

Stephanie continued to walk through the forest, feeling curious and slightly anxious, considering this was her first time walking through the woods.

Sometimes Stephanie wanted to escape into the woods to leave everything behind, but she was too young back then to even survive in the woods with all those creatures lurking day and night.

So... it was Stephanie's first time wandering through the forest known to people as the 'Forest of Demons.'

The Forest of Demons is a rumor spread through the city as a legend of something lurking behind every tree and hunting down every human.

They say that the demons that roam the Forest of Demons are not human, and they capture any human that is unfortunate enough to step foot in their forest, disappearing forever and never to be seen again.

But Stephanie does not believe in the rumor that people spread through the city, trying to stir up someone else's anxiety and paranoia to create a little scene for their own fun.

...Right?

Shudders went down Stephanie's back at the thought of it, not wanting to be another person missing or get herself caught by any of those demons.

Another was added to Stephanie's list as she noticed the sun had already disappeared over the Forest of Demons in the distance, indicating that it was midday.

With no humans around during the nighttime, the demons would venture out of the forest at night and hunt down any remaining humans that dared to roam around.

Never in a million years would she even consider herself getting caught by any of them in the first place, or else she would-

Stephanie's thoughts stopped when she noticed something, glancing around at her surroundings quickly as she stood still.

It... sounded like screeching noises.

Then, a loud but metallic *THUD* echoed through the forest, causing Stephanie to almost topple onto her bottom but luckily regain balance as she watched the birds fly out of the woods in a panic.

'What kind of demon makes *that* type of noise?!' Stephanie exclaimed to herself as she glanced around.

As Stephanie looked around her surroundings, she saw a few animals running away from what lay ahead of her, but no demons.

She was curious after watching the animals flee from something ahead of her but was also anxious to see what it could be.

What if it was an *actual* demon?

What if it could have been from something deadly?

Anxious thoughts filled Stephanie's mind about what could lie ahead of her... but her curiosity kept being at the top, *wanting* her to find out what it could be.

So... Stephanie made her final decision.

She was going to *search for what made that noise*.

Stephanie continued with her walk and walked forward, stepping over bushes and ducking underneath fallen trees from many years ago.

Pushing her glasses into place, Stephanie climbed over the side of a rock and slid down the other side, landing perfectly on her feet.

She stood back up on her feet after landing and glanced up, seeing something that made her pause for a moment.

A long line of trucks on a railroad was slightly cluttered as some were off the rails and others were still on them as they were filled with crates.

Several crates were lying on the ground, but none had been opened or spilled their contents.

But there was that weird feeling that there was something else here that Stephanie was feeling.

Glancing down the long line of trucks, Stephanie slowly followed the trucks down the left, looking at each one of them.

The trucks did not look badly damaged from what could have happened, but their brakes were on... so did that cause a crash?

Stephanie's mind poured more thoughts into her mind that replaced her anxiety, looking more and more confused as she looked at the trucks, also surprised at how *tall* they were compared to her.

They looked like they could tower around ten or nine feet tall if Stephanie was an adult, but they looked gigantic compared to her now as a child.

If the trucks are that tall... then how tall is something or *someone* pulling them in the front?!

The anxiety was bubbling again as Stephanie continued walking toward the front of the scattered trucks, feeling uneasy about seeing what could have pulled the trucks.

But curiosity still rumbled through her mind, so Stephanie gathered her courage and peeked around the first truck... only to regret looking at it.

Lying on its side and facing away from her was a *massive human*.

The giant has ivory skin but is covered in dirt and dust and has short-medium copper brown hair in a fringed-up hairstyle.

Stephanie could not see the rest of his face because he was not facing her, but she could see that he oddly had thin, almost invisible black lines around his wrists.

He wore a dark brown newspaper boy cap, a shoulder-length dark ginger shirt with medium brown overalls, and otter-brown shoes.

From staring at his back, Stephanie could see that his clothes were dirty, including his hair, which was a little messier than his clothes.

But there was something off about those thin, almost invisible thin black lines around his wrists and even his elbows whenever he moved his arms.

Curiously, Stephanie glanced down at her wrist in confusion, pushing her sleeve up slightly to look at the black line around her wrist.

Why did he have the same lines as her?

Stephanie glanced back at her as the ground started rumbling again, flinching in startlement as she snapped her head up, watching the giant stand up to his feet.

As he was getting up at his height, Stephanie was astonished at how *tall* he was when he was on his feet, towering around *sixteen feet tall*!

‘Holy crap, he’s tall!’ Stephanie thought to herself in shock.

But after getting up on his feet, the giant soon winced as he got back on the ground on his hands, sitting back in the position he was in before moving one hand down and gripping his right leg by the knee.

This seemed to perk Stephanie’s attention after watching the giant wince, grabbing his right knee with a slightly pained expression on his face.

‘Did he twist his knee?’ Stephanie thought to herself in confusion.

But as Stephanie looked closely at the leg, she noticed he had instead *popped* his knee out of its joint as he mumbled something under his breath.

So the injury is that instead of breaking an arm or twisting an ankle.

Stephanie glanced away from the injured giant and hid behind the truck she was standing next to, wondering what she could do to help the giant without scaring him or knowing she was around.

She felt a powerful urge to run away from the giant being, so she would not get herself killed by such a gigantic being.

But she could not just run away from an injured person without helping them or mending their injury.

Mentally, Stephanie cursed her powerful emotions for pitying an injured being and wanting to help them.

Stephanie glanced over her shoulder at the giant being, then back over at the bushes where she could make her escape.

If she gets away from the being... would she head back to the city?

...But Stephanie does not want to return to the abuse she lived through, not wanting to repeat the same process.

Figuring that she was grasping at straws, Stephanie made up her mind to get over her mind from overthinking everything in her mind.

And that is to *help the giant*.

Taking a deep breath, Stephanie slowly exhaled before glancing around the truck to look at the giant.

She looked over at the giant as he was still lying on his side, gingerly trying to move his leg, and kept wincing whenever he attempted to stretch it out completely.

‘Stubborn,’ Stephanie thought to herself with a slight smirk but went to her decision without stopping.

Pushing her glasses into place, Stephanie cautiously stepped around the truck and inched herself toward the giant's back, seeing that he had stopped as he groaned.

He wanted to move his leg but was stuck in that position while waiting until medical help arrived.

Stephanie stopped when she realized that the caboose in the line of trucks that were supposed to have halted them from going backwards *was missing*.

If the caboose is missing... then does that mean that the caboose went to find help?

Or did it just *walk away*?

Then... does that mean that the caboose is...?

No, they should have been destroyed a long time ago because of the lack of factories in the world.

But she *needs* to hurry, or else the demons will appear and attack her while she tries to help the giant.

After realizing that she was on a time limit, Stephanie needed to hurry before being discovered and getting herself caught.

She inched closer to the giant, feeling her heart pounding against her chest as it felt like it was on the verge of jumping out.

But Stephanie ignored the pounding feeling in her chest and continued moving forward slowly to avoid attracting the giant's attention.

However, before Stephanie could make another move to get even closer to the giant... the giant instead *flipped over to his other side*.

Stephanie instantly froze after the giant flipped over on his other side, feeling her heart skip a beat as she looked up at the gigantic being.

Seeing his face, Stephanie noticed he looked like a young adult around mid-twenty years old, but his face was covered in smears of dirt and grime, and he had light old gold eyes.

However, the giant finally *saw Stephanie standing merely a few steps away from her*.

They both stared at each other as Stephanie gritted her teeth with a worried expression.

Instantly, without warning, the giant panicked after seeing Stephanie almost close to him, squirming around as Stephanie shrieked, moving backwards quickly as he kept grunting in pain.

“WHOA, WHOA, WHOA!!!” Stephanie exclaimed as he continued to freak out but struggled as he kept wincing in pain.

Stephanie instantly headed toward the trucks and turned back around, watching him now on one knee and trying to stand up, but winced when he applied pressure to his right knee, landing on his back and winced.

Realizing that he might have injured himself more, Stephanie decided to take action before he could make a mistake or harm himself more.

Stephanie quickly ran forward toward the giant as he was surprised at her speed and was taken by surprise, yelping as he inched back against the tree while wincing in pain.

Stephanie jumped as he missed when he tried to use a stick to move her back from getting too close to him.

He was almost on the verge of *shrieking* when Stephanie slammed her body against his knee like a wrestler, *cracking it back into place*.

The giant's scream echoed through the forest, causing birds to fly out of the bushes as the animals perked their heads up from what they were doing.

Back in the forest, the giant mumbled something under his breath as he lay crumpled on the ground while holding his knee up to his chest and hugging it.

Stephanie was sitting a few feet away from him with her ears covered, feeling her eardrums ringing from his scream.

But at the same time, Stephanie was startled at how metallic his leg felt when she applied pressure to it.

It felt like human skin, soft to the touch and cushioned, yet it had the hardness of a metal plate underneath.

Then... *what* is he if he is not entirely human?!

Suddenly, the sound of metal clanging against metal hits Stephanie's ears from all the ringing, realizing that someone is coming.

Quickly, Stephanie scrambled away from the giant as he perked, watching the tiny human run toward the bushes and hide behind them, just in time when another giant human appeared.

The second giant has light fair skin and light yellow eyes, with short sunflower blond hair at the front with the bangs sticking out from underneath his cap.

He wore a hat that almost resembled a bellhop's, with the peak looking like a grill, and a headset with a single long antenna coming from the top of the left headphones.

He also wore a red undershirt with black stripes and a red neckerchief.

Over his shirt was a dark red, long-sleeved jacket with pins around the chest area that looked like they came from different railways.

He also wore dark gray pants with downward stripes and black mid-foreleg boots that had wheels underneath.

'I knew it!' Stephanie exclaimed to herself after seeing the caboose appear. 'There *is* a caboose!'

Stephanie squinted her eyes after seeing the caboose appear, looking closely at the pins as he knelt in front of the moving giant she had helped earlier.

She even watched as the wheels underneath the boots disappeared once he stepped onto land.

If there is a caboose and those wheels were a part of him... then does that mean that the giant Stephanie helped was a...?

Stephanie's face and entire body turn pale as the realization hits her like a brick to the head.

"Heya, Rusty! I brought the help you needed for the crash you went through," the caboose greeted the giant as he gingerly stood up. "Whoa, wait a moment, you can't stand up like that, or you'll-hold on your knee looks different."

"Yeah, it does," the giant, named 'Rusty,' nodded as he gingerly moved his right leg but winced slightly. "But I need to go see Victor to check if anything else is damaged."

"Good idea!" the caboose nodded. "Who helped you, though?"

Stephanie flinched after the caboose asked, feeling her color change slightly as she prayed to herself that Rusty did not tell him about her.

If he did, Stephanie would be caught by them, and everything would be over for her!

"No one," he shook his head as he was helped up by the caboose, one arm across his neck and the other dangling. "I must've popped it back when I tried to stand up to my feet."

Stephanie's thoughts stopped after hearing Rusty's voice, repeating that same line in her head in confusion.

He... did *not* tell him about her?

Why?

Stephanie stared at Rusty in confusion as the caboose stepped back onto the tracks, the wheels underneath his boots returning after popping out.

“Alrighty then,” the caboose shrugged his shoulders. “Can you still move with that leg, though?”

“Not really,” Rusty shook his head as he attempted. “I can only pop my wheels but nothing else than that.”

Rusty yelped when the caboose scooped him into his arms, and a blush spread across his cheeks as he happily exclaimed, “Alrighty then, I’ll carry you to Victor then!”

“Ah, wait, C.B!” Rusty exclaimed, visibly flustered as the caboose, known as ‘C.B.,’ began to run. “Are you really *sure*?”

“Oh, of course!” C.B. nodded. “Don’t worry ‘bout it!”

Stephanie cautiously watched as C.B. ran down the railroad away from the crash site while carrying Rusty and slowly appeared from her hiding spot.

‘I helped a *steam locomotive*?!’ Stephanie thought to herself as she winced, sitting back down in her hiding spot as she faced her back away. ‘Oh, this is even worse than I thought!’

Stephanie bit the side of her finger with her front teeth, feeling more anxious as she thought about the history behind steam locomotives and other machines mankind had made.

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*A long time ago, when she was much younger, Stephanie had run into the library to get away from the mob of people chasing her, watching them pass the library as they carried weapons and other items with them.*

*Why do they chase her like some wild animal with no sense of regret?*

*Stephanie shakenly sighed as she stood up to her height, wearing a worn-out nightgown that reached down to her ankles as her hair was messy and down to her ankles.*

*She was covered in filth from head to toe and had dirt covering the bottom of her feet as she was bleeding from her cheek.*

*But her blood was a darker red instead of the usual blood-red color that humans bleed.*

*Stephanie realized she was bleeding and began searching for a medic kit to mend her wound, but stopped when she discovered a history book.*

*It was about steam locomotives, with the word 'ARCHIVE' on the book's spine in capitalization.*

*But the word 'locomotives' was crossed out with a red ink pen and was replaced with the word 'DEMONS' in capitalization.*

*The book made Stephanie curious about why the history book was out, so she decided to save it for later to read.*

*After finding the medical kit, Stephanie patched the wound on her cheek by first cleaning the blood with hydrogen peroxide and putting a band-aid over it.*

*Once her injury was mended, Stephanie returned the medical kit to its place and returned to the history book, looking at it curiously as she wondered to herself.*

*Is the book all about demons instead?*

*Deciding to take a look for herself, Stephanie picked up the heavy book from the shelf with ease and walked over to the table, placing it down before hoisting herself up onto the chair.*

*After hoisting herself up onto the chair, Stephanie opened the book to the first page and read the book, starting with the first page.*

*While Stephanie was reading the large history book, it sent chills down her spine as she read every word, even looking at pages of the transformation from the 'Golden Crystal Infection.'*

*There were even drawn diagrams of the insides of the transformed steam locomotives and any vehicles, showing parts and what seemed to be their bones.*

*If the diagrams were drawn... then that means that doctors had managed to open a steam locomotive during that time.*

*As much as the history and the legends of the dangers of 'demons' haunted Stephanie... there was something else in the history book that caught her attention.*

*There was something about a World War II steam locomotive that was considered the 'most dangerous' worldwide.*

*The World War II steam locomotive was claimed to have sealed a thousand lives in death with its brutality.*

*He had slaughtered anyone and everything in his path to his goal - except for a baby.*

*The picture of the World War II steam locomotive was slightly hidden because of the shape hidden in the shadows, and the baby held in its massive hand was also blurred.*

*But why would a dangerous World War II steam locomotive not kill a baby in that shed?*

*So Stephanie kept the thought in mind as she closed the book and placed it back on the shelf, escaping from the streets to return to her makeshift home for the time being.*

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The memory causes shivers down Stephanie's spine at the thought of it popping into her mind.

She does not want to be another person on the dangerous World War II steam locomotive's list of slaughtered people.

But the worst part is that she *will* be part of the slaughter list since she figured out *what* demons were.

A sudden noise startled Stephanie as she flinched but poked her head over the bushes slightly, seeing that cranes were moving the trucks into place, and they were large cranes.

The two helping with the cranes had shoulder-length brown hair and were both female and male as the woman tied her hair up in a low bun while the male had it in a low ponytail.

They both have hazelnut eyes, as the woman's are lighter than the man's, and fair skin.

They both wore short-sleeved yellow shirts with a pair of green-gray overalls and black shoes.

The man also wears a flat cap on his head that is green-gray.

"Are you doing okay over there, Judy?" the male asked, glancing around the crane at the woman.

"I'm doing fine, Jerome," Judy, the woman, responded, nodding her head as they carefully placed the truck down.

Deciding that it was enough of staying around to look at the crash site, Stephanie quickly ran away from the crash site and ran in the other direction.

However, while Stephanie was escaping, Jerome heard the bushes moving and glanced over to the side, watching as a tiny blue burr ran through the trees and disappeared.

Judy was about to move the crane over when she stopped, noticing her twin brother was not moving as he was staring at the forest with a confused expression.

"Jerome?" Judy asked, snapping her brother's trance. "What are you looking at?"

"I don't know," Jerome spoke as he returned his attention to Judy. "But I don't think it is an animal."

A confused expression appeared on Judy's face briefly before she returned to what they were doing, deciding to elaborate on what Jerome had seen at another time.