

Unfortunately these happy times began to wane during the latter months of her ninth year as Derek could no longer take so much time off. He was required to return to his leadership duties as one of the other councilmen had retired and the others were growing annoyed with his lack of participation and acting on self-interest over village-interest. They understood Derek's situation but felt he had been given enough time and his daughter should be fine as she was nearing the age of ten.

So Derek went back to a busy work schedule, leaving Amethyst with Edel and her other homeschool teachers, a situation that was heartbreaking for his tiny Faunus. She was unable to see her father for days or even weeks at a time, something that had never happened to her before as usually he had been home every night! He had been there by her side as she fell asleep and woke her in the morning whenever she slept in, and now it was incredibly difficult and frightening for Amethyst as she was completely alone for longer than an hour for the first time in her life.

Derek's first all-nighter away wasn't immediately frightening, it was gradual as she initially believed everything would be alright. Going so far as to tell Edel she would be fine as she wanted to make her father proud by managing to stay home alone without supervision. Something she managed to do for the first and second hour no problem, but as the third hour was midway through Amethyst began to have some doubts. Mind slipping into worry about how long her father would be gone, if he would ever come back, if she had done something wrong to keep him away. Imagining a bunch of different ridiculous ideas of why he hadn't come home or why he may not return.

Her worry only got worse as the third hour became the fourth, fifth, and sixth as a massive storm happened to hit, creating a mess of terror for the tiny kit as she could see the waves pound against her dome home through the window. She watched with horror as lightning thrashed through the sky and darkness consumed the outside. Amethyst twitched her Faunus features frantically as she felt the reverberations of giant waves crashing against her dome home, falling further into fear as she could not bear this situation alone. It became so overwhelming for Amethyst that she fled into a closet and shut the door, huddling her tiny trembling body into a corner where she wrapped herself up in a yellow blanket after surrounding herself with a few small candles in an attempt to fight off the terrifying storm. It was so violent she did not sleep a wink that night.

It was easily one of the worst experiences in Amethyst's early life and one that made her have great difficulty falling to sleep if she was alone. She managed to rest, but it ended badly as her worry began to manifest in nightmares. It was problematic for the little gem as she needed sleep to avoid the long, lonely nights yet she didn't want to experience the increasingly frequent nightmares -- a vicious catch-22 that left her sleep-deprived and insomniac, causing her to lose her emotional control as time went on.

These changes were once again not immediately obvious as Amethyst tried to hide these problems, wanting to prove she was strong on her own despite being so frightened when alone, a task that was surprisingly easy given how often her father wasn't there. However, age was starting to affect Edel.

About a month after Amethyst turned ten, Edel started to have memory problems, regularly forgetting what she was doing, where she was going, or what she had been saying. It was difficult for the elderly woman to accomplish complex or long tasks as she would forget several steps or even the task entirely. She was unfit to deal with everyday life on her own and unfortunately it brought a close to two years of being Amethyst's favourite homeschool teacher and motherly figure.

Thankfully this did not cut the two off from each other, but did reduce Edel's visits significantly. She was able to drop by on the rare occasion with help from another Faunus, but even then it wasn't for very long given her tendency to work on activities. She always left a bittersweet feeling in Amethyst as it was both amazing whenever she dropped by and heartbreaking to hear her repeat the same story three times.

For the next six years, Amethyst was kept in near total seclusion. She was hidden away from most of the world for reasons Derek knew were selfish, but necessary given he couldn't be with her most days of the week. He believed it would be far safer for his daughter to be kept out of the spotlight and thus lessen the rumours floating around about her, an idea that seemed logical but was in the end detrimental as it gave children more opportunities to gossip about why she had disappeared, and it was never for a good reason.

Though, for now, Amethyst was safe, able to be herself within the marble walls of her family's dome home. However, being safe was really boring as Edel was gone and her homeschooling reduced due to their financial troubles, leaving the small kit to her own devices and on a small journey of self-discovery to occupy her time between classes and kindly provided meals.

At first she tried cooking as Edel meant to teach her, but it didn't pan out as she tended to burn everything and leave a huge mess. Then she tried playing her own games of hide and seek with her stuffed animals, using her imagination to pretend they were her friends. They all managed to suck at being the seeker.

Eventually Amethyst came across two activities that were not only time consuming and fun, but also had some success in due to her natural abilities. The first was sewing, an unusual hobby she had picked up from Edel, but one that made good use of her quick moving fingers she often used to snatch interesting items, allowing her initial attempts to be messy but fairly good for a beginner seamstress.

The second was simply books, books, and more books all thanks to her father who read so many to her, specifically topics relating to history, fantasy, and myths, as she found them to be

so freeing given they showed her more about the world than she had ever known. It sparked her imagination further with wonderful tales of knights, Grimm free lands, and people so kind she wished they were real, quickly becoming her escape from reality.

Yet despite her newfound hobbies and homeschooling to keep her busy, Amethyst was still not satisfied with her confined life. She was driven to take risks as a severe sense of wanderlust kicked in, pushing the small girl to sneak outside at night, a time of day she had once hated because of how aware of her anxiety she would be but now gave way to opportunities to explore a deserted Leoris.

She would use this time to scale buildings, climb onto rooftops, lie down, and stare at the stars that glowed above her, a sight that brought Amethyst to a state of melancholy as she pondered the reality she lived in to the ones that resided only in her mind. She asked herself questions about all the myths, legends and mysteries she had read so much about. Some nights she would find herself thinking that her mother, too, was looking at that same night sky, at those same stars.

Unbeknownst to her, her little getaways did not always go unnoticed by other faunus. They were rather concerned as Derek's exiled daughter, the so-called "troublemaker", was moving around at night under the cover of darkness. While it did cause some murmurs, it didn't cause any harm until some of her bullies spun these treks into tales of deviance.

While her seclusion and homeschooling made it easier for her to learn, it did not improve her relations with the other children. A large gap developed due to her isolation and nightly excursions, which worsened rumours as her typical bullies were clever kids. They spun them as attempts at revenge or acts of deviance meant to deface homes, some even going so far as to lie by breaking things and blaming them on the obvious black sheep. Over time, it spread to some of the more gossipy and snide adults, many of whom began to agree she wasn't fit to be in public given her troublemaking antics and should have better control of her bodily functions. It was reinforcing the idea that she was a true freak.

Some of the bolder bullies would harass Amethyst by painting graffiti insults on her home or throwing garbage at it. They went so far as to bother her on the rare occasion she had to travel around town during the day to shop while her father was busy. During the rare days she went around town to shop for her father, the antagonizing children would chuck rocks, trash, or practically anything. They'd chase her far and long, bombarding her with insults, some she couldn't even understand. The more helpful adults were generous enough to shoo the kids away and provide Amethyst with an escape route, but not all of them would be bothered to waste their time on a defiant and disobedient Faunus such as her -- they would simply turn their backs or tilt their heads away from Amethyst's general direction. It became difficult for Amethyst to shop anywhere without getting looks of disgust or fall victim to other teenagers who took every opportunity they could to spite the violet skunk.

All of these rumours, actions, and attacks made Amethyst very depressed about her body. One day, out of sheer desperation and an overwhelming desire to be accepted by her peers, she tried to cut her skunk glands out of her rear. However, because she had no idea where they could possibly be, she had no other choice but to choose a random spot and hope it would be cut out. Derek would soon come home to see his daughter in the bathroom, her rear covered in lacerations. He wasted no time bringing her to the local clinic to be treated and taken care of.

Amethyst stayed in the clinic for several weeks while her body recovered. She spent little time doing much else besides gazing out of a nearby window, and (hardly talked to her father when he came to visit, only choosing to inform him why she had injured herself that day.) Derek had severely underestimated the amount of bullying Amethyst had received, and was shocked at the lengths his little gem would go to be accepted. He needed to do something quickly.

Amethyst was still recovering at the clinic when she turned sixteen, but she would meet with a new visitor: Cecil Blanc. He was a large burly man -- not Faunus -- with black hair, blue eyes, and tan skin. He introduced himself as a huntsman who had retired years ago due to a severe injury to his left leg. yst definitely noticed as he had limped into the clinic to meet her there.

While Derek gave his own version of Cecil's introduction, Amethyst paid no attention. She stared into the distance as her father would inform his friend about the situation at hand. Despite his desire to stick around longer to get them acquainted with one another, Derek's duties were becoming a much greater priority to the village. He felt he could entrust Cecil with Amethyst as she recovered, hoping the former huntsman could spend enough time with the girl.

Derek had explained to him all the trouble Amethyst experienced, but he wasn't sure how to go about helping her overcome what she had been feeling for so long. The first thing Cecil came up with was to tell her stories of the adventures he had with Amethyst's father, sharing their travels throughout the land and how they fought strange beasts known as Grimm while he took care of the small girl.

His storytelling was often gruff and cranky at times, but Cecil was overall a very cheery, caring man once his hard exterior had softened up around the tiny girl. He hoped to break Amethyst's lesser mood in the next few months she remained in the clinic, bring some life back to the little gem, though he knew she needed time to recover and was willing to give as much as was needed for the daughter of his best friend.

Cecil would serve as not only a storyteller but also as a friend, an uncle, and protector, steering the bullies that came to harass her away through the strict use of intimidation. This prevented the bothersome teens from throwing bold slurs at the young skunk and significantly lessened their chances to toss trash at her, saving Amethyst from a great deal of damage through his defensive actions and presence -- who would want to mess with a Huntsman, even if he was retired? Now he never did lash out in retaliation despite forcing those meddlesome punks away, keeping his actions within respectable bounds even if they deserved a lesson because any

news of violent incidents would certainly cause a stir within the community of Faunus. Not only would this cause trouble for the shunned Amethyst as she was seen as a deviant, but would also put a stain on his and her father's reputation as he allowed Cecil inside, which could potentially lead to him being banned from the village as he was the only human allowed within city limits and worse social repercussions to the family that had let him in.

This would become incredibly important as Cecil was the first human Amethyst had ever met, eventually creating her first and probably best impression of humankind. However it would not be until much later on that this would mark a very monumental step for the small skunk, who for the longest time did not notice the significant difference due to her lifeless attitude which had barely begun to break away as she became more receptive to Cecil's stories. These gradually warmed the shy girl up to the man who stayed by her side and protected her as he continued to tell over a thousand tales.

While Amethyst had been growing more attentive towards Cecil's stories, it was only a month in that she began to show a much more emotional response to the tales he told. Her tail and ears began to twitch in excitement -- things she couldn't conceal in the clinic for medical purposes even though she really wanted to. Eventually Amethyst would begin to ask questions as well, attempting to get even more details from his stories, and gasped in awe when he recalled something amazing. She would also squeamishly squirm at the unadulterated tales of his violent upbringing.

His mentions of violence was not meant to frighten, but to inform. Despite the bad things in the world, people will be remembered for the amount of good things they have done. Cecil showed through his tales that changing the outcome for others, even if their own situation was dire, was still a wonderful feeling; it was an indescribable sensation and emotion that would come out of helping someone else, even if it hurt.

Amethyst would take every word of his wisdom to heart. Because of his tales she too wanted to help others, and put her needs aside for others -- she felt that everyone around her up till now had been so unkind to her, because she had put her own desires to be accepted above everyone else's. She wanted to be more than the freak she was often called, but more than anything she felt that being sensitive to others was the best thing and definitely far better than being mean as that only caused pain.

By the time Amethyst's wounds have nearly healed, Cecil and Amethyst had a very strong sense of companionship. They openly talked to each other despite Amethyst's typically reserved nature about Cecil's landmark places he had visited and how his work as a Huntsman had prevented many a tragedy -- he saved children to families, regardless of background. An aspiration for such heroic acts led Amethyst to ask what kind of Faunus he was -- to see if his abilities may have played a part in his talents as a Huntsman.

The question came as a surprise as Cecil didn't know Amethyst lacked the knowledge of humankind, but soon became a humorous inquiry as he began to chuckle; Amethyst was being a little silly even for him. The girl, on the other hand, flushed as she was already nervous in asking what seemed like a very personal question and had felt bad in bringing it up at all. Cecil noticed this and simply told her that he was not a Faunus at all, and would begin to tell her stories of humankind.

As Amethyst was informed of this completely different race of people, feelings of excitement and fear ran through her mind as she wasn't sure how they would treat her, thinking they would cause her more harm but at the same time not given who she knew Cecil to be: a very kind and indeed amazing person. Because of Cecil, Amethyst's impression of humans was incredibly optimistic, and would greatly help in her ability to socialize with them later in her life.

When Amethyst had been released from the clinic due to her physical wounds had sufficiently healed, Cecil went to confide with Derek on the status of her condition, talking carefully to him about Amethyst's growing interest in his career as a Huntsman as well as how she could have potential to do great things. He soon revisited the small girl with permission from her father to train her to become a Huntress, so she could be like him -- someone revered and respected.

This was an opportunity to turn her life around, though Cecil warned that taking this path means that it was going to take a lot of time and effort, and he would not go easy; however, Derek felt that she could manage to power through it and thus do his daughter a great deal of good. He had complete faith in his close friend and trusted Cecil to counsel, tutor, and mentor his troubled gem.

Amethyst didn't take Cecil seriously when heard his offer; had she understood humour she may have thought it was a joke, but she didn't and instead took it as an attempt to mock her as she couldn't have imagined herself to be as capable, brave, or talented enough to reach his caliber. But when he repeated his offer again with an expression on his face that she couldn't have imagined to be more serious, she froze in shock and needed some time to comprehend the whole situation. Soon, tears welled up in her light azure eyes as the gravity of the situation set in, finally realizing that this was not a dream or a hallucination but a real opportunity presented by a man she had grown to admire. An opportunity for everyone to revere her and accept her for who she was and not tossed aside like trash, because no one would dare to slander a Huntress.

So she excitedly agreed to have Cecil as a teacher, and her father was elated to see that his daughter was taking this with such enthusiasm, far more than she had shown in years and that was something he could be proud of.

Amethyst would begin packing immediately after their meeting, so eager to head out on her journey of acceptance. She wanted to leave that very afternoon, but her father had been able to take time off of his job to spend a few more days with his daughter before she left. He made sure she knew how much he loved her, how proud he was of her even if she didn't feel the same

about herself, and promised that Cecil would take good care of her. Derek even had Amethyst visit Edel and let the kind old woman say her goodbyes before they watched the young skunk leave on her journey with a few tears of joy falling from all.

It was a moment that was blissful and sad, relieving but daunting as she was being set free. Amethyst was no longer forced to stay in solitude as she made her first steps forward with Cecil, physically leaving behind everything behind that had hurt her other than a set of significant scars that laced her rear: a reminder of how horrible it had once been and hopefully a set of marks that would never have to be repeated in her life.

The next four years went by like a blur. Cecil trained Amethyst mentally and physically in the hope that she would be able to break the chains to her depression. While her results were slow, his effort did pay off and she began to emerge from her despair. It unfortunately wasn't a complete change, though it was definitely a start.

Amethyst had never been happier before, finally free from the judgement of others that had held her back, allowing the small kit to excel at her training as there was nothing limiting her baring her self doubt. She was always learning new things and taking her body to the limit as the months flew by.

Cecil found that Amethyst had a knack for stealth and movement, so he used these as the foundation for her training. Eventually, he moved on to teach her how to follow the signs that were left by Grimm and become a tracker of her foes, improving her knack for finding things she normally wouldn't and refining her ability to observe her surroundings for clues or details of interest.

They quickly found that she had great hand-eye coordination and was perfect for thrown weapons. A bit ironic seeing that she grew up having items thrown at her only to find herself using such things to battle others. From there, she was given a number of weapons to try out from knives to shuriken. Amethyst decided to wield the kunai as she liked their design, and Cecil noted them to be simple yet very effective weapons.

Cecil informed her that despite it being a good choice of weapon, just having it wouldn't be enough -- something that Amethyst had trouble grasping, but obeyed him regardless. He explained that multiple forms utilizing the kunai's ability to be versatile would prove very useful in combat.

Amethyst implemented Dust into her weapons for extra effect, and eventually added a new form to transform her kunai into a chain whip. Cecil also pointed out that the chain whip was an excellent choice as it worked better in close-quarters situations such as its reachability, dynamic retraction and extension, outmaneuvering defenses, and ability to constrict targets. Amethyst would practice with this form to the point where her movement and technique flowed like her

weapon was simply an extension of her limbs, making her appear like a dancer with the way she weaved her weapon through the air.

A little over a year of improving her weapon proficiency, Amethyst's Semblance began to take form -- Cecil had mentioned how important a Semblance would be, and it would come up during what would have been a regular training session. Her tiny body became enveloped in a dark violet wisps that writhed with the breeze blowing around her with a franticness so akin to her shy nature. When she realized what had just happened, Amethyst couldn't contain her joy, bouncing around and crying happily as she was so elated with the unlock of her ability. Because of this wonderful discovery, it signified the the start of her true training which quickly became more rigorous and challenging now that she had the assistance of her unique power.

On her final day of training, she challenged Cecil to a match as she felt confident enough to battle him. The old huntsman decided to humour her and went along for a duel that proved to be more than she could deal with. He easily outmatched the tiny girl due to his decades of experience and swiftly ending the battle before she even had a chance to make his aura flare. He played with her in a mischievous way as to make her realize she was not even close to prepared for a fight against a full fledged Huntsman.

This loss snapped her out of a fantasy that she had of being immediately accepted, realizing she was still far too weak despite her meager four years of training. She held onto the belief that in order to be accepted, she would have to challenge many powerful opponents. Such a notion was scary but her desire to be accepted would overpower her fear.

Cecil didn't scold her for losing the match, as he kindly gave her some pointers to improve her combat style. He gave her a special gift -- a breastplate from an old ally of his and, surprisingly, an acceptance letter to Beacon; turns out he had applied on her behalf in the midst of all her training. These were gifts so unexpected and so amazing that the young girl embraced him...even before Cecil had the chance to tell her that she was ready.

They took a week to prepare and pack, while Cecil gave advice and taught her to leave the jungle and make her way to Beacon on foot -- her final test under Cecil's tutelage before taking her first steps to becoming a true Huntress. With one last hug and words of thanks, Amethyst walked to Beacon -- a chance to see her own ability to survive by herself and to make her own choices on her journey to acceptance.