

## Episode 14- "Flying High"

"Hello?" I answered my phone. I was in the break room of the track. I had been practicing all morning. I had a pretty major race coming up.

"Amara, it's Mina..." she said.

"Mina, hi...did you find Mich?" I asked.

"Um, well...yeah." she said cautiously.

I did not like the sound of this. "That's a good thing, right?"

"Well, not exactly. I did find her...but she isn't doing well. I did convince her not to use the Amethyst...she agreed but said she needed time to clear her head. She said she needed a few days to think. I don't know if or when she is coming back." Mina said.

It took me a second to process what Mina was saying. We had an evil Empress that was the counterpart of the Queen we were sworn to protect and said Queen had run away and wasn't coming back. "Please tell me you're joking." I said, although I knew she wasn't.

"I wish I were. I couldn't exactly force her Amara. She said she needed a few days." Mina said.

"And what are we supposed to do in the meantime?" I asked.

"We meet with our respective teams and figure out our next course of action against the Empress. We can't stop fighting just because Michelle bailed on us." Mina said.

"Fine. I'll tell the others. Next time, let me go after her. We need her here and you just let her walk away." I said, very unhappy.

"I did what I could. I'll talk to you soon." Mina said hanging up.

I hung up my phone and sighed. I sent Michele and Trista a text 'Meeting right now, my house.' I sent then I grabbed my bag and headed home.

I pulled into my driveway and went inside. I was greeted by my two daughters, Alexis and Cyan.

"Momma, you're home!" Cyan said.

I hugged my girls. "I am, but Mommy and I have some things to discuss. If you take your sister and go play I'll come up in a little bit."

Cyan nodded, "OK. come on Allie." She took her sister's hand and headed to the playroom.

I found Michele in the kitchen. "Hello beautiful wife." I said pulling her into my arms.

"You seem happy for someone that just sent a snippy text demanding a meeting." she said kissing me.

"I'm happy to see you. That's about it. I'll explain when Trista gets here." I said as I heard the front door. "And that must be her."

Trista walked into the kitchen, "I got your message. What's up?" she asked.

I sighed, "I talked to Mina. She found Michelle."

"That's good news...isn't it?" Trista asked.

I shook my head. "She's not coming home. She evidently needed time to clear her head and think."

"You mean she is holed up with Jon and doesn't want to face reality." Michele said as more of a statement than question.

"I think so too, but Mina wouldn't come out and say that." I said.

"Of course not. But I think we all can read between the lines. So, what do we do? How do we protect Michelle if she won't come back?" Trista asked.

"The better question is, who is more of a threat to her well being? The Empress or Jon?" Michele added.

I raised an eyebrow, "I hadn't considered that. You have a point. Michelle is vulnerable and Jon is a master manipulator. But he is also a human threat, not a power one. I think our focus needs to be on the Empress first and foremost."

"Well, we still have the Princess. We can use her to draw the Empress out and take her out." Michele said.

"We could, but she may be the only one that knows what happened to Hotaru." Trista said.

"So we capture the Empress, but don't kill her." I said.

"Whatever we do, we have to make sure the Inners are on the same page as us or we're going to have a two front battle in which we're outnumbered." Michele said.

"Wouldn't be the first time." I said.

"We do have another option...it was something Michelle mentioned to me once..." Trista said.

"What?" I asked.

"We give Nemesis her powers back to help us. She is supposed to be on our team anyway. She's technically an Outer Soldier." Trista said.

"Absolutely not! I don't feel like fighting both the Empress and Nemesis and that is exactly what would happen." I said.

"I agree with Amara, it's far too risky and the risk does not outweigh the potential benefit." Michele agreed.

"It's much safer to work with the Inners than it would be to even think of trusting Nemesis." I said.

Trista nodded, "Understood. In that case, you know they aren't going to agree to use the child as bait."

"No, but they don't have to know our entire plan either." I said.

"Amara, you can't betray them...they will turn on us." Michele said.

"They care more about stopping the Empress than controlling our tactics. I'll tell them just enough to keep them out of our way." I said.

"There is one thing you haven't considered Amara." Michele said.

"What's that?" I asked.

"Well, from the time she got here the Empress has been hyper-focused on Michelle. Has it occurred to you that if Michelle isn't here anymore then there is a chance Empress isn't either?" Michele asked.

I considered what she said, "You think the Empress followed Michelle to New York?"

"It's a real possibility." Trista agreed.

"If that happened there is no one but Jon to protect Michelle." I sighed.

"In other words, no one. Cause Jon can't protect her. Michelle has her Amethyst but that's the only way she can match the Empress and her mental state isn't in a good place to control her powers." Michele said.

I nodded, "Remember what happened last time she lost control of her powers?"

"Yeah. she almost destroyed Los Angeles by pure accident." Michele said.

"OK, so, I guess we're going to New York?" Trista asked.

"Yeah, I think that's our best bet. But we take the kid and don't tell the Inners. We're going to finish this." I said.

Michele looked at me, "Babe, how do you think we're going to get Princess Harlyn without Darien or Adam knowing?"

"Very carefully." I said.

"Who's going to watch the kids?" Michele asked.

I thought for a second. "What about Jen? She said she was happy to help us however she could."

Michele nodded. "I'll call her and get the kids to her. You two get Princess Harlyn and we'll meet at the helicopter."

I kissed her and nodded, "See you in about an hour. Come on Trista."

Trista and I headed to the lake house where the other Jon and Harlyn were. I parked in the woods a mile or so away. "OK, Trista, you distract the guys and I'll get the princess. We'll meet at the car in 15 minutes."

Trista nodded and went inside. I ran back behind the house and hid under the window of the room Harlyn was in. I heard Trista ask Adam and Darien to join her and Jon in the living room. Once they were gone I pried the window open and slipped in. Harlyn was asleep. That was perfect. I grabbed her and carefully slipped out the window. I made my way back to the car. On the way the princess woke up.

"What's happening?" she asked weakly.

"You're ok Princess. We just have to move you to keep you safe. Don't worry, everything is ok." I said.

"Where's Jon?" she asked.

"My friends have him. They are going to meet us at our new hideout." I said as I put her in the car. "It will be ok. I promise." I said.

A few minutes later Trista ran up and got in the car. "We should go. I'm sure they realized what happened." Trista said.

I nodded and drove off. We made it to the helicopter launch. Michele was already there. I helped the Princess into the helicopter.

"Where are we going?" the princess asked.

"Some place safe." I said as we all secured ourselves into the helicopter. I lifted us off and we headed for New York. If anyone had figured out we took Harlyn they were much too late to stop us.

It took a few hours but we made it to New York. Thankfully Harlyn was still weak and slept most of the way. I landed the helicopter and shut it down.

"Now what?" Michele asked.

"We have to find Michelle." Trista said.

I nodded, "And I have no idea where Jon's apartment is. You know that's where she is."

"I could use her Amethyst to track her." Trista said.

"I know, but we risk putting civilians at risk if we take the Princess there. Even Jon. I may not like the guy but he's still a civilian." I said.

"So how do we get her here?" Michele asked.

"Well, we could try calling her...she probably has her cell phone." Trista offered.

"But will she come?" I asked.

"Not if you call her and demand it. Let me handle it." Trista said.

"Fine." I agreed.

Trista pulled out her phone and dialed Michelle's. She put her on speaker.

"Hello?" Michelle answered.

"Mich, it's Trista...where are you?" she asked.

"I told Mina to tell you. I needed some time." Michelle said.

"I know. You're in New York. So am I. I have the Princess with me. We need to meet. It's really important. Please, I promise it won't take long." Trista begged.

"You have the Princess? Trista, you just put a target on yourself. Do the others know?" Michelle asked.

"No." Trista replied.

Michelle sighed, "Fine. Where are you?"

"Top of Skytower." Trista said.

“Ok, be there soon.” Michelle said hanging up.

“Good work. Now we wait. When Michelle gets here we have her draw out the Empress and finish this.” I said firmly. I was ready for this to be over.