"My Diamond, this Lapis Lazuli has failed both of her missions. She also accepted aid from the leader of the Crystal Gems, and has been emotionally compromised by Rose Quartz's lieutenant. She submits to your perfect judgment. Please do with her as you see fit."

---

A nightmare about being Malachite makes Lapis uncomfortable with domming, so Pearl offers to switch roles with her for a day. But when Lapis comes face to face with her abusive Diamond, being a sub stops being fun and games. Can Pearl help her see that she's worth fighting for? Featuring four illustrations by Alias-Pseudonym!

- Inspired by **Regifting** by Spiralspace
Blue

Illustrations by Aliaspseudonym.

Do you know what it’s like to be Malachite?

I wish I didn’t. Because it was so intense, so painful, so pleasurable, that I didn’t want to leave. I feel like part of me didn’t leave, while part of Malachite broke off and stayed with me when we defused. And when my mind wanders, or when I fall asleep … sometimes, I become her again.

This time, it was while I was sleeping.

I was holding up the weight of the entire Earth’s oceans beneath me, standing on top of the tower that I’d tried to build to get back to Homeworld. My Gem was cracked, and the more I pulled at my chains the wider it split. But I had to keep doing it, because she was on the other side struggling against me.
The only thing I felt besides pain was hatred. Her hatred for me, my hatred for her, and Malachite’s hatred of everything. It was beautiful! I laughed, as I doubled over with the exertion, and saw my mirrored eyes in the water’s surface. And just beneath it, Malachite’s rows of eyes staring back at me.

I grinned down at her. Because I was her, and she was mine, and every part of us knew it.

If only Rose could see me now, I thought, as I struggled to stand back upright. How strong I was. I was invincible! I was so powerful, that the only thing on Earth that could hold me back was myself.

I had been all wrong about fusion. It wasn’t this weird thing that Rubies and deviants did. It wasn’t a cheap trick to make weak Gems stronger. It was the ultimate source of power! If I’d known, I could have beaten Rose and her minions thousands of years ago! But now it was just me and a handful of Crystal weaklings, and when I broke free I was going to-

“No!” I cried out, as the monster beneath the surface – the monster that I was – pulled me down to my knees. The tower of water shook, and the stars and clouds and the distant curve of Earth’s surface all seemed to spin for a second.

I gritted my teeth and forced myself into Malachite. Forced myself to consciously be her, and not just Lapis. To let go as her and stop struggling for a second, at the same time as Lapis pulled with all her might and stood back up. She hated me, and I hated her, and we both hated Rose Quartz.

I growled as I imagined her, the tower’s surface becoming a mirror and playing back our fiercest battles. She was so foolish! It was so predictable how she would make for her cracked, injured Gems, and heal them with-

“Steven?” I blinked, and stared down at the mirrored surface. A silhouette of the child that Rose Quartz had become was putting his hand to my back. And I watched the Lapis Lazuli silhouette stand up and spread her wings triumphantly.

Then the surface gave way beneath me, and I tasted salt water as Jasper roared out of the depths and grabbed me in both arms. The next thing I knew, I was Malachite, standing on top of the tower and laughing.

And spreading my wings triumphantly.

“Now I will have my REVENGE!” I bellowed, and took off from the tower I’d been holding up. It crumbled into soft, pillowy bubbles of water, toppling and splashing to the seabed below. I felt relieved at no longer having to hold it up, and invigorated by the raw power I had in this body.

I made a beeline for Rose’s temple, down past a layer of clouds, and grinned in anticipation. I was going to tear her apart. Along with that weak fusion, and that runt of an Amethyst, and the annoying Pearl that followed Rose around and had kept me inside her Gem and-

“Pearl!” I cried out in Malachite’s voice, stopping short in midair and putting both hands to my face.

* * *

I woke up, my head jerking up into the backs of Pearl’s arms and knocking her teacup away. We both made these startled, squeaking sounds, and got back to our feet in front of the couch.

“I’m sorry!” I whispered, in between Steven’s snoring from up on the loft. Moonlight shone
through the windows, and onto the waves that were crashing outside. And my cheeks turned dark blue, as I realized I’d fallen asleep with my head on Pearl’s lap.

“It’s okay, Lapis. It’s not your fault.” She bent over with her back to me, getting the teacup I’d knocked aside and setting it back on its saucer. Then she stood back up and gave me a concerned look. “Are you okay?” she whispered.

“I’m f-fine,” I lied, and tried to stop shaking.

“Are you sure?”

I just blushed even harder, and looked down at the floor.

“Alright. Why don’t you have a seat on the dry part of the couch, while I clean this up.”

I sat back down carefully, my arms wrapped around my sides. While I did that, Pearl went to the kitchen and set her dishes in the sink without making a sound, then got a half-dozen paper towels off of the roll and set to work cleaning the couch.

I watched her for a few seconds before remembering what I’d dreamed about, and hanging my head in shame.

Pearl looked up at me, concerned. “Did you dream about being Mal-”

“Yes.” I held onto myself even tighter. "Please don’t say her name."

“Okay. I’m sorry, Lapis.”

I wasn’t looking at her, but I felt her put a hand on my knee for a moment. And for some reason, it helped me relax just a little.

I sat there in silence, watching her pat down the couch cushions to soak up the spilled tea. “Do you need me to get you some more of those?” I asked.

“That’s very kind of you, dear … ” Pearl got out a twirled-up cloth towel from her Gem, and laid it on top of the mostly-dry spill. “But I’ve got it covered.”

My cheeks turned blue again, as she went to throw the paper towels away. “Yes, you do,” I whispered to myself, feeling awkward and even more nervous.

Pearl rinsed her hands in the sink, and I got back to my feet and walked towards the Warp pad as quietly as I could. Steven’s snoring helped cover for me.

“Lapis?” Pearl looked up just as I walked past, and finished drying her hands off. “Where are you going?”

I stopped at the Warp pad, and waited for her to catch up. “Thank you for having me over,” I whispered to her. “but I need to go someplace to distract myself. It … it felt too real, this time.”

I could feel Malachite’s four legs and eyes, and stepped backwards onto the Warp pad reflexively. The polished crystal was cool under my bare feet.

“Would you like me to help distract you?” Pearl asked, and stepped closer. Her hands were clasped in front of her chest, as though she were pleading with me.

“I don’t know.” I looked away, embarrassed.
Pearl gave me a coy look, her eyes half-lidded. “You could chain me up instead of her ~”

“I don’t want to chain anyone up!” I unfolded my arms, so I could hold up my hands to protest. “Not now. Not right after Malachite!”

Pearl looked taken aback. “I thought you liked …”

I sighed. “It’s complicated.”

Pearl just nodded slowly, seeming to process this.

“I’m sorry,” I whispered, and took another step back. “I need to go.”

“If you must. B-but you’re always welcome here!” Pearl added quickly. She looked … worried? Desperate? It was like looking into the face of the puppy the campers adopted in season three. And I realized that either she meant what she’d said about wanting to help me, or she really enjoyed our time together.

Or both.

I blushed hard and looked away, only meeting her gaze for a second when I spoke up. “I guess I could come over tomorrow, if that’s okay? If I feel up to it then.”

Pearl’s eyes lit up, and she held her hands up right next to her face. “Yes, absolutely! I’ll plan something special for you ~”

The way she said that almost made my knees give out. But I caught myself, and managed an embarrassed nod. “Okay, then. Goodbye for now.”

With that, I Warped back to the barn.

If I’d known “something special” meant tying me up and almost getting me poofed, I wouldn’t have come the next day.
Pearl gets a little carried away with her "role reversal" roleplay.

Whatever she was planning, I knew that it wouldn’t involve fusion. Whether she liked it or not. I didn’t care what Pearl and Peridot thought; fusion wasn’t a game, and it wasn’t harmless like Percy and Paulette holding hands. Garnet was probably the only Crystal Gem who understood what it meant, because Ruby and Sapphire had given up everything to become her. And to live life as her, year after year after year.

Had Pearl spent even a single day fused with anyone? I doubted it.

The thought of giving myself up to that again scared me. Maybe there was just something about it that I couldn’t appreciate. Maybe it would be different with someone I l- … with a Gem that I liked. And maybe … maybe if it meant feeling the way that I did when I was on top of Pearl. Maybe then I’d be okay with it.

Maybe Garnet felt like that all the time.

Not that I’d want to be fused all the time. Sometimes, what I really needed was to be alone in the night sky, looking down on the trees and hills in the moonlight like I was now. Feeling the wind mess up my hair, and pushing down on it with my wings. It felt solid, and alive. It had always helped me forget, so long as I didn’t fly near the water.

Maybe that was why I found the area around the barn so relaxing. It was miles away from the shore.

I still didn’t get this whole “one with nature” thing Steven had talked about. And Peridot’s “peace and love on the planet Earth” song was about as cheesy as the musical episode of Camp Pining Hearts. But sometimes … sometimes, it felt like the clouds and the air currents understood me. Sometimes, when I was alone with just them.

I made a face, all of a sudden. I really hoped Pearl’s idea of “something special” didn’t involve digging another pool for me, or something.

I hoped that it didn’t involve water at all.

***

I saw a flash of light through my eyelids, and felt my feet touch a Warp pad.

“Okay, we’re here!” Pearl said. “You can open your eyes now.”

I did, and squinted for a second. Then I jumped, startled, and summoned my wings without thinking about it. There was a giant version of the Great Diamond Authority’s emblem in front of me, four diamond shapes perfectly arranged in a larger one. And I saw my reflection stare back at me and Pearl from Pink Diamond’s emblem.
But, wait. There were also clouds behind us?

Pearl’s reflection smiled at me, and offered me her hand. “Come along now, it’s just up these steps ~”

I hesitated for a moment, staring up at Blue Diamond’s emblem now. Remembering our last meeting … and feeling awe and dread at the same time.

I reached out and squeezed Pearl’s hand, hoping it’d make me feel better. But then I imagined the two of us standing trial before my Diamond, in her new, high-tech court. And how helpless we’d be before her judgment.

“Lapis, are you okay?”

I looked over to her and forced a nod. “I’m fine. Just show me where to go.”

Pearl led me up two flights of stairs, and then through a hexagonal archway. Just past it was what looked like half of a stone amphitheatre, with rows of seating and two obelisks with statues in front of each. And I say it looked like only half of an amphitheatre because one of the obelisks had been torn down, the other was missing, and it just sort of ended past them. There were crumbling rocks, and then blue sky, with a fluffy cloud drifting into the upper seats.

I had never seen this place before in my life. But it reminded me of Blue Diamond’s floating court, where Ruby had nearly been shattered.

“I’m sure you remember the arena, Lapis.” Pearl squeezed my hand, and sounded excited. “I’m pleased to say it’s still partly intact!”

“Oh!” Her voice brought me back to reality. “Uh, yeah. It’s great!” I forced a smile. “So what are we doing here?”

Pearl gently tugged at my hand, and led me down the steps. “A form of Dominant / submissive Roleplay I like to call … role reversal.” She grinned.

I wasn’t sure what to say to that. But I blushed anyway, just because Pearl seemed excited about it.

When we got to the bottom of the steps, Pearl gestured for me to sit down in the front row. I did so, and then she projected another hologram presentation. This one had a big, muscle-y stick figure holding the leash of a smaller one right next to it.

“Role reversal,” Pearl explained, “is when the typical domme (that’s you) and sub (that’s me) trade places.” Suddenly the leash was on the big muscle-y stick figure, and the smaller one made it get down on its knees and then swatted its rear. “Besides letting them try new things out, it allows both domme and sub to get a better idea of what their partner likes, thus encouraging bonding and empathy!”

I was blushing harder, and had dropped my gaze. This didn’t sound like something I’d enjoy, but the way Pearl said “bonding and empathy” made me feel like I needed them. And like she was willing to give them to me.

“The safeword is ‘red,’ as always,” she went on, “and I’ve brought all the tools and toys that we’ll need.” I realized there were whips, ropes, and weird stuff that I didn’t recognize, spread out on the bench just beside me. “Any questions, Lapis?”

“Uh …” I gave up trying to figure out what some of those things were for. “Pearl, this is nice!” I
smiled awkwardly at her. “And I’m glad you didn’t take me underwater, or something. But I don’t think … ”

“You don’t think you could take me seriously as a domme?” Pearl smiled down her nose at me, and looked somewhere between “smug” and “amused.”

“I guess not?” I wasn’t sure how I felt about being tied up in general, but I wanted her to keep talking to me.

“For your information, Lapis, I’ve been domming since before there was even a word for it.” She put a hand to her chest and raised her head proudly, her eyes closed.

“O-oh.” I looked away, my face flushed.

“But a part of Dominant / submissive roleplay is to have backup plans, in case something is poorly received. So, with that in mind … ” Pearl walked over to a wheeled wooden frame with a big green rectangle in it, and pushed it over in front of me before picking up a white stick of chalk. “Let’s find out who you could take seriously, as a domme. Then we can talk about whether you’d find it more cathartic to do a role reversal roleplay, or a double role reversal in which you turn the tables on your captor.”

“But how?” I held out my hands to her. “We don’t even have any tables! And how are you going to … oh.”

The cloud that was drifting through the seats across from me had formed the words “I HAVE MY WAYS.” Beneath it, Pearl was holding her free hand up to the cloud, and grinning at me.

“I guess you are a Gem of many talents … ” I tried to grin back at her, but could barely meet her gaze for a second.

“Correct.” Pearl nodded approvingly. “Now, then. Who is someone that you could take orders from? Whether willingly or unwillingly.”

“Blue Diamond.” I didn’t even hesitate. I just stared down at the floor, as I said it.

“Oh!” Pearl put her free hand to her face. “Do you mean to say you were in-”

“She’s my Diamond.” I still couldn’t look up at Pearl. “I have to do what she tells me.”

I heard Pearl scratch the chalk on the green rectangle. “So if she ordered you to be chained to a statue, then you wouldn’t resist?”

I shook my head.

“For the purposes of our roleplay, why do you think she would want to do that?”

* * *

“She may have been compromised. Extract the intelligence from her by force.”

I remembered Quartz soldiers grabbing me by the arms, and holding me up off the floor. I remembered being held over a shallow basin of water, while a Peridot with limb extenders touched burning hot metal to my Gem and forced the memories out of me, my screams echoing and tears rippling across the playback on the water’s surface.

I remembered Blue Diamond’s floating mechanical eye looking down at me, my terrified face
reflected in its iris. Knowing that if I’d been “compromised” by my time on Earth then I’d never be of use to her again, and that she had the right to order her soldiers to shatter me right there.

* * *

“I-I don’t know.” I was trying to maintain composure, and gripping the folds of my skirt. “You think of something.”

“Hmm. Perhaps she caught you fraternizing with one of her Pearls.” There was a suggestive smile in Pearl’s voice.

I looked up at her, confused. “Wouldn’t she punish you, then?”

Pearl took the reminder of her status in stride. “Of course she would. But she’d also need to question her loyal Lapis Lazuli. Perhaps she even wants you and her Pearl to demonstrate what got you in trouble.”

"Why would she want to do that?"

“I’m sure you can think of a reason ~ ”

I could think of several. But I wasn’t sure I liked any of them.

Pearl held out her hand to me. I took it without questioning, and meekly followed her as she led me over to one of the big, stone Gem statues. She gestured for me to wrap my arms around like I was hugging its legs, and once I did so she bound my wrists together in front of me.

“This should be easy enough for a Gem like you to break out of,” she told me. “But if it’s not and you want to leave, just say the safeword and I’ll be right there. Okay?”

“Red,” I told Pearl, my voice flat and my head turned away from her. This wasn’t something I could do right now. I didn’t want to be tied up, but being reminded of what my Diamond had done to me had drained all the life out of me. So I couldn’t resist except to say that.

Unfortunately, Pearl misunderstood. “Yes, very good,” she told me. “That is the safeword. Just say ‘red’ whenever you want me to stop. Okay?”

I couldn’t say anything.

“Now, then,” I heard Pearl say behind me. “Let’s create some Gem guards … ”

There was a flash of light, and then a mechanical version of Pearl’s voice spoke. “Holo-Pearl version two-point-zero-zero-zero-zero-three! Bondage mode activated!” This repeated a bunch of times. I lost count.

“And now let’s create Blue Diamond!” said Pearl, and I felt a chill as the breeze picked up and dragged a puff of water vapour past me. I couldn’t help but turn my head to watch as it took the shape of her ancient throne, with rows of transparent Pearls in front carrying spears and staring past each other with glowing red eyes. And seated inside it was … was …

I turned away and squeezed my eyes shut, fighting back tears. I couldn’t face her again. I just couldn’t.

“Now, then.” Pearl sounded completely in control of the situation. "I’ll roleplay as Blue Diamond and the Pearl you’ve been fraternizing with, and you can choose whether to obey her orders or fight
back. Does that sound alright, Lapis? Or should I say, prisoner?"

At that, I just slumped against the statue’s legs. “Why would I fight back?” I asked Pearl. “She’s my Diamond. She’s perfect. Fighting back against her would be useless.”

It took Pearl a few seconds to realize that I wasn’t playing when I said that.
Chapter Summary

Pearl and Lapis come to have a better understanding of each other, in multiple ways.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Lapis, I’m so sorry … ” Pearl ran back over to me, and I felt her hands undoing the knot on the other side of the statue. “I didn’t know that when you said ‘red’ it meant-”

“That’s what the safeword is for. Right?” I felt my hands come loose, and stretched them.

“Well, yes, but-”

“It’s okay. You misunderstood.” I turned away from her, to face the cloud version of Blue Diamond’s walking throne and the rows of Holo-Pearl guards in front of her. My face was blank.

“You also misunderstood what I said about taking orders from her,” I went on, feeling hollow inside. “That’s okay. I can work with this.”

I walked forward and saluted the cloud, my arms stiffly forming a diamond in front of my chest. “My Diamond, this Lapis Lazuli has failed both of her missions. She also accepted aid from the leader of the Crystal Gems, and has been emotionally compromised by Rose Quartz’s lieutenant. She submits to your perfect judgment. Please do with her as you see fit.”
The entire arena was silent.

I heard Pearl’s hesitant footsteps coming towards me. “Lapis … Diamonds aren’t perfect.”

“That doesn’t matter.” I did not turn to look at her, or stop saluting. “It’s useless to fight back against them.”

“Fighting back against them is *not* useless!”

I turned to look at her, my face still blank and expressionless. “It was for me.”

“Oh … oh. So that’s why you … so when Steven offered to let you out of that jail cell and you refused, it was because-”

I just nodded slowly, and let my arms relax now that I was facing Pearl.

“Lapis, I had no idea … I didn’t *realize* that when you got back to Homeworld, Blue Diamond-”

“*Stop saying her NAME!*”

Pearl took a step backwards and put both hands to her mouth, staring at me in fear.
I sighed and tried again, this time with less anger in my voice. “I know what you’re trying to tell me. You Crystal Gems fought the Diamonds, and won. But that did me no good at all when mine had me tortured! And you’re trying to show you feel sorry for me, but a rebel like you couldn’t possibly understand what it’s like to want to be what your Diamond made you, and then have her just throw you away!”

Pearl had clasped her hands in front of her as I spoke, and was looking down at the floor now. “Yes,” she said, “I could.”

The water in my Gem ran cold.

“I was created for her.” Pearl gestured at Blue Diamond’s walking throne. “She ‘gifted’ me to White Diamond as an insult. Then White Diamond regifted me to an upper-class Quartz … a Rose Quartz. The one who brought out my true potential, until even she,” and Pearl gave the throne a disdainful look, ”was running in terror from us.

“That’s what I meant when I said the Diamonds aren’t perfect,” Pearl went on, speaking softly but passionately. ”That they make mistakes! They throw Gem after Gem away, and find planets like Earth to turn into new Gems. Irreplaceable worlds teeming with life, and drained just to make up for their mismanagement!

“When Peridot realized that Yellow Diamond wasn’t ‘objective’ enough to see that, she called her a clod,” Pearl finished.

“I know.” Peridot had told me the story ten times. Now didn’t seem like the best time to mention that, though.

“That’s why the Crystal Gems even existed! We … Rose took all the Gems that Homeworld had thrown away, and turned us into an army to fight against the Diamonds. She fought for me, a worthless Pearl whose very existence was a bad joke! She made me feel like I was everything to her. And now …”

I knew what she was going to say. I was squeezing my eyes shut, but they were starting to water anyway because I knew what Pearl was going to say.

“ … now, I want you to feel like you’re everything to me.” She put her hands on my shoulders. ”Because you deserve so much better than what the Diamonds have given you, Lapis. You deserve to feel proud of who you are! You deserve to be able to look the Diamond that hurt you in the eye and say ‘I am a Lapis Lazuli, and I’m going to kick your butt!!’ ”

“How?!?” I shrugged her off of me and pulled back, then gestured at myself with both hands. “Pearl, I’m a mess! I’m not … I can’t do that! Not if I had the whole ocean to work with!”

I looked away from her and held myself tightly with both arms, as salt water trickled down my face. “She broke me, inside. So did Malachite. And so did … so did … ”

I couldn’t finish that sentence, so I just went on. “It took everything I had just to tell Jasper to go away,” I told Pearl, looking up at her through tearstricken eyes. “And I still regret it! I’m not strong enough to forget her. And I’ll never be strong enough to fight back against my Diamond.” I looked away, again, and spoke quietly now. “I can’t even imagine what it would be like.”

Pearl was silent, for a long moment. I wasn’t looking up at her face, so I couldn’t tell how she felt about my outburst. Was she going to lecture me? Tell me how ungrateful I was, to her? Did she finally regret trying to do all this for me?
Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Pearl held out one hand towards the clod – no, cloud! – the *cloud* shaped like Blue Diamond’s walking throne. And then she started … singing?

**Soundtrack:** *Strong in the Real Way (Instrumental)*

"Why do you have to look up to her
Aside from in the literal sense?
Don’t you know you mean nothing to her?
She’d crush you for the slightest offence.

The Gem in Pearl’s forehead projected a recording of the walking throne, *retreating* before her and Rose Quartz.

"And can’t you see that she’s merciless, cruel,
And reigns through terror?
She thinks she can control your life
But we can show her."

Wait, what?

I blushed and sniffled my tears, and watched as Pearl stopped her projection and turned to face the army of Holo-Pearls and the cloud throne. In one quick motion she drew a trident from her Gem, and then started thrusting it into the copies of her, before spinning around to evade their sword slashes and thrusting again.

In the middle of it all, Pearl kept *singing* to me. Steven had warned me that this was her thing, but I hadn’t realized just what he’d meant by that …

… or how beautiful her voice was.

"I *could* show you how to be strong,
In the real way
And I know that *we* could be strong,
In the real way … "

She broke through the line of Holo-Pearls and started swinging her trident at Blue Diamond’s throne, taking puffs of cloud off of it and making it stumble backwards.

"And I want to *inspire* you!
I want to be your rock,
And when I talk
It starts a fire in you ~ "

I just stared at her in awe, my cheeks turning blue. I didn’t know about fires, but I realized I *definitely* wanted this Pearl to be my rock. That she was gifting *herself* this time, to me. And that if I ever had to face Blue Diamond again … I wanted her beside me.

Just then, I heard another voice; one of those Holo-Pearls. “Submissive detected! Please assume the bondage roleplay submission position!” After that, it started mechanically walking towards me.

I summoned my wings, and flew up to perch on the arms of the statue that I had been tied to. The Holo Pearl marched up and began swiping at me with the flat of its hand, as though it were trying to spank me.

“Get away!” I yelled, and kicked wildly at it. “Go do that to Pearl, she *loves* it!”
One of my kicks connected with its face. “A new challenger approaches!” it exclaimed, and drew its sword. “Switching to combat mode!”

“What?!” Then I jumped, as it swung its sword and chipped the arm I’d been perched on.

I climbed up to the statue’s head, but the Holo-Pearl jumped at me and I ducked away just in time. “Pearl!” I shouted, as another one of its slashes hit the statue.

Pearl stared in horror, from inside the crowd of Holo-Pearls surrounding her. Then she drew a sword from her Gem, and threw it at the one attacking me. It impaled that Holo-Pearl, and shattered it.

I climbed back up the statue, and stared down at Pearl in awe. She moved with such fluidity, like an wave crashing down on her foes. Her spear moved like an extension of her arms, and she swung it with perfect balance, never once losing track of where everything around her was. It was so … so graceful, compared to the brute force of my water control.

My cheeks were dark blue, and the water inside my Gem felt like it was boiling. I looked down at the sword, still embedded in the statue, then back up at Pearl. And I made a snap decision.

“Incoming!” I yelled, and then landed behind her with the sword in my hands, facing a couple of Holo-Pearls. I had no idea how to hold it, but I tried to imitate their stance.

“Lapis!” Pearl sounded taken aback, and started looking between me and the Holo-Pearls surrounding us. “There isn’t a body of water in sight! You need to get someplace safe.”

“I can’t think of anywhere safer than right beside you.” I reached back and squeezed her hand. “And you deserve better than how I’ve been treating you. A lot better.”

“A-are you sure?” She was blushing, now. And dividing her attention, between me and the advancing Holo-Pearls.

“Definitely.” I smiled at her, and she blushed even harder. Then I squeezed her hand, and turned back to face the two Holo-Pearls on my side. “Now, let’s do this!”

We both assumed fighting stances, hers graceful and effortless while mine was more clumsy. But it didn’t occur to either of us to let go of the other’s hand. Instead, we squeezed even tighter …

And our bodies began to shine brightly …

And then-

* * *

And then I demolished those Holo-Pearls!

**Soundtrack: Dance of Swords**

They stared up at me, confused. But I didn’t give them any breathing room. I just ran up and impaled them on my spear, one after the other, before swinging it around in an arc and destroying the rest of the squad I’d created.
There was a straggler, near where I’d tied Lapis up. I held out my spear towards it and summoned its wings, and they folded out as its point glowed with blue energy. Then I fired my spear’s cannon at the Holo-Pearl, blasting a hole through it and the arena, and it shattered while my spear vented water vapour from its core.

Finally, I turned to face Blue Diamond’s walking throne, and glared at it. “You’re a lot smaller than I thought you’d be,” I growled. And it really did seem smaller than I remembered. “What’s the matter? Are you scared?”

It didn’t answer. It was just a cloud.

I didn’t care. I just grinned, and readied my spear. “Well, you should be!” I told it, and then started running. “Because I’m a Moonstone, and I’m going to kick your butt!”

I leaped into the air, ribbons and streamers trailing behind me, and twirled around slashing the throne with my spear. Then I landed in a crouch inside of it, and spun in a circle as I came back up, using the flat end of my spear like a fan and blowing the cloud away.
I desummoned my spear’s wings, and held it casually in one hand as I stretched my arms in the air. That had been invigorating! I actually couldn’t stop grinning – I’d never felt so powerful before! *Just wait until I tell Pearl about this,* I thought-

Then I froze.

My spear clattered to the floor, as I dropped it and ran for the exit. I tried not to think or feel anything until I got back to the Warp pad, and could look at my reflection in the polished glass next to it.

I was wearing an outfit that I didn’t recognize, and I had four eyes and a white Pearl set into my forehead.

Only one word came to mind.

“AAAAAHHHHHHHH!”

Chapter End Notes

Pearl's backstory in this chapter is from [Regifted](https://spiral-space.com/), by [SpiralSpace](https://spiral-space.com/)! It's a very powerful short story, especially the beginning and the very last sentence.

If you'd like to see the concept art that [Alias-Pseudonym](https://spiral-space.com/) did for Moonstone, complete with an outline of Pearl to indicate height, click here. Can you tell what her inspiration was?

Don't forget to subscribe to the [A Pearl of my Own](https://spiral-space.com/) series, if you want to see what happens next ~

Please [drop by the archive and comment](https://spiral-space.com/) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!