

## Episode 18- "Outed"

I looked around the spaceship we were on. It was very different from Lothor's had been.

"Where is she?" Rory asked.

I could feel her presence nearby. "She's close." I said as I tried to zero in on her.

"We need to hurry." Peyton said, "I'm sure we breached their shields."

I nodded. "This way." I said as I followed the feeling I had.

"How can you sense her like that and Sensei can't?" Rory asked.

I shrugged, "We've always had a connection." It was true...I didn't know exactly why Harley's Amethyst has reacted to me or why my gut led me to Michelle...I just knew it did.

We approached a door.

I looked at the boys, "She's in there."

"OK, how do we get in there?" Peyton asked.

"I think the only way is to blast our way in." I said.

Rory nodded, "But once we do that they will certainly know we are here so we have to hurry."

I nodded and summoned my Beetle Blaster and fired through the door. It led us into a cell block where several cells with bars were. All the way at the end I could see Michelle. I ran down to the cell she was in. She was passed out on the floor of the cell and she wasn't moving. "Mich...Mich wake up." I said as I tried to break through the bars.

"I got this." Rory called on his sword and cut through the bars.

I stepped into the cell and picked up Michelle. We were headed down the hall of the cell block when an army of Continis ran at us, led by Flavio.

"Rangers! You aren't leaving here alive. And neither is she. Not without her Amethyst." Flavio said.

"He's right...we have to find that Amethyst before we leave or she'll die." I said.

"Then let's do this." Rory said as he started to fight.

Peyton looked at me, "Get Michelle out of here and find that Amethyst while we distract these guys."

I nodded as I saw Peyton go to battle. He was attacking big with the purpose of distraction. I used the chance to rush out of the cell block. I had to find her Amethyst fast.

As I ran I could see the Saturn symbol on Michelle's forehead start to glow. The brighter it got, the closer we had to be to the Amethyst...that had to be why it was glowing. I kept going the direction it got brighter. If it seemed to fade I turned back. Finally it was glowing very bright outside a room. I kicked the door open and found a room that had locked glass cases of gems. Many of the stolen gems were right here...but only one I cared about. I saw her Amethyst glowing in the distance. It was yearning to be reunited with Michelle. I carefully laid Michelle down on the floor and went to the case that held her Amethyst. I took my staff and hit the glass. Nothing happened. I punched it. Nothing. The glass wouldn't break. I grabbed it and tried to pull. I screamed in frustration and in my frustration my

hands started to radiate a crimson lightning. The glass shattered and I picked up the Amethyst. When I picked it up it became outlined in a crimson glow. I walked over to Michelle and set it on her chest. I knelt down and reached for my communicator. "Cam, I have Mich and the Amethyst. Can you get us home?"

"On it. Stand by while I lock onto your power signatures." Cam replied.

I held Michelle's hand. I heard someone coming. I hoped Cam would hurry, before someone attacked us. Moments later I felt us teleporting away.

Next thing I knew we were back at the temporary Ninja Ops.

"Michelle!" Rocky ran over and picked her up in his arms. He laid her on the table and touched her face. "Wake up beautiful." he whispered.

I cringed. I wanted to beat the crap out of him for touching her. I wanted her back. I wanted her so much it hurt. I wanted her and Harley to be my family. Seeing her with Rocky killed me. Knowing she was cheating on Rocky with Jon killed me too. First, why Jon and not me and second, if she was cheating on Rocky she didn't love him. I knew it. She didn't cheat on me. She only cheated when she was missing something and so I knew she was missing something with Rocky. I could fulfill every need she had...we belonged together. My reaction to her Amethyst proved it.

"Are you ok Hunter?" Tori whispered as she walked up to me.

I shook my head, "No, I'm not."

Tori nodded. "I know...but it's out of your hands."

I looked at her. I loved how Tori knew what I was feeling without me saying it. "You're a great sister Tor."

"I know." she smirked as she put her arm around me.

Just then we heard a groan.

"Ugh...what happened?" Michelle asked as she opened her eyes.

"You gave yourself up to Stefano to save Savannah James. Balassario stole your Amethyst but we got you back." Rocky said.

"Is Savannah ok?" Michelle asked.

"She's fine. We took her home ourselves." Rory said.

She nodded, "Thank you guys...thank you."

"Are you ok?" I asked as I sat on the other side of Mich from where Rocky was.

Michelle sat up slowly. "I think so...I'm super weak...but other than that I'm fine. I think."

"Your Amethyst needs to recharge." I said.

Michelle nodded, "I just wanna go home."

"Not until you have a physical. We need to make sure you really are ok." Cam said.

Michelle smiled, "Thanks Cam."

"SPD is lucky we got her back, but this doesn't excuse anything Charlie did." Rocky said.

"What did Charlie do?" Michelle asked.

"She just stood there while you were taken by Stefano." Peyton said.

"And she wouldn't even take Savannah home. She left her with us. She was cold as ice." Rory added.

"She wanted me gone." Michelle said.

Brielle nodded, "We think so too."

"OK guys, I need some space." Cam said as he walked over to check Michelle out.

Once Michelle had a clean bill of health she went home with Rocky and I was left alone. I went back to the house I was sharing with Tori and Blake. I went to my room and crashed. I couldn't deal with anymore pain today.

Rory

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Sensei took Michelle home to rest and the rest of us went back to our base.

"All of the stones are on his ship. Hunter said he found the Amethyst in a room that had lots of stolen gems." Peyton said.

I nodded, "Which means we can't destroy that ship. We have to attack hand to hand and get the gems back."

"It also gives us an edge over SPD. I don't think they know the gems are there." Brielle said.

I looked at Peyton. I looked at my team. I couldn't focus on the mission because I felt my secret weighing on me. It was like screaming in my head. I felt like I was going to explode.

"Rory, are you ok?" Finn asked.

"I'm gay!" I blurted out.

Everyone looked at me.

"Seriously?" Brielle asked.

I nodded.

Finn nodded, "That explains a lot."

"I'm dating Peyton." I added.

"You two are together? Cute!" Brielle said.

"So, how do we get back on that ship and manage to get off with all those gems?" Finn asked.

"Whoa! Wait...that's it? You guys don't care that I just came out?" I asked.

Finn shrugged, "We care but it's just not that big of a deal. You like who you like. It doesn't change anything."

"Yeah, you're still our friend and our leader. And you and Peyton make an adorable couple." Brielle said.

I smiled, "Thanks guys." I realized my fears were for nothing. I wasn't sure that would be the case with the hockey team, but at least I was out with my friends now.

Peyton smiled at me and took my hand, "I'm proud of you."

"Thanks. I made you a promise." I said holding his hand.

"There's nothing we can do without Michelle and Ninja Storm. I think we need to call a meeting with everyone and form a plan." Finn said.

I nodded, "I agree. Until then there's not much we can do. I'll talk to Kapri and figure out when we should all meet."

"So can we go? Cause I have play practice." Brielle said.

I nodded, "Yeah. And I have hockey practice. Just make sure you can hear if we call."

Brielle nodded. "I promise."

"Peyton, I'll see you later." I said.

Peyton nodded and kissed me. "See ya."

I grabbed my hockey bag and headed out to hockey practice. I wanted to come out to my team before I came out at school. This wasn't gonna be easy.

I went to the locker room and geared up with my team like always, then we went to the ice and practiced. We had a big game against Stone Canyon coming up and we all wanted to get the 'W' even more than normal.

After practice we went back to the locker room and showered up then gathered. I usually gave an inspirational speech to the team after practice. This one was gonna be a bit different. I looked out at my team and coach. They were waiting for one of my motivational talks. I had never been so nervous.

"We've been working hard guys. I know we can beat Stone Canyon. We just have to leave it all on the ice and give it all we got. They are good. We're better. We can bring the 'W' back to Angel Grove and do our school proud. And speaking of proud...I want to talk to you about something else. I want to be honest with you guys because you're like my brothers and this is important to me." I paused and took a breath. "I'm gay."

The whole team looked at me like I'd just gut punched them.

"Gay? As in you're into other dudes?" Robbie Miller, one of my defensemen, said.

I nodded, "Yes, although at the moment, just one. I have a boyfriend."

"What the hell? Who?" Aaron Jones, a forward and my associate captain, asked.

I took another breath, "Peyton."

"As in the quarterback?" Aaron asked.

I nodded.

"Dude, you can't be in the locker room with us anymore." Tyler Stevens, a winger, said.

"Why? This changes nothing. I'm who I was when we were just practicing." I said.

"Yeah, except now we know you like dudes. I don't wanna shower with a guy that's checking me out." Tyler said.

"Guys, you all are like brothers to me...and presumably straight to boot. I'm not going to be checking anyone out." I said.

Coach Miller finally spoke up, "Rory is right. He's still our captain and brother. This changes nothing. And if I hear any of you giving him crap about this I will bench you."

"Thanks Coach." I said.

"It's no problem son. I'm glad you trust us enough to come out to us. And you're right, we will absolutely beat Stone Canyon. We have the drive and the will. We just have to give it all we got and I know we can." Coach said.

Thank god practice was over. Now I just had to come out at school...which I had a feeling would be done for me. The team knew so I was sure by morning the whole school would know. At least I'd kept my promise to Peyton and now I wasn't his secret. We could be happy. I just had to adjust to life outside the closet. Except for with my parents...that was another matter entirely.