

Episode 6- "The Fighter"

"Class dismissed. Brielle, please come talk to me before you go." Ms. Langston said.

I picked up my backpack and walked over to her desk. "Yes ma'am." I said.

"You didn't know your lines today. I gave you the lead in this play because you're the best in this program. What's going on?" Ms. Langston said.

I sighed. "I'm sorry. I had a lot to do after school yesterday and I didn't get a chance to rehearse as much as I wanted."

"Bre, you show a lot of promise as both an actress and a singer. I'm just worried that between school, martial arts, theater, choir, and your band that you've spread yourself too thin." she said.

"I can handle it. I just need to re-evaluate my time management." I said.

"Make sure you do...because if you don't know your lines by Monday I will have to recast your role." Ms. Langston said.

I nodded. "I understand."

"I'll see you Monday Brielle. Have a nice weekend." she said.

"You too." I said as I walked out of the classroom.

I sighed. Not good.

Let me catch you up. My name is Brielle Price. I'm 17 and a senior at Angel Grove High. As Ms. Langston pointed out I have a lot of activities. I am in theater and choir at school. I'm also a black belt martial artist and the lead singer of a band I have with some friends. What she didn't know was that I had something new going on too. I had recently been chosen to be the new Yellow Ranger. The real reason I didn't know my lines was that I'd been out late at Ranger training with Michelle, our trainer and Purple Ranger. I really did have a lot on my plate but I refused to give anything up. I could do it all. I just had to make sure I handled my time management just a little better.

I headed to my locked to put some things away before I headed home.

"Bre!" a voice called.

I turned around and saw my ex-boyfriend Mason.

"Ugh, what do you want Mason?" I asked.

"My parents are gone. Wanna come over?" Mason asked as he put his arm around me.

I rolled my eyes and pushed him away. "We broke up."

"And? Doesn't mean we can't hook up." Mason said as he put his arm around me again.

"Actually it does. You cheated on me. That pretty much totally means we can't hook up. Now get your hands off me." I said trying to push him away. This time he wouldn't let me go.

"Come on baby. I miss you." he said pulling me in closer.

I tried to pull away, to no avail. "Let me go!"

"Bre, stop fighting it." he said kissing my neck.

"She said to back off." Rory, one of my friends and Ranger teammate, said as he walked up.

"Oh look, big bad hockey captain. Back off man. Come back when you can count to potato." Mason said.

"Really Mason, you're gonna mock his intelligence when I know for a fact the reason you can't play basketball has nothing to do with your ankle. You're failing English. Fucking English man." I said loud enough for everyone around to hear.

"You bitch!" Mason cried as he pushed me into a locker.

"You ass!" Rory yelled as he pushed Mason.

"You want some?" Mason growled.

"No he doesn't. I do. I got this Rory." I said as I punched Mason in the stomach then kicked him in the crotch. He doubled over in pain so I grabbed his shoulder and flipped him. He landed on his back with a thump. "Touch me again and I'll kick your ass from here to Stone Canyon." I said looking down at him.

"Ms. Price, what just happened here?" Ms. Laraby, the principal, asked.

"I just saved myself from being sexually assaulted." I said.

"It's true. She did. Mason wouldn't let go of her then he threw her against the locker." Rory said.

A group of other students that had been watching all nodded and murmured in agreement.

"Oh...I see." Ms. Laraby said. In the world of #MeToo there was no way I was going to get in trouble for defending myself. "Well now, Mr. Dawson, when you can stand please join me in my office. I believe we need to talk. Ms. Price, I will need you to come speak with me too. I need your side of the story."

I nodded. I went with her. Once I told her the whole story she apologized and said she would handle Mason. I thanked her and went on my way. Rory was waiting for me outside the office.

"You didn't have to wait for me." I said.

Rory nodded. "I know. I wanted to make sure you were ok and you didn't get in any trouble for this."

"Thanks." I said.

"Want me to walk you to your car?" he asked.

I laughed, "I appreciate you trying to be a gentleman but as you know I can take care of myself."

"I know you can. Trust me. Just, thought you might want company." he said.

"Fine. You can walk me to my car." I said.

Rory walked with me to my yellow Beetle. It had been a 16th birthday gift from my parents. I was an only child so my parents tended to spoil me. I was ok with that because I REALLY loved my car. "Thanks Rory. See you at practice

tonight?"

"Yeah. See you there." he said as I got in my car and drove off.

I got home just as I saw my dad pulling in the driveway. I got out of the car. "Hi Daddy!" I said.

"Hi sweetie." my dad said as I greeted him with a hug. We went inside. My mom was already making dinner.

"Hey Mom!" I smiled as I put my backpack down.

"Hey Bre. You planning to have dinner at home tonight?" she asked.

I nodded. "Yeah but I have martial arts after."

"OK. Just be back by curfew." Mom said.

"I will but remember, you extended it tonight. I have a gig with the band at that new teen club in Stone Canyon." I said.

"Oh, right. Thanks for reminding me." Mom said as she went back to making dinner.

"I feel like I haven't seen you all week kiddo. You're always so busy." Dad said as he sat in the living room.

I went and sat down next to him. "I know. I have a lot going on...but I like being busy."

"I know you do. I just miss you." Dad said.

"I miss you too. We'll do something together soon. I promise." I said.

Dad smiled. "I can't wait."

After dinner I headed to the Blue Dragon. Rory and my other teammate Finn were already there. "Hey guys!" I smiled.

"Hey Bre!" Rory smiled.

"Bre!" a little voice said. I turned around and saw Harley running towards me. She was Michelle and Rocky's daughter and I often baby sat her.

"Hey kid!" I said as I picked her up and hugged her.

"I won my game yesterday." Harley smiled. Harley was a hockey player, among other things.

"That's awesome Har!" I smiled.

"No penalty minutes?" Rory asked.

Harley rolled her eyes, "Only four."

"Hey, good job. For you that's an improvement." Rory said. Harley was known for playing a little rough for her age.

"Mommy took me to see a Rangers game in New York. It was awesome!" Harley said.

"You saw a game at The Garden? Lucky!" Rory said. "I'm jealous of a 6 year old."

"I'm almost 7." Harley corrected.

"Of course." Rory smiled.

"Harley, go sit down. I have to start class." Sensei said as he walked out.

"Yes Daddy." Harley said as she jumped out of my arms and ran to sit on a bench on the side of the mats. She liked to watch the advanced classes.

"Places. We are going to start." Sensei said.

"Yes Sensei." we all said, bowing, as we got into our places.

We did our warm ups then Sensei paired us up for spars. "Brielle, you're with Peyton." Sensei said.

"May as well pair the two chicks together." Evan, another student, snickered.

Peyton looked at them. "Oh I get it, because I'm gay you think I'm a chick like that's some kind of insult. I'd rather be a chick like Bre than whatever you are Evan. I promise you, Bre could kick your ass. So yeah, I'll take chick over whatever you are any day."

Evan glared. It was clear he didn't like being called out. Peyton got to him. "Yeah right. No little chick can take me down."

I rolled my eyes, "Here we go again."

Sensei smiled. "Evan, you seem quite sure of yourself in spite of Brielle being one of the best students in this class."

"She is the best chick in here, sure. But that's different." Evan said.

"OK then, I guess we'll do this again...if you're up for it Brielle." Sensei said.

"Well, why not? Eventually I'll kick the ass of every guy in this class and then maybe they will take me seriously. Honestly guys, proving myself is getting old...other than the fact I get to take you all out one by one." I said.

"Sensei, no...that's unfair to her." Evan said.

"Life isn't fair Evan. Let's go." I said.

"You heard the girl. Evan, you and Brielle spar. Now." Sensei said.

Evan sighed, "Yes Sensei."

Evan was holding back at first like guys always did with me. I could tell. Once he realized I wasn't holding back and I also did actually have skill I could tell he started to try. When he didn't take me down immediately he got frustrated which gave me the edge I need. I went low and managed to flip him over my shoulder. He landed on his back. That was easily my favorite move because I got to look down at my opponent and smirk.

"You guys never learn." I smirked.

"Damn Evan. You're right. Who would want to be a chick?" Peyton laughed.

Sensei smiled at us for a moment then he turned his attention to Evan and looked serious. "Evan, let this be a

lesson to you...never underestimate your opponent, regardless of size or gender. Also, take note that homophobia or any other kind of discrimination will NOT be tolerated at the Blue Dragon. We are all equal here. I believe you need time to think about these lessons. You can ponder it while you do 100 push ups."

Evan sighed and bowed, "Yes Sensei."

"Before you do that you can apologize to both Brielle and Peyton." Sensei said.

"I'm sorry Brielle. I'm sorry Peyton." Evan said.

"Good...now go." Sensei said.

Evan went to the side and started his push ups.

Sensei looked at the rest of us. "That goes for the rest of you too. If you feel the need to say anything to Peyton about who he is then there's the door. I will not tolerate discrimination here. And that includes the locker room. I will find out and there will be consequence. As for Brielle...when will you guys learn she can take any one of you down? Now, let's get back to work."

Story of my life. I always was proving myself in some way or another. Usually it was because I was a girl.

After practice Sensei dismissed us. The 3 of us that were Rangers lingered behind.

"Any updates?" I asked.

Sensei shook his head. "No. Michelle is working on it nonstop."

"OK. Keep me updated. I have a gig to get to." I said.

Rory smiled, "Good luck."

"Thanks." I ran to the locker room to change then headed out. I drove out to Stone Canyon and went to the teen club I was playing at. I grabbed my guitar and went in the back. My bassist Claire and drummer were already there.

"About time!" Bethany cried.

"Sorry. I had martial arts then I had to clean up. I'm ready to go though." I said.

"Good because we're on in 2 minutes!" Claire said.

My eyes widened. "Oh crap. I didn't realize I was cutting it THAT close. Sorry."

We went on stage and performed a 30 minute set then went backstage.

"Awesome show guys!" Claire said, happy.

"That crowd was lit! We have got to play here again." I smiled.

We got paid then left.

"I'm wound for sound. You guys wanna go out and grab some coffee?" Bethany asked.

"No, thanks. I need to get home." I said.

"I'll go with you." Claire said.

"You guys have fun. See ya!" I waved as I got back in my car. I was wound up too but I really needed some alone time. I went to Blue Dragon. It was closed but Sensei had given each of us Rangers a key so we always had access to the command center if we needed it. We also utilized the gym for extra training sometimes, which was my plan. I went in and changed by into my gi. I turned on some music and lost myself in the lyrics as I moved to the music. I was listening to Michelle actually. She was one of my favorite artists. I had on a song she did called "Where I Stood". It was about leaving a relationship because you know it's for the best but it's painful. I could relate. Not with Mason. That bastard cheated on me. I hated him. Before him there was a boy named Levi. He was my first love and I loved him so much. We broke up because it was hard to make time for him between everything else I had going on in my life. He felt neglected and that led to fights. I wasn't willing to give up my dreams for him so I let him go. It wasn't easy but he needed someone that could be with him the way he wanted. As I listened to Michelle sing "I don't know who I am, who I am without you/All I know is that I should/And I don't know if I could stand another hand upon you/All I know is that I should/She will love you more than I could/She who dares to stand where I stood" I felt tears run down my face. I hit the punching bag harder. I was so busy I never really gave myself a chance to feel the pain I was actually in. This was my outlet. I let every ounce of pain come out in my tears and in my punches and kicks. It was a complete physical and emotional release.

As the song ended I took a breath. I turned around and saw Michelle, herself, standing there.

"Looks like you relate." she said softly.

I nodded. "Yeah. I do."

"Heartbreaking isn't it?" Michelle asked.

I nodded as I cried again.

She pulled me into her arms and hugged me. "I know it is. It does get better. I promise."

"Does it ever go away?" I asked.

She shook her head. "Not completely."

I pulled back and wiped by eyes. "What did you write that about?"

"You really want to know?" she asked as she went and sat on a bench.

I nodded and sat next to her. "I do."

"Well, since you're a Ranger now I can tell you the full story." she said.

"What does that have to do with it?" I asked.

Michelle laughed, "Everything. I wrote it back in 2006ish. I had just finished up with a team called Mystic Force and Hunter and I had just broken up. That line that says "I don't know what I've done/Or if I like what I've begun" is actually about something I did for the Mystic team. I had to take on the persona of a girl named Mackenzie Bradley pretended to be in a relationship with my teammate Xander. It sounds crazy now but given the situation it was the best way to hide my identity at the time. Everything surrounding that led to Hunter and I growing apart and eventually our break up. I wrote that song about our break up. I really didn't know who I was without him and the idea of him moving on killed me but I also knew that as long as I was a Ranger I couldn't be who he needed. Now tell me what it means to you."

I sighed. "I was dating a guy named Levi that I was madly in love with. But I also wanted to...well...to be honest I

want to be you. I'm in drama class, choir, and a band...I guess you know that part. Anyway, between plays, recitals, gigs, and various practices Levi felt like he was being ignored. I couldn't give him the attention he needed. I couldn't give up pursuing my dreams...so I let him go."

Michelle nodded. "Sometimes that's all you can do and that is also the hardest thing to do. At the end of the day you have to be true to yourself."

"And I have been." I said.

"Then you'll be ok." she said hugging me.

I smiled, "Thanks."

"I should go. I just came to grab some papers I needed." she said.

"OK. See you tomorrow." I said.

"Goodnight Bre." she said as she grabbed a folder and left.

I went back to training. I knew she was right. I was a strong girl. A fighter. As long as I stayed true to myself I'd keep kicking ass and be exactly who I wanted to be.