

Two weeks passed, and Ten Cents continued to hold the brass cog Stephanie carried with her, hoping to meet her so he could hand the brass cog over to her.

But... there was something *weird* about him.

He blushed every time he glanced at the brass cog and would get annoyed a little *easier* whenever one of his friends or the members of the *Z-Stacks* made fun of him.

It does not seem *that* strange, so Ten Cents would shrug it off and return to what he was doing... maybe a little polishing to keep the brass cog pristine from rust.

On Monday, Ten Cents was out at night to wander, carrying the brass cog with him in case-he saw a familiar person wearing blue sitting in a chair at a café.

Ten Cents perked after seeing the figure dressed in blue, noticing the sweater, the jeans, the light pink and white shoes, and the long brown hair.

But she had a crochet hook in her hand and was making something roughly the size of a pillow in her lap.

It *has* to be her!

Ten Cents half skipped over to her after seeing the familiar blue figure, almost tripping over his feet that caught the figure's attention from the project in her lap.

She looked over at Ten Cents as he gripped the table's ledge while mentally cursing himself for tripping before looking up and seeing Stephanie staring back at him.

"Oh, Ten Cents!" she perked after seeing him as she pushed her strand of hair back with a hand and stopped what she was doing. "I didn't know you were coming over here."

"Ah, I was just wanderin' around here, and I noticed you were sittin' here," Ten Cents blushed, sitting down in the chair directly to her as Stephanie turned her body towards him. "Um, I have something to give to you that you forgot."

Stephanie watched as he lifted the brass cog he was carrying in his hands and showed it to Stephanie, watching as she perked and exclaimed as she removed her hands from her project, "My cog! I thought I dropped it at the abandoned warehouse."

“Nope,” Ten Cents chuckled. “Our friend carried it with him over to *Star Fleet*.”

“That is nice of him!” Stephanie remarked with a bright smile. “If I can see him, I’ll thank him properly!”

A light blush appeared on Ten Cents’ cheeks after Stephanie remarked before watching her *pocket* the two-hand-sized brass cog in her sweater’s pocket.

Ten Cents looked surprised after watching Stephanie pocketing the brass cog in her sweater’s pocket, exclaiming, “How did you get that cog in there?”

“I have huge pockets!” Stephanie happily chirped by putting her hands in her pockets and stretching them wide. “That’s the best thing about this sweater!”

“It looks like you’ll fit a human in those pockets!” Ten Cents chuckled.

“Yeah,” Stephanie giggled as she beamed widely with a blush. “But I *can* put a whole computer in these pockets!”

“You can?!” Ten Cents exclaimed.

“Yep!” Stephanie happily nodded. “Best perchest ever!”

Ten Cents chuckled after Stephanie beamed before asking, “Wot are you makin’ right there?”

Stephanie lifted the project from her lap and showed it to Ten Cents, excitedly explaining, “I’m making an afghan coin purse! It’s for Dianne since her previous coin purse ripped into pieces from old age.”

Stephanie paused, looked at the coin purse’s base, and asked, “Do you think Dianne would like this gift?”

“I think so,” Ten Cents nodded. “Dianne loves anythin’ old fashioned than the new fashion. Besides, it looks beautiful!”

Stephanie beamed after Ten Cents remarked and said, “Thank you!”

“So, how was your day?” Ten Cents asked before shaking his head and correcting himself. “I mean, week, how was your week?”

“Eh,” Stephanie shrugged as she removed her project into a handstitched bag. “I had to stay home for a while because my bruises hurt like hell.”

She lifted her hand and showed her palm to Ten Cents, saying with a grin, “But I healed over time, and here I am, catching up on a few things I missed out.”

“Wot, all in *one* day?” Ten Cents exclaimed.

“Yep,” Stephanie nodded. “I had to wake up around five to help Kasey with the fish since one of their friends broke an arm. Dianne misplaced her thin mannequin for measuring a customer’s size, so I offered to help since I am roughly around that size.”

She added as she gently scratched her cheek with a finger, “Right after I showed so, Dianne would not smell fish from me since she hates fish.”

Ten Cents listened to Stephanie ramble on what she did and what ‘jobs’ she did to help around the town, taking up both weird and hard jobs just to get some essential items after her work or money.

She did pottery, sewing, construction work, medical aid to some people, and so many that Ten Cents lost count of how many she did.

“And that is how my weekend went,” Stephanie sighed, rubbing the back of her neck with a hand. “I think my job is a ‘city helper.’”

Then she paused after seeing Ten Cents’ shocked expression and asked, “Did I mumble too much?”

“No, I’m just surprised at *that* many jobs!” Ten Cents remarked. “How can you do all that in one day?”

“Practice?” Stephanie shrugged. “I have been doing it ever since I was a teenager.”

Ten Cents adjusted his cap while exhaling sharply, surprised at how many jobs Stephanie did to help around *Bigg City Port*.

“What about you, Mr. Cents?” Stephanie asked. “What job are you in?”

“I work with the *Star Fleet*,” Ten Cents pointed to the building with the logo of the fleet.

“They’re my family.”

“They are?” Stephanie perked as she turned back to him. “The whole *fleet* is your family?”

“Yeah,” Ten Cents nodded, speaking a little about the *Star Fleet* but *hiding* something about it.

“Hercules is my older brother.”

“Wow,” Stephanie remarked. “I didn’t know *Hunkules* was your older brother.”

‘Mostly working at *Star Fleet*.’ Stephanie added in her thoughts.

Ten Cents snorted a little after Stephanie joked about Hercules, asking, “You’ve met my brother?”

“Not really, but I have *heard* about him from the woman’s words, and mostly one of them snapped a picture of him.” Stephanie nodded before waving a hand in front of her face, remarking, “Whoever is dating him must’ve been one lucky person!”

Ten Cents nodded in agreement after Stephanie joked before continuing their conversation.

Since most places had closed for the night, Ten Cents wondered what Stephanie was doing in the middle of the night.

Stephanie said she ‘liked watching the stars’ and pointed to the stars in the sky, telling Ten Cents about which constellation is which.

Ten Cents dazed out as he stared at Stephanie, her conversation toning out as she continued talking about the constellations, the histories behind them, and twelve assigned to birthdays.

His body position matched Stephanie’s, sitting upright with one arm on the table and facing her with a small smile.

Seeing her happy... makes *him* happy.

Stephanie continued talking about the constellations before stopping when she noticed Ten Cents was not responding and glanced over, looking confused as he stared at her.

“Uh,” Stephanie blushed a little after seeing him staring at her. “Was I talking too much?”

Ten Cents perked after Stephanie asked and stammered, “Wot, no! I was listenin’, but I kind of dazed out.” he panicked. “I mean, I was dazing, but I was listenin’!”

He grabbed the brim of his cap with a hand and tugged it down slightly with embarrassment as Stephanie chuckled, seeing his ears blushing too.

“It’s okay,” Stephanie softly assured as her mind mentally shouted at herself for blabbering. “I attend to blabber more than listening.”

Ten Cents adjusted his hat after Stephanie assured him before she suggested, “Do you want me to repeat it? Maybe I could slow down for you.”

“Yeah, I would like that,” Ten Cents nodded.

So Stephanie explained at Ten Cents’ pace as he listened to her, discussing which constellation and stars connect.

Since there were many stars in the sky, Ten Cents would sometimes mix the ones on which, but Stephanie would repeat what she said and help him connect them by drawing in the sky with her finger.

The conversation continued as Stephanie and Ten Cents chatted, Ten Cents telling Stephanie about adventures he and Sunshine, his little brother, went through with the *Star Fleet*.

The *Star Fleet*’s adventures were from Big Mac’s ‘ghosts,’ who were actually the *White Fleet*, trapped in Up River from Zorran, the leader of the *Z-Stacks*, and many other adventures.

Stephanie was impressed and curious in listening to Ten Cents talking, zoning out as she stared at him, remembering his happiness when he spoke about the *Star Fleet*, proving his love for the fleet.

But... she also enjoyed hearing Ten Cents talking, enjoying the accent of his voice as he kept rambling on about what else he and his family did.

Suddenly, Ten Cents froze midway from his conversation with Stephanie, causing Stephanie to perk from staring at Ten Cents, noticing he was *shaking*.

“Is there something wrong?” Stephanie asked, standing up from her chair and walking over to him. “You’re shaking like a leaf.”

Ten Cents did not respond but quickly stood up, responding, “Uh, I-I have to go! I’ll see you tomorrow!”

Stephanie watched Ten Cents leave in a hurry, standing in confusion as she watched him turn around the corner of the building and disappear.

“Well,” Stephanie gently huffed. “That was we-”

She stopped after looking down into the ocean, watching it suddenly ripple.

Stephanie’s brow furrowed after watching the ocean water ripple, looking confused about how it was rippling.

It seemed *plausible* that someone could take a midnight swim... but who would be taking a swim *this* night?

Stephanie shrugged her shoulders after looking at the water and returned to what she was doing, picking the crochet bag up and heading back home, deciding it was time to get to bed.

However, as Stephanie was heading home, a black boat’s bow poked around the corner and watched Stephanie disappear as a face sighed.

“That was close,” a familiar voice mumbled. “I don’t want Stephanie to see me like this. Not yet...”