

## Episode 17- "Best of Intentions"

When I got word from Adam and Darien that Princess Harlyn had been taken by Amara and Michele I was pissed. I rushed to the lakehouse.

"How did this happen?!" I cried.

"Calm down Mina...Michele distracted us and Amara too Harley. By the time we figured it out they were gone." Adam explained.

"Why did they take her?" I asked.

"Probably to use her as bait." Jon said, clearly pissed.

"That makes sense. They didn't think we'd let them so they did it on their own. We have to find them." I said.

"No need. We're here." Amara said walking in with Michele.

"Where is she?" I demanded.

"With Trista and the Empress at the Gates of Time." Amara said.

"What?" I asked.

"Trista is explaining how dangerous it is for them to be here and is going to convince them to go home. I presume she'll come to send Jon home when all is said and done." Amara said.

"You really think she's going to go home, just like that?" I asked.

"If she doesn't Trista will leave her trapped at the Gates. It's too dangerous for her to be here. If she stays we risk a multiversal collapse." Amara explained.

"If that's true then Trista could be back at anytime for Jon. We need those DNA results." I said.

"No. I don't want to know." Jon said.

"Are you sure?" Adam asked.

Jon nodded. "Yes. Because if she is mine then I have to live knowing that and not being able to tell her. If she's not then that will hurt in it's own way. I know in my heart she's mine. And I will do whatever I can to keep her from becoming like her mother. I love that little girl. That's all that matters."

Adam nodded. "OK."

"So now I guess we wait for Trista." I said.

"And hope I get to go home soon. I wish I could see Michelle again before I go." Jon said.

"Oh, I think your counterpart has her rather preoccupied." I grumbled.

"Oh...they...oh." Jon said.

"Yeah." I nodded, "While you guys wait for Trista I am going to go see Rocky and fill him in on what's going on."

"I'll go with you. Obviously I'm not needed here anymore." Adam said.

We headed to the Blue Dragon, the dojo Rocky owned with Adam (although Adam didn't do much these days and was mostly a silent partner at this point). We went inside and found Rocky finishing up a black belt class.

"Rory, I want to see you spar with Brielle." Rocky said.

Rory shook his head. "Sensei, I have a distinct size and skill advantage over Brielle. It's not a fair spar."

"You mean you have a gender advantage. You think because I'm a girl I can't fight you." Brielle said.

"I didn't say that!" Rory cried.

"You meant it." Brielle snapped.

"Enough! Rory, you've been training in Brielle for years. You doubt her ability?" Rocky asked.

"I know she's good...but I've never sparred with her because I'm bigger." Rory said.

"I know you haven't. I've taken note that you avoid sparring with her and always have. You refuse to spar any girl and that's not ok. You may have a size advantage but skill? I wouldn't bet on that. Now do as I said. Rory and Brielle, spar." Rocky demanded.

Now I was interested to see how this played out. I stood and watched as Rory reluctantly faced off with Brielle.

"If I think you're going easy on me I'll kick your ass. Give me all you got big boy." Brielle said as she took a fighting stance.

Rory sighed, "Fine, but this is going to be a short spar."

"Bring it." Brielle said.

"And go!" Rocky said.

The two started to spar. Rory did have size but Brielle was very quick and agile. Every time Rory thought he was going to get in a hit she dodged and jumped at the last second. She had skill too and in spite of Rory being stronger it was clear Brielle knew how to use her strength and move her body to maximize her strength. It was a close spar, but in the end Brielle managed to slide behind Rory when he was doing a spin kick and catch him off balance. She grabbed his arm and using the strength in her legs flipped him so that he landed on his back on the mat.

"Brielle wins. Good job both of you. Rory, don't let the size of an opponent fool you. There is more to a battle than size. Excellent work Brielle. Good class everyone. See you next time. Dismissed." Rocky said bowing.

"Thank you Sensei." the class said bowing.

Rocky walked over to us. "Hey guys...everything ok?"

"Hopefully. Can we talk in your office?" I asked.

"Sure." Rocky said.

We went into his office and shut the door. I explained what Amara had done and what was happening at the Gates of Time.

“So we think she’s going to just leave? Just like that?” Rocky asked.

“I don’t know. Maybe she will understand if she doesn’t she’ll have nothing to rule?” I shrugged.

“Do we have a plan b?” Rocky asked.

“Amara said Trista can trap her at the Gates.” Adam said.

“I have a bad feeling about this.” Rocky said.

I nodded. “Me too.”

“Michelle needs to get home. Now is not the time for her to lounge on the beach or whatever the hell she is doing. We need her.” Rocky said, clearly angry.

“I know! I tried to get her home but she wasn’t having it.” I said.

“Where is she Mina? I know you said she wanted to clear her head. She’s not answering her phone. Where is she? I’m bringing her home.” Rocky said.

“I...uh...don’t know exactly.” I said.

“You went to see her.” Rocky said.

“At a hotel.” I lied. “She may have moved on. It sounded like she was going to get something on the coast and reconnect with nature.”

“I feel like there’s something you’re not saying.” Adam said.

I sighed. I hated how well Adam knew me. “She’s hiding. I doubt anyone could find her. I truly don’t know where she is.”

“Well, we have to find her. We have to get her back here.” Rocky said.

“Look, you have enough on your plate. You worry about your classes and Harley. I will try to figure out where Michelle is.” I said.

“Fine...I’ll deal with her when she gets back.” Rocky said.

I nodded and walked out. Adam and I headed home.

“You know more than you’re saying.” Adam said while he drove us home.

“Even if I did she’s my best friend and I couldn’t betray her.” I said.

“I get that, but this is important.” Adam said.

“I know.” I said.

We got home and I went to my room and fell on my bed. I sighed and texted Michelle. ‘Mich, call me ASAP...this is important.’

A couple of minutes later my phone rang. It was Mich. “Hello?” I answered.

“What?” Michelle asked.

“Get home now.” I demanded.

“I’m not ready.” she said.

“I don’t care. Time’s up.”; I said as I explained everything that was happening.

“Fine. Tell Rocky I’ll be back tomorrow.” she said.

“Not soon enough. Now.” I commanded.

“Tomorrow. See you then. Bye.” she said hanging up.

I sighed and slammed my phone down on the bed.

“Didn’t go well?” Artemis asked as he walked in and jumped up on the bed.

“Michelle can really be a stubborn bitch.” I said.

“Ouch. Take it she’s not coming home.” he said.

“Tomorrow. She wouldn’t come back any sooner.” I said.

“She does realize the magnitude of the situation, does she not?” Artemis asked.

“She had Jon. Nothing else mat...oh crap.” I said realizing what I was saying.

“Ah, it makes sense now. And don’t worry. I won’t tell Adam.” Artemis said.

“Tell Adam what?” Adam asked as he walked in.

“What your anniversary gift is.” I said, thinking quickly.

“You have it already? I better get crackin...” Adam said.

I smiled, “You better.”

“Did you reach Michelle?” Adam asked.

“Yeah. She’ll be back tomorrow.” I said, acting like it was no big deal.

“Tomorrow?!” Adam cried.

“Yeah...that should be fine though.” I said.

“We need her here now. Rocky needs her here now.” Adam said.

“It’ll be ok. Just one more night.” I said.

“She just doesn’t get it.” Adam sighed as he walked out.

"Michelle needs to figure out her priorities because this isn't working." Artemis said when he was sure Adam was out of earshot.

"I know...but you know how she is where Jon is concerned." I whispered.

"I thought we were past that." Artemis said.

"Me too, but evidently not. And now I'm starting to wonder if we ever will be." I sighed.

"What now?" Artemis asked as my phone rang.

"Now I answer the phone." I said as I picked it up. "Hello?"

"It's Amara. Trista is back...Empress escaped with the Princess." Amara said.

"Are you kidding me?!" I cried.

"I'm sorry, I messed up. We'll stop her." Amara said.

"We'll stop her. One way or another." I hung up. I had to warn the others.

"What is it?" Artemis asked.

"Empress escaped. She's going to attack. You know she will." I said.

Artemis nodded. "Time to call the others. We need to meet now."

I nodded, "Empress is pissed. She's not going to hold back."

"We need Michelle." Artemis said.

I sighed. "I know. Tomorrow might be too late."