

Episode 15- "Golden"

"Dr. Manx, we need the Gold Ranger powers working. Sonic Boom has a new Silver Ranger. We can't allow them to out number us." I said.

Dr. Manx nodded, "I am aware of the new Ranger Officer Lopez. I assure you, it is near complete and Commander Cruger already has chosen an operator for it."

"He has? Why wasn't I informed of this?" I asked.

"I'm not sure. You'll have to ask the Commander." Dr. Manx replied.

"Oh I will." I said storming out.

I was pissed. I was storming down the hall and when I turned a corner I collided with Cadet Bridge Carson. We both fell down from the impact. "Watch where you're going!" I cried.

"I'm so sorry." Bridge said as he stood up and offered his hand to me to help me.

I ignored him and stood up on my own. "You should be. You idiot B-Squaders are a waste of space." I pushed past him and kept walking.

I went into Cruger's office where he had Cadet Schyler Tate.

"Commander, we need to talk. Now." I demanded.

"Officer Lopez, I will not tolerate disrespect or you giving me orders." Commander Cruger said.

"Sir, I mean no disrespect, but we do need to talk." I said again.

"And you can see I was busy talking to Cadet Tate. You have no authority to come barging into my office like this." he replied.

"My apologizes." I said through gritted teeth.

"Cadet Tate, we will finish this conversation later, just think about what I have said." Cruger said.

Cadet Tate stood up and saluted, "Yes sir." he said. He turned and saluted me then he left.

Once the door was closed and we were alone Commander Cruger looked at me. It was clear he was pissed.

"Officer Lopez, if you ever barge in making demands again I will demote you so fast your head will spin. Now please, enlighten me as to what is so important that you felt your behavior was appropriate." he said.

"You chose a Gold Ranger for my team without bothering to tell me?!" I cried.

Cruger nodded, "I did. My job is to assemble teams. Your job is to lead the team you are given."

"And I have no say in the matter? It's my team. I should have some input." I countered.

"When you have a choice, you get it. This time there is no choice. Your Gold Ranger is Officer Ivan Parker." Cruger said.

"Who?" I asked.

"He is a transfer from SPD Mirinoi. He was one of their top cadets but he is known to take shortcuts and they don't always end well. Supreme Commander Birdie was considering expelling him from SPD but because he is so good it was decided he would transfer here. I believe that under your leadership Cadet Parker can learn the value of what it means to be a team and do things by the book." Cruger said.

I sighed, "Well, I have no say so I guess I'm in."

"I am sorry I didn't inform you of this change to your team sooner, but it is not your place to act so disrespectful." Cruger said.

"Yes sir. I apologize." I said.

"I also hope you will apologize to Cadet Tate. What you did was disrespectful to him as well." he said.

I made a face. "He's B-Squad. I have no need to show them respect."

"Officer Lopez, you were B-Squad once...and even so, he is a person. Humanity is a very important quality in any person, but especially a Ranger." Cruger said.

I nodded, "Yes sir. I'll make a point to apologize to Cadet Tate."

"Thank you. Is that all?" he asked.

I nodded. "Yes sir."

"Then get the hell out of my office." Cruger said.

I saluted and left. I had pissed off the Commander enough for one day. I went to the Commons and found Rachel and Cliff talking.

"Hey guys." I said.

"You ok Charlie? You look like you just went 3 rounds with a kangaroo." Cliff said.

"No. Just a big blue dog." I sighed.

Rachel's eyes widened. "Commander Cruger? What happened?"

"We have a new team member and he didn't bother to tell me." I said.

"A new team member? Who?" Rachel asked.

"Someone named Ivan Parker from SPD Mirinoi. Evidently he's our new SPD Gold. Dr. Manx finished the new power." I said.

"And Cruger just didn't bother to tell us? That's messed up." Cliff said.

I nodded, "Hence my outburst. I basically barged into his office while he was meeting with a cadet and demanded he speak to me."

"And you lived?" Cliff asked.

"With a warning that I better not ever do anything like that again or I'll be on D-Squad before I know what hit me." I said.

"Charlie, I can't believe you did that! You're so lucky you didn't get in worse trouble." Rachel said.

I shrugged. "I apologized. I may have handled it wrong but Cruger shouldn't have kept that from me to start with."

"So we have a new teammate." Cliff said changing the subject.

I nodded. "Apparently." I saw the B-Squad walk in. "Hey, Tate!" I called.

Cadet Tate walked over, "Yes ma'am."

"I apologize for my outburst earlier. I handled that situation wrong." I said.

"Apology accepted Officer Lopez." Cadet Tate said.

I nodded as he went off with his team.

"That was the cadet Cruger was talking to? He's one of the top cadets we have right now. His father is a legend." Cliff said.

I nodded. "I know. I know."

"You are so damn lucky." Cliff said shaking his head.

"Enough. We have bigger issues. For instance, there's 3 Ranger teams in the mix now and oddly enough Balassario sent down 3 aliens and 3 generals. Why? Why is he trying to fight a 3 front war?" I asked.

"Maybe he's trying to take out all 3 teams to clear his path to the gems he wants." Rachel said.

"Possibly. But why not attack us all together then? The Sonic Rangers fight us as much as they do Balassario. If he was trying to take us all out why not let us destroy each other and save his resources?" I asked.

"Well, in the end we are all Rangers. Maybe he thinks if push came to shove we'd team up." Cliff said.

I pursed my lips. "I would but Ms. DeSantos would never go for that in a million years. She would fight a 2 front war before every considering that."

"She basically is now." Cliff said.

I nodded as Dr. Manx walked in with a man. "A-Squad, meet your new Gold Ranger. This is Officer Ivan Parker. I trust you'll welcome him into the fold."

"Of course. It's nice to meet you Ivan. I'm Charlie and this is Rachel and Cliff." I said.

"Hi." Rachel said waving.

"Officer Parker, you're in good hands. If you need me you know where to find me." Dr. Manx said as she left.

Ivan sat down with us. "So you guys are the A-Squad...ok."

"I hear you have a hard time following regulations. You like to take shortcuts." I said.

Ivan rolled his eyes, "Work smarter, not harder."

"Except sometimes hard work wins the day. We have regulations for a reason." I said.

"I know, but certain things are situational." Ivan said.

"Let's get one thing straight right now Officer Parker, this is my Squad and we don't take shortcuts. We do things by the book and we follow orders. Is that clear?" I said.

Ivan looked at me dead on, "Crystal."

"Good." I said holding his eye contact.

"Ok then...now that the pleasantries are out of the way...welcome to the team Ivan." Cliff said, trying to break the tension.

"Thanks." Ivan replied.

"Did Dr. Manx fill you in on the mission?" Rachel asked.

Ivan nodded, "More or less."

"We were just trying to brainstorm why Balassario is fighting a 3 front war when he doesn't have to." Rachel said.

"He's an evil space alien...isn't that explanation enough?" Ivan asked.

I sighed. "No, because if we can figure out his motivation we can try to get one step ahead of him."

"OK, OK! Tell me about the last attack and I'll try to help." Ivan said.

We filled him in and went back to brainstorming but none of us could come up with anything that seemed like a real possibility.

We were about to head to our rooms when I heard an alarm.

"A-Squad to the Command Center." Dr. Manx said.

"It's go time." I said as we rushed to the Command Center.

"Rangers, we have located Flavio. He is trying to steal the Pink Star gem from the Reefside Museum. You have to hurry." Cruger said.

"Yes sir!" we saluted and rushed off.

We went as fast as we could to Reefside. Luckily we weren't far. "SPD Emergency!" we called out as we ran into the museum. We busted in and saw the Sonic Rangers were already there and they had Flavio cornered. He did have the gem.

"Drop it." Sonic Blue said.

"Not likely." Flavio said. I noticed there was a class of students in the corner. They appeared to be on a field trip.

"This can end peacefully. Let the kids go and we'll settle this." I said.

“Or you can let me go and no one gets hurt.” he countered.

“Not happening.” Sonic Red said.

“You’re greatly outnumbered here...just give it up Flavio.” Ivan said.

“Outnumbered but not out matched.” another voice said.

I turned around and saw Stefano appear. He grabbed a young blonde girl from the group and pulled her to him as a hostage. The girl screamed.

“No!” Sonic Purple cried.

“Let us go and the girl doesn’t get hurt.” Stefano said.

“Leave the gem and we won’t contain you.” I countered.

“Please, Stefano, don’t hurt her.” Sonic Purple begged dropping her weapon.

“Are you frickin serious? You’re surrendering because he has a single hostage?” I snapped.

“Yes. And so are you.” Sonic Purple said.

“You’re delusional.” I said as I prepared to attack Flavio.

“NO!” Sonic Purple cried as she grabbed her staff from the ground and turned it on me hitting me in the stomach.

“You bitch!” I screamed.

“This girl means something to you Purple Ranger.” Stefano laughed.

“Please, let her go. Don’t hurt her.” Sonic Purple begged.

“Flav...go west!” Stefano cried as he ran east with the girl.

“Rangers, get the gem, I’ll stop Stefano!” Sonic Purple cried.

“SPD, stop Flavio. I’m going after Stefano!” I called.

Both our teams did as they were told and went after Flavio while Michelle and I went after Stefano.

“Back off Red.” she growled as we ran.

“Not happening.” I growled back.

We caught up to Stefano. He still had the girl.

“What is it about this girl that matters to you Purple Ranger?” Stefano wondered aloud. The girl was clearly scared but not crying. She looked like she was waiting for an opening to escape.

“It doesn’t matter. Let her go...take me as your hostage instead.” Sonic Purple said.

“You’re insane.” I grumbled.

“Are you serious? No tricks?” Stefano asked.

She nodded, “No tricks. Let her go.”

“Come with me willingly and I will.” Stefano said.

“Deal. Let her go first so I can see she is ok and I will go with you as your prisoner.” she said.

Stefano smirked, “Fine.” he let her go and she ran away from him.

Sonic Purple grabbed the girl. “Savannah, are you ok?”

The girl nodded, “Yeah...”

“Good. Go with this Red Ranger. She’ll make sure you’re safe.” Sonic Purple said.

“What about you Purple Ranger?” Savannah asked.

“I’ll be fine. Red, her parents are Ethan and Hayley James. Make sure she gets home safe.” Sonic Purple said as she turned herself over to Stefano. In a flash they were gone.

Moments later both my team and the Sonic team ran in.

“Flavio got away with the gem.” Cliff said.

I sighed.

“Where’s Purple?” Sonic Blue asked.

“She turned herself over to save this girl.” I said.

“And you didn’t stop her?!” Sonic Red cried.

“No...why would I? She’s a big girl.” I said.

“Did you fight for her?” Sonic Silver asked.

“She didn’t do anything. She just let that monster take the Purple Ranger. She didn’t try to help at all! The Purple Ranger gave herself up for me and she did nothing!” Savannah cried.

“One less Sonic Ranger to deal with huh?” Sonic Yellow said.

“You’ve gone too far. You will pay for this.” Sonic Red said.

I rolled me eyes, although I knew they couldn’t see. I pushed Savannah to the Sonic Rangers. “Get the kid home. We have a gem to track down.” I said as I turned to walk out. My team followed.

On the way back to New Tech City Rachel looked at me.

“Why didn’t you try to help?” Rachel asked.

I smirked. “Like Yellow said...one less Sonic Ranger to deal with.”