

PRWC 4- "Learning to Cope"

*"I need you now
Do you think you can cope
You figured me out - I'm lost and I'm hopeless
Bleeding and broken - though I've never spoken
I come undone - in this mad season"
~ "Mad Season" Matchbox 20*

"OK, group dismissed, Chris may I talk to you for a second?" Hunter asked.

"What's up?" I asked walking over.

"Your mom is coming up to see you tomorrow." He said.

"Just my mom?"

"Yeah."

"Oh...why?"

"To see you...she didn't say any specific reason."

"OK...thanks." I said heading to the kitchen to help serve dinner.

My name is Chris Hayes and 15, I'm also the new Black Ranger...now that's something I never expected. I ended up at Starlight Academy because I was busted for tagging and possession of weed. Now I'm a Power Ranger...

What freaked me out about my mom visiting me alone was that my dad kept her on a pretty short leash. She was never allowed to do anything without his permission and normally she couldn't go anywhere without him either.

"So what did you do now?" April asked as I pulled down some plates.

"Nothing. I'm getting a visit." I said.

"Lucky you." April mumbled.

"Like you wouldn't want your parents to visit." Tiffany said.

"I don't. In case you forgot Princess I was the one who ran away so I could escape them." April said.

"At least you have parents to visit you." Jesse said softly.

"Look at that, he speaks." I said.

"So when are they coming?" Tiffany asked.

"Not they...just my mom and tomorrow." I said.

"Oh great, this means we'll have to clean the dorms." Derek said.

"Hey, I'm not thrilled about this either." I said.

"Guys, hurry with dinner, we have some hungry students out here." Harley said peeking her head in.

"Yeah, yeah." April said.

"You guys are more like turtles than wildcats." Harley said coming in to help.

"We're just allergic to work." I said.

"Oh please...if that's true the world is in serious trouble." Harley said.

We finally got dinner out to everyone and were able to sit down and eat.

Hunter

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"I don't believe you Hunter...how could you?" Michelle asked.

"I warned you Mich. I gave you time and you didn't find anyone." I said.

"But to hire Conner after I said no..."

"You never even gave me a good reason! We need someone and he applied."

"Isn't the fact I said no enough of a reason?"

"Not when I'm running around like a chicken with my head cut off trying to coach and keep up with my head master duties."

"But Conner..."

"Conner is good. We're lucky to have him so just deal. He starts tomorrow." I said.

"And how does Kira feel about this?"

"I don't know."

"I bet she's no happier than I am."

"What is it between you three? I asked. She obviously had a problem with both Conner and Kira and I couldn't figure out why.

"Nothing, I just don't want Conner working at my school." She said as Felicity toddled in.

"Daddy, apes." She said

I smiled. "Ok sweetie. Mich, I'll be at the house if you need me." I said picking up Felicity and walking to the house to give her grapes.

Chris

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"Ok Wildcats, I want this dorm spotless. We have a visitor tomorrow." Harley said.

"Har, this is the boys dorm, you shouldn't be here." I said.

"It's before 8 and I'm a staff member. I think it's ok. Don't think you're escaping my supervision." She said.

"Fine." We mumbled as we started to clean. I was folding my clothes when we heard footsteps stomp upstairs. Seconds later Josh came in, he didn't look happy.

"Whoa, where's the fire?" Harley asked.

"Sorry guys, didn't mean to interrupt...Julia said I'd find you here Har." Josh said.

"Yeah, Chris's mom is visiting tomorrow so we're cleaning up." Harley.

"No, you mean we're cleaning up and you're supervising." I said.

"Yeah, I don't see you cleaning." Derek said.

"What's wrong Josh?" Jesse asked.

"Maybe he needs to talk in group." I laughed.

"Stop it...Josh, are you ok?" Harley asked.

"Can we talk alone?" Josh asked her.

"Of course...guys I expect you guys to keep cleaning. I want to see progress when I get back." Harley said walking out with Josh.

"I want to see progress when I get back." I mimicked.

"Guys, I don't think she was kidding, we should keep working." Jesse said.

"You keep working, I'm taking a nap. We don't get nearly enough sleep in this place." I said laying down.

"I hear that." Derek said laying on his bed.

"You can't seriously expect me to finish this myself..." Jesse said.

"Hey, that's your call." I said.

“Well...I guess I can keep cleaning.” Jesse said.
“Is he always such a push over?” Derek whispered towards me.
“Always.” I said laughing. I knew we’d get Jesse to do the hard work.

Harley

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“Josh, what’s wrong?” I asked once we were alone.  
“I couldn’t stay at home. My mom is pissed that my dad took a job here.” Josh said.  
“They ended up hiring him?” I asked.  
“Yeah? You didn’t hear? My dad is the new coach and my mom is furious. They were fighting really bad so Anna went to practice with her band and I had to get out.”  
“I’m sorry this is causing problems for you.”  
“Thanks....so Ms. Hayes is coming in tomorrow?”  
“Yeah...”  
“You know, we should get in there. Ten bucks says those lazy cats got Jesse to do all the cleaning.”  
I sighed, “I bet you’re right. Jesse needs to learn not to be such a push over.”  
“HARLEY!” Julia called as she ran over.  
“What?” I asked.  
“Phone call for you.” She said.  
“Phone call? Ok. Josh can you supervise?” I asked.  
“Sure, not a problem.” He said.  
“Ok, thanks.” I said running off with Julia.

Chris

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I was just starting to fall asleep when I heard a voice.
“ATTENTION! All Wildcats front and center!” Josh barked.
“Ugh, man can’t a guy sleep around here?” I mumbled.
“Chris, Derek, now!” Josh said.
Yeah, right. Like I had any intention of moving now.
“Dude, just step off.” I mumbled.
“Yeah, we’re just trying to rest.” Derek added.
“If I have to go get Hunter he’ll not be so kind. Do you really want to spend Sunday chopping wood?” Josh asked.
“Fine, fine.” I groaned and Derek and I stood up.
“Ok, room looks good. Jesse you’re dismissed. Derek and Chris, get to work or face wood chopping duty.” Josh said.
“You’ve got to be kidding.” I said.
“Why is he getting out?” Derek asked.
“Because he did more than his share of the work so now he gets rewarded while you guys finish the job.” Josh said as he let Jesse out of the room.
“Man, this is whack.” I said as I went back to cleaning.
“Come on guys, pick up the pace. We wanna finish before midnight.” Josh said.
“Where’s Harley?” Derek asked.

“She had a phone call to answer.” Josh said.
Just our luck. Harley was bad enough then we get stuck with Mr. Drill Sergeant.
Can a guy never catch a break?

Harley

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I went into the lodge and got the phone.

“Hello?” I asked.

“Harley? Hey baby.” Jay said.

“Jay? Oh god, it’s good to hear from you. How have you been?” I asked.

“Great. I’m doing great. You?”

“I’m great too. How’s training?”

“I’m getting back into the swing of things.”

“That’s good.” I said.

Insert awkward silence.

“Listen, I called because I’m coming to town this weekend. I need to see you.”

“Oh...that’s great! Um...is everything ok?”

“Yeah...um everything is fine.”

“OK...then I guess I’ll see you Saturday?”

“Ok...see you then. Bye.”

“Bye.” I said hanging up.

“Everything ok?” Julia asked.

“I guess so...but I felt like I was talking to a total stranger.” I said as Jesse walked in. “Jesse, shouldn’t you be cleaning?” I asked.

“Josh dismissed me because Derek and Chris made me do most of the work. He is making them finish it.” Jesse said.

I laughed, “Serves them right. What did they do?”

“They were going to take naps while I cleaned.” Jesse replied.

“Can’t leave Chris alone for a second without him trying to get some extra sleep.”

“His mom is coming tomorrow right?” Julia asked.

“Yeah.” I said.

“Good luck...parent visits aren’t always a walk in the park.” She said.

“No kidding.” I said as Felicity came toddling in with a cup of grapes.

“Hary ape?” she asked holding a grape up.

“Thank you Liss.” I said taking the grape and eating it.

“Esse ape?” she asked holding up another grape.

Jesse smiled. “Thank you Felicity.” He said taking the grape.

“JuJu ape?” she asked.

I started cracking up.

“JuJu? I wonder who taught her that.” Julia said shooting me a look.

“That’s my sister, what can I say?” I asked picking up Liss and hugging her.

Chris

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We finally finished cleaning just as it was time for lights out, which was fine with me. I happily got into bed and quickly fell asleep. As I slept I dreamt.

"Chris let's move it. They're coming."

"No Dave, we can take 'em." I said.

"There's 5 of them, 2 of us. We need back up." Dave said.

"No, we need to teach those trespassers a lesson." I said turning back.

"Mike will be pissed if you try taking them without help."

"Like I give a shit what Mike thinks." I said as I turned to face the rival gang coming at us.

"Chris, come on." Dave said.

"Not smart little boy, should have listened to your friend." One of the guys said coming at me.

"I'll show you little boy. This is my hood, you should have stayed out." I said.

"Big words little boy." Another guy said coming at me. This one pulled a gun.

"Chris!" Dave cried pushing me out of the way.

"Dave!" I cried as I noticed he had been shot.

"Get gone...get gone and don't look back, go!" Dave screamed.

I jumped up and ran.

"That's it, run away little boy. Run home to Momma." They all called after me.

I sat up in bed and jerked awake. I looked at the time. They'd be waking us up in 5 minutes anyway. I rolled out of bed and went to take a shower before anyone woke up. By the time I was showered and dressed everyone else was getting up. I went out to get an early start on breakfast.

"Hey, you ok? You're never up first." Hunter said coming in the kitchen.

"Fine." I mumbled as I took my toast out of the toaster.

"Your mom called. She'll be here around 10"

"Ok, so I'm missing class?"

"Yes. Your grades have been good so Michelle and I decided to give you a day pass so you can leave campus with your mom."

"About time I got away from this dump."

"But that means you're in charge of breakfast clean up on your own. Well that and I heard what you and Derek pulled on Jesse last night."

"Oh? And what does Derek have to do?"

"He has to cook oatmeal for 160 students on his own." Hunter said as Derek walked in mumbling.

"At least it's not wood chopping" I said.

"Oh the week is young. Keep up mistreatment of Jesse and you'll be chopping wood until your arms fall off." Hunter said leaving us alone.

"Just great." Derek said as he filled a pot with water. "So what are you doing up. I thought your goal in life was to sleep until they dragged you out of bed."

"Yeah, nightmare."

"Yeah, my mom visiting would give me nightmares too."

"No, not that...other stuff. I'm not worried too much about my mom visiting."

"I would. Moms suck."

"Michelle is a cool mom." I pointed out.

"Michelle is different. She's like superhuman or something...in general."

"My mom is pretty cool I guess." I said.

"Then you're lucky." Derek said.

Derek finally got breakfast served and when everyone was done I cleaned up. Right as I was finishing Michelle came in and told me my mom was there. I went to the office and there sat my mom.

"Ma..." I said hugging her.

"Christopher, my boy." She said hugging me tight.

"Good to see you." I said.

"Yes it is. Mr. Bradley tells me I can take you off campus for the day."

"Then let's go." I said

"Please have him back by 7:00." Michelle said.

"Of course, can't miss group." I said.

"Don't worry, I'll have him back." Mom said as we left. I got in her car and we drove. "So where do you want to go?"

"I don't know...let's see what there is around here." I said.

We drove quietly until we got to town.

"Cyberspace...I hear Harley and Josh talking about that place a lot, let's check it out." I said.

"Ok." She said parking the car.

We went in and found a table.

"Hi, welcome to Cyberspace. I'm Savannah, what can I get for you?" a lady asked. Something about her was very familiar.

"I'll just have a soda." I said.

"Me too." Mom said.

"Coming right up." Savannah said.

"So what are you doing here without Dad?" I asked.

"That can wait...how's school?" Mom asked.

"It's ok. I guess I like it ok." I said as Savannah brought us our sodas.

"Have you made any friends?" Mom asked.

"I guess sorta." I said.

"Good."

"Mom, where's Dad?" I asked again.

She sighed, "I left him. We're getting a divorce."

"What?" I asked. I couldn't have heard right.

"I can't take his abuse anymore Chris. I had to get away so I filed for divorce." She said.

"How could you? He gave you everything." I said.

"All he gave me was black eyes. Chris, I came here to warn you...when you get out of Starlight you'll have to pick who you want to live with."

"And you want me to pick you..."

"Yes. I'm moving to Angel Grove. I hear it's a nice place and it'll be easy to stay out of trouble."

"How could you break up my family? Take me away from my father? You bitch! I hate you!" I screamed.

"Chris, don't cause a scene." Mom said trying to calm me down.

“Just get the hell away from me! Stay out of my life!” I cried running outside. I looked around then just took off running. I didn’t care where I was going, just that I was going.

I was running through the town square when a monster showed up.

“A lone Ranger...goody good.” The monster said.

“I am so not in the mood for this!” I screamed as I held up my Morpher. “Wild Cat Transform!”

I faced off with the monster and pulled my crossbow and shot at him. He dodged.

“Ok, that’s how you want it? Fine.” I said jump kicking. The monster threw me back. “ARG!” I screamed as I attacked with a furied rage. I was thrown back again. That’s when I heard a voice.

“You know it isn’t smart to take on a monster alone Chris, get out of here and call for back up.” Josh said.

“You know?” I asked.

“Yeah, but can we talk about that later? You can’t take him alone” Josh said.

“But this is my turf” I said as I saw the monster aim at us.

“Chris watch out!” Josh said pushing me out of the way. I suddenly felt a major sense of déjà vu.

“Not this time!” I cried stepping in front of Josh to protect him. I fired my bow to knock the monster’s blast off. “You’re right Josh...let’s go get back up.” I said helping him up as we ran for cover.

“Ok, you do know your Morpher doubles as a communicator right?” Josh asked.

“It does?” I asked.

“Yup, they must have forgotten to tell you that part.” Josh said.

I held my Morpher up. “Hunter, Michelle, Derek...come in...trouble in the town square.” I said.

“We’re on our way.” Derek said.

In no time all my team mates, Harley included, were with me. We fought the monster together and in to time he was history. I thought we were done but then the monster grew.

“Big shock.” Harley mumbled, “Call the Zords.” She said.

We formed the Wildcat Megazord for the first time. Totally rocked.

“I could get used to this.” I said.

“Totally. This is killer.” April said.

“It’s kinda high up.” Tiffany said.

“Princess...” I mumbled.

We decimated the monster and the others went back to campus. Harley stayed behind.

“Power down!” we commanded.

“So, what’s the problem? What were you doing out here alone anyway?” she asked.

“My mom just notified me she’s leaving my father and I lost control.” I said.

“I’m sorry...but have you considered it might be for the best. When my mom left... my other dad...I was angry too but in the end it turned out great because if my parents never got married then we wouldn’t have Starlight Academy or Felicity. Everything happens for a reason. Maybe you should try talking to your mom...you don’t have to be happy but just discuss things with her.” Harley said.

I sighed, she made a good point. "Ok...I'll go talk to her."
"Good...and keep control of that temper...see ya round." She said heading back to Reefside U.

I went back to Cyberspace and saw my mom talking to Savannah and crying.
"Ma?" I asked.
"I'll leave you two alone." Savannah said leaving.
"I'm sorry this is so hard for you Chris, but it's what I have to do." Mom said.
I sighed, "I'm sorry I lost my temper...I think we should talk about this." I said sitting back down.