I get hurt by him? What if I get myself captured by someone else? What if-"

"Sasha does not harm anyone," Raz assured as Stephanie glanced up at him. "You are a human too, Stephanie. And he is one of the best *Psychonauts* around."

'That I am worried about,' Stephanie thought to herself as she was close to Raz's chest for safety.

As much as she wanted to get used to her newfound powers, Stephanie also wanted to find her parents... but did not expect herself to have a *human* helping her with the search.

...What will she do now?