

Episode 16- "Confronted"

"She what?!" Sensei DeSantos cried.

We had returned to our base after losing a gemstone to Flavio and were explaining how SPD Officer Lopez had allowed Michelle to be kidnapped and a young girl to almost get hurt. He was clearly pissed. I was too. As a Red Ranger I took personal offense to another Ranger allowing my training and teammate to be kidnapped.

"I still don't understand what caused Michelle to have such a strong reaction to Stefano grabbing Savannah. I know she's an innocent but she reacted really strongly." Brielle said.

I glared, "She has passion for saving the world."

Brielle rolled her eyes.

"Savannah is the daughter of a former Ranger and Ranger ally. She's part of the Ranger family." Sensei explained.

"Oh! We had no idea." I said.

"You couldn't have. The important thing is Savannah got home safely. Now we have to get Mich home safe too." Sensei said.

"I can't believe Charlie just let them take her without a fight." Peyton said.

"It's one less Sonic Ranger for her to deal with." Finn said.

"Two if Bri doesn't get it together." I said.

"Oh my frickin god! I said I was sorry!" Brielle said.

Sensei looked at Brielle. "Rory has a right to be upset. You bailed on an important training and didn't answer the call when they were in battle and needed you."

"I couldn't hear the call. I was practicing with my band." Brielle said.

"You have to be on call at all times if you are going to be a Ranger and you have to be at training." Sensei said

Brielle looked down. "I know Sensei. I'm sorry. It won't happen again."

"Good. Let's move on. We have to find Michelle. I have Cam already trying to trace her Amethyst signature. Hopefully we can use that to locate her." Sensei said.

"Cam kinda hates her too. Can we trust him?" Brielle asked.

Sensei nodded. "Yes. He may not like her but he is also a Ranger and we take care of our own. Except for SPD apparently.

Hunter and Blake walked into the base.

"Cam said something about Mich being kidnapped?" Hunter asked.

Sensei nodded. "Yes. We are working on it. Don't worry about it."

"She's a Ranger. Of course I worry about it." Hunter said.

Sensei glared at him. "I'm sure that's the only reason."

Hunter glared back. "Does it matter why? Mich needs our help."

"We need to find her and we need to find the Pink Star gem they took." I said, trying to break the tension.

"Um...has anyone considered that Michelle is the holder of a very rare gem?" Brielle chimed in.

"Oh my god, you're right. The Amethyst...it's her life force. You don't get rarer than that. And if Balassario gets her Amethyst she will die." Hunter said.

"OK...now we should all probably worry." Sensei conceded

"What do we do?" I asked.

"We wait for Cam." Sensei said.

Hunter looked at him. "We should call Hayley too. She might be able to help."

I nodded. "Good idea. This happened because Michelle was saving Hayley's daughter. If she can help I am sure she would want to."

"What about Tommy? He's her brother. Maybe he can help." Finn said.

Hunter and Sensei both scoffed.

"Tommy is half the reason she is in this mess. He supported SPD over her." Sensei said.

"For once we agree." Hunter nodded.

"Fine. No Tommy. And we can't do anything to save Michelle until Cam tracks her...but there's one thing I can do." I said.

"What's that?" Peyton asked.

"Go to SPD HQ and give them a piece of my mind." I said as I grabbed my keys.

"Rory, that won't help." Sensei said.

"Maybe not, but they need to hear it." I said.

"If you're going at least let me go with you. You shouldn't go alone when you're this angry." Peyton said.

"Fine. Come on." I said as I stormed out of the dojo.

Peyton and I headed to New Tech City in my car.

"I know you're a hockey player and all but you don't have to go all enforcer on them." Peyton said.

"In hockey we learn to defend our own at all costs. Charlie LET Stefano just take her. I can't just not to anything." I said.

"I get it man. I play a team sport too." Peyton said, "We're both captains. I get wanting to defend your own."

"Then you should be just as angry as I am." I snapped.

"I am. I'm just better at keeping a cool head." he replied.

"How?" I asked.

Peyton sighed. "Rory, I'm a gay football player. If I didn't keep a cool head I'd be pissed all the time. I have to let things roll off my back. I spend most of my life being bullied in some way."

"You get bullied? I figured being the star quarterback saved you from that." I said.

Peyton laughed, "No. Only at school. They just don't do it to my face. They do it anonymously, online."

"Wow man, I had no idea. I'm so sorry." I said sincerely.

Peyton shrugged. "It is what it is. I gotta be me. I'd rather deal with this than live in the closet."

I looked down for a moment. "You're brave."

"I am not brave. I'm just me." Peyton said.

"Sometimes it takes bravery to be who you are." I said as we pulled up to SPD.

We went inside and were stopped at the front desk. "Who are you here to see?" the receptionist asked.

"Charlie Lopez." I said.

"Is Officer Lopez expecting you?" she asked.

"She should be." I said gritting my teeth.

A few moments later Charlie walked out with her commander.

"Rory...what do you want?" Charlie growled.

"We need to talk." I growled back.

Commander Cruger nodded. "This way."

He led us to a conference room and closed the door. "You let Michelle be kidnapped and you just stood there! Where the hell were your rules and regulations when she needed help? Or is letting another Ranger just get kidnapped part of the rule book?" I screamed.

"She was the idiot that traded herself for the girl!" Charlie yelled back.

"Officer Lopez, tone it down. Rory and Peyton is it? I am sorry about Michelle and I have spoken with Officer Lopez on how she could have better handled the situation. That being said, it is Michelle that insisted we were your enemies." Commander Cruger said.

"And so that gives you a reason to let Stefano take her without a fight?" I asked.

"What would you have me do?" Charlie asked.

“You could have attacked Stefano once the girl was safe and tried to stop him from taking Michelle.” Peyton said.

“Except you wanted her gone didn’t you?” I asked.

Charlie just glared.

“You did...” I started to lunge at her but Peyton grabbed my wrist.

“She’s not worth it Rory.” Peyton said.

I took a breath. “Before we were just following orders trying to keep you out of our way. Now, we’re your enemy. Let’s see your rules and regulations get you out of this.”

“Beautiful. Now we don’t have to feel guilty when we take you down.” Charlie countered.

Peyton pulled on my arm. “Come on Ror. Let’s just go.”

I nodded. “Fine. But this isn’t over.”

“Not even close.” Charlie said.

Peyton and I walked out. We went back to my car and got in. Once we were in with the doors closed, I slammed my hands into the steering wheel and screamed.

Peyton put a hand on my shoulder. “It’s gonna be ok Rory. We’ll get her back. And bring down SPD.”

“They let this happen! Charlie could have stopped it! If Michelle dies it’s on them.” I said. I was so angry tears started to slide down my face.

“Rory, look at me.” Peyton said.

I made eye contact with him. “What?” I asked.

He reached up and wiped away my tears. “I know this is infuriating. We will do everything we can to get her back as soon as we can. One Ranger has been lost in the battle. We won’t lose another.”

I nodded and realized his hand was still on my cheek. It felt so good. I’d been denying my attraction to him for so long and with my emotions running so high I couldn’t fight it anymore. I leaned forward and kissed him passionately.

Peyton was clearly shocked by the kiss but in a moment he had wrapped his arms around me and was returning it. I wrapped my arms around him and we kissed deeply. It felt like forever.

When I finally pulled back for air I looked in his eyes. “Should I be sorry I did that?” I asked.

Peyton shook his head. “Not at all. Just took me by surprise.”

“Remember I said it takes bravery to be who you are? That’s a bravery I don’t possess.” I said.

Peyton nodded as if he finally got what I’d been trying to say. “I understand.”

“I like you Peyton. A lot.” I said.

Peyton brushed his hand on my face, “I like you too. I’d be crazy not to...but I can’t be a secret.”

I nodded. "I understand. Can you give me a couple of weeks in secret before I blow up my who life?"

Peyton paused. "Two weeks. I'll be your secret for two weeks. After that we either come out or it's over."

I nodded. "Deal."

Peyton pulled me in for another kiss. It was great. I didn't know how it happened but was Peyton my boyfriend now? I was pretty sure that is what had just happened. It took a few minutes to process. We drove back to Angel Grove in silence, but about halfway home he did reach over to hold my hand. It was very nice. What was I going to do? How was I going to navigate this? How could I come out and deal with that while I had Balassario, SPD, and a missing training to worry about?

I was so in over my head.

We got back to the dojo and I found Sensei.

"How did it go?" he asked.

I sighed, "Not great"

"I didn't think it would." Sensei nodded.

"Any word from Cam yet?" Peyton asked.

Sensei shook his head. "Not yet and that worries me. I hope they haven't gotten her Amethyst already."

"It's taking too long. I'll find her." Hunter said.

"How?" Sensei asked.

"We have a connection. Always have. I can try to sense her. I've done it before." Hunter replied.

"When you were dating her...you don't have a connection anymore." Sensei snapped.

"Just because you don't like it doesn't mean it doesn't exist." Hunter countered.

"Having you here is a real pain in the..." Sensei was cut off by Tori running in.

"Rocky, it's Harley...she passed out." Tori said.

We ran into the main part of the dojo where Marah was sitting next to a passed out Harley.

Sensei scooped her up into his arms. "Harley, wake up Princess."

"Where's her Amethyst?" Hunter asked.

"In the base." Sensei said.

"Check it." Hunter said.

We went back into the base. Sensei laid Harley down on the table and went to a safe and opened it. He pulled out a box that had an Amethyst.

“It’s dull...” Sensei said.

“The brightness is fading...it’s connected to Michelle’s...if hers weakens so does Harley’s.” Hunter said.

“That means they have Michelle’s Amethyst already.” I said.

Tori nodded, “And if they manage to keep it for too long we’ll lose Michelle.”