

- NextStep-

Today, it's Valerie's birthday and in just three hours she will receive the gift she had wanted for so long, her first smartphone. Valerie's eagerness was understandable, as she was the only person in her class who did not have a phone yet, and that was strange, as she turned fourteen today. The young girl's mother and father were somewhat peculiar, since they were the only family in the village that did not have electronic devices, such as television, mobile phones, tablets, computers....

Although they did not agree with their daughter's request, they loved her very much and Valerie had been longing for a single gift for years.

Before Valerie received her present, her father gave her the choice between a smartphone and a book. It is worth pointing out that the girl's parents were librarians and had hundreds of books at home, so why did they think that their daughter would exchange something as precious as a phone for a simple book.

A few months later, Valerie was already an expert on social media, and though she spends more time than her parents would like using it, there is nothing they can do about it.

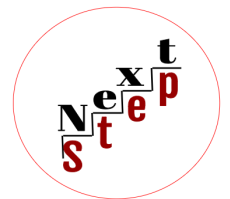
For a few days now, the school has been talking about the new app "NextStep", which sets daily challenges, personalised for each user, and in exchange for completing them, they receive points which they can exchange for things, such as earpods, cell phones, gift cards to spend in clothing shops and a whole bunch of other things. Valerie was initially distrustful of the app, but when she saw that all of her classmates were earning lots of items by doing simple challenges, she ended up downloading it. When Valerie opened the app, it sent her a message, greeting her warmly, this seemed strange to the girl, as she had never mentioned her name when registering, but she left those thoughts behind as soon as she received a new message, it was a challenge for her. The challenge consisted of jumping into a pool with clothes on, simple. After finishing Valerie sent the video and NextStep rewarded her with 150 points.

Valerie followed the challenges assigned to her until a girl from her school went missing. After that, the challenges were limited, as her parents would not let her leave the house after 7pm. This bothered Valerie but she understood that the situation was special and thought that in a few weeks everything would be back to normal. But it didn't. The following week another child from her village went missing and people started panicking. Now the young girl was not allowed to go out and was even being picked up from school. The good thing was that she had already scored enough points to make her first order, an ipad which she had had her eye on

ever since she made her first challenge. Knowing that her parents wouldn't accept having another appliance in the house, she decided to place the order when they went on their romantic getaway for the weekend, that way, the delivery guy wouldn't get discovered. It was Friday when Valerie ordered her new ipad and it was on Saturday night when she heard the delivery man's doorbell ring. She excitedly ran down the stairs and when she opened the door, there was no one there, just a package with the NextStep logo on it, she reached out for the package, but before her fingers could touch it, she fell unconscious on the floor after receiving a sharp punch to the back of the head.

When she regained consciousness, she found herself in a dark, dank room, chained to a bed. What made her skin crawl was the sight of the two teenagers who had been missing for several weeks. At that moment all she could think of was that she should have chosen the book.

By June Gimeno
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**iGracias por participar
June!**
Eskerrik asko parte
hartzeagatik!

Fair Saturday pulsa **Enter** ↵

