

### Amethyst: A Talisman of Healing

You're married to a hot mom. Everyone knows the type. Her name is *Cadence*. She can wear maroon suede over-the-knee boots with a little black dress to pick your daughter up from pre-k and not look like she's trying too hard. She named your daughter Amethyst from some ancient myth and gets passive aggressive when you try to call her Amy for short.

Three years ago, when Amethyst came into the world, you would have sold your heart and soul to stay at home with her all day. Your life stopped and started again the day she was born, Cadence jokes, because you literally passed out and had to be revived. Blood has never been your thing.

Everything was glorious that first year of her life. You had a really nice job as a financial consultant and Cadence stayed home with the baby. You thrived in the "manly husband bringing home the bacon" role. Sometimes you even brought flowers home with the bacon and Cadence would cry because you are the actual sweetest.

Cadence started a mom blog as soon as the baby started sleeping through the night. You thought the articles were cute. She'd throw in some pictures and some random life advice. Crazy enough, she garnered a rather large following. You'd sometimes read them in the morning before work, black coffee in one hand and iPad mini in the other. Then she changed the settings so that you had to subscribe to get access, and you never quite managed to have enough time to type in your info before work.

It was May, 2018, when you went into work and left before lunch.

"Hey, April," you greeted your secretary as you walked in.

"Mr. Williams has been waiting for you in your office," she cringed.

Turns out, you never submitted the year-end reviews to your biggest client in D.C. Turns out, that's a career-ending mistake. In hindsight, you should have fought back. You should have questioned it. It was probably just a test, actually. A test that you failed with flying colors. You were a cocky son of a gun and thought you'd get another job easily. You didn't need that six-digit salary and that over-qualified secretary, anyway.

The ride home was ... rough. You're pretty sure a tear slid down your cheek at some point but it would take more than a gun to your head before you'd ever tell anyone. You weren't even sad about the money. It was just plain embarrassing. You spent the rest of the drive trying to figure out how to tell Cadence that you'd have to rip up her new hardwood floors piece by piece and sell the wood on the black market if you ever wanted to send your daughter to college one day. Your mind goes to dark places in a crisis. There's a reason you aren't in public relations.

Your hot wife took the news swimmingly. That made it so much worse. You wanted her to poke your eyes out and never talk to you again. Instead, you decided you'd have to poke your own eyes out and never talk to yourself again. You miserable, pathetic, negligent...

"You know, hon," Cadence interrupted your self-deprecation. "I could make money advertising on my blog."

You blink. You blink again.

"At least, for a little while? Until you're back on your feet, of course."

You found that adorable. She wanted to help. Poor thing.

"Babe, I don't think that'll be necessary."

It's been six months, and you still don't have a job. Cadence still stays at home with Amethyst while you go out job hunting. The savings account is slowly funneling to the grocery store in order to keep you and your family alive. You haven't told your parents anything. It's pretty obvious that you've been handling the whole thing like a big baby. Cadence talks to her mom on the phone about it almost every day. As if your relationship with your mother-in-law wasn't already the worst. It'll be a surprise if she ever talks to you again.

You cringe as you sit on the beige leather couch in the living room, eating potato chips and thus resembling a couch potato in more than one way. Christmas is in a month, and you're going to have to tell both sides of the family that you lost your job and cannot provide for your wife and child. You wonder how much tickets to Alaska cost this time of year....

"Hey, babe?" Cadence pokes her head around the door.

"Yeah?" You say, feeling quite certain she's going to want a divorce. Hot women don't stay married to pathetic men.

She walks in and sits down on the couch next to you. She takes your hands in hers. She's cold and clammy. You knew it. You remember the time Sally Putnam broke up with you in eighth grade. It went just like this. Except she was wearing overalls and had braces. You look at Cadence's lips. No braces there.

She starts talking about how she knows the past six months have been really hard on you. Blah blah blah. And how she's tried to be supportive. Blah blah. And how she decided to advertise on her blog just to see if it would work. Blah. And how it did work and how she has a check she wants to show you.

Wait, what?

Cadence starts jumping up and down on the couch. You start halfway jumping, too. She reaches into her pocket and... \$1,500. For a freaking mom blog.

Turns out, L'Oréal has just launched a new brand (Cadence tells you it's like Urban Decay, which means absolutely nothing to you) and they are using Cadence's blog to promote it. The campaign is aimed towards the young mom demographic. They tried a banner ad first, which Cadence says is one of those little pop-up ads at the bottom, and they got enough clicks to give her over a thousand bucks.

“And they're saying if I actually review the product in my writing, I can make way more!”

You give her a huge hug. This is a big deal for her, you think.

You are excited for her, really. You are so happy. You're just ... surprised. You are also very surprised the next week when a check rolls in for 3k. And the same the next week. You start to wonder if dad blogs are a thing. Maybe you should make them a thing.

Your hot wife tells you they want to fly her up to New York for a meeting and an interview. Black Friday is next week and it's going to be a big deal for sales. You say that sounds amazing. A trip would do you both some good. Amethyst can stay with Cadence's parents.

A pause.

"You know, babe. I'm really just good to go by myself. There wouldn't be much for you to do. And plus, you haven't spent much time with your daughter lately," is what Cadence says.

"You are worthless to me and have been a terrible father," is what you hear.

Cadence always put cute little handwritten notes in your luggage when you went away on business. You think you'll return the favor and essentially scribble *I'm sorry you hate me* on a passive aggressive sticky note and tuck it in her bag. She takes an Uber to the airport. She is wearing heels and as much as you hated to admit it, she is going to slay that interview whether you are with her or not.

"Daddy, Am-thie needs potty."

Your kid is three-years-old and you've never spent more than two hours alone with her. The weekend looms in front of you like a dark storm cloud. You've never wiped a kid's butt before and you come to find out it's ten times more confusing when it's not your own butt.

Cadence has made you a "Daddy Daughter Weekend Fun" list of all the things you could possibly do in the suburbs with a child. The first item is "bake cookies," which is a strong no, so you try item number two, "Chick-fil-a."

Amethyst says she wants to go as Anna. Not only that but she wants to put the Frozen character's dress over her polka dot shirt and leggings. And she wants to carry a wand. And she

wants you to wear the tiara. And at this point you're thinking there's no way in this world that you're going to put that stupid—

“Daddy, isn't Mommy pretty?”

What the heck. Screw it. If Mommy can be pretty, so can you. The two of you bust out the door looking like Elsa just unfroze Arendelle and you're not even mad about it.

It doesn't take you long to figure out that Chick-fil-a is a Daddy-Daughter date heaven. There are at least ten other dads in there, so you feel nothing but respect for wearing a little girl's tiara. Heck, the dad sitting next to you has on fingernail polish and lipstick. You give each other a manly nod.

Later that night, after you put Amethyst to bed, you give Cadence a call. She's all settled in her hotel, excited about what tomorrow holds. You're still excited that Chick-fil-a has those little ketchup packets that you can dip in and you don't have to squeeze fifteen thousand of those crappy little baggies onto a napkin. Cadence laughs. You also tell her about how Amethyst made you wear a tiara all night. It has been a while since the two of you just talked about silly nothings. You keep talking late into the night.

You wake up on Saturday feeling no shame about carting your kid back to Chick-fil-a for breakfast. The staff is just so freaking friendly and... and Amethyst informs you she'd like to have pancakes instead. It takes you two hours, but the final product is decent, to say the most.

According to the Daddy Daughter Weekend Fun list, Amethyst has a playdate at Ava's from 1-4, and you wonder how that could possibly be daddy-daughter fun. Sounds more like Amethyst-Ava fun. You drop her off, after telling her you love her a couple dozen times, and then you don't know what to do with yourself. Typically, a free Saturday afternoon was a golden opportunity to watch sports, but you feel restless.

You passed a Starbucks on the way to Ava's so you decide to stop in on the way back and look at job listings online. You think about ordering a venti cappuccino, but think better. You haven't had income in six months. You get a tall black coffee, find a seat, and whip open your laptop. You avoid the dozen tabs open to job listings and instead open another. You're mindlessly scrolling through Facebook, procrastinating, when Cadence's face flashes by. You scroll back up. It's an ad for her blog. Like, a full-on paid ad. You click on it. It says you get to read the latest post for free before you have to subscribe. The whole webpage looks totally different than you remember it. She's made a lot of changes in the past year. You check the date at the top. *November 17, 2018*. She wrote this one today.

### **Amethyst**

hello again!!! i feel like a different woman as i sit and write this from my oober fancy hotel room in THE new york city (squeals!!). who knew that mom dreams could come true, too? and no, i'm not talking about going to big apple and kicking b\*tt and signing contracts and making it big time with a blog. (though, i must confess, all those things are happening right now and i can't wait to let y'all know where it all goes!). no, this mommy's dreams came true last night with a call from her husband.

maybe i just miss my kid so i'm emotion-vomiting onto the page right now, but boy, did i need that conversation last night. brace yourselves - vulnerability moment coming up. for the first time, i left him at home with amethyst for the whole weekend (don't worry, i literally wrote down what they should do every second of every day). and y'all, i think he really enjoyed it. h\*ck, i think he loved it. it was music to my ears.

here's the kicker - in order to keep blogging, i have to travel to do promotions. that's why i'm in new york. in order to keep blogging, i can't be a stay-at-home mom. but i don't want my baby to spend the rest of her life in after school. in an ideal world, i mean a world where roses don't have thorns and ketchup packets are dippable, not squeezable, i work and he... doesn't. do i dare ask my husband to stay at home?? will he literally run away?

STAY TUNED to see if we pull off a hallmark movie ending and become the perfect little family that some of you probably think we are. haha. family is messy and gross and worth fighting for?? question mark??

i want to know what y'all think! do i dare confront him? or do i just settle? COMMENT below! and keep checking back for exciting updates from new york!! muah!

You stare at the page. You cannot believe your eyes. You read it again and again and again. You chuckle at the ketchup mention.

The slow hum of the espresso machine gets lost in the chaos of your loud thoughts. Your fingers hover about the keys.

You click “add comment.” You get rejected. A little banner pops up and informs you that you have to subscribe to comment on a post. You bang your head on the table. You buy a cappuccino. It was just a matter of time.

You pull out your wallet and subscribe to your wife’s blog with an email address she’ll recognize. Grinning, you click “add comment.”

Fifteen minutes later, satisfied, you click “send.” It seems like Amethyst has been gone for hours, but you check the time and it’s only been thirty minutes. That cappuccino had a way of disappearing rapidly. You open Evernote and start making a grocery list. You noticed last night that the fridge was running low on some must-haves. Deli meat, milk, yogurt. Amethyst is going to want more Goldfish. You’re going to want more Ben & Jerry’s. You add chocolate-dipped strawberries to the list. Cadence is going to be so excited when she gets home.

A notification pops up your screen. Someone replied to your comment. It’s your beautiful, talented wife. For the first time in six months, you close all the tabs on your browser. You can’t help but smile as your eyes glance the first line of her response –

*Babe ❤️ I’ve always thought you’d look hot in a tiara ;)*