

The sun rose over the horizon as the sunlight beams on *Bigg City Port*, one of the world's largest ports.

Scattered across the land were many buildings and businesses in every nook and cranny, even gift shops and cafés.

Many large ships and docked boats were in the port, and a large ship was anchored in the water in the background.

Near the forest, away from the cities and the port, was a mansion with white walls and a black roof.

It was against the rocky side of the mountain, with the back of the house supported by beams, and seemed to be emerging into the mountain.

The door opened, and a female figure stepped out from inside onto the porch while holding a *Samsung Galaxy Z Flip4* with a dark blue case.

She looked at the time from the case, as it read '7:00,' nodding to herself and putting her phone into the pocket of her blue jeans.

The woman took out a keychain with a single key on it, inserted it into the keyhole, and locked it before putting her key away in the same pocket.

She turned around after locking the door, and the woman was revealed to be a beautiful thin young woman with caucasian skin, long copper brown hair, and azure blue eyes.

The woman wore a long-sleeved light blue shirt with blue jeans, light pink and white shoes with white shoelaces, and rectangular dark blue and black glasses.

She also wore a cameo blue sweater with a zipper on the front and a hoodie in the colors of peacock, sky, white, and dark blue, and the hems are in a frost blue color that reaches down to her hips.

Walking down the sidewalk and the road, she looked around at the surroundings, avoiding accidentally wandering into traffic.

The woman walked along the road through a thick, healthy forest filled with rocks.

She stopped walking and pushed her rectangular glasses from sliding from her nose bridge and continued walking, arriving at a sidewalk and continued walking.

The woman pushed back some hair over her ear as she stopped by a crosswalk, pressing the button as she moved her hands behind her back.

“Hey, Stephanie!” After hearing the name ‘Stephanie,’ the woman perked and glanced over her shoulder, watching someone run beside her.

The person was another woman with beautiful smooth sienna skin, hazelnut brown eyes, and long, wavy dark copper brown hair in a high ponytail.

She has a healthy thin body with wide hips, double-D breasts, medium-thick thighs, and a bubble butt.

She wears a long-sleeved light red shirt with a white dress jacket with the number one pin on the collar of her jacket and black pants with black high heels with a mailman bag on the left side of her hip.

“*Muchas gracias* for pressing the button, Stephanie,” the woman thanked, her accent thick with Spanish.

“No problem, Adalina,” Stephanie, the first woman, nodded softly as the light turned red to white. “How are you doing?”

“Oh, it’s going to be the same thing!” Adalina, the Spanish woman, groaned as they walked down the sidewalk. “Me trying to get to the *Star Fleet* and the *Z-Stacks* by calling a taxi and being a little slow because of traffic.”

“Have you tried buses?” Stephanie politely asked as they stepped off the crosswalk. “They have different routes than taxis and *could* speed up your time to arrive at your destination.”

“No, but I have been meaning to,” Adalina nodded. “I have been busy recently because of work piling up and kept pushing some important things to the side.”

“It’s alright,” Stephanie nodded as they walked through the city and started to come to life, watching as shops opened and cafés filled with people for their morning. “Take your time to try to solve your problems.”

“Then it will pile up more,” Adalina sighed, rolling her eyes before perking. “Oh, here’s a bus!”

She headed into the street, and Stephanie watched her as she called, “*¡Que tengas un buen día, Estefanía!*”

Stephanie smiled softly before flinching when a taxi zipped and screeched to a halt beside Adalina, honking its horn.

“*¡¿OYE, QUE MIERDA?!*” Adalina cussed in Spanish as she turned to the taxi while the taxi driver poked his head out from the window. “*¡ESTOY CAMINANDO POR AQUÍ!*”

Stephanie sighed after Adalina gave a few more cusses at the taxi driver as the driver was doing the same and walked off, as Stephanie walked in the other direction, glancing around as she walked through the city.

She pushed her glasses into place as she walked through the city, hearing whistles blowing in the distance from the boats.

Stephanie continued walking through the city’s streets before coming across a shop titled ‘*The Patchwork Couture.*’

She opened the door and held it open as a man stepped out with his daughter, carrying what looked like a few bags filled with items.

Stephanie watched the two with a polite smile, but her eyes seemed slightly filled with sadness as the two walked away.

“*Pardon?*” a polite yet annoyed French voice asked. “What are you doing holding the door open like that? You’re going to let loose all the warm air!”

As Stephanie poked her head into the shop, she saw an annoyed woman with her hands on her hips.

The woman has caucasian skin with long, wavy dark hazelnut brown hair and dark brown eyes.

She has a healthy thin body with medium-thick thighs, D breasts, and a slim waist.

The woman wears a UCLA blue 19th-century dress with oxford blue lining and a white lining with pearl earrings.

“Oh!” Stephanie perked as she stepped into the shop, closing the door behind her. “Sorry about that, Dianne. A man and his daughter were just leaving the shop.”

Dianne, the French woman, nodded after Stephanie apologized and said, “*C’est bon*, at least you closed the door.”

Stephanie smiled softly after Dianne assured her before asking, “So what brought you to my shop?”

“Well,” Stephanie pushed her glasses into position. “Winter is arriving, and I have grown out of my winter clothes.”

“You did?” Dianne blinked. “I thought you wouldn’t grow anymore.”

The tip of Stephanie’s ears blushed as she said, “I meant a few years ago, Dianne. The winter clothes you gave me had grown out of my size.”

Dianne nodded after Stephanie explained, saying, “I can make you some new clothes by the end of this month before winter comes, but there is a problem.”

Stephanie perked after Dianne explained to her before saying, “The machine that helps me make my strings downstairs had broken, and the mechanic that was supposed to fix it called in sick.”

“I can help you fix that!” Stephanie smiled.

“You can?” Dianne echoed.

“Yes,” Stephanie nodded. “Anything for a friend.”

Dianne smiled after Stephanie suggested and said, “*Merci beaucoup*.”

She turned around and opened the employee’s door, allowing Stephanie inside as she stepped through.

Dianne led Stephanie into the basement and showed the machine, watching as Stephanie’s face cringed after seeing the damage.

Strings had been snapped and wrapped around the cogs that made the strings as the large bobbins were halfway wrapped, but missing the rest as it was all in a makeshift cloud-like mushroom of a rainbow.

“Jesus Christ!” Stephanie exclaimed. “What happened?!”

“Well, a lazy employee, that is!” Dianne hissed. “I left for a minute to help a customer, and that idiot did not pay attention to tangles and, well,” she paused as she mentioned the mess. “*This* happened!”

Stephanie smacked a hand on her forehead and exclaimed, “*This* happened a week ago?!”

“*Oui*,” Dianne nodded with a hiss in her voice.

But Stephanie shook her head and turned around, taking her sweater off as Dianne watched with confusion, asking, “What are you doing?”

“Don’t want anything loose to get stuck in the machine and get myself hurt,” Stephanie answered as she took a rubber band out of the pocket of her blue jeans. “But it’ll take me a few hours or less if I find a way to fix it. Just let the customers know that your machine is in the works, so fixing clothes or making clothes would be for another time.”

Dianne nodded after Stephanie explained and said, “*Merçi, Stéphanie*. Just let me know if the machine is fixed.”

Stephanie nodded as she put her hair in a high ponytail, although she stopped when Dianne helped her adjust it higher enough for safety.

Once Stephanie’s hair was up, Stephanie instantly went to work on the machine, looking at the damage and nodding to herself as she inspected every nook and cranny.

After seeing the problem, Stephanie took out needles and *carefully* untangled the strings from each other after hooking the snapped ends into the blunt needles.

She weaved them through the tightened threads, untangling them carefully as she loosened the cogs from being tangled.

Once the cogs were untangled, Stephanie would pick them up and inspect them, checking for damage before putting them in the spots where they were.

The fixing lasted thirty minutes as Dianne usually did customers, writing out their sizes on a notepad as one by one entered her shop and asked for new clothes.

She explained that the machine that helped her make threads for her clothes was broken, and they would ask her for a request in case the machine worked.

Once the previous customer had left, Dianne heard a knock and walked to the employee's door.

She opened it to see Stephanie panting, using the back of her hand to wipe the sweat off her forehead as she smiled, "It's done, Dianne!"

Stephanie moved to the side and showed the machine, completely fixed, and the strings that had been snapped were readjusted to reconnect to the large bobbins and were all in different colors instead of one massive explosion of color.

"*Merci beaucoup, Stéphanie!*" Dianne smiled, gently hugging her before kissing both her cheeks.

Stephanie beamed as Dianne looked at the machine, exclaiming, "You even repaired the loud noise it makes?"

"Yes, I did," Stephanie nodded. "Found out that someone," she lifted her hand to show a two-hand-sized brass cog, saying, "Left this in your machine when it was used a long time ago."

Dianne's face turned to shock as she exclaimed, "*That* is what caused the noise?"

"Yep!" Stephanie nodded. "Must've been an extra piece. I'll take it with me to see if something is useful."

Dianne rolled her eyes as Stephanie took down her hair and put her sweater on, and Dianne remarked, "I swear, you are raised by magpies with you collecting shiny and random things!"

With a shrug, Stephanie glanced over her shoulder and said as she pocketed the brass cog, "Yeah, I'm a magpie. I just like to be crafty with random things."

With that, Stephanie exited the store with a soft smile, taking the brass cog with her as she pushed her glasses into place.

As she walked through the city, Stephanie could hear whistles from the docks, meaning that the Star Fleet and Z-Stacks boats were now at work.

Then, she paused as she sat in a chair next to a café, wondering about those boats she would hear from all day to night.

She had heard of them and their captains... but Stephanie had never *experienced* them or met them personally.

But it *is* the number one thing on her bucket list.

Ever since she was a little girl, Stephanie watched shows, read books, and looked at the history of locomotives and boats, always wanting to ride on one when she grew up.

...Now, Stephanie is in her prime age, and... she is going *nowhere* at this rate.

Stephanie sighed as she moved back a stray strand of hair from her face, her mind still rambling on what she should do-

She perked after hearing her phone buzzing and a ringtone of ‘*The Banks Of Sacramento*’ from Nathan Evans, causing her to snap out of her thoughts and take her phone out.

Seeing the name ‘Kasey’ on the cover, she opened her phone and answered the call.

“Hello?” Stephanie asked.

“*Stephanie, I need your help!*” a voice responded from her phone. “*I’m stuck in some netting, and the sailors are out doing their own things!*”

“Okay,” Stephanie assured as she stood up from her chair. “I’ll be over there in any minute, Kasey.”

“*Thank you, Steph,*” Kasey thanked.

Stephanie closed her phone and walked around before pausing when she noticed a crowd of people near the market, mumbling, “Damn. I forgot about the late-morning buyers.”

Then she looked up at the side of the building and perked, glancing back at the massive crowd.

She walked into the alley and jumped, grabbing onto the bottom of the ladder before climbing it until she reached the roof.

Stephanie then picked up speed and quickly jumped from one roof to another, hopping and landing perfectly on her feet.

When she reached the harbor, Stephanie turned tightly and jumped, grabbing the top of the flagpole with her hands.

Using her weight, Stephanie skidded down without hitting the flag and landed on her feet, releasing the flag as she sighed.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Stephanie turned to the fourth wall. “Don’t try *that* at home.”

She walked towards one of the boats and stopped at one of the smaller boats, seeing a pile of rope squirming around as there were some limbs and hair.

“Got yourself stuck in the rope again, hmm?” Stephanie asked, placing her hands on her hips.

“It’s not my fault!” A muffled voice exclaimed from underneath the pile. “Can you help me?”

Stephanie gently shrugged her shoulders and started to untangle the ropes pile, carefully preventing whoever was underneath from getting smothered.

When the ropes were halfway off, a young person sat up, holding a cell phone while looking slightly shaken.

They have short jet-black hair, fair Caucasian skin, and light green eyes.

They wore a long-sleeved shirt with black overalls that reached their ankles and gray boots.

“Thank you so much, Steph!” they thanked as they stood up. “I still have trouble with the ropes!”

“It’s okay, Kasey,” Stephanie chuckled. “Just give it some practice, and you’ll-”

She paused when she noticed someone in the distance and frowned, saying, “I have *someone* to deal with. Let me know if something else goes wrong.”

Kasey nodded and went back to what they were doing as Stephanie walked down the docks, heading further and further away from the city and the people.

She soon arrived at an abandoned warehouse and entered, seeing a group of people surrounding one person holding a mailbag in his arms.

“Come on!” one of them urged. “I know you got all that moola!”

“I-I don’t have any!” the poor man exclaimed. “I forgot to bring it!”

“That’s what you said last week!” another hissed before grabbing the strap of his bag. “Come on, let us see-”

“Hey!” Stephanie called, startling them as they turned around. “What the hell are you all doing?!”

“None of your goddamn business,” one of them, African American, has puffy jet-black hair, brown eyes, and is thin. “Just scoot along, Little Miss Blue, and get back to your-”

“I said,” Stephanie spoke louder, getting near the man as he backed a little. “What the hell are you doing with him?”

The other members turned around after Stephanie asked, ignoring the young man as he scrambled to the side, exiting from the back door.

“We’re just taking our own business,” one of the members huffed, who was taller than the others but had more puffy hair. “Just make yourself like a leaf and-”

“It’s ‘make like a tree and beat it,’” Stephanie corrected, ignoring that she was surrounded. “If you are going to threaten me, do it properly.”

“Will you shut the hell up?!” a woman dressed in all red snapped. “And get outta here!”

Stephanie stayed calm as she stared at the group... before her phone went off, and one of them reached into the pocket of her blue jeans without permission, taking out her phone.

“Hey!” the member remarked as he showed the phone to the others, who looked surprised. “She has the latest model!”

Stephanie quickly grabbed her phone from the man's hand and hung up with one swipe, saying as she shoved it back into her pocket, "It's mine and," she turned to the person who reached into her pocket, hissing, "Do. Not. Reach into the pocket of my blue jeans!"

But one of the biggest members grabbed her shoulders as the thin man said, "Well, consider that you got the latest model; it means you are rich as hell."

"Well, I'm mad as hell!" Stephanie glared. "I don't need to see a talking twig with R-rated Jessica Rabbit ruining my day!"

The man turned around and grabbed Stephanie's face with his hand, and she gritted her teeth a little, feeling the man's rough hand against her skin.

"We tried to warn you, but you wouldn't hear our warning," the man hissed before turning around, seeing the man went and the backdoor open. "WHERE THE HELL DID HE GO?!"

Stephanie glanced around at her surroundings and quickly elbowed the man behind her with her elbow.

She weaved through the crowd and headed toward the entrance of the abandoned warehouse.

"Hey, stop her!" Stephanie picked up speed to outrun them all... but something was tossed at the back of her head with a hard *clonk*!

She collapsed on the ground with a *thud*, the brass cog she had pocketed skidding out as she groaned, seeing a *rock* tossed at her head.

"I said, 'stop her,'" the man shouted. "Not 'toss somethin' at her!'"

"That *was* one way of stopping her!" another exclaimed.

Stephanie pushed herself up to get away, but Biggie grabbed her by the ankles and dragged her back, causing her to grab the brass cog with her hand.

They surrounded her as Stephanie swung the brass cog and moved backward fast, hitting one of the members across the face with a hard *clang*!

"OOOOWWWW!" the man exclaimed as he held his injured area on his face and landed on his bottom before cussing. "[REDACTED]!"

Stephanie was about to swing the brass cog around when Biggie punched at her, hitting the side of her face with a solid hit, flinging her glasses off, and causing a bruise.

Others entered the job and started to punch and kick her, swinging fists and high-heel kicks at every inch of her body.

Stephanie felt the urge to do something as she gritted her teeth, dug her fingers into the ground, and bared what looked like vampire-like teeth.

But a sharp punch to the side of her head caused her to collapse on the ground on her side, feeling like she was going to pass out.

Suddenly, a loud shrill-like [whistle](#) went through the air sharply, causing everyone to stop moving instantly.

It was loud that Stephanie could feel the ground shake from the vibration as the windows shook.

As Stephanie was blinking in and out, she heard muffled noises as she watched everyone panicking as the door opened, even watching the thin man passing out after a massive shadow appeared.

She watched legs run in front of her from all directions before something picked them up in one swoop.

Stephanie blinked out briefly before coming back to reality as a figure loomed over her, the face obscured by its own shadow.

Before Stephanie passed out completely, she saw what looked like a gigantic shape reaching down to her before enveloping her in darkness.

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Stephanie blinked awake after waking, feeling her entire body aching from all those kicks and punches, but she felt something wrapped around her head.

She reached up with a hand in confusion about what was wrapped around her head when she heard someone's voice exclaim as a hand gently wrapped around her wrist, "Whoa! Don't move around too much, or you would've undo the bandages."

Stephanie glanced over at who said it and was surprised to see a handsome young man sitting in a chair beside her as she was lying on a couch.

He has short, medium-brown hair, light brown eyes, and Caucasian skin.

He wore what looked like a sailor's uniform in yellow, blue, and hints of white and black with the name '*Ten Cents*' stitched on the left corner of his collar in white thread and the number one pin on the other with an American flag pin and black pants with a single white stripe that went down in a straight line.

The man wore a medium blue cap on his head with a bird-shaped ornament and dark brown shoes.

"Oh," Stephanie spoke as she stopped moving. "Sorry."

Stephanie groaned lightly as she felt another wave of numbness through her body as he asked, his accent with an East End Cockney, "What were you doin' in the abandoned warehouse?"

"Well," Stephanie began as she shifted slightly in her spot. "I saw someone getting themselves pushed into said abandoned warehouse in the first place, so I went over there to distract them and let the man escape. I *was* about to leave like they said, but I didn't plan for my phone to go off like that."

She sighed as she rolled her eyes, "So I got myself into bigger trouble and got beaten up for sticking my nose into 'their' business."

Then she paused and asked, "But did you see a massive person? I want to thank them for helping me."

The man glanced away *nervously* after Stephanie asked, and Stephanie did not notice it as she thought as he responded, "No, not really. He's, uh, very rare to come across."

After explaining, Stephanie's face turned to confusion as he corrected himself, "We rarely see him around since he works elsewhere."

"Oh." Stephanie nodded before asking, "What about you?"

“Well, he took you over here, and we mended ya after seeing your bruises,” he explained.

Stephanie softly smiled after he explained and said, “I appreciate it, mister?” she mentioned a hand to her with a confused expression.

“Ten Cents,” he answered.

““Ten Cents?”” Stephanie echoed in confusion.

“Yeah, that’s my nickname,” Ten Cents nodded as he mentioned the stitched name on his collar.

“Just don’t want to tell my real name.”

“Fair enough,” Stephanie nodded, barely wincing from the pain of her bruises and possibly broken bones. “I’m Stephanie, Stephanie Allen.”

Ten Cents looked surprised as he remarked, “So *you’re* Stephanie!”

“You’ve heard of me?” Stephanie blinked, sounding surprised.

“Yes!” Ten Cents nodded with excitement. “A few people from the *Pacific Fleet* have been talkin’ about you.”

“Ah,” Stephanie nodded. “Then you know Dianne, Kasey, and Adalina?”

“Yes,” Ten Cents nodded. “They help us with the clothes, ropes, and contracts.”

Stephanie gently nodded after Ten Cents explained and said, “Adalina is my childhood friend, and we’ve-”

The door instantly slammed open as a loud Spanish voice screamed, “¿*QUIÉN COÑO HIRIÓ A STEPHANIE?!?*”

Ten Cents flinched and jumped to his feet after the familiar voice shrieked as Stephanie calmly remarked, “Ah, there she is.”

Adalina came storming in with a *furious* expression and had her hands in fists, glancing around before making eye contact with Ten Cents.

Ten Cents, not wanting to make Adalina angry and mostly afraid, moved to the side instantly as Stephanie carefully stood up from lying on the couch but was sitting on it as her legs were aching, saying, “Hi, Adalina.”

Adalina instantly went towards Stephanie and gently cupped her hands on Stephanie’s face, asking in Spanish, “*¿Estás bien? ¿Qué sucedió? ¿Quién te golpeó? ¿Puedes explicar lo que pasó? ¿Quiénes son los bastardos que te hicieron esto?*”

“Addie, Addie!” Stephanie chuckled as she stopped. “*Estoy bien. Estoy bien.*”

Ten Cents looked impressed after Stephanie spoke in Spanish, his cheeks blushing softly.

Adalina sighed, and Stephanie explained, “Damarion and his gang beat me up after I saw them harassing a guy for his money. So, I went in and got myself beaten.”

“You should’ve been careful!” Adalina gently scolded. “What happens if you-”

She paused as she glanced to the side at Ten Cents as he listened to the conversation before sighing, removing her hands from Stephanie’s face.

“Let’s just head back home,” Adalina sighed. “You’ll rest for a while until your bruises heal up.”

Stephanie nodded after Adalina sighed and carefully stood up, although her legs were aching from all the kicks and punches.

“Careful,” Adalina cautiously spoke. “I’ll take you home.”

“Do you have a car?” Stephanie asked with a slightly sarcastic tone.

“*Perra*,” Adalina frowned after Stephanie sarcastically asked.

Stephanie hobbled out of the *Star Fleet* office with the help of Adalina as Ten Cents watched before noticing something lying on the side.

He picked it up and realized it was a brass cog, remembering Stephanie was carrying it in her hand when ‘his friend’ carried her to the office.

Ten Cents ran outside and called, “Hey, you-” he paused when he noticed the two had disappeared as she finished, “Forgot this.”

He sighed as he looked down at the brass cog in his hands, seeing that it had *some* blood but was perfectly round without some bent edges.

A shadow loomed over him that caused him to look up from the brass cog and at who towering over him as a voice asked, “Ten Cents? What are you doin’ out here?”

“Adalina took Stephanie home,” Ten Cents responded. “And, she left her brass cog here with me. I was going to go out and tell her, but they disappeared.”

“Well, maybe you could see her again,” another voice responded. “Bigg City Port is not that big for you to lose her.”

Ten Cents slowly nodded as he looked down at the brass cog in his hands before another voice asked, “Though, did she, by any chance, see you?”

Ten Cents glanced away from the brass cog in his hands and responded, “No, she passed out when I came over.”

He sighed and gritted his teeth, revealing sharp canines past a vampire’s teeth.

“I just *hope* she doesn’t get *too* suspicious.” Ten Cents softly murmured.