

Stephanie patiently waited for the opportunity to escape, watching Captain Star as he busily worked on the papers and picked up the phone, answering anyone's calls.

She knows that if he is too busy, Stephanie took this time to escape from the base before anything else happens to her.

Then, she would try to go back to her home to see if there is anything to save and scavenge for parts to survive.

Knowing that it would get her into more trouble or getting herself captured by any other giants, Stephanie decided to risk her life.

So, when the chance came, Stephanie sprung into action as carefully as she could without getting herself caught.

She landed quietly on the ground on her feet and snuck around Captain Star's desk, pausing a few times to check if he glanced over at where she used to be or looking around.

Once Captain Star was distracted again, Stephanie snuck away from the room and entered the break room, seeing that there was no one else around to her luck.

Thinking it was easy, Stephanie sneaked over to the door that goes to the forest she had come into in the first place, pausing a little as she looked up at the doorknob.

Since she was only down to either their hips, thighs, or knees, the doorknob looked close to where Stephanie stood.

So, Stephanie lifted her arms up over her head and reached for the doorknob, taking it into her hands, and gripped it.

Using her strength, Stephanie pulled herself up and used her weight to turn the doorknob, unlocking the door with a quiet *click*.

After the door was unlocked, Stephanie landed back down on the ground quietly and glanced over her shoulder to check, seeing that Captain Star had not gotten up from his chair or from his desk.

Sighing, Stephanie turned back around to the door and gripped the slit, hooking her fingers into it and using her strength to open it.

The door opened enough for her to go through it, but not enough to make it too large.

Then, she squeezed herself through the crack and back into the outside.

Once outside, Stephanie closed the door quietly with her upper body strength, as the door clicked again, locking shut.

With a relieved sigh, Stephanie turned back towards the forest and ran towards it.

She disappeared into the greenery and away from the giants to be away from them.

Stephanie continued running for a long time until she stopped for a moment to take a break, shaky by the fact she had *escaped* from a giant.

But then she paused when she noticed that there was something *off* about her from inside.

She felt... *worried and guilty*.

Was it from escaping from Captain Star and the fleet?

Or was it from breaking the rules her foster parents had given her?

Stephanie shook her head a little from the thoughts about the weird feelings she was feeling inside her, ignoring them.

Instead, she focused her mind on getting back to her now crushed home to scavenge for whatever could be in the remains.

Pushing her glasses into place with a single finger, Stephanie began her adventure through the forest, trying to jog her memory a little to see if she could find something that looked familiar to her.

But no matter where she goes, everything around her seemed to be the same and felt like going around in circles.

So, she kept stopping and thought to herself as hard as she could but ended up straining her mind from doing it.

The strained thinking and searching lasted for a few hours, making Stephanie feel more stressed and confused.

Has she been here before?

Why does everything seem so familiar to her?

Is she lost?

Stephanie groaned as she rubbed the side of her temple with a hand, feeling a migraine coming from all the stress thinking.

After stopping herself from thinking, Stephanie glanced up to the scenery to see if she was close to her home but paused a little when she finally saw something.

There was a prickly bush that looked like a *giant had grabbed it*.

‘That’s where Sunshine found me and tried grabbing me!’ Stephanie thought to herself with relief. ‘Then that means my home,’ she paused as she glanced around for a moment, thinking to herself before turning to the path where Ten Cents carried her while following O.J. ‘The way is there!’

She pointed in the direction and began walking, hoping to herself that the remains of her home is where she *hopes* would be at.

Stephanie walked for more hours through the forest until she stopped again, taking a break from all the walking.

As she stopped, Stephanie checked her surroundings for any giants or giantesses coming towards where she was and headed in the right direction.

But then paused a little as she looked around, seeing that everything looked the same.

Stephanie's anxiety rose into a panic state, seeing that she was lost in a sea of trees and greenery with no map of where she was going.

Her guilt came to her from leaving Captain Star's base and the group, feeling like they *are* mad at her for scaring them like that.

She took a few steps forward as she glanced around at her surroundings again to piece things together.

Trying to think of where or what Stephanie could do to make sure she was not going the wrong way until she went into something side first that was semi-soft.

Stephanie yelped a little after going into the sudden object in front of her, looking at it with confusion.

But her confusion turned to fear as she noticed it was covered in a familiar blue fabric.

She slowly glanced up to *who* was standing in front of her.

Unfortunately, it was the same *giant who saw her in the beginning*.

The giant looked confused when he felt something bump into his leg before glancing down to what it was, seeing the *human* he discovered a long time ago.

A soft, surprised expression appeared on his face when he discovered her as a worried expression appeared on hers.

She got caught by the same giant... again.

"It's you!" he exclaimed, turning his attention towards her.

Stephanie had no time to react after noticing her but only took a step backwards to run away from him.

"Wait!" Stephanie flinched when his hand came towards her and expected him to grab her as Sunshine did before.

But his hand instead moved it behind her back, keeping her from taking the chance to run.

She felt trapped, with no chance of escaping.

Stephanie's stomach clenched as he knelt in front of her, his light blue eyes curiously looking at her as he had his left hand placed down on the ground as a pillar.

So, Stephanie backed into his hand to make herself small as she looked scared of him.

"Hey, it's okay," he assured her as he curled his fingers a little to her. "I'm not going to hurt you."

Stephanie's frantic mind stopped after he said the same line Ten Cents had said to her before when she encountered him after Sunshine.

Is he... true to his word, like Ten Cents?

Stephanie only stayed silent after he assured her, watching his eyes look at every detail of her, feeling like she was being examined.

His expression changed a little when he saw her looking scared of him, as Stephanie wondered to herself about what he saw on her.

"You look lost," he pointed out. "Did something happen?"

Again, Stephanie was silent after he asked, thinking to herself about what he would do to her if she answered his question.

So, Stephanie answered, with a shaky tone in her voice, "Y-Yes... I am lost."

"You can talk?" he softly murmured, looking amazed at her voice.

"O-Of course," Stephanie nodded shakily. "Not only singing, but I can also talk too. B-But that's not the topic."

She glanced over to the side, trying to think of a way to get away from the curious giant and find her way to her home.

“C-Can you remove your hand, please?” Stephanie stammered, glancing up at him. “I want to see if I was heading the right way to my home.”

“Oh, I know where it is,” he remarked, removing his hand from behind her. “Well, where it *was* since that giant destroyed it before.”

Stephanie listened to his explanation, as her mind was repeatedly telling her to escape from him since *now* she has the chance.

But... for some reason... she seemed to stay put from where she was, feeling like she would *trust him*.

But why?

Are giants not bone crushers and flesh-eaters?

However... this giant seemed to show *differently* from how her foster parents described them.

There were no signs or smell of blood from his hands with no stained teeth, as all of them looked normal, aside from the canines.

Are they... like humans?

Living like them and not harming others?

“Hey, are you alright?” Stephanie snapped out of her thoughts after hearing his voice, glancing up at him. “You seemed to be dazing out.”

“So-Sorry,” Stephanie apologized. “I was thinking to myself.”

The giant paused a little after Stephanie answered his question, thinking to himself for a moment as Stephanie dazed out again.

“Do you want a ride with me to get to your home?” he asked.

Stephanie snapped out of her thoughts again and glanced up at him from looking away, asking, “Wh-What?”

“A lift,” he repeated himself. “You are lost in the forest, aren’t you?”

Stephanie’s cheeks flushed a little with sheepishness, remembering her panic earlier when she saw she was lost.

However, Stephanie was not sure that he would accidentally drop her or carry her somewhere else than her home as she hoped to go to.

So, she nodded her head, responding, “Yes... I would like a lift, please.”

The giant nodded and moved his right hand towards her with his palm up, laying it flat for her to board.

So, Stephanie sat down on his palm facing him and gently wrapped her arm around his pinky for protection.

He curled his fingers a little once she had sat down in his palm and lifted her up to his height as he started to stand.

A nervous clench came from her stomach from Stephanie as she gripped her strength on his pinky a little.

But he managed to stand up without dropping her on accident, moving her towards his chest in a way to feel safe.

“You might want to climb onto my shoulder,” he explained to her. “I need both hands to move things around to get to your home.”

From the back of Stephanie’s head, a worried groan from her, but not wanting to get on his nerves to stay in his palm, Stephanie nodded her head.

Carefully, Stephanie gripped his collar with her hand and pulled herself onto his shoulder, going down on her knees.

If she stood up, Stephanie would accidentally fall off his shoulder and break a bone.

Once Stephanie was on his shoulder, she repositioned herself to be comfortable and safe, holding onto his collar from accidentally falling off.

“Are you comfortable?” the giant asked, looking over at her from the corner of his eye.

Stephanie paused a little after he asked, thinking to herself about how she is sitting on a *giant’s shoulder*.

Never, in her twenty years, would she ever sit on a giant’s shoulder willingly.

But here she is, sitting on one’s shoulder right now!

A quiet shudder went down Stephanie’s back from the thoughts in her mind before being snapped out of it when he started walking.

Stephanie’s grip nervously tightened on the collar as he turned around and started walking in a different direction than the one she was heading to.

Her anxiety kicked in a little from the thought of being taken somewhere other than where she wanted to go, thinking that he would take her to show his friends or at a laboratory.

But Stephanie forced the thoughts out of her mind from trying to scare her too much.

Instead, Stephanie assured herself with what he said to her earlier, just like Ten Cents.

The ride oddly felt... relaxing to Stephanie, with the gentle tremors of his feet and the gentle swaying of his body.

He was... gentle with her as if she was a friend of his.

Stephanie felt more confused about the weirdness of the giants acting around her, returning her thinking to the rules her foster parents told her for a long time.

Were they meant to be broken?

“Oh, I didn’t introduce myself,” the giant spoke, snapping Stephanie out of her thoughts. “My name is Thomas, Thomas Billinton.”

Stephanie smiled a little after Thomas introduced himself to her before answering, “My name is Stephanie, Stephanie Allen.”

“Pleased to meet you, Stephanie,” Thomas grinned, moving his right hand up for a handshake.

Instead, Stephanie took his first finger with her right hand while the other had a hold of his collar for an easier way to shake his hand.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Thomas apologized. “I forgot you are a human.”

“It’s fine,” Stephanie assured him as she released his first finger. “There’s no reason to be sheepish about it.”

Thomas chuckled after Stephanie assured him and moved his hands up to part some trees to the side a little for him to go through, blocking some for Stephanie to be safe.

Once he was through the two trees, Thomas soon reached the large space in the forest, seeing the wreckage of the remains of her home.

Stephanie’s heart sank to her stomach when she saw the wreckage of her home.

Thomas moved his hand up for her to get off his shoulder as she slid into his palm without hesitation.

He then placed his hand down on the ground and allowed Stephanie to be back on the ground, walking over to the remains of her house.

Thomas knelt a little to watch Stephanie as she looked at the wreckage, even picking up some items left inside.

“Do you know who did this?” Stephanie asked, glancing over at him.

“No, I only know that it was someone,” Thomas explained, moving a leg down to be comfortable. “Maybe one of the twits at work.”

There was a slightly angry tone in his voice after Stephanie asked, causing her to shudder without him noticing.

“What about your parents?” Thomas asked, watching Stephanie as she started to gather items. “Wouldn’t them be angry or terrified?”

Most of the items were luckily not damaged from the wreckage from the attack.

Stephanie paused a little from her scavenging and glanced over at Thomas, as she had a slightly sad expression on her face.

“I... don’t have parents anymore.” Stephanie sadly sighed. “They passed away when I was a baby, and... my foster parents died a long time ago from a disease.”

Thomas’s expression on his face looked surprised after Stephanie explained to him about her family.

“So... you’re alone?” Thomas slowly asked, moving his head to the side a little to watch her.

Stephanie nodded her head after Thomas asked, pushing her glasses into place with a finger and continuing with what she was doing.

“Yeah... I have.” Stephanie slowly nodded, picking up more items and placing them into her backpack. “Even if there are remaining humans here... I don’t think any of them survived after the Underground closed.”

She zipped her large backpack and placed it on her back, walking over to Thomas.

She was still hesitant to trust him but felt hopeless.

“Now that I have collected what is necessary,” Stephanie sighed, mostly mumbling to herself. “All I need is to find somewhere else to live.”

“You don’t know where else you can live in?” Thomas asked, sounding confused.

Stephanie flinched a little when he asked, did not think that he would overhear her mumbling.

“Nope,” Stephanie sighed as she shook her head. “This home is what my foster parents built. ...Now that it has been destroyed, all that is left is the Underground or-”

Before Stephanie could finish her sentence, Thomas’s hand suddenly moved down towards her and picked her up from the ground with the fingers gently wrapped around her, causing her to panic.

“Uh, Th-Thomas?!” Stephanie fretted, feeling worried about being dropped.

Thomas stood up to his height again after picking Stephanie up, saying, “You could be roommates with me!”

Stephanie’s mind stopped after Thomas suggested to her, stammering, “Ro-Roommates?”

Thomas eagerly nodded his head after Stephanie stammered.

“Yep, you can get to know all about Knapford, Drayton, and other cities!” Thomas smiled. “You don’t have to live in a stuffy ground for the rest of your life or try to search for a new home.”

Stephanie’s stomach clenched worriedly at the thought of having to live with more than one giant and giantess around her in Thomas’s room, not wanting to be stared at or be the main attraction.

But on the other hand, Thomas was right about one thing: the Underground *can* be stuffy and barely allow anyone to back out once inside, and searching for a new home can be dangerous.

So, Stephanie decided to choose to live *with Thomas*.

“A-Alright,” Stephanie stammered. “I’ll be roommates with you.”

Thomas smiled after Stephanie agreed with him and placed her back onto his shoulder as she gripped his collar again.

“Percy will be excited to meet you!” Thomas remarked. “He always wanted to see a human.”

‘Oh, boy.’ Stephanie groaned from the back of her mind as she had a slightly nervous expression on her face. ‘That means I get a lot of eyeballs looking at me.’

Other than dealing with other giants and giantesses, Stephanie now thought about Ten Cents and others, thinking they would panic about her missing.

A bad feeling sat in Stephanie’s stomach as Thomas headed deeper into the forest, away from the remains of her home that she once was safe inside.