

Stephanie waited for the week to pass as she worked hard, helping many people from different places, and sometimes would see Ten Cents occasionally.

Although it is funny and amusing to Stephanie because he gets shy quickly while standing there blushing and twiddling his thumbs before blushing more when she smiles and waves at him.

It is cute to see him get all red.

But *funnier* to see him get more flustered whenever one of his family members says something to him and watches his face turn redder.

She cannot tell what they said to him, but it *is* amusing to watch someone who is cocky and confident turn into a flustered mess by a minute whenever she is around.

They would meet whenever they could, and Stephanie would *flirt* with him to watch his face turn red for amusement.

He would attempt to flirt back, but it would wind Stephanie up with amusement and excitement, and she would flirt with a good one and see his face redder.

While the two *Z-Stacks* she scolded just watch and snicker at Ten Cents' reaction before running off when Stephanie sees them hiding.

Serves them right for attempting to blackmail Ten Cents as Stephanie gently smirks, going back to what she was doing.

The week went by, and it was soon Saturday as Stephanie and Ten Cents promised each other, but Stephanie decided to pay him a surprise instead of picking her up.

So Stephanie went to the *Star Fleet* building but paused a little from entering as she felt it was a different building.

She glanced over to the right and noticed a larger building and felt curious, walking over to it before knocking on the door.

“Be right there,” a voice responded from the other side of the door.

Stephanie moved her hand down and waited patiently before the door opened, revealing Hercules, wearing his casual outfit and not his cap, showing off his slight jet-black curls.

“Hello,” Stephanie gently smiled. “Is Ten Cents here?”

“Yes, m’dear,” Hercules nodded. “Let me fetch him for you. Oh, come inside.”

Stephanie perked with surprise before entering the building, watching as Hercules climbed the stairs as she glanced around curiously.

It was different from her home, but to the *Star Fleet* family, it is their home, even if it is not much.

Stephanie smiled softly as she looked around, pushing her glasses into place as she waited patiently in the living room.

“Hey,” Stephanie perked after hearing someone and glanced over, seeing Warrior looking confused about her standing in the living room. “What about you doin’ here, Ms. Allen?”

“I came here to pick up Ten Cents,” Stephanie gently smiled.

“Really?” Big Mac looked confused. “Doesn’t Ten Cents pick you up?”

“Nah,” Stephanie chuckled. “I like switching. Since he picked me up yesterday, I’ll pick him up today.”

“Wot?!” Stephanie perked after hearing Ten Cents exclaim from up the stairs as she perked, mostly startled. “She’s here?! I thought I was pickin’ her up!”

“Oh boy,” Stephanie softly winced as she sheepishly looked at Big Mac and Warrior. “I must’ve forgotten to let him know I was coming, too.”

There was thumping down the hallway as Stephanie perked, guessing it would be Ten Cents running as fast as he could.

‘Nuff said, Ten Cents soon rushed down the stairs as fast as he could, hopping on one foot to put on a shoe while Sunshine was behind him.

“Slow down, Ten Cents!” Sunshine exclaimed.

Ten Cents was too hurried to hear Sunshine until he slipped at the third step of the staircase when he struggled with one of his shoes.

Stephanie perked and quickly went underneath him, allowing him to collide with her, but she managed to keep herself up after he went into her.

Her arms wrapped around his middle as Ten Cents have the same, but he was startled that someone eight inches shorter managed to *hold* him.

Thankfully, no one was hurt.

“Are you alright?” Stephanie blinked as she looked up at him.

“Y-Yeah,” Ten Cents blushed with embarrassment before remembering. “Wait, how are you holdin’ me?”

“I carry a lot of heavy cargo,” Stephanie smirked, using the same *confidence* Ten Cents showed off as he blushed more. “Besides, you weigh like a bag of grapes to me.”

She placed him down after catching him as she adjusted his clothes, saying as he blushed, “There’s no rush, Ten Cents. You don’t need to hurry.”

“I didn’t want to keep a lady waitin’,” Ten Cents gently huffed.

“True,” Stephanie chuckled softly before adjusting his collar after standing on her tippy toes.

Ten Cents’ heart was picking up speed as Stephanie was close to him to help him adjust his clothes, telling him that she *did* shower and... oh gosh, she was wearing something that *smelled* like blueberry desserts.

The others were surprised to see Stephanie had caught Ten Cents, even if he was a little taller than her, but were relieved that he did not break a bone.

But Hercules can see *something* happening between the two as Ten Cents blushes like crazy while Stephanie is helping him.

“She’s preening him,” Hercules gently whispered to Big Mac with a small smile.

“What?” Big Mac looked confused, whispering back to him. “‘Preenin’?”

“They aren’t birds, Hercules,” Warrior pointed out, keeping his voice low.

“No,” Hercules softly chuckled. “She’s helping Ten Cents adjust his clothes, which is another way of ‘preening.’”

“Oh,” Warrior gently nodded.

Stephanie finished ‘preening’ Ten Cents by adjusting his hair slightly before returning to her normal height, saying, “There. You look much better.”

Ten Cents was still blushing as Stephanie noticed his expression and chuckled, saying as she removed herself from him, “Sorry. I didn’t know I was a little *too* close to you.”

“No, no, it’s okay,” Ten Cents assured. “I didn’t mean to crash into you like that.”

“Well, you could’ve slowed down,” Sunshine huffed before noticing the time. “Since she’s here, you might want to start on your date.”

“Sunshine,” Ten Cents blushed more as Stephanie did the same. “It’s not a ‘date,’ it’s-”

“It’s okay,” Stephanie assured, gently taking him by the wrist. “Let’s start our ‘date,’” Ten Cents blushed after Stephanie joked. “Through *Bigg City Port*.”

Ten Cents nodded before stopping to take his jacket and hat as Stephanie waited outside, watching as he stepped out in his glory.

“You look fantastic,” Stephanie beamed as Ten Cents grinned confidently.

Ten Cents walked up to Stephanie as she gently retook his wrist, now feeling more confident about holding her hand.

“Oh, Ten Cents!” Ten Cents turned to the door as his family waved at him with Sunshine in front. “Be careful, alright?”

“Make sure you let us know something is wrong, okay?” O.J. called.

“Don’t forget to kiss,” Sunshine joked.

Ten Cents' blush went another shade after Sunshine joked as Stephanie responded, "Oh, don't worry! We won't forget."

Ten Cents looked at Stephanie in a split second with a 'Are you serious' expression as Stephanie took him by the wrist, looking at his family as if silently asking, 'Is she really going to kiss me?'

The group looked surprised as Top Hat looked unamused while Sunshine mouthed, 'I was jokin'.'

Ten Cents blushed a little and returned to Stephanie after Sunshine mouthed as Stephanie started taking the lead, walking through *Bigg City Port* as Ten Cents followed.

Stephanie took Ten Cents through the city and past others as they went through *Bigg City Port*.

Ten Cents looked confused as Stephanie was taking him through the city, wondering where Stephanie was taking her.

Rock music was playing in the background, and Stephanie perked as she stopped leading Ten Cents as he looked confused.

"Wot?" Ten Cents asked.

Stephanie then beamed and started to lead Ten Cents in the opposite direction she was walking in, leading Ten Cents towards what looked like a concert.

"Uh, Steph?" Ten Cents looked confused about where she was heading. "Why are we headin' towards a concert?"

Stephanie did not listen to him and headed to the back of the concert with Ten Cents behind, still holding his wrist as he followed.

She approached one of the bodyguards and smiled, "Hello, Caleb!"

The bodyguard looked down at Stephanie from behind his back sunglasses as Stephanie smiled up at him.

He then noticed Ten Cents as he stood beside Stephanie with his wrist in her hand, cocking an eyebrow in confusion.

Stephanie looked over at Ten Cents and blushed, stammering, “Oops, ah, he-he’s a...”

Stephanie started at him after drifting off as she blushed more, trying to come up with a word that meant one thing... but all only came up with either something that would friendzone him or hurt his feelings.

Ten Cents noticed and decided to help her, saying, “We’re friends!”

Stephanie instantly felt a faint arrow of hurt hit her heart as Ten Cents made a quiet ‘D’oh’ noise while mentally slapping himself for saying that sentence.

Ouch, Ten Cents.

The bodyguard named ‘Caleb’ gently nodded his head with acknowledgment after Ten Cents told him as Stephanie decided to shake the feeling away, saying, “Can we get in the backstage?”

Caleb nodded and moved to the side, allowing Stephanie to pass by him and backstage as Ten Cents looked worried and confused.

They walked through the fabric walls as Ten Cents was led from behind, looking around curiously at the music noises and the crowd cheering from behind the fabric.

“Stephanie?” Ten Cents spoke as Stephanie glanced over her shoulder at him. “Why are we backstage?”

“Oh,” Stephanie gently chuckled as she blushed with slight embarrassment. “We’re backstage at the music band *Soprano and Gravel*.”

“*“Soprano and Gravel?”*” Ten Cents blinked with amazement. “How do you know them?!”

Stephanie chuckled as they soon entered the cosmetic room, which had two mirrors on each side with evidence of two rock stars.

“I’ll tell you once this song ends,” Stephanie pointed with a smirk. “They’ll be coming since it’s almost twelve.”

Ten Cents felt excited after Stephanie explained everything to him, and Stephanie noticed his excitement and asked, “Are you a fan?”

“I am.” Ten Cents nodded. “Their cover song, *Livin’ La Vida Loca*, is my favorite.”

“Mine too!” Stephanie nodded with a smirk as she turned to him. “I sometimes sing that song whenever I am around my house.”

Ten Cents blushed as he said, “I usually listen to their songs whenever I’m lying on my bed.”

Then he guessed, “You do the same?”

“Yep,” Stephanie nodded. “Mostly writing stories too. It helps give me focus.”

Ten Cents blinked after Stephanie mentioned and said, “You never told me you wrote stories!”

“Ah,” Stephanie gently chuckled as she sat on one of the speakers. “Well, yes, I write stories. But I didn’t publish any of them.”

Ten Cents looked confused after Stephanie explained as he asked, “Why haven’t you published any of them?”

“I have jobs to do,” Stephanie gently sighed. “And... other things too.”

“Oh,” Ten Cents nodded. “That makes sense.”

Stephanie nodded in agreement before asking, “What hobbies do you do on your off days?”

“I usually practice knot tying with O.J.,” Ten Cents explained. “And I play games with Sunshine whenever we get bored.”

“Knot tying,” Stephanie repeated curiously. “Is that a way of keeping your barges from floating away?”

“Exactly!” Ten Cents nodded. “It happened once with a barge after I didn’t tie the rope right and went *Up River*. Billy luckily found it and took it to *Star Fleet* before it floated out to sea. It took the rest of us to find it while Hercules was out in the sea.”

“That’s great of him,” Stephanie gently smiled. “And you’ve been practicing ever since?”

“Yep,” Ten Cents nodded as he was blushing a little. “I didn’t get into much trouble after that day.”

Stephanie giggled and responded, “Reminded me of one of my foster uncles’ kids.”

Ten Cents perked after Stephanie mentioned her ‘foster uncle’ as she continued, “His kids were a handful whenever they came over to visit, always getting into things and even losing a lot too. They even hide things to play games for their amusement.”

Stephanie sighed as she crossed her arms over her chest, huffing, “They always seem to like hiding *my* stuff to watch me go around to find them.”

“I can tell how you felt,” Ten Cents slowly nodded, still trying to wrap his mind around the term ‘foster.’ “Sunshine used to do the same when he was a toddler. He always gets me annoyed whenever he does it.”

Stephanie chuckled after Ten Cents told her about Sunshine’s habits, deciding to save the thought of Stephanie’s family for later.

“Ooh,” Stephanie perked. “I would even listen to music while searching for *Pokémon* around *Bigg City Port*.”

“*Poké*-what?” Ten Cents blinked in confusion.

“*Pokémon*,” Stephanie chuckled softly. “It’s a Japanese monster-catching game where you find different *Pokémon* and collect them, even for battling others too!”

She reached into her blue jeans pocket and took out her phone, flipping it open as Ten Cents stood beside her to look.

Stephanie tapped an app on her phone as it loaded with a beautiful background with several monster-like creatures around, showing her avatar with a bird-like creature flying over it.

“This is my avatar,” Stephanie pointed with a smile. “This is Fearow, a normal flying type *Pokémon*.”

“That’s wot a *Pokémon* looks like?” Ten Cents curiously asked.

“Yep!” Stephanie nodded. “But that’s not just only one. There’s more.”

She tapped a few icons and showed a massive list that had some with numbers and others filled with different *Pokémon*.

“There are over a thousand and eight *Pokémon* to collect,” Stephanie explained as Ten Cents listened. “I collected about fifteen percent of them from eighteen Types, but I hope to encounter a Legendary. That’s one of the rarest for *Pokémon* hunters.”

“Cor,” Ten Cents gently chuckled. “You’re a fan of these games?”

Stephanie blushed after Ten Cents asked and said, “Yeah, there’s *Bakugan*, another collecting game, *Yu-Gi-Oh*, a card collecting game, ooh, and *Digimon*, too! It’s almost identical to *Pokémon*, except you collect *digital* monsters.”

“Really?” Ten Cents asked as Stephanie nodded. “Cor, you are a huge fan of them.”

“Yeah,” Stephanie nodded as she blushed more. “If you want, I could introduce you to the games I mentioned.”

“I would love to!” Ten Cents nodded. “And I’ll show you how to tie ropes.”

“Fair enough,” Stephanie beamed with a cute smile.

‘Too cute!’ Ten Cents blushed, turning his head away from her and trying to keep himself from steaming up.

Then, three figures entered the room, and the two perked as Stephanie instantly beamed and hopped off the speaker she climbed onto.

The first figure was a tall, skinny male with long dark brown dreadlocks and light hazelnut brown eyes with fair skin.

He wore a beanie on his head, a sweater with a zipper and a shirt underneath, blue jeans, and black shoes.

The second figure was a male who was short and chubby with short hazel brown hair, a beard, fair skin, and light blue eyes.

He wore a dark gray short-sleeve shirt with a black cloth vest, blue jeans, and *Converses*.

The third figure is a female with a beautiful body, fair skin, light green eyes, and long wavy red hair.

She wore a long-sleeve medium green shirt with lace sleeves, a dark green pencil dress that reached her ankles, and bare legs with black high heels.

“Dads!” Stephanie smiled as she hugged the two males, then released them as she hugged the female. “Aunt Aubrey!”

“It’s so good to see you, Stephanie!” the woman named ‘Aunt Aubrey’ smiled.

Ten Cents looked surprised after hearing the word ‘Dads,’ realizing that Stephanie has two Dads!

“How are you doing, Stephanie?” the thin male asked, his voice soothing.

“Yeah, how was your day?” the chubby second male asked.

“Oh, good,” Stephanie smiled. “I, ah,” Stephanie walked over to Ten Cents and wrapped her arms around his right, causing Ten Cents to blush as she led him to the three figures. “I’m with my best friend.”

Ten Cents smiled at the three figures and tipped his hat to them, saying, “It’s a pleasure to meet you. I’m Ten Cents. Stephanie’s-”

“You never told us you have a boyfriend!” the chubby second male exclaimed.

Stephanie’s cheeks blushed red like Ten Cents as she exclaimed as Aunt Aubrey walked up to Ten Cents, “What?! Dad! He’s my best friend!”

“He looks cute,” Aunt Aubrey smiled as she walked around Ten Cents before standing before him. “I’m Aubrey, Stephanie’s aunt.”

“Pleased to meet you, ma’am,” Ten Cents shook Aubrey’s hand as Stephanie blushed with embarrassment.

“He’s polite too,” nodded the thin male to Stephanie and the chubby second male. “He’s a keeper.”

“Dad!” Stephanie exclaimed as the tip of her ears were red.

“Okay, okay,” the chubby second male chuckled. “We’re teasing you.”

Stephanie sighed after they assured her as Ten Cents turned the two, getting excited as he was facing his favorite singers.

“I’m a *huge* fan,” Ten Cents smiled. “I didn’t know you were Stephanie’s dads.”

“Sorry,” Stephanie blushed. “I should’ve told you after hearing their music, but I was excited about meeting them since they went on a world trip.”

“It’s fine,” Ten Cents assured. “You don’t need to apologize.”

Stephanie’s blush deepened after Ten Cents assured her as Aubrey and the two noticed Ten Cents and Stephanie’s blushing habits and how *focused* they were while talking, seeing the *strangeness* as they glanced at each other mischievously.

“Hey,” the chubby second male spoke up. “Since you’re a fan *and* Stephanie’s best friend, you can come backstage whenever we come to *Bigg City Port*.”

“Yeah,” the thin male nodded. “We’ll let Stephanie know whenever we are coming here too.”

“Dads,” Stephanie blushed, acting like a teenager complaining.

“Stephie,” they both responded back to Stephanie.

Stephanie’s blush deepened again after the nickname ‘Stephie,’ saying, “Oh good gosh, you two still remember that nickname Callen called me?”

“Yep,” the thin male nodded as Ten Cents snorted a little. “It’s still cute.”

Stephanie groaned after they mentioned her nickname as the thin male said, holding his hand for a handshake, “My name is Jackson Young.”

“And I’m Cameron Hyles,” the chubby second male responded.

Ten Cents felt his inner geek fangirling that he was shaking his favorite bands’ hands as he responded, keeping everything together, “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Then someone stepped into the room, holding a clipboard in his hand while a microphone was in his ear, speaking to the singers, “Hey, we got a few hours or more until nighttime, so we got plenty of time before we start singing again.”

“Thank you, Colm.” Cameron thanked him as the guy turned around and left.

“Hey, Dads, Aunt Aubrey,” Stephanie gently smiled. “Do you want to head over to my home?”

“Sure!” Aunt Aubrey nodded. “It’s been a while since we last arrived at your house.”

“Yeah,” Stephanie gently chuckled. “Though, that last house I was living in got refurbished.”

After talking to her Dads, she paused and turned to Ten Cents, asking, “Would you like to come? I’ve been to your apartment before.”

“Fair,” Ten Cents nodded.

Stephanie gently took Ten Cents’ wrist, and he blushed before she paused and said, as she released his wrist as Ten Cents mentally felt a strong shocked ‘WHAT?!’ feeling go through him, “Ah, would you like to lead me instead?”

Ten Cents silently sighed with relief after Stephanie asked him before nodding, gently taking her wrist as she blushed.

Her heart was beating against her chest as she mentally told herself as Ten Cents walked backstage, remembering which way to go as the other followed behind, ‘Calm down, Stephanie. Calm down, Stephanie. Calm down, Stephanie. Calm down, Stephanie.’

But she was silently squealing with happiness that Ten Cents was holding her wrist, wanting more than being held around the wrist.

Maybe wanting to hold hands-

‘NOW HOLD ON! CAN’T THAT WAIT UNTIL LATER?! I’M NOT READY FOR THAT YET!’ Stephanie’s inner thoughts shrieked at the sentence above as Stephanie was still following Ten Cents from behind.

They walked backstage until they stepped out into the open, walking up to a limo as the bodyguards led them.

Ten Cents can see that the concert was facing the ocean itself with campgrounds of people celebrating while different music played.

“Hey, who’s playing music?” Ten Cents asked.

“My Italian twin step-cousins,” Stephanie smiled. “They are DJs from my Dad’s,” she points at Cameron as he opens the door for Jackson before closing it. “Side of the family. They’re pretty good with their music and are awesome people who come over. I’ll introduce them later.”

Ten Cents nodded before opening the door for Stephanie, allowing her to step in first before sliding in next to her.

He blushed after sitting next to Stephanie after closing the door, scooting to the side slightly as Stephanie glanced away from him, still blushing.

After they entered the limousine, the ride to Stephanie’s house was chatty, with Stephanie telling her Dads and Aunt Aubrey about what she did over the time they were gone while Ten Cents listened.

She did a *lot* of jobs, from what she told Ten Cents the second time they met, from wielding, construction, pottery, painting, and delivering cargo, so many jobs around *Bigg City Port*.

They even ask Ten Cents what he does, and to keep his tug form a secret, he tells them that he uses a switcher tug to deliver cargo and fuel to Sally and Lilie.

This surprises Stephanie as she has *seen* tugs around, which worries and gives some hope to Ten Cents that she must have seen their other forms behind his back.

But she instead says it was from a far distance, which somewhat deflates his hope but grows his worry a little.

If she sees him in his tug form... how would she react to seeing him like that?

He pushed that thought to the back of his mind as he continued the conversation, asking questions to the family as Stephanie chirped along like a bird.

It is... *cute* seeing Stephanie this happy as she talked with her family and even to Ten Cents.

They soon arrived at Stephanie's house and stepped out of the limousine, and the three were surprised after seeing her house.

"That's your new house?!" Cameron exclaimed.

"Yep," Stephanie nodded as she walked up the stairs with Ten Cents behind. "It's a lot bigger inside than it is outside."

'Really?' Ten Cents thought with confusion.

Stephanie unlocked the door with her key and opened it, allowing the others in as she took off her shoes and placed them in a small cupboard.

"Make yourself at home, Ten Cents," Stephanie smiled as he glanced around.

"It looks very roomy," Ten Cents nodded. "Even clean too."

"Ah," Stephanie blushed as Ten Cents did the same to be polite, even taking his jacket and hat off. "I clean it from time to time."

Ten Cents continued looking around curiously, noticing barely anything except for the two couches and a coffee table between them.

'How often does she vacuum?' Ten Cents thought.

There was even no animal around, which made Ten Cents' worry grow a little more, seeing how *lonely* Stephanie was.

...How long has she been living in this expensive house alone?

"Hey, Ten Cents." Ten Cents snapped out of his thoughts and glanced at Stephanie, who had her sweater off, revealing her long-sleeve light blue shirt, even at how skinny she was. "I'm going to cook lunch. What would you like?"

'Think, Ten Cents, think!' Ten Cents scrambled through his mind for what Stephanie could make.

Stephanie noticed Ten Cents' expression and smiled softly, saying, "You know what? I'll make something that is always great to cook with family."

Ten Cents looked confused after Stephanie assured him, watching as she turned around and tied her long hair into a low ponytail.

"Oh," Stephanie turned back around and chuckled a little. "Are you allergic to anything, or is there something you don't want to be added to food before I start?"

"Not really," Ten Cents shrugged. "The only thing I don't want to be added to food is octopus."

Stephanie gave a thumbs up before starting to cook as he sat on the couch, sitting there somewhat awkwardly in the quietness of the house.

The Dads and Aunt Aubrey must have walked away to look around at Stephanie's house... which means that they left Ten Cents by himself with Stephanie.

Ten Cents might have time to think about his day with Stephanie.

He gets that Stephanie is a foster kid and adopted by these two Dads and aunt, meaning she has more family members than he expected.

...What happened to her real parents?

Something meowed, and Ten Cents perked, glancing around at what meowed before a cat jumped onto the couch next to him.

It was a beautiful fluffy Siamese cat with a dark tail, ears, face, and legs, wearing a blue collar around its neck with the name 'Hazel' etched on it.

Well, she does not seem *that* lonely in her home.

The Siamese cat named 'Hazel' stared back at Ten Cents with beautiful large blue eyes, and Ten Cents was surprised to see a cat walk up to him.

Said cat decided to rub against his side with its body as it began to purr, and Ten Cents smiled and scratched its head, stroking its body as its tail curled around his hand as he finished.

From the feral cats he saw roaming around *Bigg City Port*, this one was *very* friendly towards him... and then climbed onto his lap before lying down while purring.

“Hey, Ten Cents?” Ten Cents was pulled back from his thoughts after hearing Stephanie’s voice, responding, “Yeah?”

“Have you seen a vehishifter?” Ten Cents jolted after Stephanie asked out of the blue, surprised that she *did* hear about a vehishifter! “I’ve heard rumors through *Bigg City Port* that they were giants that can shapeshift into the vehicles they gained from birth. Have you seen any of them?”

Ten Cents was stuck between either telling her that he had seen a vehishifter and *is* one himself... but not wanting to because he did not want to lose the choice of losing his best friend.

“No,” Ten Cents answered as he petted the cat in his lap. “What would you do if you *did* see one?”

There was a pause in the conversation after Ten Cents asked as she responded, “I don’t know. I would most likely stare... but then I would be terrified. So, I don’t know how I would react.”

Ah, that made *some* relief to Ten Cents’ worries.

Stephanie paused after answering his question before asking, “What would *you* do if you saw a werewolf?”

““Werewolf?”” Ten Cents repeated, looking confused but shrugged. “I would be scared after seein’ it... but I would be slightly surprised because it is right before me.”

Stephanie chuckled after Ten Cents responded as Ten Cents could smell something good that made his stomach rumble.

“Ohh, what is that?” Ten Cents asked. “It smells good.”

“I’m cooking beef,” Stephanie answered. “Do you want avocados added or not?”

“Hmm, nah.” Ten Cents responded. “They have a weird taste.”

“Heh, same,” Stephanie agreed.

Ten Cents went silent after Stephanie agreed before noticing what looked like black strands of fur on the couch's back, looking confused after seeing the almost invisible strands.

Does she have a dog around here?

...But then the dog would have approached the door after hearing Stephanie unlocking it.

"Hey, Steph?" Ten Cents said as Stephanie responded with a "Hmm?" "Do you babysit a dog?"

"No, why?" Stephanie responded.

Ten Cents felt more confused as he answered, "There are black strands of hair here."

Stephanie's movements stopped after Ten Cents answered, answering, "Ah, m-maybe one of my friends usually comes here. They have jet-black hair."

Ten Cents felt confused after hearing Stephanie stutter, but deciding not to pry at it, he responded, "Oh, right."

Meanwhile, Stephanie sighed in relief as she placed a hand on her chest, relieved that she had told Ten Cents a *lie* as she returned to cooking.

Stephanie's Dads and Aunt Aubrey soon entered the living room as Cameron apologized, "Sorry we took long to get here. We got a little lost wandering through the house."

"Yeah, you're right about one thing," Jackson nodded. "It's bigger on the inside."

Stephanie chuckled as she finished cooking, stepping out from the kitchen as she was carrying four plates.

Two were in her hands while the other two were in her arms, which Ten Cents guessed was part of her restaurant waiter job.

She gently knelt and responded, using her head to nod over at the plates as she mentioned the two on her right arm and hand, "These two have avocados because you like them, Dads."

"These two here," Stephanie continued as she looked at Ten Cents, mentioning the plates on her left arm and hand. "Don't have avocado on them."

“Thanks, honey,” Cameron thanked as they took the plates from her, and Ten Cents took one from her arm.

After the plates were taken, Stephanie walked around and sat next to Ten Cents as they began talking as Ten Cents was eating.

He wanted to talk with the conversation, but he had food in his hands, and it smelled good, heck, *tasted* amazing, so he listened to them while eating.

...Well, Ten Cents did *not* expect spices to hit him in the back of the throat, which caused him to cough a little, but it was still delicious.

Though the cat on his lap seemed to like the food, it was trying to sneak some bites as he lifted his arms up to keep it from chewing.

The conversation lasted a long time as they all finished eating their food, and Ten Cents finally added to the conversation after eating, talking about the same subjects they were on.

It ranged from different bosses that needed some extra hands to the people from *Pacific Fleet* that helped make items for *Star Fleet*, *Z-Stack*, and *Up River*.

It lasted until six o'clock, and Colm entered the house, perking everyone's attention from the conversation.

“Hey, it's almost time for another show to start,” Colm explained.

“Thank you, Colm,” Cameron nodded before pausing. “Aubrey? How is your voice?”

“Still a little sore,” Aubrey sighed.

Stephanie noticed and thought a little before asking, “Hey, Dads? Do you mind if I replace Aunt Aubrey for this concert?”

Ten Cents looked at her confused as the Dads said, “Sure!”

“But do you know the lyrics to *Randy Dandy Oh*?” Jackson asked.

“Of course,” Stephanie chuckled. “The sailors sang that song multiple times while you were on your trips.”

Ten Cents felt butterflies in his stomach after Stephanie explained, now hearing that she would *sing* in a concert.

Does she even sing?

He had never heard her sing before... so what would happen in the concert?

Ten Cents put his shoes, jacket, and cap on as Stephanie did the same, turning around to Ten Cents as Jackson and Cameron exited the house, holding his wrists, "That means you are going to have a free pass into the concert! Eee, you're going to love it!"

"Sure," Ten Cents nodded. "But, how would you know if I was in the crowd?"

"It's easy," Stephanie grinned. "You'll be in the V.I.P. section in front of the crowds! That's a special place for those who got V.I.P.s. Like," Stephanie booped his nose with her finger as he blushed. "You, Mr. Cents."

Ten Cents felt excitement rushing through him as they returned to the concert in a limousine, arriving on time as Jackson and Cameron went backstage.

Stephanie disappeared for a minute and returned, carrying a paper dark yellow bracelet before wrapping it around Ten Cents' wrist.

"This is the V.I.P. bracelet," Stephanie smiled before gently pushing him from behind. "You need to get to the spot before you're stuck among the crowds."

"Ah, right!" Ten Cents perked before rushing to the seats.

Stephanie went to the cosmetics room with her Dads as Ten Cents went to the seats, showing his bracelet to the guards to let him through.

They allowed him, and Ten Cents was soon standing in front of the crowd with a few others lucky to have V.I.P., wondering what would happen as he felt excited.

He was in one of his favorite bands' concerts and was waiting for the show to happen.

Minutes passed, and Ten Cents waited anxiously for the show to begin before the curtains rose, showing them *dressed in pirate uniforms!*

Even *Stephanie* was dressed in a pirate uniform, with some parts of her hair braided, wearing a light blue button-up shirt underneath a dark blue jacket with cuffs, light brown pants, and boots.

The setting was a pirate ship with Jackson at the bow, Stephanie in the middle, and the other characters dispersed throughout the ship like members of a pirate family.

Ten Cents' heart skipped a beat after seeing Stephanie's appearance as the song began, with Jackson singing the first verse of the song *Randy Dandy Oh* with the others singing along with him, “🎵 Now we are ready to head for the horn, weigh-hey, roll and go! Our boots and our clothes, boys, are all in the pawn, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

“🎵 Heave a pawl, oh heave away, 🎵” Jackson sang as the others followed. “🎵 Weigh-hey, roll, and go! The anchor's on board, and the cable's all stored, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

Then, *Stephanie* sang, which was *beautiful* as she sang the following verse: “🎵 Man the stout caps'n and heave with a will, weigh-hey, roll and go! Soon we'll be drivin' her 'way down the hill, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

“🎵 Heave a pawl, oh heave away, 🎵” Stephanie sang as the others followed while Ten Cents' jaw dropped and his *heart fluttered*. “🎵 Weigh-hey, roll and go! The anchor's on board, and the cable's all stored, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

“🎵 Soon we'll be warping her out through the locks, 🎵” Cameron sang. “🎵 Weigh-hey, roll and go! Where the pretty young gals all come down in their flocks, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

“🎵 Heave a pawl, oh heave away, 🎵” Cameron sang as the others followed. “🎵 Weigh-hey, roll and go! The anchor's on board, and the cable's all stored, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

Then, one of the band members did an awesome guitar solo, and the crowd went wild as the member continued to play the guitar.

Ten Cents was excited, already enjoying the concert itself, and was ignoring all the noises behind him, tuning in to the music... mostly to Stephanie's voice as he could hear it faintly in the background.

“🎵 We’re outward bound for Vallipo Bay, 🎵” Colm sang, surprising Ten Cents that he was a singer. “🎵 Weigh-hey, roll and go! Get crackin’ m’ lads, ‘tis one hell of a way, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

“🎵 Heave a pawl, oh heave away, 🎵” Colm sang as the others followed. “🎵 Weigh-hey, roll and go! The anchor’s on board, and the cable’s all stored, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

“🎵 Heave away, bullies, ye parish-rigged bums! 🎵” the *guitarist* who pulled the solo sang, surprising Ten Cents. “🎵 Weigh-hey, roll and go! Take yer hands from yer pockets, and don’t suck yer thumbs! Rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

“🎵 Heave a pawl, oh heave away, 🎵” Jackson sang with the others as the song ended.

“🎵 Weigh-hey, roll and go! The anchor’s on board, and the cable’s all stored, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! Heave a pawl, oh heave away, weigh-hey, roll and go! The anchor’s on board and the cable’s all stored, to be rollicking Randy Dandy, oh! 🎵”

Ten Cents clapped with the crowd after the song ended as the curtains fell, instantly going backstage as he excused himself through the crowd.

He soon arrived backstage as Stephanie stepped out, still wearing her pirate costume, and she looked *fantastic*.

“What do you think of the show, Ten Cents?” She asked.

“It was fantastic!” Ten Cents exclaimed. “Y-You were an awesome singer! I didn’t know your guitarist could sing!”

“Yeah,” Stephanie chuckled. “Richard doesn’t sing that much in some leading guitar roles, but this is a perfect time.”

Then she took a pocket watch from her jacket and examined the time, exclaiming, “Oh, shoot! It’s almost eight!”

Ten Cents glanced around as Stephanie opened the door, saying, “I’ll be back. I’m taking Ten Cents back to his apartment.”

“Alright, be safe!” Cameron responded.

Stephanie smiled and closed the door, gently taking Ten Cents by the arm as he said, “I know a shortcut to get home.”

She nodded as Ten Cents led her through *Bigg City Port*, going through the city as it got darker, but soon arrived at his apartment.

“Perfect timing,” Stephanie smiled as she looked at the pocket watch.

Ten Cents opened the door and stepped inside, saying, “Do you want to do something next week?”

“Mhh,” Stephanie gently hummed. “A month-long fair will open next week on the first. Do you want to come?”

“Of course!” Ten Cents nodded. “I haven’t been at a fair, to start.”

“Well, this will be your first,” Stephanie smiled. “Though it will open at nine, do you think we meet at seven or eight before the crowd arrives?”

Oh, boy, Ten Cents must wake up *early* to get ready.

Not wanting to let Stephanie down, he responded, “Sure! That sounds perfect!”

Stephanie chuckled after Ten Cents nodded before Ten Cents said, “Oh, one last thing.”

He wrapped his arms around Stephanie and hugged her, catching her by surprise when he hugged her.

Down the hallway and peeking around the corner, Sunshine was happy that Ten Cents hugged her as Warrior looked confused about Stephanie’s outfit.

They released their hug after Ten Cents hugged as Stephanie said, waving her hand, “I’ll see you next week!” before running off.

Ten Cents waved back before closing the door, sighing with love as he leaned against the door as steam was coming from him, making heart shapes.

“Ohh~,” Ten Cents perked after seeing Sunshine with a smirk as the steam stopped. “Seems like you two kissed.”

“We didn’t!” Ten Cents blushed as he stepped into the apartment. “She introduced me to her Dads after they arrived in *Bigg City Port*.”

He paused as he pouted a little, admitting that he *wanted* a kiss, “Though we didn’t kiss through our time together.”

“That’s a shame,” Sunshine huffed. “And I was jokin’.”

Then he noticed something wrapped around Ten Cents’ wrist underneath his jacket’s sleeve, asking as he pointed, “Hey, what’s that wrapped ‘round your wrist?”

Ten Cents looked and responded, “Oh, Stephanie’s Dads are in a band called *Soprano and Gravel*, and I got to see their concert because she gave me free V.I.P.!”

“Lucky!” Sunshine exclaimed as the others looked surprised. “And you got to see them up close too?! So that’s even luckier.”

Hercules chuckled a little from Ten Cents’ excitement as he started talking more about his day to Sunshine as he sat on the couch beside him.

Ten Cents looks like he is born underneath a lucky star.