

AMETHYST

SERIAL ONE OF
THE JEWEL SERIES



Copyright © 2019 by Emilie Vainqueur

All rights reserved. No parts of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of the publisher.

The Jewel Series is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the production of the author's imagination or are used factiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Published in the United States by Lili Books & Company, an imprint of Everyone Loves Content, LLC.

ISBN: 978-1-950629-00-8

eBook ISBN: 978-1-950629-06-0

Cover designed by Hampton Lamoureux

Edited by Stephanie Cohen & Emilie Vainqueur

Typography by Emilie Vainqueur

Images by Anita, Deposit Photos, freeiconspng.com, Jerk

Cliparts, PurePNG, Sc lance, Sccpre.cat & Vexels

Edition 1: June 2019

Table Of Contents

Language Of Jewels	I
Her Butterfly	1
The Last Routine	12
Something Strange	26
In The Villa Trade	34
The Race To Fire	45
Go	57
Open Your Eyes	69
Into The Nightmare	80
My Jewels	89
Hidden	103
Fighting For Her	111
Stolen In The Dark	125
Emilie's Note	138
Lahûah Õ Stitõn	143

LANGUAGE OF JEWELS

*Disclaimer: This language is not needed to follow the book.

.Ah.

Ahah (ah-ah) – Laugh
Ahgûmarin (ah-goo-mah-ree-n) – Aquamarine
Ahî (ah-ee) – Ouch
Ahîd (ah-ee-d) – Hand
Ahj (ah-ch) – Scorch
Ahlmôn (ah-l-mon) – Draw
Ahm (ahm) – Food
Ahmêzôn (ah-meh-zoh-n) – Super
Ahmûwè (ah-moo-weh) – Ahead
Ahnîmahli (ah-nee-mah-lee) – Animal
Ahnô (ah-noh) – Annoy
Ahnûl (ahn-poo-l) – Group
Ahp (ahp) – Skip
Ahpah (ah-pah) – Father
Ahpde (ahp-deh) – Sad
Ahrè (ah-reh) – Have
Ahs (ah-s) – As
Ahsîôn (ah-see-oh-n) – Asian
Ahsh (ah-sh) – Fast
Ahsû (ah-soo) – Eye
Aht (ah-t) – Are
Ahtô (ah-t-oh) – Into
Ahtû (ah-t-oo) – Heart
Ahvèt (ah-veh-t) – Go
Ahwè (ah-weh) – Up
Ahwèi (ah-weh-ee) – Freedom
Ahwèisah (ah-weh-ee-sah) – Angel

.B.

Bahbû (bah-boo) – Baby
Bahdi (bah-dee) – Body
Bahn (bah-n) – He
Bahnaahn (bah-nah-n) – Even
Bahni (bah-nee) – Son
Baht (bah-t) – That
Bè (beh) – Him
Bèn (beh-n) – Leg
Bès (beh-s) – His
Bîtah (bee-tah) – Birth
Bîtahdahwû (bee-tah-dah-woo) – Birthday
Blahk (b-lah-k) – Black
Blû (b-loo) – Blue
Blûwd (b-loo-wd) – Blood
Bök (boh-k) – Damn
Brahn (b-rah-n) – Brown
Bûbû (boo-boo) – Ass
Bûdah (boo-dah) – Butt
Bûdôn (boo-doh-n) – Sit
Bûtè (boo-teh) – About
Bûf (boo-f) – Strong
Bûs (boo-s) – Ugly
Bûwah (boo-wah) – Boy
Bûwahn (boo-wah-n) – Man
Bûyè (boo-yeh) – Spider
Bwî (b-wee) – Music

.D.

Dah (dah) – Hug
Dahîah (dah-ee-ah) – Dia
Dahk (dah-k) – Dark
Dahmôn (dah-mon-d) – Diamond
Dahwû (dah-woo) – Day
Dîi (dee-ee) – Need

Dì (dee) – Say
Dõn (doh-n) – Good
Driyè (d-ree-yeh) – Dry
Dû (doo) – You(r)



È (eh) – What
Èglèsh (ehg-leh-sh) – English
Èks (Eh-ks) – Quit
Èlèmènt (eh-leh-meh-nt) – School
Èlō (eh-loh) – Yellow
Elōkrèm (eh-loh-k-reh-m) – Butter
Èmètist (eh-meh-tee-st) – Ameth-
 yst
Èmī (eh-mee) – Ame
Èmīlī (eh-mee-lee) – Emilie
Èmèrōd (eh-meh-roh-d) – Emerald
Èr (eh-r) – Here
Èsh (eh-sh) – Shake
Èt (eh-t) – Eight



Fah (fah) – Heal
Fah'èw (fah-eh-w) – Healer
Fahī (fah-ee) – Wing
Fahnt (fah-nt) – Great
Fahv (fah-v) – Five
Fèi (feh-ee) – Health
Fèr (feh-r) – For
Fèwiv (feh-wee-v) – Forever
Fib (fee-b) – Weak
Fil (fee-l) – Sense

Filipinō (fee-lee-pee-noh) – Filipino
Fiyèk (fee-yeh-k) – Attack
Fli (f-lee) – Fly
Flō (f-loh) – Hair
Flüid (f-loo-ee-d) – Water
Flûtèfli (f-loo-teh-f-lee) – Butterfly
Fō (foh) – Four
Frahnziāh (f-rah-n-zee-ah) – Scare
Frèt (f-reh-t) – Cold
Frīrī (f-ree-ree) – Fire
Fûshī (foo-shee) – Foolish
Fût (foo-t) – Fuck
Fûûwī (foo-oo-wee) – Faith



Gah (gah) – Her
Gahlkè (gah-l-keh) – Coffee
Gahn (gah-n) – She
Gahnī (gah-nee) – Daughter
Gahrnèt (gah-r-neh-t) – Garnet
Gahzōn (gah-zoh-n) – Grass
Gèwah (geh-wah) – Girl
Gèwahn (geh-wah-n) – Woman
Gōg (goh-g) – Look
Grīn (g-ree-n) – Green
Gûwī (goo-wee) – Mad
Gûwōs (goo-woh-s) – Always



Īkè (ee-keh) – Help
Īl (ee-l) – Call
Īn (een) – Or

Īndiahn (een-dee-ah-n) – Indian
Īnimini (ee-nee-mee-nee) – Which
Īnvizib (een-vee-zee-b) – Clear
Īō (ee-oh) – Hello
Īpsû (eep-soo) – Lip
Īsè (ee-seh) – Stick
Īsû (ee-soo) – Ear
Īvah (ee-vah) – All
Īvī (ee-vee) – Every
Īvionè (ee-vee-oh-neh) – Everyone
Īvitinè (ee-vee-tee-neh) – Every-body
Īvlōt (eev-loh-t) – Most
Īvwè (eev-weh) – Alright
Īwè (ee-weh) – We



Jah (ch-ah) – Give
Jahl (ch-ah-l) – Before
Jahp (ch-ahp) – Chapter
Jahrah (ch-ah-rah) – Character
Jèn (ch-eh-n) – Young
Jènahñ (ch-eh-nah-n) – Jacket
Jèt (ch-eh-t) – Get
Jī (ch-ee) – But
Jīj (ch-ee-ch) – Bitch
Jīkû (ch-ee-koo) – Kill
Jīl (ch-ee-l) – Ice
Jīlè (ch-ee-leh) – Cool
Jīt (ch-ee-t) – Child
Jīzī (chee-zee) – Happy
Jōd (ch-oh-d) – Land
Jōm (ch-oh-m) – So
Jōn (ch-oh-n) – Old
Jūm (ch-oo-m) – Over
Jūs (ch-oo-s) – Any



Kahī (kah-ee) – Ask
Kahk (kah-k) – Back
Kahkzōn (kah-k-zoh-n) – Back-bone
Kahl (kah-l) – After
Kahlmīd (kah-l-mee-d) – After-noon
Kahm (kah-m) – Would
Kahnè (kah-neh) – Can
Kahsè (kah-seh) – Break
Kahwūn (kah-woo-n) – Arm
Kahzû (kah-zoo) – Because
Kè (keh) – Yes
Kōn (koh-n) – With
Kōst (koh-st) – Disgust
Kōt (k-oh-t) – Coast
Kōrièn (koh-ree-eh-n) – Korean
Krahzè (k-rah-zeh) – Strength
Krèm (k-reh-m) – Cream
Kû (koo) – Neck
Kûlû (koo-loo) – Crazy
Kûnuh (koo-nuh) – Now
Kûû (koo-oo) – High
Kûyahd (koo-yah-d) – Field
Kûvrī (koo-v-ree) – Cover
Kûwè (koo-weh) – Right



Lah (lah) – Be
Lahjuh (lah-ch-uh) – Money
Lahōnt (lah-ohn-t) – Dramatic
Lahrèn (Lah-reh-n) – Queen

Lahûah (lah-oo-ah) – Language
Lîlè (lee-leh) – Book
Lît (lee-t) – Light
Lizõn (lee-zoh-n) – Spine
Lõmmtè (loh-m-m-teh) – Love
Lõnjè (loh-n-ch-eh) – Long
Lõt (loh-t) – More
Lõwûn (loh-woo-n) – How
Lûn (loo-n) – Morning
Lûnahm (loo-nah-m) – Breakfast
Lûnîs (loo-nee-s) – Sun
Lûf (loo-f) – Pull
Luh (luh) – A
Luhnõtûd (luh-noh-too-d) – Another



Mahah (mah-ah) – Too
Mahsh (mah-sh) – Step
Mahshè (mah-sh-eh) – Walk
Mahmah (mah-mah) – Mama
Mahtah (mah-tah) – Matter
Mègah (meh-gah) – Grow
Mèn (meh-n) – Them
Mî (mee) – Self
Mid (mee-d) – Noon
Mîdahm (mee-dah-m) – Lunch
Mîl (mee-l) – Home
Mîliû (mee-lee-oo) – Family
Mîsû (mee-soo) – Mouth
Mîûwè (mee-oo-weh) – Left
Mîzè (mee-zeh) – Important
Mmtè (m-m-teh) – Kiss
Mõnõk (moh-noh-k) – Uncle
Mõkahjah (moh-kah-jah) – Fight
Mû (moo) – My

Mûn (moo-n) – By



Nah (nah) – No
Nahdû (nah-doo) – Also
Nahn (nah-n) – Nine/Not
Nahk (nah-k) – Tell
Nahtîuh (nah-tee-uh) – Nature
Nahw (nah-w) – Want
Nè (neh) – Low
Nèk (neh-k) – Knife
Nèt (neh-t) – Net
Nîbirû (nee-bee-roo) – Nibiru
Nîgè (nee-geh) – Run
Nîks (nee-ks) – Nyx
Nûgû (noo-goo) – Who
Nûî (noo-ee) – Year
Nûmb (noom-b) – Number
Nûtahm (noo-tah-m) – Dinner
Nûît (noo-ee-t) – Night
Nûtis (noo-tees) – Moon
Nûwè (noo-weh) – Wet
Nuh (nuh) – In



Õ (oh) – Of/Oh
Õd (oh-d) – Protect
Õfè (oh-feh) – Fear
Õgahn (oh-gah-n) – Sister
Õl (oh-l) – Kind
Õm (oh-m) – Am
Õmah (oh-mah) – Mother

Ōmahd (oh-mah-d) – Death
Ōmahè (oh-mah-eh) – Devil
Ōmkè (oh-m-keh) – Okay
Ōn (oh-n) – Build
Ōnè (oh-neh) – One
Ōnèfahvn (oh-neh-fah-vn) – Fifteenth
Ōnèn (oh-neh-n) – First
Ōnèōnè (oh-neh-oh-neh) – Eleven
Ōnèsīs (oh-neh-see-s) – Sixteen
Ōnèsvèn (oh-neh-s-ven) – Seventeen
Ōnètûrī (oh-neh-too-ree) – Thirteen
Ōnètŵō (oh-neh-t-woh) – Twelve
Ōnèwōwō (oh-neh-woh-woh) – One Hundred
Ōnèwōwōn (oh-neh-woh-who-n) – One Hundredth
Ōnèzèwō (oh-neh-zeh-woh) – Ten
Ōnī (oh-nee) – Only
Ōnjè (oh-n-ch-eh) – When
Ōrahnjè (oh-rahn-cheh) – Orange
Ōtûd (oh-too-d) – Other
Ōv (oh-v) – They
Ōwah (oh-wah) – World



Pahdō (pah-doh) – Idiot
Pahli (pah-lee) – Tree
Pahn (pah-n) – Than
Pahng (pah-ng) – Bread
Pahpah (pah-pah) – Papa
Pahz (pah-z) – Stop
Pèj (peh-ch) – Page
Pèlik (peh-lee-k) – Bench
Pèn (peh-n) – Then

Pī (pee) – Bug
Pīd (pee-d) – Foot
Pīds (peed-s) – Stupid
Pīk (pee-k) – Pink
Pīn (pee-n) – Little
Pīs (pee-s) – Part
Pōbō (poh-boh) – Problem
Pōlīzīk (poh-lee-zee-k) – Authority
Pōs (poh-s) – Shift
Pōs'èw (poh-s-eh-w) – Shifter
Pōt (poh-t) – Door
Pût (poo-t) – Let
Puhpèl (puh-peh-l) – Purple
Pwèn (p-weh-n) – Point





Sah (sah) – I/Me
Sahfè (sah-feh) – Safe
Sahvīv (sah-vee-v) – Create
Sè (seh) – Why
Sèahl (seh-ah-l) – Serial
Sègah (seh-gah) – Shrink
Sèj (seh-ch) – Find
Sèkahl (seh-kah-l) – Sequel
Sèwī (seh-wee) – Attract
Sèwīs (seh-wee-s) – Series
Sī (see) – The
Sīahl (see-ahl) – Promise
Sīpsè (seep-seh) – Drink

Sis (see-s) – Six
 Siüt (see-oot) – Suit
 Slahm (s-lah-m) – Side
 Slèt (s-leh-t) – Blank
 Spahs (S-pah-s) – Room
 Strik (st-ree-k) – Control
 Stil (s-tee-l) – Take
 Stütön (s-tee-toh-n) – Jewel
 Sùè (soo-eh) – Thank
 Suhng (suh-ng) – Confused
 Stüiv (s-too-eev) – Try
 Svèn (s-vehn) – Seven



Shahm (sh-ah-m) – Should
 Shahwè (sh-ah-weh) – Our
 Shènj (sh-eh-n-ch) – Morph
 Shĩmbahshĩ (shee-m-bah-shee) –
 Secret
 Shĩnĩ (shee-nee) – New
 Shĩt (sh-eet) – Hole
 Shiyèn (shee-yehn) – Dog



Tahn (tah-n) – Tan
 Tahnah (tah-nah) – Fun
 Tahnsõrah (tah-n-soh-rah) –
 Anything
 Tahnzahnĩt (tah-n-zah-nee-t) –
 Tanzanite
 Tahõn (tah-oh-n) – Feel
 Taht (tah-t) – Think

Tahtĩ (tah-tee) – Aunt
 Tè (teh) – There
 Tèt (teh-t) – Head
 Tĩ (tee) – It
 Tiksh (tee-k-sh) – Shit
 Tinè (tee-neh) – Thing
 Tõm (toh-m) – Some
 Trahv (t-rah-v) – Job
 Trahvĩ (t-rah-vee) – Work
 Tũ (too) – And
 Tũrĩ (too-ree) – Three
 Tũwĩn (too-wee-n) – Third
 Tuhk (tuh-k) – Just
 Twĩn (t-wee-n) – Between
 Twõ (t-woh) – Two
 Twõĩnlõt (t-woh-eeen-loh-t) – Us
 Twõn (t-woh-n) – Second



Û (oo) – Do
 Ûè (oo-eh) – Heavy
 Ûmĩ (oo-mee) – Favorite
 Ûmtĩ (oo-m-tee) – Small
 Ûmwè (oo-m-weh) – Big
 Ûnah (oo-nah) – Sky
 Ûsè (oo-seh) – Use
 Ût (oo-t) – Out
 Ûwõ (oo-woh) – Hold



Uh (uh) – To
 Uhnah (uh-nah) – On

Uhnè (uh-neh) – Below
Uhntah (uh-n-tah) – Turn
Uhnus (uh-nuh-s) – Mind



Vï (vee) – Come
Vïduhwènt (vee-duh-weh-nt) – Different
Vör (voh-r) – From
Vöw (voh-w) – Know
Vwûdôn (v-woo-doh-n) – Amaze



Wahm (wah-m) – Could
Wahn (wah-n) – People
Wahnè (wah-neh) – Time
Wè (weh) – Where
Wèd (weh-d) – Red
Wèï (weh-ee) – Way
Wèin (weh-ee-n) – Will
Wink (wee-nk) – At
Wit (wee-t) – Week
Witè (wee-teh) – White
Wiw (wee-w) – Next
Wô (woh) – Woah
Wûd (woo-d) – Like
Wûsh (woo-sh) – Disappear



Yah (yah) – Hey
Yiyi (yee-yee) – Cry



Zahk (zah-k) – Treat
Zè (zeh) – Electric
Zèwô (zeh-woh) – Zero
Zï (zee) – Is
Zik (zee-k) – This
Zit (zee-t) – If
Zôn (zoh-n) – Bone

Affixes.

‘dah (dah)		-ed
‘ètz (eh-tz)		-est
‘èw (eh-w)		-er
‘ink (ee-nk)		-ing
‘nī (nee)		-ish
‘t (t)		-s
‘yè (y-eh)		-ive

Have any suggestions, pointers, or tips? Please leave
a message at www.thejewelseries.com!

*Disclaimer: Once again, this language is **not required** to follow
the storyline of this book. If you do not understand something,
you are not meant to. If you would like to translate, the
Language of Jewels is at your disposal. Enjoy!



ZÈWǒ
HER BUTTERFLY



SHE FLITTED FROM flower to flower in the open field of grass as her sisters fluttered behind, following gracefully in her steps. Amethyst sat on a bench not too far from her sisters and, like little flowers dancing in the wind, they moved towards her. She brought her arms out and held them there, until yellow nectar syruped into the center of her palms.

One by one the butterflies piled in, causing Amethyst to smile at how vivid and unreal they looked. Their wings were brushed a greenish-teal, complemented with deep blues and accenting purples. They were so majestic. If Amethyst didn't know any better, she might've believed they were fairies—fairies in bug suits trying to stay hidden.

A single butterfly fluttered out towards her face, its legs being the first to stick as it landed on her ear.

It crawled. The six tiny legs tickled against the small fibers of Amethyst's hair. She giggled nervously and gently shook her head to wave off the butterfly, but it held tight. It seemed to take comfort in adhering to her ear.

Led by her sister, another flew from Amethyst's hand and onto her cheek. She shook her head a little harder, but the butterflies refused to move.

They were beautiful shards of nature, but Amethyst wasn't so sure about bugs resting on her face. Before another could follow suit, she delicately tossed her hands and nudged the butterflies into the air. She then shooed off the other two.

"Abvèt kôn dû mîlîû," Amethyst spoke. As if they understood, they flew high into the sky. Their vibrant wings strained to a black behind the sun's gleam.

The little creatures dispersed in a frenzy. They frantically circled the sky before they came zipping down in her direction.

Amethyst noticed the zest in their flight and tried to get up, but for some reason she couldn't move from the bench. She was stuck in place as the insects swarmed the side of her face. She swatted at them, but they only seemed to cluster, and all she could do

was shake her head as the sky grew dark and suddenly . . .

. . . there was no light.



Ten-year-old Amethyst sat up on her bed, panting as she ran her hands through her hair. She crawled to the end of her bed and in front of the small mirror on the wall.

“How did th— what is this?”

There was something all over her hair and pajamas. The substance glistened, web-like, as she stretched her fingers through wisps of coily hair. She began to freak out.

Amethyst glanced around the room, but all she could see was the dark figure of her little sister across the room. She was sleeping under the covers on her own twin-sized bed, and with curtains closed over the windows, it was still pitch-black in the room.

Just like how her dream ended.

Amethyst couldn’t see anything, but she heard something faint coming from beneath her.

As she was about to back away into her pillows, and underneath her blankets, a small figure popped up at the end of her bed.

“Boo!”

The figure uncovered their eyes, and Amethyst yelped in fear.

At first, she couldn’t tell who or what it was, but once the scare wore off, she realized it was her youngest sibling.

He laughed hysterically and jumped beside her bed. “I got you!”

“Garnet!” Amethyst cried. Before she could do anything, he ran from her bedside, smiling.

“Ha–ha–ha–ha–ha,” he sung repeatedly as he inched towards the door, “I pranked you.”

“I’m going to tell Papa on you!”

“Noo,” he protested.

“Ame . . . what’s wrong?” Diamond asked sitting up in her bed.

Apparently, Garnet had gotten to her, too.

Her hands were covered in syrup and feathers all around, kind of like feather mittens or wing hands. It had Garnet’s signature written all over it. He loved arts and crafts.

Amethyst had to hold back a giggle, even though she was upset. “He pranked us!” She glared at the five-year-old. “Of all the pranks in the world, you have to do the messiest? Really, Net?”

He began twiddling his feet and jumping in excitement. “I goed—”

“Really, Net?” Diamond spoke over her little brother.

“I—I goed get the pancake syrup and then I up back the stairs and then— and then I goed to my room an—and get my feather to my art project, and then I put the pancake syrup in your hands and tickled your ear with it so you can get syrup all over,” he frolicked, telling his story, “and then you getted scared.”

“Net, that wasn’t funny.” Amethyst folded her arms, “I had a bad dream. What if I’d done that to you?”

“*Nooo*,” Garnet whined. He was beginning to get upset.

“What if I done that to you?” Diamond aggressively mimicked Amethyst as she folded her arms.

Amethyst thought it was cool how she followed in her footsteps. She thought Diamond was the best little sister ever. She always took her side when it

came to arguments.

Papa always said she reminded him of Mama because of her stubbornness. Amethyst thought it was because of her distinct Asian eyes, fair skin and straight hair.

When Mama passed away, street people couldn't tell whether Diamond was related to their family or not. Both her siblings had inherited Papa's dark skin and curly hair.

She stood out at times.

"Come on Dia, let's get him." Amethyst encouraged.

They both pulled their covers off and slid out of bed.

Garnet screamed and ran for the door.

"Hurry! He's getting away." Amethyst led them into the short hallway, lit by only a few candles.

Halfway through, they suddenly stopped.

Diamond bumped into Amethyst and hung around her waist, peering from beneath her sister's arm in amusement. They found Garnet hiding behind a tall pair of legs.

Smart move, Amethyst thought. She glared.

It was the almighty shield that each of the kids

abused at some point in their lives.

And with a heavy chuckle, “Hello, my three pumpkins,” the tall pair of legs spoke, holding the same warm mug of coffee he brewed each morning.

He tried not to spill anything with Garnet moving about his legs, even taking a few sips to lower the black liquid inside his cup.

“Papa, look.” Amethyst shoved her arms out. “Net pranked us again. I’m sticky, and my bed has syrup everywhere!”

“Good morning to you too, bahbû.”

“Good morning,” she sped through her greeting. “It’s not fair. It’s going to take forever to get this out.”

“Yeah, it’s gonna take *forever*,” Diamond exaggerated as she shook her hands, making the most adorable face as she pulled at one of the feathers. “Eww.”

“Aha, Garnet. You did this to them? Well, that’s not very nice.” Papa tried not to laugh at his cute kids.

Amethyst frowned at how lightly he was taking this. “It’s not funny. Right, Dia?”

“Yeah, that’s not funny, Papa,” Diamond scolded as she crossed her arms. ““Treat others the way *you* would like to be treated.”” She puffed her chest and

quoted the words their father had drilled into them.

Papa's eyes softened as he set his coffee aside. "You are one hundred percent right. Zahk òtûd't sî wèi dû wèin'dah wûd uh lah zahk'dah."

As the words ran fluidly from her father's mouth, Amethyst recalled the times she first learned sî Lahûa Ò Stitôn't. *The Language Of Jewels*.

It was one her father had created from scratch.

The memory was foggy in Amethyst's head, but Mama was around, and she was still pregnant with Diamond. She remembered the three of them sitting together as they practiced Stitôn't from Papa and Hangeul from Mama. It was one of her favorite memories.

Papa crouched down next to his son. "Garnet, don't you think you should apologize to your sisters?"

Garnet pursed his lips and looked to the floor.

He didn't say anything before he dashed into his room, leaving his family out in the hallway. His small footsteps faded as he moved across the wooden floor.

"Net, where you are going?" Asked Papa.

With the same speed he left with, Garnet came running out of his room. He held two drawings he'd

made at school and handed one to Amethyst and the other to Diamond.

One paper had a red heart with gems and feathers glued onto the piece of paper. The other had four stick figures of their family holding hands under a bright and sunny day.

Garnet had expressed the love he felt for his family in the best way he could.

Papa's cheeks rose into the corner of his eyes, "What do you say?"

"I'm sorry," he told the girls. Shortly, Garnet looked to his father for confirmation.

"Give them a hug." He had always taught his children that words of kindness weren't always going to be effective. There needed to be action to support the weight of those words.

Amethyst couldn't help but smile when he wrapped his little arms around her. He was just a kid. She knew he didn't mean any harm when she ruffled his hair and hugged him back.

"I forgive you," she said, "but don't do it again."

Diamond hugged her little brother as well, "I forgive you, too."

"Great, that's what I like to hear. Now that we've

cleared that up, you girls get ready for school. It's almost sunrise and you can't be late. Go ahead and hop in the shower, you two."

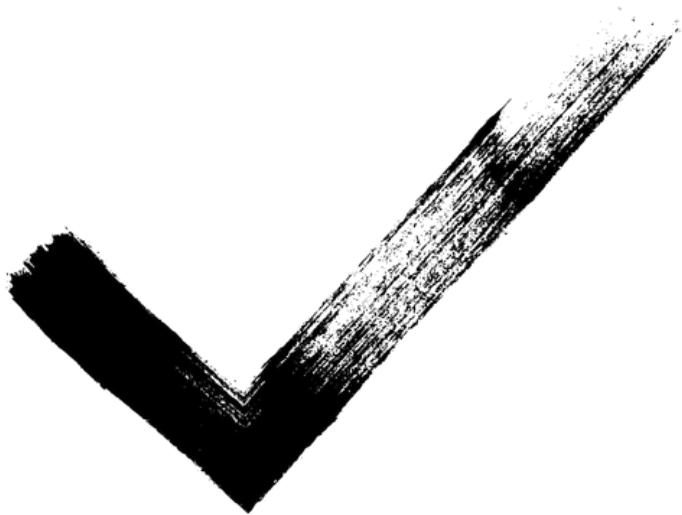
And with that, the girls disappeared into their room.

Papa looked to his son. "Guess we're making breakfast today. Net, do you want to help me?"

"Pancake!"

Papa let out another heavy laugh at the complete disregard in his question.

"Aha, pancake it is!"



ZÈWǒ PWÈN ǑNÈ
THE LAST ROUTINE



“DIA, DRY YOURSELF off in the tub,” Amethyst reminded her, just as Diamond’s leg reached halfway out of the tub.

“I know,” she responded as she retracted her foot.

Amethyst handed Diamond a towel and began to dry herself off with one of her own.

She stepped out and walked over to the sink, then wiped the fogged mirror with her hand. She watched at how her hair ran down her back in unusual wavy strands because of the water. It was a different species once it dried up, and a lot harder to manage that way.

“Not a trace of syrup. I wonder what my hair will look like by the end of today,” she scoffed knowing her strands would intertwine a hut if she didn’t pull

it back into a tail.

“My hair will look straight,” said Diamond as she joined Amethyst at the sink, her tiny fingers drumming on the counter top.

“Yeah, ‘cause your hair is always straight. You have Mama’s Asian hair.”

The thought made Amethyst a little jealous, since she missed Mama the most. Diamond didn’t remember Mama all that much, but she got to look like her.

It wasn’t fair.

Amethyst had to learn to be responsible since there wasn’t always someone to watch over her siblings when Papa went to work. Four years had gone by, but Amethyst couldn’t seem to ignore the squeezing feeling she felt in her heart when she looked at Diamond.

She looked away from her younger sister and began to tame her hair with a comb.

“I have to brush my hair, too,” Diamond reached for the comb in Amethyst’s hand. She’d only made it to the crease of her sister’s elbow.

Amethyst pulled her arm away, “No, you don’t.”

“Yes, I do,” she whined.

“No, Dia.” Amethyst turned her back. “I need it more than you and you can’t brush with a comb, you just comb it.”

“No, I have to br— I have to comb my hair!”

“Nah, Dahïah!” she yelled, her Stïton accent rolling off her tongue. “You don’t need it. I do. You just want it ‘cause I have it. Nah.”

“I need it,” Diamond expressed, “Tr—treat others the way you want to be treated.”

“That doesn’t even make any sense—”

“AMETHYST!” Papa yelled from the bottom of the stairs.

By the aggravation in his voice, he must’ve been calling her for a while now. Amethyst thought she might’ve heard her name, but she couldn’t tell over the insistent nagging spouting from Diamond’s mouth.

“Yes!” Amethyst called back to them.

“AXEL’S HERE!”

“O—okay!”

“I need it, I need it, I need it!” Diamond refused to let up being the six-year-old that she was. Everything that wasn’t hers, she wanted; especially when her big sister had it.

“Ömkè, òmkè, you can have the comb, but you have to comb your hair out there.”

Diamond nodded. She immediately turned to the mirror to get started when her big sister finally gave her the comb.

Amethyst blankly dropped her expression then opened the bathroom door. “Out there, Dia.”

She always had to repeat herself when it came to her siblings.

“Okay,” said Diamond. She happily left with her sister’s comb in her hand.

Amethyst shut and locked the door behind her. She turned and leaned her back against the wood.

Axel’s here.

Amethyst’s heart jumped out of her chest knowing he was just a floor beneath. She thought, what if the floor caved in and she had dropped in just her towel?

She looked at the blue tiles of the bathroom floor and squeezed her legs as if the flooring had become transparent; as if he could see her even though she had just locked herself in the bathroom. Every morning, it was the same whenever he showed up.

Axel’s here.

She blushed in the mirror and held her cheeks. She could feel the fear and excitement building up. She watched the reflection of her eyes slowly glow to a vibrant purple. The more anxiety that bubbled inside her, the more that thick ring of color grew around her iris.

“Stop it,” she scolded herself. “You can’t do this. He’ll think you’re weird.” Nevertheless, her heart continued to race. She bit her lip and frowned.

Amethyst sighed as she recalled all of the times people had made fun of her at school.



“Papa . . . it happened again. They’re picking on me,” she looked to the floor and mumbled her words. “There’s something wrong with me.”

“There’s absolutely nothing wrong with you, babbù. You’re just . . . very special. You have a gift. A gift

*that you can't tell anybody about. Okay? Nobody.
Whenever they go fluorescent, just close your eyes and
forget about everything around you. Inhale . . .
exhale . . . and count to five. I seal, it will go
away . . . It has to. Do you trust me?"*

She nodded and did as she was told.

"Hide your eyes. You can't let anybody see them."



"1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . ." She counted between breaths, "5."

Amethyst opened her eyes and they returned to their original dark shade. Still purple, but much less noticeable if she kept her head low.

Amethyst swiped her forehead and whipped it to the side before she let out a heavy sigh.

She quickly tied her hair into a tail and left her bangs out. Then she brushed her teeth. When she was done with that, she left the bathroom, stumbling over her sister's damp towel at the entrance.

Amethyst rolled her eyes before she picked up her comb and kept it moving.

She walked over to the dresser and grabbed the plastic container filled with cream, spreading it throughout her body. Soon after, she ironed her school uniform and slipped it on before running to the bathroom mirror.

"Hair?" She fluffed a couple strands. *Check.*

"Uniform?" Amethyst spun, revealing her red skort and adjustable straps that went up her front and crossed her back. Underneath, she wore her navy flannel shirt. *Check.*

She inspected her teeth and lastly, her eyes. She was in the clear. Amethyst walked out and closed the bathroom door, but right before she left her room, she eyed the framed picture on her night stand.

Her eyes softened as she walked over and lowered onto her knees. She calmly leaned her body forward until her nose kissed the floor, her hands positioned in front of her. She stood back on her feet

and lowered her knees to the floor again to repeat the ritual a second and third time.

This was usually done where a funeral was held, but every morning, Amethyst chose to follow this Korean tradition right in her bedroom and pay her respect to the dead.

“Bye, Mama.” Amethyst waved at the picture of her mother.

Soon, she was out of the bedroom and closing the door behind her.

Amethyst ran into the hallway and down the stairs, but halfway through she stopped on a step and turned around, wanting to flee. She was thankful nobody could see her yet, but she had to gather herself. Her heart was beating so fast.

Amethyst had finally made it to the bottom steps, and in the kitchen, she could see Papa fixing up the pancakes. To the left of the kitchen, Diamond and Garnet were seated at the table. They played around with Axel, who stood next to them.

He resembled the males in the house with his thick brows and roundish eyes, though his lips were plump and his nose rounder. Axel hung around their family often and people mistook him for Garnet’s

older brother since he was twelve years old and towered over each of the siblings.

Amethyst thought his smile brightened the dim living room as she watched him laugh together with her siblings. She thought he looked cute in his school uniform, too.

It consisted of a navy flannel shirt that had three little white buttons at the top and brown shorts that stopped above his knees. His hair was black and cut short, barely an inch. It made him look very neat and clean, even though his hands were always wrapped in old bandages.

Since last year, Axel started to wear this off-navy long sleeve shirt underneath his uniform. Kids made fun of him, especially when it was really warm outside, but Axel never let it bother him. He just ignored them. Whenever anybody would try to put their hands on him, he'd just dodge them.

Amethyst was thankful for him, because even though he had his own problems, he had always protected her from bullies when he could. After Papa, he was kind of her hero.

"Morning, everyone," Amethyst greeted as she walked over to the dining table.

Papa dealt his hello from the kitchen cut out in the wall, but everybody else just giggled.

Diamond covered her mouth and looked back and forth at Amethyst and the two boys, who were also smiling.

Amethyst wondered what the joke was.

“Good morning, Net,” Axel spoke, disregarding Amethyst’s greeting.

It felt like an imaginary stab to Amethyst’s chest. Was she being ignored?

He crouched down by Garnet before taking a quick peak at Amethyst’s face. “How’d the prank go this morning?” Axel listened intently for his answer.

Garnet giggled and shot him a thumbs up, but when the little boy tried to speak, chewed up bits of pancake flung from his mouth all over Axel’s face. Diamond died laughing in her chair.

Baffled by what just happened, Axel stood up and wiped his face with a napkin. “Not cool.”

He frowned and sent them a thumbs down, but that only made them laugh harder. Something settled in Amethyst’s heart.

She didn’t understand it, but she was happy it passed. “I knew you put him up to it! You’re a bad

influence.”

“And you’re—”

He paused.

Amethyst jolted at the break in his sentence as he looked at her. She decided to fill the space.

“Ugly, funny-looking, fat,” she oinked, finishing his sentence with a forced smile.

“How’d you know?” He teased.

Amethyst’s jaw dropped.

She began to feel a mix of emotions. The more embarrassed she got, the angrier it came off. She frowned and marched around the table to attack Axel.

He also began to hurry around the table, trying to defend himself, “I didn’t—”

His own laughter cut him off. His attempt to get away from Amethyst was also feeble. “I didn’t mean it.” She grabbed him by the collar and pulled him in close so she could give him a good couple of smacks on the arm. “I’m kidding—ah! I’m kidding. You’re beautiful! You’re the prettiest girl I’ve ever met.”

Amethyst stopped halfway through another slap as her frown softened to a pout.

Axel met with her eyes, “I really mean that.”

Her hand retreated to her side, a little shocked from his compliment.

Did he *really* mean that? Did he actually think she was beautiful? Or was he just trying not to get hit?

Amethyst couldn't bring herself to say anything as he looked away from her. They both got kind of flustered. She tried to fight the growing smile on her face, but she really didn't know what to do with herself.

She had to calm down. Her eyes were going to change.

"Okay." Papa waltzed in with a tray of pancakes, eying Amethyst's little friend. "Alright, simmer down, simmer down." He stepped in between the two and placed the tray of food on the table, "Here are the rest of the pancakes. Dig in!"

Everyone had just sat into their seats ready to eat, when a set of knocks hit frantically against the door.

"That's probably your aunt, Yu Na," Papa told the kids as he left the table. He murmured to himself, "Why's she knocking like that?"

He walked over to the door and checked the peephole slot to see who had come by. Papa hesitated before opening the door, but when he did, a

well-dressed man barged in, holding long black clothing in his arm. His skin was fair, but not tinted like Diamond's.

He was a white man paired with blue eyes that could be noticed from across the room. Amethyst had never seen him before. Nobody from Papa's work had visited before.

This was the first.

"Joseph. Quick, you have to come," the man spoke in urgency as he grabbed hold of Papa's arm.

He had to shush the man for being so loud with the kids in the house. Papa guided him outside and closed the front door behind them, though loud muffles could be heard all the way at the table. The kids exchanged looks but continued eating.

It was grown-up stuff.



ZÈWǑ PWÈN TWǑ
SOMETHING STRANGE



TWENTY MINUTES had gone by before Papa slipped back inside, scratching the nape of his neck.

The man pushed his upper half past the door. “Please, you have to hurry.”

“Okay, okay. I’m coming,” Papa spoke over the man. “Please. Wait outside.”

Papa rushed past the kitchen and moved for the stairs, almost forgetting about the children at the table. He stopped and looked at them, as they stared him back with curiosity.

“Hey pumpkins,” said Papa.

Axel raised an eyebrow.

“I have to go into work early.” Papa picked up his untouched plate of pancakes and used his fork to empty the leftovers into Diamond’s plate. She was closest. He soon sped off into the kitchen.

“Apparently, something happened, and they want me to, uh, come in.”

Papa was acting weird. He clanked his dish into the sink and that was something he had always told his kids to be careful about.

“Did something bad happen?” Diamond asked, sensing how off Papa was.

“No, sweetheart, they just need my help. I’ll be right back.” Papa disappeared up the stairs and in a matter of seconds he was stomping right back down trying to slip his other arm into his suit jacket. “Ame, you know the drill?”

“*Stay with these guys until their wagon shows up. If it doesn’t, then stay home.*’ I got it.” She said giving him two thumbs up before Axel flipped one down and mimicked a fart sound.

“Great, don’t forget. Stitōn lessons after school today,” Papa winked, and Amethyst nodded with a smile. “Same with you little guys. It’s important you learn the language.”

Axel looked at the exchange between them. “What language? How many of those do you guys speak?”

“Okay,” Papa kissed each of his kids and rubbed

Axel's head, "I'll be back." He grabbed his suitcase by the stairs. "I love you all. Be safe on your way to school," and with that he closed the door.

"Wait, Amethyst, did you forget?" Axel asked wide eyed, immediately changing the subject upon Papa's departure.

"Forget what?"

"*Ahh*," he put his hand to his forehead. "You forgot. The race is today! I'm going to win," Axel explained confidently.

Amethyst gasped, "Shoot, that's right. People are climbing the tree today! Especially the older kids."

"Well more importantly, *I'm* climbing the View Tree."

"Well, then what are we doing? Let's g—" She had already forgotten. "Right . . . we can't."

Axel propped his elbow up on the table and turned towards her, "Yeah. What are we going to do?"

"I don't know." Amethyst thought about how she wanted to climb the tree, but the chance of her eyes changing held her back. The lack of upper body strength didn't help, either.

If she couldn't climb, she wanted to watch the others race up the biggest, tallest tree near the Villa

Trade.

It was decades old and held a bird's eye view of the entire alley, all seven sections of the Villa Trade until it reached the Dalia River. At least, that's what they said.

Papa always told them to ignore the rumors and that people just liked to gossip unnecessarily, but Amethyst couldn't help but hope this one was true.

"We could just leave the little rug-rats," Axel suggested with a smile on his face, only to receive furrowed eyebrows from Amethyst. "We could play Hide and Run."

"Hide and Run," Garnet exclaimed in curiosity. "What's that?"

Axel turned, "Just a little game I came up with." His devious smirk grew. "Wanna play?"

"Yeah!"

"I want to play, too," Diamond chimed in.

"Stop it," Amethyst nudged Axel in the shoulder. "We're not doing that."

He rose his hands in the air. "I'm kidding. Well, if my calculations are right, which they usually are, we won't be able to make it if we don't leave at least an hour before the wagon comes. You already know

it'll take us thirty minutes to get there."

"Yeah," Amethyst sighed, knowing her siblings would be the reason she couldn't leave, and in turn, *she* was the reason Axel couldn't leave. "I have to stay here and wait so— but I mean, you can go."

"Then how would you get to Second Elementary?" he asked.

"I'd walk."

"You'd walk all the way over there? Are you crazy? Your legs will fall off."

"No way, I have strong legs." She proceeded to stretch out her leg and flex her calf.

"Not stronger than mine," Axel stretched out his calf beside hers, looking slightly larger in comparison.

"Barely," she retorted.

"Whatever," Axel retreated his leg. "Mine are longer. Either way, I'm not going to just leave you here. My mom raised me to be a gentleman, so that's what I'm going to do."

"Thanks," Amethyst smiled at him still feeling bad about everything. She was lucky to have such a reliable friend. What would she do without him?

But what Amethyst didn't know, was that Axel felt the same way, and he couldn't help himself when

he stared at her. She was so pretty.

He began to fidget in his seat, “Uhm, Ame. D-do you—”

He stopped mid-stutter when his voice cracked into a high pitch, puberty at its finest moment.

She giggled, trying to contain her laughter. “Do I what? What’s wrong?”

“Never mind.”

“Noo— No. I didn’t mean to laugh.”

“Nothing’s wrong, I just have to . . . ask you a question.”

“What is it?” Amethyst asked, her curiosity getting the best of her. He looked kind of serious.

Axel sat up and cleared his throat. He paused in thought before he spoke again, refusing to look Amethyst in the eyes. “Do you like me?”

Amethyst froze in her seat. Like Axel, she averted her eyes and stared at the half-eaten pancakes in her plate, replaying his words over in her head, though he’d just said it. She couldn’t believe this was reality, so she pinched her thigh under the table—a little too hard.

“*Abi*,” she whispered to herself.

“I?”

“No—”

“No, you don’t like me?”

“No, it’s not that—”

A wave of emotion rushed over Amethyst. Her face was burning up by the second and butterflies fluttered uncomfortably in her tummy. Papa said love was a feeling to be cherished, so why did she always feel dizzy and sick?

“I like you a lot,” said Garnet.

“Me too. I like Axel,” Diamond said agreeing with her younger brother, both of them raising their thumbs up to the ceiling.

“Thanks, but uhm . . . Ameth—”

There was another knock at the door.

“Oh! The door!” Amethyst jumped from her seat.

“I have to get that.”

ZÈWǒ PWÈN TÙRĪ
IN THE VILLA TRADE



EVERYBODY WATCHED HER walk over towards the door. Amethyst stood there, taking a minute to recuperate her feelings. She found herself doing that several times a day. She really didn't want to surprise any visitors with her glowing eyes. Amethyst could see the reflection of her eyes in the doorknob. She waited for the reflection of light to fade away as she counted up to five.

When she was in the clear, Amethyst opened the door for a lady who wore a beige dress with colorful, hand-sewn, flower patterns. She held a woven basket of fruits and vegetables and other household supplies.

"Hello, my darling."

"Yu Na Imo," Amethyst wrapped her arms around the lady, happy to see her aunt. She always practiced her Korean whenever Auntie Yu Na came

around. She didn't want to lose her roots, mostly because it made her feel closer to Mama. "Eotteohge samchoni?"

"Mh, samchon? Gwaenchanha. Neouni Appa?" She asked, looking around the room.

"Appa yeogi eobseo. He left for work early."

"Hi, Imol!" The youngest two rushed over to the front door, Axel striding behind them.

"Annyeong," she greeted them with a smile.

"Konichiwa." With a devious grin on his face, Axel bowed, greeting their aunt in Japanese. Both Auntie Yu Na and her oldest niece shook their head at his ignorance.

"Tch, baboya," she raised a fist.

"Baboya," he mocked her in an old lady voice before he snuggled under her arms, making Auntie Yu Na smile unwillingly. "I'm just kidding."

"How's my adopted nephew?"

"How do you say 'good' in Korean?"

"Gwaen—chan—ha," she said slowly so Axel could repeat after her.

"Yeah, that," he chuckled.

Auntie Yu Na scowled at him and walked over to the kitchen, "I have some produce for you guys." She

peered through the kitchen cutout and over to the table of pancakes. “I see you all used up the maple syrup.”

Garnet began to giggle, “I—I know why the syrup is gone.”

“Oh, you do,” Yu Na smiled. She crouched over her knees, “Why is the syrup all gone?”

“I know, too!” Diamond rushed over.

“E’cause I—”

“I want to tell it!”

“No, I wanna—”

“Okay, okay. Why don’t you both tell me what happened.”

The two kids fought for the spotlight as they retold this morning.

When Axel nudged Amethyst, she thought he might’ve wanted to finish the conversation from earlier. What was she going to say? If she even *began* to tell him how she felt, her eyes would change when she needed to keep them hidden. She couldn’t risk it. She couldn’t let anybody see them, not even Axel.

Amethyst tried to ignore him even when he poked her in the stomach. The more she ignored him, the more he poked. It started to tickle.

She gave in. “What?”

He nodded his head toward the kitchen.

“Huh?”

“Ask her,” he grumbled with another nod, then pointed to the front door.

That’s right. She could ask Imo to watch Diamond and Garnet. That way her and Axel could make it in time for the tree race.

Amethyst was antsy approaching Yu Na, because she never really knew what would come out of her. Most of the time she was nice, but there had been times when she wasn’t. Amethyst hadn’t personally experienced her uglier side, but she had observed it towards others.

It was already bad enough that Papa had warned Amethyst about keeping her special ability a secret, but she never understood why he always said, *especially Yu Na*. She guessed it was because her aunt was superstitious? But all Amethyst could do was change her eyes unwillingly. What harm could that do?

None the less, Yu Na Imo was family.

“Silly boy, always with the pranks,” she pinched Garnet’s cheeks. “Just like your Appa.”

“Imo?” Amethyst stepped into the kitchen.

“Yes, dear.” She smiled.

“Do you think you could watch the kids until the wagon comes, please? Axel and I want to get to the wagon stop early today.”

“It should be arriving soon?”

“Yup.”

“Mh, araso. Kunde . . .” Yu Na motioned for her niece to come closer, then raised her brows toward Axel. “Namja chingoo issuh?”

“Aniyol!” Amethyst exclaimed, embarrassed by her question.

“Oh, kurre?”

“De,” Amethyst averted her eyes. “He’s my friend.”

“Oh, araso. Okay. Naneun aideul-eul bolgeoya,” said Auntie Yu Na. She told Amethyst to be safe and then returned her attention to the younger ones.

“De,” she bowed slightly and backed out of the kitchen, “gomapseumnida!”

Amethyst gave Axel the OK and then went to grab her pack at the bottom of the stairs. She strapped it over her shoulders and rushed to the front door, waving Axel over. He put his hands

together and bowed to Yu Na, quickly following Amethyst out the door before her aunt could scowl at him again.



Houses and complexes towered over the small huts that stood tall over the entire community of the Villa Trade area. People bustled around with different kinds of goods, ranging from carts filled with fruits, vegetables, and meats to the utmost of leathers and the flimsiest plastics.

Around dozens of these carts, children ran from east to west playing with their small dolls. They even used rocks that emulated ashy colors, from grey to red, to create games and drawings on the gravelly cemented parts of the ground.

It helped pass the time as they waited for the wagon to arrive and take them to First Elementary, a school for those nine and under. Double-digits had to find their own way outside the Villa Trade and over to Second Elementary, which was right by the other school. There just weren't enough wagons to transport all the kids and even if they did have

enough vehicles, it would cause too much traffic between the people transporting on foot.

It was only a year ago that Amethyst had joined Axel on his commute to the wagon stop. The two of them were lucky enough to attend, as some were far too poor to send their children away for an education, and those that did could barely afford to wash their clothing properly. Some of the kids' uniforms remained dirty, but nobody judged since water was scarce.

That was the consequence of thousands of families in one giant community, especially for those living in Sections A, B and C since water was several hours out across the alley, even though these three sections were closest to the shops.

Opposite to these Sections were Sections D, G and F. They were furthest from the shops, but a water source was right in their backyard because of the Dahlia River. Amethyst never heard anything about the people who lived across the river, but there was talk of people canoeing over just for the goods.

This made trading a huge success.

Everyone strived to live in the Villa Trade because of the wares each shop sold. Not only were

there plenty of materials, but also it was conveniently located straight down Poplar Avenue. Both sides of the street were filled with shop after shop, but being an owner came with the high risk of theft and destroyed property.

Section B was the closest to the heart of town, and Amethyst was lucky enough to live there since her father worked with the authorities at the Capitol, which was the largest building in Section E. This was centered amongst all other Sections in the Villa Trade.

The authorities were their protectors and Amethyst felt safe with them around. There was rarely any violence since the higher-ups forbade it, and to enforce the rules, there were guards on every street corner to keep up with the current of people who passed through.

There was never a day that Amethyst didn't see a guard when she stepped out of the house, which made her uneasy when she didn't see a single authority outside.

"We still have forty minutes left. You ready?" Axel propped up his metal bike, the tires dull from years of cycling.

Amethyst sat on the metal plate behind the seat of the bike. “Yup,” she affirmed, wrapping her arms around his waist.

“Hold on tight.”

Axel quickly pedaled through the crowd. He turned several corners and tight folds of street space.

It was about eleven minutes of keen maneuvers and memorized pathways before they exited past the wired fence, which wrapped around the entire Villa Trade but had exits for different sections.

Several feet away from the fence, there were three shops. The first shop at the corner was the Shoe Shop. It was run by Epaminondas, Papa’s friend.

He had a son named Tyryn who was around the same age as Amethyst, but his wife had passed away. Without two set incomes, he couldn’t afford to send his son to school. It made him spiteful towards the people around him.

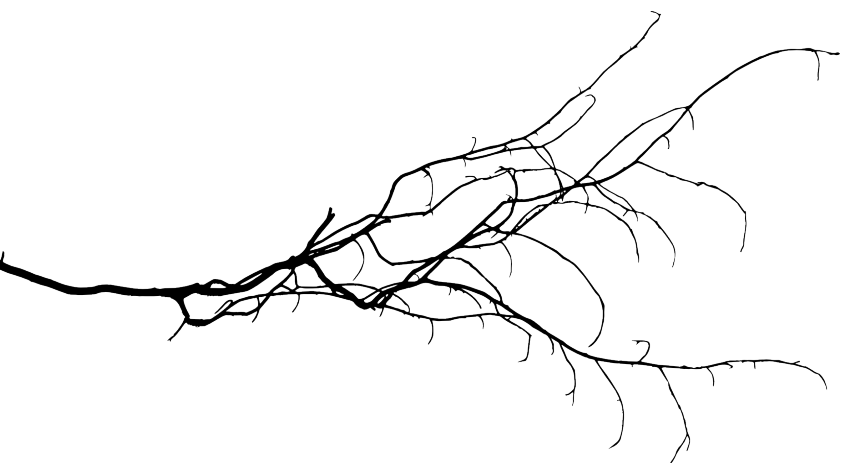
Anybody who cut through his grass got drenched with a bucket of dirty water. It didn’t matter whether you were a child or an adult, and he knew that people were only doing it to get straight onto Poplar Avenue. It was such a miniscule piece of grass, but Epaminondas didn’t care.

Amethyst didn't have to worry about getting splashed, since they just needed to go straight up the road. The minutes moved quickly as they zoomed through the familiar area.

This was Amethyst's favorite part of the day. She got to be outside in the sun and very close to Axel. She tightened her grip around his waist and snuggled her cheek against his back where he couldn't see her, even if her eyes changed.

If bystanders saw her eyes go fluorescent, it wouldn't even matter. She'd be gone before they could even recognize her. Despite the long ride, that's how fast Axel could pedal through the hills.

For those twenty minutes, she could almost be free hiding behind his shoulders.



ZÈWǓ PWÈN FǓ
THE RACE TO FIRE



THEY WERE CLOSE to the stop. In the near distance, Amethyst could see the older kids waiting at the wagon stop beside the View Tree.

“Right on time.” Axel slowed down until he stopped behind the cluster of bushes surrounding a signpost.

Amethyst braced herself, drawing in a heavy breath before she was ready to go. Axel steadied his feet on the ground as she got off the bike, noticing that the condition of the sign was considerably less than mint.

“Look at this.” She pointed out. “It’s all bent.” Amethyst walked around to the other side of the bushes. She read the crumpled words aloud.

“Welcome to Poplar City.”

Axel tied his bike around the ankle of the sign,

making sure his bike was well-hidden in the pocket he created beneath the bushes. “Yeah, I noticed coming in.”

“But look at this, someone drew a curved line with marker.” She cocked her head to the side. “Why does the line have stitches on it?”

He walked around beside Amethyst and touched the sign with two of his fingers.

“No, it’s paint. It’s still wet.”

“Oh, yeah. It’s still dripping.”

Axel wiped the residue on the grass, but it left a red smudge on his fingers. “Come on, let’s go. They’re about to start.” He trotted his pace to a run as Amethyst moved to keep up with him.

“Hurry up, slowpokes!” shouted a boy named Roger.

Axel ignored him and joined the roughly fifty to sixty kids surrounding the View Tree, placing his hands to his knees to catch his breath.

“The wagon’ll be here in under twenty minutes now, so we gotta start,” another fifteen-year-old, Pas, instructed.

“Thanks for making us start late, Axe Head,” Roger taunted.

“Thanks for making it easy to win, you sack of potatoes.”

Some of the kids couldn’t help chuckling, including Amethyst. Roger was always such a bully, so the other kids didn’t really feel too sorry about Axel’s comment.

“Alright, enough, you two. We’ll hold two rounds to see who can reach the top the fastest—*or at all*. Sammi, you got the watch?” asked Pas.

Amethyst flinched as he gestured to the tall girl standing beside him.

When she nodded in confirmation, he continued, “Okay, we gonna do four at a time. Who up first?”

Everyone was quiet.

Pas looked around for any volunteers. “Nobody? Come on, guys.”

The people who’d boasted about climbing the tree yesterday were silent today. Axel was the first to shoot his hand up.

“Yes! Boy with the sleeves,” followed by the sack of potatoes. “Alright, we got Roger. Who else? We need two more? There were at least ten of y’all who wanted to do it last time.”

Sammi’s eyes drifted over to Amethyst, a heavy

grin curled her lips.

Amethyst instantly felt inferior. She looked away from the girl and down to the ground. She refused to make any more eye contact with her.

Before Sammi could offer her like a piece of meat, two other boys stepped onto the plate. “We’ll give it a try.”

“Bet, let’s get this show started! The four of y’all are going to circle around the tree, evenly, so there’s enough space for everybody and no complications, but before that, y’all have to be five feet away from that tree. You guys already know what it is, but imma recap it anyways. There’re only three rules for this event. No interference. No cheating. No trash talking ‘till *after* the race. That goes for you too, Roger.”

Roger started to protest, “Me? Why I—”

“Or you’ll be disqualified.”

That shut him up.

Pas continued, “Now, you all line up in place.”

The boys circled evenly around the tree and backed up to what they estimated as five feet. Sammi and three of her friends pulled out their rulers and measured out the distance to make sure they were

exactly the right amount away.

“Pas, we’re good,” Sammi confirmed.

He spoke so fast like these words were one—
“Alright-alright-alright,” —and clasped his hands.
“Y’all ready?”

Roger glared at Axel when Pas began to count.

“One . . . Two . . .” He paused once again to add dramatic effect. “. . . Three! GO!” He flung his hands forward as if he had just released the boys.

They raced forward and everybody formed a crowd behind who they wanted to win.

Each of the contestants grabbed ahold of the bark in attempt to maneuver up the tree. Axel hugged the tree with his whole body, his feet just barely holding on. He moved his arms slowly up the tree, grabbing whatever he could to pull himself up, only to fall to the ground.

That didn’t stop him from latching right back on. He moved his arms up the tree again, slowly making his way up the tree bark.

“Come on, Axel!” Amethyst cheered him on, as everybody hooted and hollered.

She was stuck on how cool Axel looked and admired his efforts, especially when dark puffs of

smoke began to rise in the distance behind him. He was so brave.

She watched him climb as the sun gleamed upon her face. It revealed the purples that accentuated in mineral-like streaks from her pupils. Truly a work of art.

To her surprise, even the sack of potato had a couple of supporters. That quickly changed when he could barely hold himself onto the bark. By now, the other three contestants were hanging off of a branch or at had least propped their feet up on the tree. People were beginning to drift to the next racer.

Roger looked around, gruff at the sight of no supporters. The look on his face when he saw that nobody was rooting for him made Amethyst feel terrible.

If it had been her, she'd feel very embarrassed. She knew what it felt like to be singled out and didn't want anyone else to know the feeling, not even Roger. He'd been mean to her on several occasions, but she still felt sorry for him.

Amethyst listened to the echo of her father's voice.

Treat others the way you'd like to be treated.

Then she ran over behind Roger.

“Let’s go, Roger!” she smiled and genuinely clapped for him.

Out of breath, he looked over at Amethyst.

“Come on, you can do it!” She thought she might’ve given him a boost when he smiled at her.

Roger looked up at the tree and over at Axel, who was several branches up. He cupped his hands to the side of his mouth. “Aye, Axe–Head! Your girlfriend is all over me.”

He wheezed a laugh, then scowled over his shoulder. “I don’t want your cooties, Amethyst. Go away.” After that, he paid her no mind. Fighting the tree commanded all of his energy.

Even though he was mean and Amethyst wanted to cry, she held it in.

If her eyes changed now it would all be over. “Whatever, Roger.”

She walked away, but Roger had been so loud that he brought unwanted attention towards Amethyst. Several random eyes watched her with laughter, disgust, and fear. They were not discreet. They were *never* discreet whenever her name came up.

Amethyst envied them for being able to express themselves freely, but she hated any type of attention towards her, especially negative. It made her feel flustered and anxious. She always wanted to run away or hide.

Amethyst hoped to blend in with Axel's sum of supporters, but Sammi and her friends followed after her, seizing an opportunity.

She needed a friend, but the only one she had was too far up the tree. She couldn't see him, and it was already too late.

"SO, you're not only a freak, but a boyfriend-hopper too?" Sammi glowered. She was tall and hovered over Amethyst with a shadow. "You just got to have them all."

"No," Amethyst responded timidly. "Axel's not—"

"Your mom did warn us about nasty girls with weird names," one of the other girls said. "We got to be careful, Sammi."

"I know, I don't want to catch rabies. MOVE, Amethyst."

She cowered as the cruel girls passed her.

"You're such a freak." Sammi bent forward to

her level. “Why are your eyes *purple*?”

Amethyst turned away, afraid to even look at Sammi.

“Look at her, she doesn’t even have anything to say.”

“—ave a gif—” she mumbled.

“What? We can’t hear you. And DON’T get any closer, I don’t want to catch your sickness.”

If they treated her like this, was this how she should be treating them?

Water shifted to the lines of Amethyst’s eyes, though her voice boomed under the flow of voices around her, “I have a gift!”

“What?” Sammi chortled a laugh. “Are you kidding? Who lied to you?”

“My Papa,” she defended in the heat of the moment.

“Your *Papa* lies,” Sammi retorted. “You even admitted it.”

“No, he doesn’t—”

“That means you’re a liar. Where did you come from? FREAK.”

Amethyst looked up for Axel, but he’d already made it to the top of the tree, and everyone was

chanting his name. He was the first to make it, just like he said he would. She was happy for him, but there was already too much going on. She was on the verge of breaking.

What was she going to do?

“Look! Her eyes are glowing!”

“Oh. My. Nibiru. Mom was right. She’s a witch! That’s why her mom disappeared.” She confirmed the mystery surrounding Amethyst’s mother all by herself, but Sammi didn’t actually know anything.

Those were rumors and *only* rumors, and Papa said not to listen to them. They weren’t true, so why would the townspeople say something like that about Mama? Especially when Amethyst missed her so much. It was so painful.

Sammi refused to touch Amethyst, so she pushed one of her friends into her, so that she’d fall to the ground, and when she did, Sammi’s friend had toppled over her.

“Abh!” The girl had shrieked her way up off the ground and began to squirm, wiping herself where Amethyst’s body had touched her. “What the hell, Sammi?! Now *I’m* going to get rabies!” She wiped her hands into the grass, rather touching bugs and

manure than to have remnants of Amethyst leftover.

The girl frowned as her other two friends laughed. They didn't care that Amethyst had scraped her knees, but she'd rather take a shove than listen to someone talk ill of Mama. That didn't stop that horrible feeling growing in the pit of her stomach.

Why did they hate her so much?

Just because her eyes changed colors, people were so mean to her. If she could stop it, she would, but she *couldn't*. She never learned how to control it. Amethyst was just born like this.

She gripped the grass between her fingers.

Why couldn't they just leave her alone?

The girls kept snickering at her and whispering. She shrunk her body towards the ground, trying to appear as small as possible. She just wanted to disappear and take all of the rumors about Mama with her.

Behind her tears, everything blurred into blobs.

Amethyst panicked. She dropped her head to the ground and turned away from the girls.

A m e t h y s t .

She cringed at the presence calling her name, but she couldn't take her situation anymore. It was too much, but like an itch the presence continued.

Suddenly, she had remembered what Papa always told her to do. How could she have forgotten?

The girls continued to talk against the crowd of voices and though they still hovered over her small frame, she didn't hear them.

She blocked them out, forced her mind clear and shut her eyes. "1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . ."

"Fire!" screamed a voice.

ZÈWǓ PWÈN FAHV
GO



AXEL?

Amethyst's eyes sprang open and like everybody else she whipped her head towards the tree.

"Fire," he gasped between breaths. "There's fire!" Axel continued to warn the people below him.

Everybody searched around for what he was talking about and looked at each other when they didn't see anything. Axel worked his way down the tree and hung onto a branch before he let go and stumbled onto his back.

"What is going on?" The crowd was full of questions. Axel got to his feet and wiped off his elbows.

"Are you all idiots? There is no fire," Roger declared, trying to redeem himself for not making it off the ground. "Axe-Head here is just spewing lies

because he won.”

“Are *you* an idiot?” He shook his head at the boy, realizing that everything that came out of that sack of potatoes’ mouth made no sense.

Another thing he didn’t understand was why Amethyst was on the ground. It only took one look at Sammi and her friends to know what had happened. He huffed.

Axel glared at the bullies like the plague that they were.

Everyone watched as he brought his only friend to her feet.

“Come on, Ame.” He held her hand and proceeded to walk away.

“W—wait,” Amethyst protested as confusion cluttered her mind with the other emotions she was already trying to keep ahold of.

“Hey, there’s smoke rising! Over there,” Sammi pointed out, making everyone look out to the sky.

“She’s right, look!”

They were the same puffs of smoke that Amethyst had noticed before. Now they were huge and as big as the clouds in the sky. They seemed to rise from one area.

Amethyst stared out into the distance, and when she realized where it was coming from, she gasped.

The Villa Trade.

Everyone began to buzz with questions. “So, there’s really a fire?”

“Yes, and not just fire, chaos. Everything is being destroyed! We have to go!”

“Where are we going to go, though?” someone asked.

“*We* have to go,” Axel gestured to Amethyst with her hand in his.

With his lead, the two began to leave the others and run for his bike.

As they slowed their pace to a stop, Amethyst’s eyes ran over the “*Welcome to Poplar City*” sign with its tainting red paint and crumpled posture. That’s what really slowed her down. She recalled the curved lines and the stitches that ran through them.

Before she even realized it, Axel had already pulled his bike from beneath the bushes.

“Get on.”

Amethyst circled around the shrubs. “Hold on.”

“Why?” he asked with urgency.

“We’re not supposed to run *towards* the fire, we’re

supposed to run away.”

Axel thought about all of the emergency steps he’d learn to take when there was a fire, and she was right. They were supposed to head in the opposite direction.

“What if there’s something wrong?”

Amethyst pulled her elbows into her hands, “Well, what can we do? We’re just kids. We have to stay where it’s safe.”

“But don’t you want to see your family? What if something’s happened to them?”

Amethyst thought about it, but that was absurd. “We were just over there, and everything was fine.”

“Yeah, but everything’s *not* fine right now. I saw it with my own eyes.”

“Now, you just sound crazy.” She tried to hide the fear in her voice.

“I’m not.” Axel dropped his bike and placed his hands atop her shoulders. “Ame, everything was in flames.”

“If that’s true, then the adults will handle it.”

Axel sighed, unsure of what else to do but listen to his gut feeling. And that’s what he did.

“You don’t have to come, but I’m going.” He

picked his bike up and hopped on the seat.

When he put his foot on the pedal—

“*Fine*, let’s go.”

—Amethyst caved. She didn’t want to be left alone.

She hopped on the bike. Instead of sitting down, she stood on the pipes. The ones that stuck out on both sides of the bike’s hind wheel.

Axel checked for her behind him. Amethyst nodded, letting him know it was okay to take off.

They quickly moved into the distance, where clouds rolled in and mixed with more smoke. It was hard to tell the two apart anymore as it commenced to storm. They biked down and up some hills, and at their peaks, Amethyst could see everything, things that no child should ever have to witness.

She noticed the lightning as it began, and her heart dropped as the thunder made its presence known. As they neared their homes, she tried to grasp what her eyes were telling her and understand what her ears were trying to convey.

Axel had pedaled the streets faster than he had ever before. The closer they got, the more the air smelled of overcooked beef and pork, but not quite

like the meat Papa cooked at home. It was distinct. Despite the drizzle of rain, the smell of hot rubber slipped into her nose. The last time Axel pressed his brakes, she noticed it had been coming from the tires of his bike.



It was only twelve minutes before they stopped in front of Section B. Villagers clogged the fence opening, desperately trying to flee the community with their families. Next to the original exit were two new ones, wires bent into wide holes. Those hadn't been there this morning and it still wasn't enough for the thousands of people who lived solely in Section B. Both holes were congested with people as they hurried to make more.

Axel abandoned his bike for Amethyst's hand and worked against the current of people, squeezing towards the entrance, rubbing against skin, collecting and then transferring beads of sweat, all while engulfed in a cloud of body heat, fear dripping off each of their dampened bodies and onto another. Axel tried his best to protect Amethyst with his arm

out in front and his body shielding hers behind him.

Adults tried to force them the other direction and when he realized it was impossible to get through this many people, Axel turned to face Amethyst. He let the current pull them away from the fence as he blocked off her sides with his arms again. Amethyst was nestled against his chest as she tried to catch her footing.

When they could finally stand without being pushed around, they looked around and at each other for a solution.

Amethyst had noticed areas around the fence where people weren't crowding. They had tried to go in where many people were coming out. What if they went about it a different way?

"*The fence.*" Amethyst pointed out. "Let's climb over the fence!"

Axel knit his brows at the thought of her climbing up that tall barricade.

He had no choice but to follow her when she dragged him through the crowd. She bobbed and weaved through the empty slits that made themselves apparent through the pits of people.

She eyed the length of the fence, acknowledged

its threat and choked it in the palm of her hands, determined to climb over. Axel gave her a boost up the fence and when she reached the top, she swung her legs over one by one, and then dropped onto the ground.

When she landed on her feet, she got a jarred feeling betwixt her heels and ankles, like her joints had collided by a hairline and struck a bolt up her legs. She was sore, but ignored the feeling.

All she could worry about was how this fence separated her from Axel and how she wanted him to get over it as quickly as possible.

She looked behind her, then back at her best friend.

Axel looked at Amethyst in a daze on the other side. "I—I'll be right back!"

He ran from the fence but quickly returned with his bike, giving Amethyst a mini heart attack. She let out a troubled sigh.

He was amazed at how she went about that without a second thought. She had the courage to jump over when she didn't even want to come in the first place. It sparked some determination in him. He had to get her home safely, and he needed his bike

to do that.

Axel tossed his bike over the fence after some struggle and then raised himself up after.

The two of them hurried onto the bike and dove further into the Villa Trade. Heat waves warmed their skin and fumes crept into the area before they pushed towards the sky. Laundry that had been dried in the sun flung into flames. Pockets of fire dispersed on the ground and spread into sections.

They watched green leaves crisp to a brown like the plants surrounding them, as they inhaled debris. Their lungs became scratched with coughs.

A lot the villagers were packed around the exit, but there were still plenty of people deep inside the Villa Trade. There was a noticeable difference in people as they moved in.

The more villagers had escaped the area, the more apparent these thugs had become, and they were everywhere. It was evident on their faces that these bandits didn't care about the people who lived there and had been causing the ruckus themselves.

From head to toe, they were covered in dull, shredded clothing. They wore dark leathers and metallic plates assembled into a whole outfit.

Amethyst had seen the authorities arrest one or two of these bandits before. Papa had told her to go back inside the house, that these were dangerous people. She wasn't allowed to go near any of them, but that wasn't something she could control right now.

There was an infestation of them dragging a cart full of men and women. It wasn't small like the travel carts villagers wheeled around day to day. It was one of the wagons that took them to Elementary. It was ten times the size of a travel cart.

All of the people inside had brown sacks over their heads and their wrists were tied with rope. Grown adults. Children. You could hear them all crying under the men telling them to "*shut up!*"

Axel tried his best to stay away from these carts. They snatched anybody who got close enough. It was difficult because there were thugs terrorizing people on foot everywhere, too.

Amethyst saw two of them dragging large brown sacks with items. A flood of crimson poured from broken seams and made its own trail on the ground.

The pigment was the same deep color surrounded by dead bodies and held the same consistency as

the red paint on that welcome sign.

It was a lot for Amethyst to take in.

With everything happening all at once, it was getting harder and harder to tell which street was which. Between all of the people, they were going to have to halt if they kept going forward, but Axel swiveled to the right and then to the left. He swiveled to the right again and abruptly turned a corner.

He almost sent Amethyst catapulting forward when he stomped on the brakes.



ZÈWǒ PWÈN SĪs
OPEN YOUR EYES



“COME ON, GET DOWN,” Axel whispered as loudly as he could, hauling her over to a cluster of singed bushes.

They squeezed between a building and the disintegrating leaves barely hanging on for their lives, but there were still enough branches to crisscross over and hide their bodies when they crouched down.

The branches poked and prodded Amethyst’s legs, indicating she couldn’t go in any further, but Axel wasn’t fully covered. The side of his body stuck out from where they entered.

“They’re going to see me,” Axel admitted, just as he saw a bandit coming their way. He quickly covered the opening with his bike and tried to back away.

Amethyst saw how scared Axel was and didn’t have much of a choice when he pushed against her,

as did the branches when they broke through the side of her skin.

“AHA! So y’all think you could hide, eh?”

This was it. They were caught.

“Come out here, child.”

Amethyst frantically and tightly gripped onto Axel’s arm. Her eyes were wide. She refused to let go. If they took him, she’d go with him.

“Mummy!” A little boy screamed from a couple of feet in front of them. There was evident rustling coming from the bushes across. They could hear his small feet start to a scurry as he left from behind the shrubs. “Mummy!”

Amethyst couldn’t see him, but the sudden silence from the boy frightened her. She heard two hard thuds . . .

Had they killed him? She squeezed Axel’s arm, her chest swelling as it heaved for clean air.

“*Mummy, Mummy*,” the man sung. “Where are you, *Mummy*? Come join our crew. We don’t bite. Well—”

He belched into an obnoxious laughter.

“—*maybe a little*. But we seal not to kill ya,” his sentence slid to a hungry growl.

He sliced through the hedge on a long row of bushes, probably the one the boy was hiding in. After setting fire to that one, he quickly moved to the other end of the bush the children were hiding in.

The thug lowered his torch and Amethyst watched the flames rip through while he dragged it along what was left of the bush.

Tendrils of smoke clawed desperately, as if trying to escape from the blazing inferno itself. As the flames moved closer with each second, Amethyst could feel the heat from the fire growing on her skin.

She turned her head away and into Axel's arm.

I'm going to die, she thought. *Papa!*

"Aye!"

Another man walked into the street.

"Stop foolin' and collect! We burned enough of the land already. Let's get this over with!"

"Shut up, you rat!" He turned to the other man. "I have no problem burning *you* alive."

The men bickered back and forth until their footsteps cleared into the distance, but neither of the children could bring themselves out of hiding, not after seeing—up close, with their own eyes—that there were people out there trying to kill them.

Amethyst heard what she assumed was the little boy's body being dragged across the way.

A m e t h y s t .

She felt the warmth of fire increase in the bushes beside her. It was only after she shook Axel's arm that they began to come out of shock.

Axel sat, shaking his head before he turned a slow daze towards Amethyst. His eyes cleared and when he saw the growing flames behind her, he straightened out. He peered through the holes of his bike and checked for the strange men.

Axel quickly stood to a crouch and Amethyst noticed that his shorts were suddenly darker in one area.

There was a dampened stream down the inseam of his leg. It didn't take much for her to realize what that was. She knew Axel would be embarrassed so she didn't say anything. Not right now.

Once Axel deemed the area clear, they got onto the bike. It was the only thing keeping them alive at this point. It made them quicker than the bandits on foot.

They moved deeper into the Villa Trade, the cries of women and children more distinct and heart-wrenching as the thugs chanted and pillaged, challenging the strength of the people in their community.

Dogs barked relentlessly and Amethyst even noticed one attacking a bandit, biting him at the ankles and trying to protect his owner, as did several other dogs that joined the fray. It wasn't long before the animals fell into whimpers and howls of pain when the bandit torched their coats with fire.

It was feverishly hot as they moved through the ruins, the buildings heavy with flames. The slight rain only seemed to add to the inferno's wrath. It wasn't enough to put the fires out, but neither were the small buckets of water that people tried to use. It was devastating.

Amethyst wiped at the debris on her face. That was when she realized she had been crying. She was suddenly more aware of her body when she soon felt her skin throb with each trickle of blood running down her leg. Her breath was getting shorter and weaker, and she could tell Axel's was too since his pace decreased on the bike.

To the left of them were three bandits restraining a villager to his knees. They pushed the man and tugged at his arms. A mahogany lady beside him screamed for them to let him go, hiding three of her children behind her small frame.

Just like the lady, Amethyst couldn't pull her eyes away when she heard the tear in the man's ligament, right before they ripped the limb from his body. She couldn't believe it. How was it possible for three people to do that? And with their bare hands?

This isn't real, she thought.

"Nooo!" The lady sobbed as she fell to her knees. Her despair wasn't enough for the bandits to stop, because they quickly went for her next.

She fought to protect the kids who clung onto her desperately, but once she realized it was too late to save herself, she told the kids to run, peeling at their tight grips, begging them to go with every hard shove she gave them.

Her head hung low with regret as the bandits held her in position. The kids hadn't even made it far enough before they cut over the lady's neck and down her back. Amethyst didn't want to listen while the lady screamed, but it wasn't something she could

escape until the woman, herself, had been silenced. She was dead, but the bandits continued with her corpse.

What more did they want?

One of them continued to carve her tissue in the motion of an “I”. The man dropped his knife and opened the folds of her skin. Then he began to tug, but tug on what?

All that was there was her spine.

Axel zoomed past them before Amethyst could see.

She was thankful and squeezed her eyes shut, afraid to see what else was to come, but her imagination frightened her even more when she involuntarily replayed what just happened. She opened her eyes, closing them only to blink away at beads of dirt that froze in the air like ice.

Crispy leaves had also stopped blowing with the wind and stilled mid-air all around her, but when she looked to the left and to the right, chaos had still been progressing at a fast paced.

Women and their daughters were dragged away from their homes. Grown men lay dead on the ground. Young boys were motionless beside them.

Over the duration of this trip, three dead bodies had become thirty, and it was extremely difficult for Axel to maneuver around them all.

Sirens went off in the distance, but there were no authorities, only thugs hauling bodies around each corner like they owned the place. Amethyst wanted to erase the infuriating grins on their faces.

Horried, the remainder of people ran wildly. Some hid. Some prayed. Some continued to fight physically, but mentally, Amethyst was stuck battling her own thoughts. *Everything was just fine*. Her mind burned with questions and her eyes flooded with more tears.

Why?

Her lips quivered furiously.

Why are they doing this?

There were countless attempts bandits made to snatch them off the bike, but heavy gusts of wind kept them from getting close. There were even times Amethyst saw blue strips strike between the friction of wind, but she knew how hysterical this chaos was making her.

Axel continued to zigzag through Section B until they reached Amethyst's home, and luckily enough it

was one of many that remained intact. He stopped the bike and Amethyst didn't hesitate to get off and find her family. She only faltered when she didn't see Axel get up with her.

Amethyst knew he had his own family to worry about, but she couldn't help but move to his side and place her small hand over his on the bike handle, as if holding them both would stop him from going anywhere.

Her shiny orbs looked into his searching for answers, but he pulled his hand from beneath hers and let it fall limply to her side.

She thought he was going to leave her, but then his moistened fingers slid over her cheekbones and past her ears when he cuffed her face into his hands, the rough bandage absorbing her tears dry, the tips of his fingers gripping like adhesives the way he held her.

He pulled her forehead to his and breathed her name, before he pulled away and looked to her eyes again.

"After this is over— just in case something happens, meet me back at the View Tree. I'll come there every day until I find you. Okay?"

All she could muster was a weak nod. It was like she had a ball in the back of her throat.

“I seal, Amethyst.”

She nodded a little harder, just before he planted a protective kiss to her forehead.

The kind of kiss Papa planted before each night came to an end, except, instead of falling into her usual slumber, electricity ran up and through her body. Energy looped over and over, even after Axel had pulled away from her.

“I will come find you.” His palms loosened before he released her, as delicately as a butterfly.

Axel readjusted himself on his bike and got his foot up on the pedal. The wheels moved beneath him on command.

He didn’t get too far when Amethyst stopped him by the end of his shirt. They looked at each other for a brief moment. Then Axel grabbed her hand and removed it from his shirt.

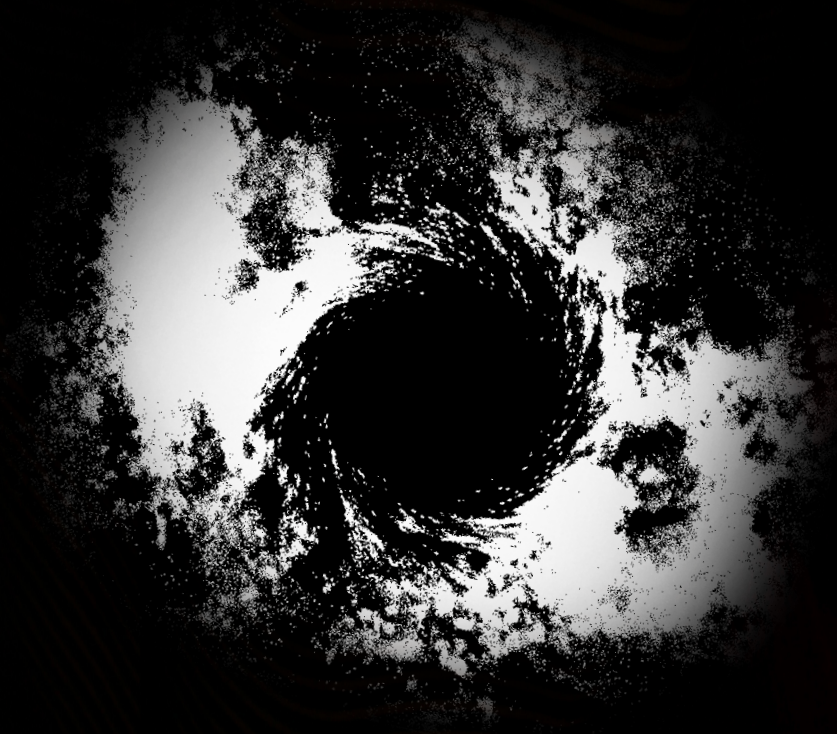
He took off.

It felt like she’d never see her best friend again, the way he vanished into the crowd, leaving her behind.

“*Axel*,” she whimpered.

He wasn't turning back around, and she knew that.

ZÈWǓ PWÈN SVÈN
INTO THE NIGHTMARE



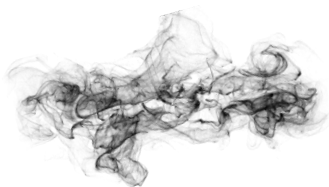
AMETHYST WAS ALONE now, and she needed to find her family. Just as she turned to go inside, a bandit spotted her.

She gasped and quickly leapt over some bricks as rushed past the front door. There wasn't enough time for her to close it when the bandit stood at the doorway.

She heaved in anxiety, waiting for him to strike her, waiting for him to set her on fire, like they did the rest of Villa, but after scrutinizing the building, it was like he couldn't come inside. He just huffed a groan in annoyance and then left.

Amethyst quickly shut the door before she began to call out to her family, ignoring the humidity that tousled her hair in a frenzy.

“Papa! Garnet! Diamond! Where are—”



*If there's an emergency, speak only in Lahûah Õ
Stitôn. I created this language specifically for this
family. If anything happens you guys can
communicate with each other without anyone else
understanding. If I'm not there, Amethyst, you take
your siblings and go somewhere safe. Okay, my little
pumpkins? Listen to your older sister.*



“Wè aht dû, Pahpah? Aht dû mîl?” Amethyst
called out to her father.

Something scraped against the wooden flooring,
then glass broke on the floor. A murmur sounded in
the dining room near the table. Amethyst hesitated

to speak again. She hid behind the wall in the kitchen.

“Ī-Īō?”

“-me-me,” a voice trembled. “H-he-here-h-he-re-”

“Wè? Dahïah, zï baht dû?” Amethyst stepped from behind the wall and out of the kitchen.

Slowly, she moved to the dining room and saw a small body hiding underneath the table.

“Garnet!” She choked out.

Amethyst crawled to the floor and embraced her little brother, happy that he was okay. She inspected his body and made sure he was all in one piece. He felt so small and fragile in her arms. She knew he was scared. It made her want to cry all over again.

“Wè zï Dahïah? Tû Pahpah? Aht öv kōn Yu Na Imo?” Her brother said nothing when she asked for the whereabouts of their family.

Amethyst couldn’t sit around and wait for Garnet to answer her questions. She had to find out for herself. She rushed to stand.

Garnet screamed for her not to go.

“Sah ahrè uh gōg fèr mèn.” She stood on her feet, “I’ll be right back,” and moved for the stairs.

She stepped into her father’s room and called out

his name. She then went adjacent, into Garnet's room. When she didn't see anyone, she ran down the hall and into her own room. It was the only one left.

She called out for her sister, but when she got no response, she swung the bathroom door open and rushed to the tub. The curtains clanked to the side, but there was nothing.

Amethyst walked out of the bathroom. Nobody was there, except for Mama. She stared at the picture, trying to contain her feelings. Amethyst grabbed the picture frame and ran to the first floor and over to Garnet. He was still hidden underneath the table.

"Nèt, we have to go!" When he didn't say anything, she began to tug at him, "Tì zì dangerous èr. Sî mil't aht on fire!"

"No, s-s-sah not leave!" he cried in fear, hugging the leg of the table, his small fingers gripping so tightly around the wood, the one that Papa built with his own two hands.

It was Mama's table.

"Nèt, we can't wait fêr Pahpah. He's coming later, but we have to go, kûnuh," she spoke sternly. Amethyst tried to be strong for the both of them.

"Noo . . . Papa," he turned his head away in

staggered breaths.

“Gahrnèt,” she whined. For a second there, Amethyst had lost her balance. “Trust me! We have to go, Nèt. Īwè ahrè uh ahvèt, tĩ zĩ an emergency. Sah òm sĩ oldest tũ tĩ zĩ my responsibility.”

She stopped to think. What if going outside was a bad thing? Amethyst didn’t want to risk taking her brother outside if this was the safest place to be. Their home hadn’t been set on fire yet.

She wobbled to the side as the last word of her thoughts echoed in her head. *Yet?*

Amethyst heard more rumbling outside. She quickly ran to the door and took a look through the peephole.

Though the air stunk of charred flesh and black smoke, people stood outside, peering up at the sky. Amethyst reluctantly opened the door to see what was happening. As she walked out towards the other people, pebbles began to bounce, and windows shivered like a cold day in winter.

No one moved until the ground began to vibrate with a noise several magnitudes louder than the thunder. The ground forced Amethyst forward and she fell onto the gravel with everyone else.

The roar sounded at an intensity she'd never experienced before. She backed away, afraid she might fall through one of those skinny cracks that moved and thickened as it ran beneath a tall building.

The building shook like a plastic doll house before it broke into large pieces on the side of her house.

Garnet!

The loud crashes intimidated her, even so Amethyst tried to stand and when she did, she felt a strange warmth in the center of her chest.

A m e t h y s t .

She dropped her mother's picture frame. The glass cracked into several pieces. Amethyst balled the clothing over her rib cage as she dropped to her knees. Her limbs hung over in agony. She didn't know what was going on, but whatever it was, it hadn't lasted long.

The pain subdued just as the quaking did. As soon as Amethyst realized it had stopped, she hurried to her feet.

She ran into the house, past the front door, past

the small kitchen her Papa always cooked in, and past the stairs that led to each of their bedrooms. She ran until she was standing in the living room, where they always had their meals, only to find that the ceiling had caved in on top of Mama's table.

"G-g-g," was all she could muster as she watched blood seep from beneath thick piles of cement, tiled with the same color of blue that was once her bathroom.

Amethyst stumbled forward, gaping at the hole in the ceiling that led to her bedroom. She'd hoped her eyes had been deceiving her and Papa would be coming home any second now.

He'd tell her she was just having a bad dream, to go back to sleep, and that very soon, she'd wake up and they'd be having breakfast with Axel again, like they did every morning, that Garnet was just taking a small nap, and that—

"*Omo-Omo!*" Auntie Yu Na appeared, and shrieked in the language native to her tongue. She covered her mouth, gasping as she watched her nephew's blood seep out onto the floor, "Sesange."

Amethyst had turned around, and with tears, she looked to her aunt, her eyes shiny and fluorescent

with color. “*I-Imo . . .*” She cried as she tried to walk over.

“No! *Haji*— Don’t come near me . . . *jebal*. Stay! S—s—stay over there.”

Amethyst did as she was told and stood in place. Neither one of them made a sound.

The woman stared at her niece and with accusing eyes, slowly backing away—further and further from Amethyst.

The more Auntie Yu Na backed away from her, the sadder Amethyst felt, and suddenly, the sky grew dark. There was no light.

All that could be seen was the glow in Amethyst’s eyes, piercing through the night.



10



Years Later



ŌNÈ
MY JEWELS



STEALING WAS LIKE BREATHING. I didn't need to, but it was a fate I couldn't escape. My only choice of survival was to take back what was once mine, and for the last six years, I'd done that without fail—until I got caught.

My name was Amethyst Oh-Maya, but everybody in here knew me as—

“Hour Eight!”

—and I refused to be caught by those monsters.

My feet jumped from rooftop to rooftop, steering clear of any wide openings. I had to know which way I was going before I could even see what was in front of me, and I couldn't risk stopping for one second.

There were twenty of those bandits I had stolen

from, and six of them were keeping up with me.

Every inch of my body ran slick with perspiration. Everything clung to my skin: my hair inside the bodysuit, and the bodysuit itself wore me like glue. My skin roasted with heat, and beads of sweat streamed down my face, but I kept pushing. I had to keep running across each roof, until I could no longer feel the fatigue in my legs.

My feet were nimble and ready for any sudden turns, which was how I was able to stop the momentum of my body when I reached a gaping hole atop the side of one building. Rocks slid off the edge like crumbs where my sneakers pushed at the concrete.

I backed up. It was unstable and felt like the rickety decay of old bones.

It was what we called a *splint*.

Bricks stacked unevenly. Granular cracks were apparent on every line, but I hadn't noticed the opening on this ledge. I couldn't.

It was one thing to determine the length between two buildings from afar, but it was too dark to notice a hole like this.

Standing at the ledge, I could see the fissure was

two stories long. Metal tubing and wires stuck out between the bricks and I could see the floor that separated the two homes. *Shit*. I had no time for this.

When I turned around, the bandits were closing in on me. I was surrounded, but that didn't mean anything. I was trained for this.

Determination flooded through me, and I knew my eyes lit up with their fluorescent hue when I saw the look on those bandits' faces.

Fûûwî abrè nah ôfê. These were my jewels, and I was ready to protect them with everything I had, but when the wind blew too hard, my legs wobbled at the ledge.

My body was tipping off the three-story building.

The bandits' aghast reaction quickly changed to a sneer as I fell to my last breath with their stolen goods. Hoots and jeers rolled off their tongues as gravity dragged me down to what seemed like Hell—or whatever came after that.

Death waved hello like this were the last time I'd be in this place.

Maybe I wanted it to be. I could just let those tubes rupture my ribcage and bleed out with a bang.

Instead, I anticipated the drop.

I lunged, my head beneath me for a better view, diving headfirst. I swiftly threw my hands up and when my fingers reached for the side of the brick, I was careful about where I placed them, avoiding the metal piping and anything else that could puncture the skin. My weight balanced out when I gripped the wall and pushed forward off my shoulders. I flung two-hundred-and-seventy degrees until I slowed into the same laying position I started in.

My fingers reached through the air, hoping to grab hold of something, anything, even though I knew that wasn't possible. I gave that effort up and simply folded my arms over the small pack I carried over my chest.

I imagined the feeling of my bones contorted into unnatural angles beside that pile of rubble on the ground, but it was seconds before I dropped into a tree. The plant swallowed me whole and its twigs whipped against my skin. Every hit slowed my tumble between barks and branches, and I took the slashes without a whimper.

That was, until I fell on my back.

"Fuck." I swore quietly, yet my voice still sent alley cats into a scurry. I internalized the pain.

Groans escaped every now and again. Even if it wasn't from three stories high, it was steep enough to shoot a stinging pain up my back.

It didn't help that I had a small audience either.

Randoms. They were the people that were—well, random.

They watched me writhe on the ground, distracted from their nightly routines, probably contemplating whether they should take me on while I was down. They were smart enough not to. Most weren't bold enough to take on one of the Regulars. And not all of them were fully human.

There were animals that hid in dark spaces, lurked around, and took care of their own business, trying to stay unseen just as I was. Just because I was a Regular didn't mean I wanted trouble. I had an agenda that was different from the rest. I wasn't stealing just to steal, and I didn't live here, either. In fact, this was the furthest I'd traveled through this place my entire life.

I sat up. I familiarized myself with the area, and as usual, my eyes stung from stench of rotten sewage and stale feces. Not only did the unnerving smell send Randoms sprinting in opposite directions, but

the high rates of violence and thievery gone unpunished rose exponentially—but only in this alley.

It was after what everybody called . . . *Mayhem*.

Authorities had lost complete control of this area a decade ago. It was only outside of these boundaries that people were safe. Families that lived here had no choice but to move out and into the cities, since bandits ruthlessly terrorized the Villa Trade and its seven sections. Now it was this giant pile of shit and stolen goods.

The crimes that took place in here were whispered about for years. Villagers that made it out alive had scars to prove them, though nobody ever talked about it. As if there were some unspoken rule, people remained hush and claimed to have never seen anything. Whatever happened here, stayed here.

Those who spoke the crimes into existence were hunted, caught, and murdered. Within days, those thug-like scavengers stole their spines and trophied them in respect to the infamous alleyway, hence, the *Devil's Backbone*. That was what they renamed our home. No one dared enter these Sections again, except for the brave, the foolish and the desperate.

So, where did I stand?

Leaves danced around me until they'd reached a still pose on the ground. Everywhere I looked were these menacing buildings, and off those brick walls bounced screams through this maze all night, the echoes reverberating in any listening ears. The deeper you were in, the more apparent those sounds were.

These walls that used to create happy homes were now tooled for the atrocities that took place in the Devil's Backbone, a.k.a. DB, and it caused people to lose their way, especially when running from fatalities. Fear made you lose your morality, your mind.

Lose your way, and you'd never make it out of these streets alive. Even one wrong turn could mean your life, but that wasn't a problem I had to fret about. I had everything mapped out, for the most part.

I leaned off of my hand, ignoring the tiny pieces of gravel I'd pressed into my skin when I palmed the throbbing wounds on my arm. I worked my way up to my feet, feeling some extra weight. I noticed that my back was covered in the goop that had molded these grounds for years. I groaned under my breath.

"Disgusting." With the rips in my suit, some of

that gunk had to be touching my bare skin.

I walked over to the tree and tried to wipe most of it off, but why did it feel like I was just rubbing it in more? I did what I could and checked the rest of my suit. The fabric was decent enough for the last three days I'd used it. It laid flat on my forehead like it was supposed to, covered my mouth and nose, leaving just my eyes and the shape of my figure to the darkness.

I scanned the area for the bandits after my jewels. I had diamonds and garnets that I had rightfully stole myself. They were mine, and there was no way I'd give them up.

My head whipped to the side when I heard a loud bang. I hid behind the tree, peered from the side of its bark and watched a man—eye-patched and with a headpiece of metal and bones—exit the building and search the dark with his good eye. It was the steel door. He swung it too hard.

I thought my eyes were wrong when the building shivered the way it did. Old cracks stretched up and across the platform and erupted into fractures. When those thin openings broke new wrinkles, it was hard

to look away as they thickened a trail to the top—where I saw a black figure standing on the roof.

I stepped from behind the tree.

The cloth it wore rippled like the figure I spotted from time to time when I came to DB. I had no doubt in my mind that *that* was the Black Flame.

My brows were tightly knit.

What was it doing up there? The building was a splint.

“I see her! She's still alive.” The guy with the eye patch warned the others.

I looked away for just a second, but when I peered back up towards the roof, the Black Flame had disappeared.

I knew my denial wasn't going to confuse what sounded like a thousand breaking bones. It was all too familiar. *This place. The sudden rain . . . That vibration.*

The building couldn't hold any longer. In a sudden motion it let loose a roar, large pieces of cement felling hard and crumbling into a giant pile of rocks and debris. It formed another pile of dust and rubble that resembled the others in this alley. It was soon to be cherried with defiled spines, just like the rest of them.

A chill crept up my back. My eyes widened,

forcing the knot in my throat to go down with my buckling knees.

“*Nah*,” I whispered to myself. “*Gabrnet*.”

My mind faded in and out. Memories of my little brother poured into my mind. It was like I was there again. I couldn’t do anything, but I was the one who caused *everything*.

Another knot lodged in my throat as ringing of the past blew through my ears. *It was my fault*. I couldn’t move. *It was my fault*.

“Where is she?” A man belched. “Find her!”

What was I doing? I panicked. I needed to get up.

“Over there!” another shouted eagerly.

I attempted to pick myself up, but my body only flopped to the side.

“Her eyes! She’s right there. Hour Eight’s on the ground!”

What are you doing? I tore myself from the painful thoughts. *GET UP! We can’t do this here*.

“Don’t let her get away!”

Not here.

I backed a few weak steps, forcing my legs into a hard sprint when I spun around. I ignored the tear that snuck its way down my cheek with a clench in

my jaw—Garnet’s bloodstain in the front of my mind.

“Don’t think we’ll go easy on you because you’re a woman, Hour Eight,” one of them called out. “You steal from us, you pay the consequences.” The man hollered from the darkness, encouraged by groans, hoorahs and chants that screamed toxic masculinity.

Somewhere in this place, another Regular howled and like a pack, the rest of the alley began to holler and hoot in tradition. If I cared enough, I might’ve hollered something witty myself—like I used to when I first stole in here—but heartbreak seemed to pervade above all other emotions.

I wiped the last drops of weakness from my face and removed my pack from my shoulders.

“Choose your fate wisely,” the man spoke harshly as the rain transmuted to a thick fog. “Leave the jewels and maybe—just maybe—we’ll go easy on you.” He chuckled, implying the exact opposite.

The others chanted behind him, “LEAVE THE JEWELS.” It sounded like that man was their leader. Because of the oncoming fog, I didn’t get to look behind to confirm his identity.

Somebody said they’d seen my eyes. If they were

fluorescent, then I might've caused this fog.

Might've. I shrugged. I *did* cause this fog.

It was too deep for anything normal.

I'd always thought, that all I could do was change the color of my eyes. But whenever my emotions were provoked, the weather seemed to change with the whim.

I had to keep this curse under control, but in order to do that, I had to lock my emotions inside of a steel box. I'd been struggling with this since I was ten. Even before then, I just didn't realize what was going on. I *still* didn't know what was going on.

Thank Nibiru I was only in the Devil's Backbone, because anything went here.

I followed the line of lace around my neck and grabbed ahold of the locket made by my father. It was made of amethyst, but shaped like a diamond, and inside was a piece of Mama's table with a drop of Garnet's blood. It was my way of staying connected to them wherever I went.

I wiped away as much grime as I could visibly see and tapped the amulet to my lips.

Fááwí ahрэ nah ôfè. I chanted the words that always gave me strength and slipped the amulet back into

my bodysuit. *Faith has no fear.*

Even through my fatigue, I still kept a good distance from the bandits. It wasn't too long before I turned through corners of the maze and slid into one of the narrow alleys. I quickly hid between two foul-smelling dumpsters and tucked my body deep against the wall as my breath caught up with me. They were close. I could faintly hear their conversation.

"Aye, where'd she go?"

"I think we lost her."

"Well, keep on looking! Dead or alive, I don't care. Don't stop until you find her."

"Yes, sir!"

"And leave her spine alone. I want it," the leader snarled.

ÕNÈ PWÈN ÕNÈ
HIDDEN



FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, I listened to muddled feet stomp past me in a rush. The shuffling of shoes slowed to nothing before I sighed a breath of relief. I could only hear voices echo faintly against the noise of the night. That sense of danger wore down, and my adrenaline simmered out with it.

One second, I felt the coast was clear; the next, my mouth filled with mush. I couldn't hold it in.

I yanked the lower half of my suit down, got to my toes, leaned over the dumpster and spewed out globby churns of bread and water. After being forced shut by the sudden jolt in my body, my eyes opened to reveal a platter of dead, spineless corpses. Mold

and extremities on the side.

I inhaled some of the nasty air with a gasp. Immediately, my stomach ejected more carbohydrate-laden fluids over the decaying flesh. It was the first time I had ever looked into a pile of death.

I slumped back onto the wall, tried not to breathe too deeply. The smells that came from DB weren't something you could get used to, and my stomach was already weak standing between the dumpsters.

I'd have to make do and stay hidden. I slid down between them and sat on the ground, trying to get those images out of my head. I could feel the bruises forming on my arms, my back, too. My suit was still wet with blood.

I pulled my left sleeve up and took a look at my monitor. It wrapped around my wrist like a watch and kept track of my heart rate. Anything above one hundred and fourteen beats per minute made the monitor go off with a dim flash and some beeping. It meant that my eyes were probably fluorescent. However much it flashed and beeped depended on how quickly my heart was beating.

I always kept the sound switched off when I entered the Devil's Backbone. It was less important

if my eyes were fluorescent here, but out there in the city, the sound *needed* to be on, though it drew attention. It was better that than somebody trying to run me out because my eyes had gone purple. At least with the beeping, I had a fair chance to get out of there unseen.

I always tried my hardest to contain it. Sometimes it was never enough, and I hated myself for it. It was why I always traveled in the night. It was how I got my name.

Hour Eight. When there wasn't a singled shed of light, she looted through the Devil's Backbone and feared nobody. She was the threat and showed no mercy.

She was what kept me alive.

Once my heart rate had completely fallen, I unzipped my bag.

There were some leftover pieces of bread, a few gulps of water in a plastic bottle, and some clean black rags. I also had my shard of glass—it was pointed like a knife and wrapped at the bottom with sturdy white rope over a thick brown cloth. The two held everything together for proper gripping. It was a one-of-a-kind item made by an old friend. I only

used it when I really needed to.

I took out one of the black rags and chose to tie it around my right arm. It was worse than the other one. With the help of my teeth, I maneuvered two knots beneath my shoulder. I took another rag and did the same for my left leg. After I'd tightened the knot on my thigh, I used the last rag I had to hide half of all the jewels I'd stolen.

I reached through the top of my suit. Stitched inside was a secret pocket next to my amulet, which held a small pouch. In that pouch were all the jewels I had stolen these last three nights. I used my pack, not only as storage space, but also as a decoy. Those thugs always thought I carried my jewels in it, only because I fought for the bag as if my life depended on it.

I removed the pouch of jewels and poured half of those beauties into the palm of my black cloth, then tied it securely with multiple knots.

I slipped the original pouch of jewels back into my secret pocket. Then I chugged the last swig of water in that bottle and tossed into the dumpster. I zipped my bag up and slung it backwards over my shoulders again.

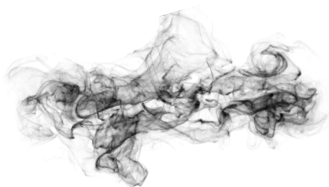
I leaned back against the wall with my knees to my elbows, and took a careful breath, filtering the air between the cracks of my fingers. I balled my hand into a light fist over my lips.

This was honestly the furthest I'd gone out. I usually stuck to stealing from Sections B and A. They were closer to the city, and even though I was only in the outskirts, this was my first time entering Section E. It was still far more dangerous a place to be in than any other section; and somewhere in here, was the Capitol.

After all these years of stifling my curiosity, I wanted to know what was inside.

The more I mapped this place out, the more I wanted to know who instructed the rummage of my neighbors, and why some of them were taken to the Capitol Papa used to work at almost every day.

I closed my eyes and remembered that last time I saw him. The last time I heard his voice. That musky scent he carried every time he threw on that suit jacket.



“Hey, pumpkins . . . I’ll be back . . . I love you all.”



My eyelids opened to a small slit. If I could find any morsel of his existence, that would change everything, but I couldn’t rush it. I had to be patient and smart, and carefully piece together what this section entailed. Just like I knew Section B like the front of my hand, I could learn Section E just as easily.

I hung the knotted rag of jewels in my mouth and crawled, staying as low to the ground as possible. I poked from behind the dumpster and checked the streets. I didn’t see anything, but I heard some

wandering voices. I crept into the alley at a slow pace, careful not make any sudden movements, until I saw a long row of distinct bushes.

A corner of my lips pulled back upwardly as I moved towards the bundle of leaves, and much further down the road, out walked a dog from a dark corner.

It noticed me before I had noticed it and warned me with a low growl. I froze—well, at first.

I was caught by surprise, but it wasn't unusual to have an encounter with the stray animals roaming around, and I always let them know who was boss.

ŌNÈ PWÈN TWŌ
FIGHTING FOR HER



I LET THE POUCH drop from my mouth and walked a hand forward, letting her know I'd be ready to charge if she tried anything. I couldn't explain how I knew she was a female. I just felt it. Something about her screamed womanhood.

I didn't want to fight, but if a tussle was what she wanted, I was going to give it.

When I didn't take the hint to leave, she barked, her tone deepening with a backlash, while she sucked in another breath, just to release it with a growl. I didn't budge. I inched closer with pouch between my knuckles.

Her lips pulled up into a nasty snarl, but what the dog hadn't realized was that I had no business with it, just the bushes a couple of feet between us.

I had no reason to target her; the dog certainly

had no jewels. I hadn't even seen the dog until it walked out. She saw me first.

But this was the Devil's Backbone, and I couldn't blame her defense. Everyone was a target here, and there was no fair play, but I wasn't backing down and she knew that. I needed to hide my jewels, so I kept my head up and eye contact strong. Even threatened the dog with some growls myself.

The animal's reaction was just as I expected; excessive with barks, but the way she looked away and licked her lips, I knew she didn't really want to fight me either. She was letting me know that. The dog was just being protective. And I didn't know why until I had finally reached the bushes. I realized why she'd screamed motherhood to me.

She was pregnant. *Oh, Nibiru*, and in DB, too.

I instantly backed off. It wasn't worth it, and I didn't want to stress her out more than I had done already.

I slowly placed my pouch to the side and began digging a hole deep enough to hide the jewels. She still growled, but the best I could do was pay her no mind and go about my business. The more I ignored her, the calmer she got.

I placed the rag below and kept note of where they were located. *Underneath the third bush—by the dumpsters.*

“*Just in case.*” I whispered to them and raked the excess dirt over the hole.

Other than the regular disturbances that complemented this ominous place, I didn't hear or see anybody that resembled those bandits. The coast was clear.

I looked back at the dog and she was still stiff in her stance. It was because I was still here, but she shouldn't have been standing. Her belly was huge. I was far from a hero and it was everyone for themselves in here, but why did I feel the need to help her?

I ignored every horrible thing that happened to people in here. The screams, the cracks in living bones, the begging of lives to spare, the groans, the crumbling of a splint and the people killed beneath it. I ignored it all. I had to. I couldn't let it affect my performance, and it was none of my business. Step foot in the Devil's Backbone unprepared, and you're just asking for a grisly death.

The low growls that rolled off her tongue again

should've sent me on my way by now, but they didn't. I huffed through my nose and unzipped my bag.

I removed whatever stale bread I had left over.

Two pieces.

I slowly put the bread on the ground, lowered my head and avoided eye contact as I pushed it towards her with just my hand. She was still several feet away and I knew she wouldn't risk coming near me for small pieces of food, even if she was pregnant. I'd probably have to leave before she sniffed it out for consumption. I turned. Whether she ate it or not was up to her, but I wasn't going to find out. I had to get out while I still could.

I recalled the bandits running to the right, so I knew I'd take off to the left and make a loop around for Section B. I swiftly mapped out the routes in my head and mentally traced over the paths I'd take advantage of.

I sighed a deep breath and slipped out of the creases.

Then I cut into a run.



The words “Section E,” were graffitied on almost every building I had passed. It was like this through all seven sections now, since it was the only way to differentiate between them all. I pumped my arms back and forth and continued hurriedly through the alley, dodging potholes, jumping over bricks and ignoring the gaze of stray eyes.

The warm humidity made me feel sticky and suffocated. My breathing was labored, my legs were tired, and the dusty wind was torturing my eyes, but that was nothing. I'd never stop.

A paddle swung into view and before I could slow down or turn the other direction, the piece of wood whipped hard into my frame and sat me directly on my tailbone.

What the hell?

I held my stomach and coughed at the pain, uselessly backing up when the man and his paddle came into view.

The shadow cascaded down his body as he revealed himself, a devilish grin plastered beneath his helmet visor. Fresh blood had dried down the sides of his face, arms, and legs, and powdered rubble covered him and his clothing. He resembled the

other bandits from before, but bones protruded from his metal helmet in a unique fashion. He must've been one of the thugs inside the building when it crumbled.

Somebody survived. How?

There must be more of them running around than I had anticipated.

“Over here, boss! She’s still alive!” he looked behind and hollered, and from around the corner came the rest of their posse. “I got’er.”

I scrambled to my feet and made an attempt to run, but he turned back around too quickly.

“Where do you think you're going?” He shoved me backwards.

That was when I realized he was actually a *she*. Besides a few rough spots and calluses, her hands were soft and delicate though her strength. Her appearance clouded my judgment.

The woman removed her helmet for several breaths of air. Her identity was more feminine than anything, but the male body armor did her curves no justice. I could've admired her if she hadn't killed my stomach with that paddle.

The men neared us. The biggest of them stood

out in front, his chest full and large with muscles. To his left, stood the same guy with the eye patch, the one who'd caused that splint to fall. To the right, was another who was shorter than the rest.

Together . . . they were Big Buff, Eye Patch, Shawty, and Wo-Man—at least in my head.

“Hour Eight,” Big Buff spoke with his jaw clenched. His chest heaved from the chase I had put them through. “Hand over the jewels.”

“These jewels don't have your name on them—”

“Listen while I'm being *nice*, little girl.” The words slithered off his tongue with venom.

“I stole them. They're mine!” I spat out with fake confidence. There was something different about these guys.

The man groaned with aggravation. Like he had done it many times before, Big Buff walked over, inches from my face, and closed his hand around my throat.

I gasped a last breath of air when he pulled me up off my feet. Vengeance soared through his eyes and fear began to well up in mine. It took a lot for me to believe this was happening. This was the first time since the Mayhem that I had been at the mercy

of these stupid bandits.

“No. *I* stole them. They boast of how *strong* and *quick* you are on your feet. A lone *bitch*,” he enunciated, looking into the purple fluorescence of my eyes, “thieving in the Devil’s Backbone, but you’re nothing more than a feeble girl.” Big Buff clenched his hand then threw me to the ground. “A rag doll.” He grabbed me by the neck and pulled me up again, my legs struggling to keep up with so much movement. “A *dead woman*.”

I kicked him in the stomach with what strength I had left, my nails scratching hard at the skin on his hands, but he didn’t even flinch. He simply tightened his grip around my neck, every muscle in his fingers slowing my blood flow. My throat pricked. My head began to feel tight as if it were shrinking, just like the fight inside me was fading.

Tiny sparks of light danced around me, and pockets of black began to cloud my vision, time slowing down with each heartbeat. I could sense myself drifting away from my body, like I couldn’t hold on anymore.

I didn’t even want to.

I was so tired, but I knew I had to keep

pushing . . . for *Diamond*.

She was still alive. I couldn't be this selfish. I couldn't leave her by herself, not after what I'd caused.

No, I needed to try harder.

The straggling bits of strength that hadn't been strangled out of me yet clawed at the man's face, gunning straight for what I could see through the haze. *His eyes.*

I knew I'd gotten him good when the edge of my fingers pulled at his lower lids and dampened my fingertips with fluids.

Big Buff growled and my body dropped to the ground with his release. My mouth gaped at the air, my hands clawing at the pain in my throat. I latched onto every breath. Big Buff sent a hard kick to my stomach and snatched the bag from off of my shoulders.

"My jewels!" he hissed, then laughed and held the bag in the air. "And now, I will steal your spine as punishment!"

He made attempts to kick my back, but connected with my shins, when I quickly rolled over, curling my legs up in front of me. It was unbearably painful,

but at least it couldn't paralyze me or torment me the way my mind did. Physical pain was short-lived.

Eventually, it went away. Mental pain was raw, inescapable. There was no running even if you tried. It thrived inside of you.

The men roared in victory and Wo-Man jimmied her fist into the air, but I wasn't done yet.

Plan B . . .

I flicked the switch of my monitor on.

"What the hell is that?" asked Big Buff.

"*Fûûmî abrè nah ôfê*," I said as clearly as I could through cessations of coughing.

"This is no time to cry for help, weak woman." Wo-Man spoke down at me. "What is that gibberish you speak?"

I slowly climbed to my feet as the rest of them straightened into battle stances, grunts rolling off their tongues. "Hear that? I just activated the bomb. Open my bag and you'll see."

"Lies," Big Buff quickly closed in on me. "You don't *own* such equipment. Only the authorities do, everyone knows tha—"

"—Then open the bag," I hissed, "if you're as big as you claim to be." I took small steps forward past

Wo-Man. "I'd be willing to open it for you thugs, if you'd like?" A smirk grew on my lips, the same one they had given me when I fell off that roof.

Big Buff glared silently. He snapped his head away from me, taking a few steps with the bag in his hand. His crew simply looked around at each other and their boss.

I turned around and faced Wo-Man with a glower, taking subtle steps as I spoke over my shoulder, "Or leave it closed, if you don't want the jewels I hid deep inside my bag. I tried my best to keep those away from you idiots... but it's over now. We can all blow up right here," my voice dried out as the ticking continued. "I have nothing to live for."

"You're lying!" the leader of their pack accused me, and he was right. I *was* lying.

"Okay," I said with a fake limp, holding my bruised arm. I threw his words back at him, "*Choose your fate wisely.*" I've already chosen mine."

Big Buff scowled and turned to Shawty. "You."

He straightened his back. "Yes, sir."

"Open this bag, right now."

Shawty hesitated. He didn't want to be the one to blow up into little, shitty bits of flesh.

“Come on, what are you waiting for? Take the bag, you fool!”

“Did you not hear your orders?” Wo-Man chimed in as she moved forward, past me and towards them.

I turned with her, slowly moving in the opposite direction.

She continued, “Boss, let me do it, please, before it blows up.”

Slowly.

“NO. I will not be disobeyed.” Big Buff threw the bag to the man's feet and commanded, “Open it.”

“Y-y-yes, sir.” Shawty picked up the bag and fumbled with the zipper, but when he did, he froze like a deer in flashlights.

“DO IT,” Big Buff demanded.

Shawty dug his hand into the bag and searched through it. “S-Sir, I don't see it.”

And then I took off, my feet stomping into the ground, my heart pounding beneath my chest, my arms charging fast in matching pace with my legs.

“What?!” I heard them shout.

Soon I was listening to the faint sounds of my jewel-less, miscellaneous items clang onto the

ground.

“There's no bomb! Sh-she fooled us!”

By the time they realized the truth, I was far too gone in the distance for them to catch up with me.



About an hour had gone by.

I was finally out of Section E and getting further into B. It was the closest Section to the city.

Another two hours and I'd be home.

This was the easiest part of it all.



ÕNÈ PWÈN TÛRĬ
STOLEN IN THE DARK



GLIMMERS OF LIGHT flashed against my suit as I silently ran. My feet refused to stop moving, even for one second, between these decrepit buildings.

Once upon a time, this place was occupied by loving families, but this was no fairy tale. The Devil's Backbone changed all of that, leaving thousands of people and creatures homeless and hungry, like myself. The most disconcerting part about it was that I never found out how much of this was *really* my fault. I guessed that was what always kept me connected with this place.

I belonged.

It was a never-ending void that consumed *everything* of my being and left me feeling *nothing*. It's always been there—that emptiness—masked behind normal human emotions. I'd always been giving,

warm and loving, but always to a limit. Stagnancy was my only choice. As a teen, I'd always made sure not to get too excited, angry *or* cry. I held back my emotions, just enough to keep my eyes from changing.

As much as I resented this alley for what it'd become, it was the only place that accepted me for who I'd become.

Like it had stolen from me, I stole from it. I was just evening the score, and like that, days became weeks, and months into years. For every moment that I was in this place, I never forgot what happened that night. It lived with me. Every step. Every breath. Every move I made, it was there. Hovering and breathing its scorching air into my existence, haunting me through this *gift* the universe had cursed me with.

As excruciating as it was, it never stopped me from protecting the ones that I loved. It was one that I, some-fucking-how, could endure. One that I could sleep through, night after night, without the anesthesia of false hope. I knew what was real and this—

—*this was real.*

Once I made it over that fence, I'd be freed from all of the threats and unspoken rules that had held this alley together for years . . . until next time.

My lavender eyes stung drily as I couldn't peel my eyes from the fenced opening. Though twisted, there was a smile in lips. It was an expression that never made an appearance on its own, yet it grew nervously, feverishly as I jumped onto the wires that divided DB from the rest of the world.

I was almost over the fence, but in that second, I was robbed from a glimpse of what seemed like happiness when the darkness tugged at my leg.

My feet dangled beneath me as a figure, masked in black, yanked my body off of the fence. I'd seen that draping before, but never this close in front of me. The cloth they wore slung over their entire body and swiveled in the wind when they moved. Almost like a flame.

The Black Flame.

I didn't know who or what was underneath, but I had an idea of what they wanted—what everybody strived for when they came here. It could only be two

things.

Before I could even make a move, the figure had already punched me and sent my face to the ground.

The Black Flame spun vigorously as my vision blurred, intensifying its movement when it crouched down beside me—the musky scent of my Papa filling my nose . . .

.Emilie's Note.

Hi guys,

You've made it to the end of serial one in the AMETHYST sequel! Thank God. I feel so blessed to share a piece of my brain with you. Hopefully, it was better than expected.

Although this was only the beginning of their adventure, I hope you guys fell in love with the characters *almost* as much as I did creating them.

Since I've begun writing, people have always asked me, "How do you think of all these things?" Truthfully, I pretty much reside in my head, but I usually tell them, "everything," from life experiences, TV, other books, or my own fantasies.

When I took my first writing class in college, I distinctly remember my professor asking us a question. "What three things do you think make a great story?"

Initially I chose, mystery, dramatics and sensory detail. But after some failed attempts of writing about a killer bear, I thought, why just stop at three?

What did *I* think made a perfect book?

Within a few minutes, I thought of all the things I loved in a story and all the genres that came with it; Fantasy, Romance, Comedy, Action, Adventure, Mystery.

I compiled all of those things and birthed the story AMETHYST. The ideas came to me like the particle accelerator explosion—*just* like that lightning bolt struck my husband, The Flash. Next thing I knew, I was writing ideas down for two weeks straight. I couldn't watch TV or eat properly without having to stop and write something down.

The more I wrote, the more these characters came to life. They were real and had a mind of their own, as contradicting as it sounds. I've had to rewrite chapters because I've tried to force characters to do or feel something that wasn't them. Now I know better and it's so weird.

It's come to a point that I feel sick not thinking about them. I would actually miss them, and I can't wait 'till you guys understand why.

This may be the end of the book, but it's clearly not the end of Amethyst's story. You all have no idea what you've gotten yourselves into :)

That being said . . . could you be my grain of rice?

Again, people always ask, "What's one vote?" "What's one penny?" "What's one grain of rice?" Well, it could be a terrible president, a lottery winner, or a full pot of food.

I would be forever thankful if you left an honest review for the book on Amazon, even if it's just to say, "hi!"

. . . Will you be my grain of rice?

THANK YOU

to the following people, for outstanding support within these last two years; through brainstorming, editing, planning, designing, and simply pulling me up when I felt at my lowest. Thank you to those of you that kept a roof over my head and food in my mouth as I worked towards my dream. Thank you to another for influencing my decision to start writing when I thought I couldn't. Thank you to those of you who answered all my incessant questions. Lastly, but obviously not least, thank you to those of you who've taken the time to read AMETHYST, even in its ugliest first drafts. Going as far as to leaving me letters and little comments is still something that I cherish, even as this book sits in your hands right now.

From the entirety of my heart . . . thank you.



Nadine Dubuisson
Chancel Vainqueur
Lucy Kanyenda
Ashley Batista
Dania Valencia
Coutchard Point Du Jour
Megan Fahey
Holly McIntyre
Amber Gales
Delaney Mccarron
Laken Burns
Katie Hinkle
Nate Bernardi
Jacob Shockley
Lexi Palmer
Kathleen Koval
Ryan Decker
Josh Stuart
Elizabeth Manso
Lindsay McCarthy
Quinn O'Donnell
Clara Cozort
Jason Hall
Victor Williams
Curtis Stapleton
Amber Gales
Glenn Taylor
Devin Lacy
Tabitha Drobey
Erin Drummond
Shannon Echard
Erika Baya
Haleigh Posey
Allen Lau

Stephanie Cohen
Jordan Silvers
Briana Hudson
Sebastien Vainqueur
Talia Vainqueur
Yaw Dickson
Bryce Hansell
Junior Jayseus
Martine Vainqueur
Ionne Vainqueur
Hampton Lamoureux
Sienna Brown
Danielle Grace
Tatianna
Roselyn Hoffmann
Kayana Mc.
Brittany Rock
Rachael Pius
Clara Acousta
Mia
Shreya Singh
Tessa De Claro
Melody Brooke Griffith
Zawyann Jansen
Nicole Rivera
Victoria Centeno
Igor Burov
Stanley
Marta
Meixia
Naomi J.
Karrie Bloomer
Makarov Rudko

LAHUAH Õ SÛTÕN'Õ

*Note: This is a flipped version of the language for easier translation. If you want to create sentences of your own nuh sī Lahuah Õ Sütõn't, I've made it easier to find with English words being discoverable on the left. Ahrè tahnah!



A – Luh (luh)
About – Bûtè (boo-teh)
After – Kahl (kah-l)
Afternoon – Kahlmîd (kah-l-mee-d)
Ahead – Ahmûwè (ah-moo-weh)
All – Ìvah (ee-vah)
Alright – Ìvwè (eev-weh)
Also – Nahdû (nah-doo)
Always – Gûwôs (goo-woh-s)
Am – Òm (oh-m)
Amaze – Vwûdôn (v-woo-doh-n)
Ame – Èmî (eh-mee)
Amethyst – Èmètîst (eh-meh-tee-st)
And – Tû (too)
Angel – Ahwèisah (ah-weh-ee-sah)
Animal – Ahnîmahî (ah-nee-mah-lee)
Annoy – Ahnô (ah-noh)
Another – Luhnôtûd (luh-noh-too-d)
Any – Jûs (ch-oo-s)
Anything – Tahnsôrah (tah-n-soh-rah)
Aquamarine – Ahgûmarîn (ah-goo-mah-ree-n)
Are – Aht (ah-t)
Arm – Kahwûn (kah-woo-n)
As – Ahs (ah-s)
Asian – Ahsîôn (ah-see-ohn)
Ask – Kahî (kah-ee)
Ass – Bûbû (boo-boo)
At – Wînk (wee-nk)
Attack – Fiyèk (fee-yeh-k)
Attract – Sèwî (seh-wee)
Aunt – Tahtî (tah-tee)

Authority – Pölîzîk (poh-lee-zee-k)



Baby – Bahbû (bah-boo)
Back – Kahk (kah-k)
Backbone – Kahkzôn (kah-k-zoh-n)
Be – Lah (lah)
Because – Kahzû (kah-zoo)
Before – Jahl (ch-ah-l)
Below – Uhnè (uh-neh)
Bench – Pèlik (peh-lee-k)
Between – Twin (t-wee-n)
Big – Ûmwè (oo-m-weh)
Birth – Bîtah (bee-tah)
Birthday – Bîtahdahwû (bee-tah-dah-woo)
Bitch – Jîj (ch-ee-ch)
Black – Blahk (b-lah-k)
Blank – Slèt (s-leh-t)
Blood – Blûwd (b-loo-wd)
Blue – Blû (b-loo)
Body – Bahdî (bah-dee)
Bone – Zôn (zoh-n)
Book – Lîlè (lee-leh)
Boy – Bûwah (boo-wah)
Bread – Pahng (pah-ng)
Break – Kahsè (kah-seh)
Breakfast – Lûnahm (loo-nah-m)
Brown – Brahn (b-rah-n)
Bug – Pî (pee)
Build – Òn (oh-n)
But – Jî (ch-ee)
Butt – Bûdah (boo-dah)
Butter – Elôkrèm (eh-loh-k-reh-m)

Butterfly – Flûtèflii (f-loo-teh-f-lee)

By – Mûn (moo-n)

.C.

Call – Îl (ee-l)

Can – Kahnè (kah-neh)

Chapter – Jähp (ch-ah-p)

Character – Jahrah (ch-ah-rah)

Child – Jït (ch-ee-t)

Clear – Învizîb (een-vee-zee-b)

Coast – Kôt (k-oh-t)

Coffee – Gahlkè (gah-l-keh)

Come – Vi (vee)

Confused – Suhng (suh-ng)

Control – Strik (st-ree-k)

Cold – Frèt (f-reh-t)

Cool – Jîlè (ch-ee-leh)

Could – Wahm (wah-m)

Cover – Kûvrî (koov-ree)

Cream – Krèm (k-reh-m)

Create – Sahvîv (sah-vee-v)

Crazy – Kûlû (koo-loo)

Cry – Yiyî (yee-yee)

.D.

Dark – Dahk (dah-k)

Damn – Bök (boh-k)

Daughter – Gahnî (gah-nee)

Day – Dahwû (dah-woo)

Death – Ômahd (oh-mah-d)

Devil – Ômahè (oh-mah-eh)

Dia – Dahîah (dah-ee-ah)

Diamond – Dahmôn (dah-mon-d)

Different – Viduhwënt (vee-duh-when-t)

Dinner – Nûtahm (noo-tah-m)

Disappear – Wûsh (woo-sh)

Disgust – Kôst (koh-st)

Do – Û (oo)

Dog – Shiyèn (sh-ee-yeh-n)

Door – Pôt (poh-t)

Dramatic – Lahönt (lah-oh-nt)

Draw – Ahlmôn (ahl-mon)

Drink – Sipsè (see-p-seh)

Dry – Driyè (d-ree-yeh)

.E.

Ear – Îsû (ee-soo)

Eight – Êt (eh-t)

Electric – Zè (zeh)

Eleven – Ônèônè (oh-neh-oh-neh)

Eme – Êmî (eh-mee)

Emerald – Êmèröd (eh-meh-roh-d)

Emilie – Êmilî (eh-mee-lee)

English – Êglèsh (ehg-leh-sh)

Even – Bahnahn (bah-nah-n)

Every – Îvî (ee-vee)

Everybody – Îvitinè (ee-vee-tee-neh)

Everyone – Îviônè (ee-vee-oh-neh)

Eye – Ahsû (ah-soo)

.F.

Faith – Fûûwî (foo-oo-wee)

Family – Miliû (mee-lee-oo)
Fast – Ahsh (ah-sh)
Father – Ahpah (ah-pah)
Favorite – Ûmi (oo-mee)
Fear – Öfè (oh-feh)
Feel – Tahõn (tah-oh-n)
Field – Kûyahd (koo-yah-d)
Fifteenth – Öñèfahvn (oh-neh-fah-vn)
Fight – Mökahjah (moh-kah-jah)
Filipino – Filipinõ (fee-lee-pee-noh)
Find – Sèj (seh-ch)
Fire – Friři (f-ree-ree)
First – Önen (oh-neh-n)
Five – Fahv (fah-v)
Fly – Fli (f-lee)
Food – Ahm (ah-m)
Foolish – Fûshĭ (foo-sh-ee)
Foot – Pĭd (pee-d)
For – Fèr (feh-r)
Forever – Fèwĭv (feh-wee-v)
Four – Fõ (foh)
Freedom – Ahwèĭ (ah-weh-ee)
From – Võr (voh-r)
Fuck – Fût (foo-t)
Fun – Tahnah (tah-nah)



Garnet – Gahrnèt (gah-r-neh-t)
Get – Jèt (ch-eh-t)
Girl – Gèwah (geh-wah)
Give – Jah (ch-ah)
Go – Ahvèt (ah-veh-t)
Good – Dõn (doh-n)
Grass – Gahzõn (gah-zoh-n)
Great – Fahnt (fah-nt)

Green – Grĭn (g-ree-n)
Group – Ahnpûl (ah-n-poo-l)
Grow – Mègah (meh-gah)



Hair – Flõ (f-loh)
Hand – Ahĭd (ah-ee-d)
Happy – Jĭzĭ (ch-ee-zee)
Have – Ahrè (ah-reh)
He – Bahn (bah-n)
Head – Tèt (teh-t)
Heal – Fah (fah)
Healer – Fah'èw (fah-eh-w)
Health – Fèĭ (feh-ee)
Heart – Ahtû (ah-too)
Heavy – Ûè (oo-eh)
Help – İkè (ee-keh)
Her – Gah (gah)
Here – Èr (eh-r)
Hey – Yah (yah)
Hello – İõ (ee-oh)
High – Kûû (koo-oo)
Him – Bè (beh)
His – Bès (beh-s)
Hold – Ûwõ (oo-woh)
Hole – Shĭt (sh-ee-t)
Home – Mil (mee-l)
How – Lõwûn (loh-woo-n)
Hug – Dah (dah)



I – Sah (sah)

Ice – Jīl (ch-ee-l)
 Idiot – Pahdō (pah-doh)
 If – Zīt (zee-t)
 In – Nuh (nuh)
 Indian – Īndiahn (een-dee-ah-n)
 Into – Ahtō (ah-toh)
 Important – Mizè (mee-zeh)
 Is – Zī (zee)
 It – Tī (tee)

J

Jacket – Jènahh (ch-eh-nah-n)
 Jewel – Sütōn (st-ee-toh-n)
 Job – Trahv (t-rah-v)
 Just – Tuhk (tuh-k)

K

Kill – Jīkû (ch-ee-koo)
 Kind – Ōl (oh-l)
 Kiss – Mmtè (m-m-teh)
 Knife – Nèk (neh-k)
 Know – Vōw (voh-w)
 Korean – Kōrièn (koh-ree-eh-n)

L

Language – Lahûah (lah-oo-ah)
 Land – Jōd (ch-oh-d)
 Laugh – Ahah (ah-ah)
 Left – Miûwè (mee-oo-weh)

Leg – Bèn (beh-n)
 Let – Pût (poo-t)
 Light – Līt (lee-t)
 Like – Wūd (woo-d)
 Lip – Īpsû (eep-soo)
 Little – Pīn (pee-n)
 Long – Lōnjè (loh-n-cheh)
 Look – Gōg (goh-g)
 Love – Lōmmtè (loh-m-m-teh)
 Low – Nè (neh)
 Lunch – Mīdahm (mee-dah-m)

M

Mad – Gūwī (goo-wee)
 Mama – Mahmah (mah-mah)
 Man – Būwahn (boo-wah-n)
 Matter – Mahtah (mah-tah)
 Me – Sah (sah)
 Mind – Uhnus (uh-nuh-s)
 Money – Lahjuh (lah-chuh)
 Moon – Nûtīs (noo-tee-s)
 More – Lōt (loh-t)
 Morning – Lûn (loo-n)
 Most – Īvlōt (eev-loh-t)
 Mother – Ōmah (oh-mah)
 Morph – Shènĵ (sh-eh-n-ch)
 Mouth – Mīsü (mee-soo)
 Music – Bwī (b-wee)
 My – Mû (moo)

N

Nature – Nahtīuh (nah-tee-uh)

No – Nah (nah)
Neck – Kû (koo)
Need – Dīi (dee-ee)
Net – Nèt (neh-t)
New – Shīnī (sh-ee-nee)
Next – Wiw (wee-w)
Nibiru – Nibīrû (nee-bee-roo)
Night – Nûit (noo-ee-t)
Nine – Nahn (nah-n)
Noon – Mīd (mee-d)
Not – Nahn (nah-n)
Now – Kūnuh (koo-nuh)
Number – Nūmb (noo-mb)
Nyx – Nīks (nee-ks)

.O.

Of – Ō (oh)
Oh – Ō (oh)
Okay – Ōmkè (oh-m-keh)
Old – Jōn (ch-oh-n)
On – Uḥnah (uh-nah)
One – Ōnè (oh-neh)
One Hundred – Ōnèwōwō (oh-neh-woh-woh)
One Hundredth – Ōnèwōwōn (oh-neh-woh-who-n)
Only – Ōnī (oh-nee)
Or – Īn (een)
Orange – Ōrahnjè (oh-rah-n-cheh)
Other – Ōtûd (oh-too-d)
Ouch – Ahī (ah-ee)
Our – Shahwè (sh-ah-weh)
Out – Ūt (oo-t)
Over – Jūm (ch-oo-m)

.P.

Papa – Pahpah (pah-pah)
Page – Pèj (peh-ch)
Part – Pīs (pee-s)
People – Wahn (wah-n)
Pink – Pīk (pee-k)
Point – Pwèn (p-weh-n)
Problem – Pōbō (poh-boh)
Promise – Sīahl (see-ah-l)
Protect – Ōd (oh-d)
Pull – Lūf (loo-f)
Purple – Puhpèl (puh-peh-l)

.Q.

Quit – Èks (Eh-ks)
Queen – Lahrèn (Lah-reh-n)

.R.

Red – Wèd (weh-d)
Right – Kūwè (koo-weh)
Room – Spahs (S-pah-s)
Run – Nīgè (nee-geh)

.S.

Sad – Ahpdè (ahp-deh)
Safe – Sahfè (sah-feh)

Say – Dī (dee)
 Scare – Frahnziāh (f-rah-n-zee-ah)
 School – Èlèment (eh-leh-mehn-t)
 Scorch – Ahj (ah-ch)
 Second – Twōn (t-woh-n)
 Secret – Shīmbahshī (shee-m-bah-shee)
 Self – Mī (mee)
 Sense – Fīl (fee-l)
 Serial – Sèahl (seh-ah-l)
 Series – Sèwis (seh-wee-s)
 Sequel – Sèkahl (seh-kah-l)
 Seven – Svèn (s-veh-n)
 Seventeen – Ònèsvèn (oh-neh-s-ven)
 Shake – Èsh (eh-sh)
 She – Gahn (gah-n)
 Shift – Pōs (poh-s)
 Shifter – Pōs'èw (poh-s-ehw)
 Shit – Tīksh (tee-k-sh)
 Should – Shahm (sh-ah-m)
 Shrink – Sègah (seh-gah)
 Side – Slahm (s-lah-m)
 Sister – Ògahn (oh-gah-n)
 Sit – Būdōn (boo-doh-n)
 Six – Sīs (see-s)
 Sixteen – Ònèsīs (oh-neh-see-s)
 Skip – Ahp (ahp)
 Sky – Ûnah (oo-nah)
 Small – Ûmtī (oo-m-tee)
 So – Jōm (ch-oh-m)
 Some – Tōm (toh-m)
 Son – Bahnī (bah-nee)
 Spider – Būyè (boo-yeh)
 Spine – Līzōn (lee-zoh-n)
 Step – Mahsh (mah-sh)
 Stick – Īsè (ee-seh)
 Stop – Pahz (pah-z)
 Strength – Krahzè (k-rah-zeh)
 Strong – Būf (boo-f)

Stupid – Pīds (pee-ds)
 Suit – Sīūt (see-oo-t)
 Sun – Lūnīs (loo-nee-s)
 Super – Ahmèzōn (ah-meh-zoh-n)



Take – Stīl (s-teel)
 Tan – Tahn (tahn)
 Tanzanite – Tahnzahnīt (tah-n-zah-nee-t)
 Tell – Nahk (nah-k)
 Ten – Ònèzèwō (oh-neh-zeh-woh)
 Than – Pahn (pah-n)
 Thank – Sūè (soo-eh)
 That – Baht (bah-t)
 The – Sī (see)
 Them – Mèn (meh-n)
 Then – Pèn (peh-n)
 There – Tè (teh)
 They – Òv (oh-v)
 Thing – Tīnè (tee-neh)
 Think – Taht (tah-t)
 Third – Tūwīn (too-wee-n)
 Thirteen – Ònètūrī (oh-neh-too-ree)
 This – Zīk (zee-k)
 Three – Tūrī (too-ree)
 Time – Wahnè (wah-neh)
 To – Uh (uh)
 Too – Mahah (mah-ah)
 Treat – Zahk (zah-k)
 Tree – Pahli (pah-lee)
 Try – Stūiv (s-too-eev)
 Twelve – Ònètō (oh-neh-t-woh)
 Two – Twō (t-woh)
 Turn – Uhntah (uh-n-tah)

·U·

Ugly – Bûs (boo-s)
Uncle – Mönōk (moh-noh-k)
Up – Ahwè (ah-weh)
Us – Twöïnlôt (t-woh-een-loh-t)
Use – Ûsè (oo-seh)

·V·

·W·

Want – Nahw (nah-w)
Walk – Mahshè (mah-sh-eh)
Water – Flûid (f-loo-ee-d)
Way – Wèï (weh-ee)
We – Ìwè (ee-weh)
Weak – Fib (fee-b)
Week – Wīt (wee-t)
Wet – Nûwè (noo-weh)
What – È (eh)
When – Ōnjè (oh-n-ch-eh)
Where – Wè (weh)
Which – Ìnimīnī (ee-nee-mee-nee)
White – Wītè (wee-teh)
Who – Nûgû (noo-goo)
Will – Wèïn (weh-een)
Wing – Fahī (fah-ee)
With – Kōn (koh-n)
Woah – Wō (woh)
Woman – Gèwahn (geh-wah-n)
Work – Trahvī (t-rah-vee)

World – Ōwah (oh-wah)
Would – Kahm (kah-m)
Why – Sè (seh)

·X·

·Y·

Year – Nûï (noo-ee)
Yellow – Èlō (eh-loh)
Yes – Kè (keh)
You(r) – Dû (doo)
Young – Jèn (ch-eh-n)

·Z·

Zero – Zèwō (zeh-woh)

.Affixes.

-ed		‘dah (dah)
-er		‘èw (eh-w)
-est		‘ètz (eh-tz)
-ing		‘ink (ee-nk)
-ish		‘nī (nee)
-ive		‘yè (y-eh)
-s		‘t (t)

Have any suggestions, pointers, or tips? Please leave
a message at www.thejewelseries.com!

EMILIE VAINQUEUR



AMETHYST

SERIAL TWO OF
THE JEWEL SERIES



COVER TO BE REVEALED

Pre-Order on Amazon