

Stephanie continued sitting near a corner, chewing on the sides of her fingers as she scratched her arms with her nails.

Her mind was fretting over the fact that she had broken two simple rules that are supposed to be strictly followed through life: ‘Do not sing,’ and ‘do not get caught.’

But she was relaxed after being terrified throughout her life and sang, resulting in getting herself caught by the giant.

They have to move out of the house immediately, leaving no trace behind, and find another to live in.

If that does not work, they go Underground to live with the rest of the hidden humans.

But Stephanie did not want to leave her house or go with the other humans to hide out of daylight because she loved the outside world.

Suddenly, Stephanie stopped a little when she felt something liquid against her fingers, glancing down at her left arm and noticing she had scratched herself until she bled.

Stephanie stood up from the corner and carefully snuck herself into the bathroom to not make any noises.

She also kept an ear out for any noises coming from outside, pausing a few times to feel any tremors.

Once she had reached the bathroom, Stephanie carefully opened the cabinet door and took out the bandages before closing it back, as it made a small and quiet clicking noise.

Sitting on the bathroom floor, Stephanie first puts hydro-peroxide on her scratched arms to clean the blood off, which stung as she bit down on her tongue to keep herself from hissing.

After the blood was cleaned off of her arm, Stephanie then placed gauze pads on her scratched wounds to keep them from bleeding again.

She then started wrapping the bandages with bandage wrap, keeping the gauze pads secure from ripping off if she moved quickly around.

After mending her scratched arm, Stephanie carefully and slowly stood back up to her feet, walking to the living room to reconsider her actions.

Usually, if Stephanie either draws, crochets, or anything that makes ‘noises,’ her foster parents would instantly freak out if they catch her doing that, lecture her about what she did ‘to danger them’ and take all it away from her.

Stephanie covered her ears from the memories of her foster parents’ constant and frantic shrieking at her.

She had to watch her creations and her creativity being taken away from her or destroyed.

If she had toys, they would instantly take them away from her the instant they see them in her hands, leaving her with almost nothing.

Suddenly, something rumbled that caused her to open her eyes, and her breathing hitched a little.

Glancing over at the glass of water that she filled from the kitchen sink to help her calm her nerves, Stephanie watched as the surface of the glass rippled a little, causing her heart to skip a beat.

Was a giant coming this way?

Stephanie glanced over her shoulder at one of the closed windows, feeling terrified of seeing a giant iris staring back at her.

But she wonders if any of them came.

Gathering her courage, Stephanie stood up to her feet and slowly walked herself over to the window, being careful of making any noises to alert the giant that is coming here to know she is still inside the house.

Once she had reached the window, Stephanie hesitated at the thought of opening the curtains to look through it, still worried about a giant iris staring back at her through the glass.

But after hesitating for a moment, Stephanie slowly reached over with her hands and gripped the fabric, shaking as she took a deep breath.

Slowly, she opened the curtains, and, to her relief, there was no eye staring back at her, but Stephanie could see something going on within the forest.

Glancing around for something to help her look, Stephanie noticed her foster-father's binoculars, remembering times when he used them to peer out the window for any incoming giants.

Picking them up, Stephanie looked through the binoculars and peered out into the forest to see what was going on.

Around fifteen or eighteen feet away from where Stephanie lives, she could see the same giant standing in the forest.

He was glancing around through the forest as he scratched the back of his neck with his hand, looking slightly confused.

Stephanie's stomach worryingly clenched as she watched the giant with the binoculars until the giant glanced over at the home where she is living.

Instantly, Stephanie's heart skipped a beat after they had made eye contact, but to her luck, the giant did not see her watching him through the window but only stared.

'What on earth is he staring at?' went through Stephanie's mind as she continued staring at the giant with the binoculars.

But he could be staring at the house or something else instead.

The stare lasted around a few minutes as Stephanie stared back at him, worried about what else he was planning to do.

Then the giant glanced away from her home and looked over his shoulder.

Did someone call out his name?

After that, he walked away from the spot he was standing on, heading deeper into the forest.

Stephanie softly sighed as she moved the binoculars down from her eyes, relieved that she did not get caught by him again but felt nervous about going outside.

Suddenly, a scuffling noise went through the house that caused Stephanie to yelp, flipping around and dropping the binoculars down on the ground.

She covered her mouth worriedly as she glanced over at the sightly uncovered window.

The thought of seeing a giant standing in front of her home scares her.

A few minutes passed, and something orange sped by the couch, causing her to flinch before recognizing it was a fox.

Somehow a fox snuck itself into her home without her noticing or distracted by the giant lurking in the forest.

“Hey!” Stephanie softly exclaimed, moving around the couch carefully and noticing the fox.

It loudly growled when it saw her, flicking its long tail back and forth, pinning its ears back as a warning to not get close or it would bite.

“Shh!” She softly shushed the fox. “Don’t make too much noise!”

The fox stopped growling and lightly cocked its head to the side slightly after Stephanie gently shushed the fox before starting to come a little closer to her.

“What are you doing here?” Stephanie asked in confusion as she gently knelt a little to its height.
“Are you-”

Before she could continue, her necklace fell off her neck after the link was released and landed on the ground.

Her necklace landed between her *and the fox*.

Instantly, the fox grabbed the necklace before she could and started darting through the house with it in its mouth!

“Hey!” Stephanie scrambled to her feet after seeing the fox snatch her necklace and chased after it.

She ignored her feelings of not wanting to make any noises to draw any attention.

It lasted for a few minutes through the house as she continued chasing the fox until it went through the door and went towards the forest.

Stephanie luckily had her shoes and her casual outdoor clothes on, instantly chasing after the fox, going into the forest where she was told not to enter.

She and the fox went deeper and deeper into the forest as Stephanie continued going after the fox, determined to get her necklace back.

Soon, she reached a stop where the fox dropped her necklace from its mouth and slowed down, panting as she leaned down and placed her hands on her knees.

All the running had been a part of an exercise practice Stephanie had from her foster-father whenever a giant saw them.

After taking a few minutes of taking some fresh air into her lungs, she picked her necklace up from the ground and wiped the saliva off of it onto the sweater she is wearing.

Once the saliva was off, Stephanie checked the chain that had made it fall off in the first place, which is luckily not broken.

Moving her hair over her shoulder with one hand, Stephanie placed her necklace back around her neck, clipping it together for the last time since she was only halfway through.

She then placed it inside her sweater and underneath her shirt, moving her hair back over her back.

Once she had her necklace back from the escaping fox, Stephanie turned around to head back to her home when she stopped and realized she did not know the way.

Then panic filled her mind when she noticed she was lost in the woods, which were the same woods her foster parents specifically told her not to enter inside.

Because giants roamed in the forest.

‘Oh crap,’ Stephanie winced softly to herself as she glanced around. ‘Oh, crap, crap, crap, crap!’

Noticing that she would scratch her bandaged arm again, Stephanie forced herself to stop and calm down.

She kept telling herself since she got herself into this mess, she needs to get herself out.

So, she decided to go blindly through the forest to make her way back home and perhaps make a map the next time a fox sneaked into her home and took items away from her.

Stephanie went on her adventure to return home, and if she does, she will hide inside for the rest of the day until things are calm again.

But she kept stopping every time, thinking she was going around in circles.

After an hour had passed after walking through the forest, Stephanie felt confused and scared as she stood next to a tree, feeling panicked.

She did not have a phone with her, which made matters worse because her parents refused to give her any phones or anything electronic since ‘they make too much noise and distract you.’

Stephanie cursed her parents’ paranoia and herself for chasing after the fox without being prepared.

Soon, it got dark outside with the sun setting over the horizon after Stephanie continued walking through the forest, still lost and fretting that she could be walking around in circles.

Stephanie made a turn and started heading towards the direction she thought her home could be when she suddenly ran into something tall and semi-soft.

She went backwards after ramming into the being and fell onto her bottom, wincing as she covered her nose with her hand, wincing softly to herself.

“Huh, what was that?” Stephanie’s blood ran cold when she heard a voice over her head, feeling the hairs on the back of her neck standing up in fear.

She removed her hand from her nose after hearing the voice and, luckily, it did not bleed after the impact.

The object she had run into was covered in a piece of black fabric with two white stripes down the side, which made her a little confused.

Slowly, she followed where the black fabric met until she froze on the spot in fear as her face paled.

Towering over her at either thirteen or fourteen feet tall was another giant, except this one, which looked more different from the previous one she saw.

He has medium-length blonde hair with fair skin color and light blue eye color.

He is wearing a black with yellow and white jacket as he has dark yellow fabric patches on his elbows.

The right arm’s sleeve has the number seven, as the left arm has the American flag on it.

Tied around his neck is a red neckerchief tied, hiding some parts of his collar.

But there was the name 'Sunshine' stitched in white on it.

His pant legs were long and drooping over the back of his brown shoes, and the white stripe down the side of his pant legs.

And they were *his legs she had run into*.

They made eye contact as Stephanie jumped in fear from the sudden gaze of his eyes.

He looked surprised to see her sitting on the ground near him after bumping into his leg as she went stiff.

"A human!" he exclaimed as he carefully turned his body towards her.

Stephanie immediately started scooting her body backwards in fear with her hands, trying to force her body to cooperate with her mind to get away from him.

He only took two steps forward after she had scooted away from him, as he reached over to her with his hands.

Soon after Stephanie scooted back a little, he finally reached her and placed his hands underneath her armpits, carefully wrapping his fingers around her thin body.

Stephanie yelped as she was lifted from the ground and into the air.

She was soon held about six or seven feet away from his face and from the ground.

Stephanie did not want to be in front of a giant or become its main center of attention.

"Who are you?" he curiously asked, not noticing that Stephanie was panicking and squirming in his grip.

She did not respond to his question after he had asked before noticing she could slip out of her sweater from his grip since it was not tight around her.

Moving her arms up, Stephanie slipped out of her sweater effortlessly and collapsed on the ground on her bottom, slightly wincing as she thought she landed on a pine cone.

“Oops, I’m sorry!” Stephanie slightly flinched when he tried again to grab her. “Are you alright?”

Stephanie dodged his hand and went past his legs, scrambling up to her feet before skidding underneath a prickly bush.

“Hey!” he exclaimed as his hand followed her. “I wanted to-ow!”

His fingers touched the bush after Stephanie skidded underneath the shrub without getting herself hurt, except he got pricked by it instead.

Stephanie watched from underneath a different bush as the giant quickly moved his hand away from the shrub she skidded underneath, wincing as his left was holding the cameo sweater she had slipped out of.

“Ow,” he winced as he hissed softly, noticing the multiple tiny thorns stuck in his palm. “Yep, that’s gonna leave a mark...”

Stephanie was about to make a dash to the other side of the forest to get out as fast as she could when she stopped and noticed another pair of footsteps were getting closer.

“Oi, Sunshine!” Stephanie ducked further after hearing another voice calling out, feeling more scared. “Where are you?”

The giant responded to the name ‘Sunshine,’ calling out to the voice, “I’m over her-ow!”

He winced as he moved his pricked right hand as a third giant emerged from the woods after Sunshine called over to him.

The third giant has fair skin with messy dark blonde hair and blue eye color.

He wears a blue cap with a sweater-like uniform in a yellow color and has a badge on the right arm, as the left arm has an American flag and a zipper down the front.

On the collar, he has the name 'Ten Cents' stitched in white thread, and the handwriting was in cursive.

Around his waist was a black belt with a silver buckle on the front, and on his hands is a pair of black fingerless gloves.

He is also wearing a pair of black pants with a white stripe down the sides and pockets hidden underneath his jacket.

Topping things off, he is also wearing a pair of brown shoes with white shoelaces.

He walked up to the second giant, who could be named Sunshine, and is taller than him as he reaches down to his chest.

"What happened, Sunshine?" he asked, noticing the injured right hand, before glancing over at his left hand. "And... is that a human's sweater?"

Stephanie softly gasped when he noticed her sweater in Sunshine's left hand, as he winced slightly from the thorns in the palm of his right.

She was about to be discovered and would be hunted down by masses of giants or giantess, wanting the last of the humans extinct.

"Yeah, I found a human here in the woods, too, Ten Cents!" Sunshine remarked.

"You found what?!" the third giant exclaimed, responding to the name 'Ten Cents.'

“A human, Ten Cents!” Sunshine smiled softly as Stephanie’s heartbeat sped up in fear. “I knew history was wrong! There is still hu-ow!”

He winced when the thorns on his palm twinged with pain, as Ten Cents, the name of the third giant, gently took his friend’s injured palm and looked at it.

“Did this human do this to you?” Ten Cents asked, sounding stern.

Stephanie ducked a little after hearing the slight change in Ten Cents’ tone of his voice about the damage to his palm.

“No, she didn’t!” Sunshine panicked, confusing Stephanie slightly. “I did this to myself! I was just curious ‘bout her, and she hid underneath that pricker bush,” he paused as he pointed to the pricker bush Stephanie slid underneath.

“And caused yourself to be pricked?” Ten Cents finished for Sunshine as he sheepishly blushed and nodded. “I guess that is a lesson for lettin’ your curiosity gettin’ the best of you.”

Sunshine sighed as Ten Cents examined his pricked right hand as he held Stephanie’s sweater in the other.

“Oi, let me have a look at that,” Ten Cents mentioned to her sweater. “Let me see if it is real or not.”

Sunshine handed Ten Cents her sweater as he looked at it, as Sunshine held his right hand by the wrist.

“It doesn’t look old,” Ten Cents said as he stared at the sweater, feeling it gently with his fingers without ripping it on accident. “And, it feels warm, as if a human was wearin’ it!”

“I told you!” Sunshine exclaimed as he huffed. “I found a human!”

“Well, where is she?” Ten Cents asked.

Sunshine nodded his head over to the bush Stephanie was hiding in.

“She’s hidin’ behind that bush,” Sunshine spoke as Stephanie gasped, ducking more behind the bush. “I don’t think I want ta make another move towards that pricker bush.”

“I agree,” Ten Cents nodded before placing Stephanie’s sweater into the pocket of his pants. “Why don’t you go to our home and get yourself mended? I’ll stay here.”

“Are you sure?” Sunshine curiously asked. “What about-?”

“Don’t worry, I’ll convince her,” Ten Cents assured him again, interrupting him.

Sunshine paused for a moment after Ten Cents assured him, glancing away as he eyed the bush Stephanie was hiding, as Stephanie shook from head to toe.

“Alright, I trust you, Ten Cents,” Sunshine sighed. “But don’t hurt her, okay?”

“I promise,” Ten Cents nodded. “Just remember not to tell anyone else.”

“Alright, Ten Cents!” Sunshine smiled before wincing slightly from the twinge of pain from his hand, from the thorns. “Ow, okay, don’t move that hand.”

With that, Sunshine walked away from Ten Cents and started heading deeper into the woods, holding his hand by the wrist.

After Sunshine disappeared, Stephanie peeked slightly from around the bush to see if Sunshine or Ten Cents was distracted to get away from them before she could be caught.

But Ten Cents was not distracted and accidentally revealed some part of herself to him when he glanced back at the bush, as she gasped and hid away from him.

“Oi,” Stephanie winced when she heard the giant’s voice called to her as she hid behind the bush. “Are you there?”

Stephanie did not respond and continued hiding from him, shaking like a leaf as she curled close to her body, feeling terrified.

“I just saw you,” he remarked, causing Stephanie to jolt. “So, come on out from there. You can’t be hidin’ there for long.”

Stephanie understood he was right since she was far away from home and terrified, feeling like she would cry again.

“Look,” she flinched as the ground rumbled a little before stopping. “I know Sunshine didn’t mean to make you scared, but he was just curious. I have your sweater in my pocket.”

She felt more confused when he mentioned her sweater, thinking they had already ripped it to pieces.

“Well, if you are not comin’ out,” Stephanie stiffened, thinking she must have made him angry for not coming out. “I’m stayin’ here until you do.”

Stephanie’s confusion and curiosity grew as she turned her head to the side slightly, still feeling scared but confused about why he is not chasing after her or attempting to grab her yet.

Her mind shuddered slightly at the thought of being grabbed again and lifted from the ground.

Suddenly, something brown zipped past her, which caused the sudden blur of color to startle her.

She accidentally fell to the side and landed hard on the ground, possibly on another pine cone.

Stephanie winced after she had collapsed on the ground, placing her hands on the back of her head and wincing slightly at herself, thinking she could have landed on a rock too.

“Ouch, are you alright?” Stephanie jolted when she realized she was revealed again to the giant, bolting up to her hands.

She glanced over before being taken by surprise when she saw his hand reaching for her.

Instantly, Stephanie yelped and curled herself into a ball, trembling from head to toe in front of him, as she thought she would be grabbed again.

But nothing has happened to her yet as she was still curled into a ball.

With Ten Cents, his hand was near her, but not touching her to make her feel overwhelmed after seeing her curled into a ball.

He felt confused and concerned about her as he moved his hand back away from her, wondering what could have possibly made her feel terrified of giants?

Rubbing the back of his neck, Ten Cents thought of why she was so terrified of them in his mind, remembering the legends from one of his friends about the relationship between humans and giants.

But there was nothing about humans fearing giants.

Unless there could be something else that Ten Cents he does not know about.

A sniff snapped Ten Cents out of his thoughts as he glanced back up to her, noticing that the human was still curled on the spot where she accidentally came out of, still shaking and... crying.

Worried, Ten Cents placed his left hand on the ground and reached back over to her, feeling concerned he might have done something wrong to her.

“Oi, are you alright?” Ten Cents softly asked, still not touching her with his hand. “Is there somethin’ that me or Sunshine did?”

She stiffened when the shadow of his hand loomed over her, curling tightly just inches away from his hand.

He remembered Sunshine telling him he had found her and was curious about her, so he must have grabbed her before.

“Oh,” Ten Cents softly winced to himself. “You must’ve been really scared when Sunshine found, weren’t you?”

The shaking died down a little after he had asked, as she slowly moved her hands from her head.

Ten Cents continued speaking to her, thinking he would help her if he would calm her down, just a little.

“I mean,” Ten Cents spoke. “If I were at your height, I would’ve been terrified too if you found us and picked us up.”

Soon, she slowly uncurled herself from a ball and glanced up at him with tear-stained eyes.

This confirmed to Ten Cents that she was overwhelmed because two giants caught her.

Ten Cents felt more worried about her when he noticed her crying, moving his hand behind her instead of hovering over her.

“Look, I’m not goin’ hurt you,” Ten Cents assured her as she slightly flinched when she noticed his hand from behind. “I promise.”

She glanced back over at him after he had promised not to hurt her, as he could tell she could be thinking or feeling confused.

He perked up when he heard a twig snap in the distance before a different voice called out, “Ten Cents? Where are you?”

Stephanie recoiled when she heard a different voice calling out to the giant standing before her and started shaking like a leaf at the thought of being discovered by *another giant*.

“Oh no,” he winced softly to himself as he glanced over his shoulder from looking at her. “O.J’s comin’ over here!”

She yelped in startlement when she was suddenly scooped up from the ground, flipping over on her back as she was in his palm.

It was unlike being grabbed around the middle like what the previous giant did to her.

When she was picked up from the ground, the giant carefully placed her in a cradling position against his chest.

He slowly stood up to his feet as Stephanie felt like he was towering about fourteen or fifteen ft.

“Ten Cents?” A fourth giant appeared from around a tree, also looked different from the three previous giants Stephanie encountered.

The giant is an elder with short white hair, fair skin, and soft light blue eye color.

He wears a pair of half-moon glasses, with a flat straw hat on his head with a red ribbon around it.

He also wore a yellow long-sleeved jacket over a white short-sleeved button-up shirt with a collar, including a black bowtie with a number three pin, the American flag on his collar, and his name stitched in white thread.

Topping things off, he also wears a pair of black pants and brown shoes, and in his right hand, he has a cane for support.

“Oh, O.J,” Stephanie trembled when she heard the name of the fourth giant, feeling more overwhelmed and afraid.

“What are you doing over there?” O.J, the name of the elder, asked, sounding confused. “I thought you were heading to the others after patrol?”

“I err,” Ten Cents stammered a little before O.J noticed Stephanie in his arm.

He looked surprised when he noticed Stephanie in his arms, asking as he mentioned to her with a hand, “Is that a human in your arm?”

“Yes,” Ten Cents sighed, looking concerned but protective of her. “Sunshine was the first one to find her.”

“Well, where is he?” O.J asked.

“He went to mend his hand up after gettin’ it pricked on that pricker bush.” Ten Cents explained, mentioning over to the pricker bush next to him. “There’s a lot more to that, too.”

O.J paused for a moment after he had explained before speaking, “Well, please tell me all about it, Ten Cents.”

So, Ten Cents explained what he had heard from Sunshine, summing up the best he could for O.J to understand.

After Ten Cents finished and got to the part where he was trying to calm Stephanie down from being overwhelmed, O.J thought to himself as he placed a hand on his chin.

“I think I remember where she lives,” O.J spoke.

“You do?” Ten Cents asked, perking a little from acting protectively over her. “Do you know where it could be?”

“Yes, but you have to promise me this,” O.J sternly spoke as Stephanie was silent the whole time, feeling overwhelmed, confused, and scared. “Do not tell anyone else about her or where she lives. It is too dangerous for her to be alone out here by herself or with anyone else.”

Stephanie was slightly perked when she heard the somewhat strict sentence from O.J, feeling more confused and curious about why they were not like the ones she had heard from her foster parents.

“I promise, O.J,” Ten Cents nodded. “Can you do the same thin’ to Sunshine? Except with showin’ him where she lives?”

“Of course,” O.J chuckled softly.

Stephanie only stayed quiet as she was being carried in Ten Cents' arms, feeling semi-overwhelmed, confused, and curious.

Soon, they reached the edge of the forest, and Ten Cents noticed Stephanie's house from the distance.

"Is that her home?" Ten Cents asked, sounding confused.

"It is," O.J. nodded. "Best if you drop her off since you are holding her."

Ten Cents nodded his head and walked up to her home before placing her down at ground level on the backyard doors.

She slid out of his palm and landed on the ground, still shaking from being grabbed twice in a row.

Mostly from her overwhelming feelings of being caught by the giants.

"Oh, I forgot," Stephanie slightly flinched as she turned over to Ten Cents worriedly, as he reached into his pocket and took out her sweater carefully.

He handed it over to Stephanie as she took it, feeling more confused yet slightly calm and... safe.

"There," Ten Cents smiled as he stood back up carefully. "I'll be off now."

With that, Ten Cents walked away and entered back into the forest with O.J., leaving behind a confused and relieved Stephanie.

Stephanie went back inside the house after she was dropped off, pushing back a stray brown hair that could be covered in dirt.

But her mind was filled with questions and confusion.

Why are they acting so differently from the stories that her foster parents told her?

So, semi-unwilling and curious, Stephanie decided to do something that she would regret doing in the future or in her life.

That is to spy on the giants to see how they would act with each other.

Meanwhile, with O.J and Ten Cents, Ten Cents thought to himself about the little girl he recently held, wondering who else lives with her.

“Is there something wrong?” Ten Cents snapped out of his thinking and glanced over at O.J, who looked concerned for him. “You seemed to be thinking hard about something.”

“Yes, there is,” Ten Cents nodded as he stopped walking. “It’s ‘bout that girl. I can’t get the thought of her out of my mind.”

“What about her?” O.J asked curiously as he also stopped walking by Ten Cents’ side. “Is it about her alone?”

“Yes, that is exactly it,” Ten Cents nodded in agreement. “There’s somethin’ that makes me feel worried. Where could the relatives or her husband have gone off to?”

Somehow, that question seemed to make O.J think about her too, slowing down a little as he thought to himself.