

# Sleepover

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The Crystal Gems could face anything. No monster on the planet earth was safe, no adventure too dangerous, no puzzle unsolvable. Well at least until Steven came into their lives. For most of the time Greg took care of the little baby, but occasionally the gems had a few hours with Steven. They were very limited though. With Amethyst being pretty reckless nobody knew how well she would handle a fragile infant and Pearl had had a minor breakdown the first time Steven had peed on her while she changed his diaper. It's not like he didn't trust them, he just thought human babies weren't really their specialty.

Greg didn't tell them why exactly he had to leave, he just said he had to attend some personal business and would be gone for three or four days. Explaining that to Steven was the hardest part. He liked spending some time with the gems but that was mostly just a few hours and then he went back to his dad. He had never been without him for so long. When Greg left Steven didn't seem to mind much, maybe he hadn't really understood what they had tried to explain to him.

„Later Daddy!“ Steven waved after the van from where he was in Pearl's arms, then he turned to the gems and smiled brightly at them.

„What'cha wanna do now, little man?“

„Hmm... Play!“ Steven didn't need any help to come up with games, he had lots of ideas and three gems to play with. After a while he had a brilliant idea: Pillow Fortress. Pearl and Amethyst helped him built one and soon enough he thought it was a good time for a nap inside.

The afternoon went by without any bigger complications, there was a minor diaper incident but Greg had warned them about it. The stress started in the evening. Steven was wandering around the beach house, inspecting everything he found and ended up sitting on the kitchen floor pouting.

„What's wrong, Steven?“ Pearl kneeled before him so they were nearly on the same level.

„Hungwy!“ With a smile Pearl took him in her arms.

„We can't have that now, can we?“ Greg had prepared something so they just had to warm it up. He didn't really trust them with preparing food for Steven, the only one to eat was Amethyst and her idea of cooking was shoving everything together in her mouth.

Steven was happy that he could help with something before he was sat in his chair. But that was it with being happy little Steven for a while. Feeding Steven had always been a problem for Pearl. She was disgusted by food in general and watching a toddler eat didn't really help with that. Now when Steven saw that Pearl didn't like his

food, he didn't like it either. He just refused to eat it and threw his little fork away. Then when Amethyst came and said she would eat it, he suddenly wanted it again. Because his fork was gone though, he just started eating with his fingers which ended in a huge mess.

„Steven“, Pearl sighed. The little boy had managed to paint his face with tomato sauce and was now trying to lick everything from his tiny hands.

„Pea'l help!“ He had started to rub his hands on his bib, but his face was still dirty. They carefully cleaned him up together before he tried to help her with the dishes. He mostly helped her, because he knew helping often gets you a cookie and he wasn't wrong.

„OH, mean, P, I want a cookie too!“ Steven was standing between the two of them with his cookie half in his mouth. For a few long moments he watched them stare at each other before he broke a piece off of his cookie and handed it to Amethyst.

„Steven shares.“ Amethyst ruffled his hair and thanked him before they both made the cookie disappear.

The next thing on Steven's adventure list was the fence between the house and the temple. He would probably not be interested in the warp pad at all if there wasn't a fence to climb. Pearl had thought it best to separate the human and the gem part of the house so that Steven couldn't accidentally warp himself away; it was the same around his lofty bed area and on both ends of the stairs just in case. His first attempt was quickly interrupted when Amethyst picked him up for some play time. At first he was a little disgruntled but forgot about it very soon. His second attempt started when Pearl and Amethyst were too focused on their bickering to pay him any attention. The fence stood barely taller than him and behind it was the nice glittery-blinky-thingy he wanted to have. So he started climbing. Steven was quite good at climbing things he was not supposed to. Sadly as soon as he made his ascend onto the pad two strong hands lifted him up and he found himself in a warm hug in Garnet's arms.

„Ga'ne!“ At first he was disappointed about the sudden end of his adventure, but now he was just happy. I liked being up high in Garnet's arms, nothing could happen to him here, Garnet always had an eye on him.

„Steven, what are you doing 'ere?“ She knew that he knew he wasn't supposed to climb over fences and for a moment he looked a little bit guilty. As soon as he spotted her glasses once again the guilt was gone from his face and he had a new objective: Getting Garnet's glasses for him to look just like her. She let him have them to play with for a moment, while she carried him back to his part of the house. A single look from her made the two gems shut up. They hadn't even noticed that Steven was gone. The little boy didn't mind at all, he was just happily playing with the cool glasses and trying to climb all over Garnet. Pearl tried to compose herself while clearing her throat and wanted to lift the little boy from the taller one's head.

„Nooo! Ga'ne time!“ Pearl didn't know what to think about that kind of behavior, but a warning glare from Garnet left her speechless for a moment. They let Steven do what he wanted for a few more minutes until he was tired of his play and just sat in Garnet's arms and snuggled up to her, a thumb between his slightly open lips.

After a five minute discussion over diapers and Steven's potty and a little bit of crying before his little baby teeth were brushed, he was finally in his pajamas and ready for bed. After the tantrums they, especially Pearl, had decided it best not to try to bathe Steven today. He had started to cuddle with them again and had been quiet, normally that meant he was ready for bed. Pearl took it upon herself to carry him up the stairs

and lay him down; he seemed tired enough to sleep without a story tonight, which was just fine for her. Even if gems did not need to sleep, a day with a toddler could leave them tired and ready for a few quiet minutes alone.

She tucked him in and stroked his hair. He wasn't even three, that was not even a blink in the life of a gem, but he had changed their lives so drastically. Pearl would have never thought she could love this human, well half-human, so much, especially since he was the reason Rose wasn't around anymore. Though she had learned that wasn't really true either. They had the same smile, the same laugh, even the expressions and he was just as loving as his mother, if not even more. He was his own little person, but it was impossible to not see all the little facets of Rose in him.

„Good night, Steven, sleep tight.“ Apparently that wouldn't happen and it wasn't yet time for her relaxation.

„No... Not bed time“, Steven said and sat up again, his bear tight in his arms and obviously tired. That didn't seem to stop him though. „Daddy's not home. And no sleepy song!“

„Steven, Gre-, your dad talked about this with you. Tonight you have to go to bed without him. But you did so before, so it's no big deal right?“ She sat beside him on his 'big boy bed' and stroked through his hair once. It nearly broke her heart to look into these sad small eyes. For a moment none of them moved, then he let go of his bear and quickly climbed into her lap to hug her as tight as he could. She heard him sniffle into her shirt and couldn't help herself to softly lay her arms around him.

„Oh Steven, you don't need to be sad. Your dad will come back soon and if you go to bed now, it will be even sooner. You stayed with us over night before, sweetie. That wasn't so bad, was it?“ Steven was silent for a few moments, well nearly silent, he still sniffled a little bit but he seemed to calm down again, just sitting there in her arms.

„But no daddy, no song, no sleep.“ He looked up at her a few tears glistening on his cheeks. Instead of arguing with him, Pearl just started humming a song. That was way more effective than she had thought. Steven fell asleep nearly instantly and Pearl was glad, she could finally put him in bed for the night. She stayed for a good ten minutes to make sure he really slept until she left him alone. She never really did though. She would spend some time in the temple and then come back to check on him, see if he was still sleeping and most importantly breathing. The sooner the morning was coming the longer she left Steven alone, because she didn't want him to worry about something being wrong in case he woke up and noticed her.

It was a good thing, she didn't saw what Steven did after waking up, because she would probably have a heart attack, even if she did not have a real heart. Little Steven woke up early in the morning, the sun was barely up and he was alone. He climbed out of his bed and looked around the house from his high position: No one in sight. Well that was unsatisfactory. His diaper was dirty, he was kind of hungry and he didn't like alone time very much. So Steven decided to do something about everything. First he needed to get to down the stairs.

He looked around his little room and got his bear to fly over the fence, the toy did not land, as intended, on the sofa but the ground, so Steven would not try to follow him that would get an ouchy. He tried opening to stair gate, but that didn't work out very well either, so climbing it was. It was harder than he had thought, but he managed somehow without hurting himself. Now he was on the stairs, that wasn't so hard. He had traveled over a lot of stairs on his own already, even though up was certainly easier than down. The second gate was much faster left behind him, because he magically got it to open. He laughed happily and collected his bear before going in the

bathroom.

His dirty diaper was quite icky he told his bear friend on the way and he was a big boy now, he did not need diapers during the day, only sometimes and by sometimes he meant quite often. Undressing himself was no problem for the toddler, he did that every evening before bed time and every morning after breakfast, so his pajama pants went to the floor. Getting rid of his diaper proved to be a little more difficult, but with a little patience they were gone as well. Putting his pants back on though, that was something he normally needed help with and as he became too frustrated, he just left them in the bathroom, so he and his bear could get some breakfast.

He got as far as the fridge before his morning adventure was over. First of all, opening the big cold box was hard, it never looked so hard, but he just wasn't strong enough to do so. Second of all, in his frustration he may have called for the gems to help him with his breakfast. While he waited he looked around the kitchen to find something to eat with his bear.

"Steven, what are you doing?" Pearl was always the fastest when he needed something, but she sounded angry with him as she lifted him up in her arms. He pouted a little at her before telling her the thrilling tale of his morning adventure. He was really excited and proud of himself for doing all these things without any help, but Pearl seemed to be really angry with him this time, so after a while he shut up and looked at her ready to start crying.

"Steven, you can't just climb over the gates, you could have hurt yourself. And running around the house without anyone knowing about it that is very dangerous. What if something happened to you?" She did not raise her voice, but her tone alone was enough to see how upset she was about his actions. Steven rubbed his eyes before the tears could fall. He didn't like when someone was angry with him, he didn't mean to be a bad boy. Before she could start to lecture him more, he laid his arms around her neck for a moment.

"I'm sorry." Pearl sighed and rubbed small circles on his back. He was a good child, although he worried them quite a lot.

"I know you are, sweetie." When she called him sweetie, he normally was out of trouble again. So he gave her a quick wet smooch on the cheek.

"But now it's time to put some pants on this butt, don't you think?" She smiled at him, all anger and worry forgotten.

"Nah, no pants, Steven's hungry." Sometimes he was really difficult to deal with, but Pearl wasn't sure if that was his nature in general or if it was just the human part of him. She had read some books about human children, but none of them had prepared her for this little ball of pure energy.

"Amethyst! Can you help me please?" Pearl called in the general direction of the temple, before walking through the kitchen with Steven now on her hip.

"You can't eat breakfast if you don't have pants on, that's a rule, remember Steven?" He seemed more interested in trying to spot his breakfast than another of her rules. When he found a banana lying on the counter he tried to grab it, unsuccessfully due to Pearl's strong grip on him.

"Steven. Please pay attention when I talk to you."

"Well, you can't blame him, P, you talk an awful lot." Amethyst jumped onto the counter and grinned at the fellow gem.

"Ame!" Steven switched position and was now sitting on Amethyst's lap, hugging her happily, before he started to play with her hair which included putting it in his mouth and looking at Pearl.

"Can you please go and help Steven get dressed, while I make him some breakfast?"

"Why don't you dress him and I make some breakfast?" Pearl only shot her a look. They had had this discussion before and every time Amethyst said she would make Steven food it was either some take out or she would eat half of it herself. So they stopped letting her do it without supervision.

"And why is Steven naked? Last time he ran around without pants, I got in a whole lot of trouble with you, but when you let him to it, its okay?"

"He did it himself, that's why I want you to make sure, he really puts pants on now. And he'll probably need a diaper." Before Steven could start to protest, Amethyst carried him to his room already. Arguing with Pearl was a lost cause this early in the morning, especially when she was right.