

Episode 11- "The Fallen"

I blinked and took a breath. I had to have heard that wrong.

"What?" I asked.

"Shane...he's dead Mich." Hunter said. I could tell he was crying now.

"Hunter, if this is a way to try to get my attention on you it's sick." I snapped.

"Michelle, I wouldn't do that and you know it." he snapped back.

I gasped. "I know...I just...I'm in shock."

"We all are." Hunter said.

I took another breath. "What happened?"

"He was visiting Dustin in Angel Grove and there was an attack on a gemstone where they happened to be. Dustin and Shane morphed while they waited for the Sonic Rangers. They didn't know the extent of the monster's powers and...there was an explosion." Hunter said.

"Is Dusty ok?" I asked.

"Dustin is hurt, but he will recover. Shane was closer to the center of it and it was so powerful even being Morphed couldn't protect him." Hunter said. "He was killed instantly."

I started to cry. "How can this be happening? We're Rangers. We don't die."

"You know that's not true Mich. While our casualties may be few, they exist." he said.

"I know...but Shane..." I said.

"I know." Hunter said, crying too.

"Why are you calling me?" I asked.

"I asked Rocky if I could be the one to tell you. We were a team and I felt you should hear it from one of us. He agreed. Rocky and Harley are both fine. I'm actually in the office at Rocky's dojo right now. I can see Harley playing on the mats. She is absolutely safe." Hunter promised.

"How did you know I was going to press about Harley?" I asked.

"I know you and I know the kind of Mom you are." Hunter said.

"I'll ninja streak home straight away." I said.

"No. You won't. You'll charter a plane. Rocky and I knew you would try that and we agreed you are in no shape to ninja streak over an ocean. Just take a plane." Hunter said.

"Fine. I'll be home as fast as I can. Thank you for calling me." I said.

"I'll see you soon." Hunter said.

"Yes. Please tell Rock and Harley I said I love them." I said.

"I will, I promise." Hunter said.

"Thank you...bye." I said as I hung up.

"What happened?" Jon asked as he put his arms around me and held me. I guess I had woken him up when I was on the phone.

"You remember my friend Shane?" I asked.

"From Blue Bay? Yes. Briefly." Jon said.

"He was killed in battle." I said, crying again.

"Oh my god, I'm so sorry Mich." he said hugging me tight.

"I need to get home. Now." I said.

"OK, don't worry about anything. I'll call the airport and get the plane ready and call a car." he said.

"Thank you." I said as I went to get dressed. As I got dressed I started to cry again. This was my fault. If I would have gone back to Angel Grove instead of jetting off to Russia to cheat on my husband then I would have been there and I could have saved Shane. It was my fault he was dead. When this hit me I fell to the floor and started sobbing. Jon heard me and rushed in. He sank down to the floor and pulled me into his arms. "It's my fault." I whispered.

"How?" he asked as he stroked my hair.

"I came here. If I would have gone home instead I would have been there." I sobbed.

"And then it may have been you instead of him and do you have any idea how much worse off the world would be without you?" Jon asked.

"So instead it was Shane." I cried.

"Baby, everything happens for a reason. For some reason it was his time. Think about 9/11. How many people have said they were supposed to be on that plane but they weren't. Things happen and it's tragic but everything is by design." Jon said.

I continued to cry. "There is also karma and he's paying for my infidelity." I said.

"Baby, Shane is not your karma. Not at all. Our love is unconventional sure...it always has been. It's never been wrong. You said yourself...love is never wrong." he replied.

"Unless it's cheating..." I said.

"Are you ending things? Please don't. Mich, I need you. I need Harley. I love you both so much. I know it's not right to have a secret family but you guys mean so much to me." Jon begged.

"I'm not. Not right now anyway. I need time to think...right now I need to get home." I said standing up.

Jon nodded, "I understand."

I finished getting ready and took the car to the airport. I got on the plane and on the long flight home I thought about Shae. I thought about what I'd done. I thought about all the ways I could have saved him if only I'd been there.

Several hours later I landed at LAX. I got off the plane and took a car home. I walked in to my house. Rocky, Hunter, Tori, and Blake were sitting in my living room talking.

"Oh baby, thank goodness you're home." Rocky said as he rushed to me and took me in his arms. I hugged him tightly and started to cry again.

"We're all glad to see you. Just wish it were under better circumstances." Tori said. It was obvious she'd been crying.

After I hugged Rocky I hugged each of my friends in turn. I noticed that Hunter held me tighter and longer...I really didn't mind. I needed him as much as he needed me.

"I wish it were too. I'm so sorry I wasn't here." I said, crying again.

"You couldn't have prevented what happened Mich. The only one to blame is Balassario." Blake said.

"Where's Cam and Dusty?" I asked.

"Dustin was hurt pretty bad. He'll be ok, but he is in the hospital. Marah is at his bed side. Kapri is mourning the loss of her husband so Cam is with her. I think they are still at the hospital too." Tori said.

"Kapri and Shane had just gotten married. God...I can't even imagine her pain." I said softly.

"It's a lot. She's not doing so well so Cam is staying with her." Hunter said.

"Shouldn't you be with Cam?" I asked.

Hunter shook his head. "We're not together at the moment. I'm the last person he wants to see right now."

"Oh...gotcha." I nodded. I turned to Rocky, "Where's Harley?"

"Sleeping in her bed." he said.

I nodded, "Good...how much does she know?"

"I told her that Uncle Shane was hurt really bad and the doctors couldn't fix him so he had to go to heaven. She asked if she would see him again when she went to heaven and I told her she would. We just wouldn't see him again on Earth. She was sad but I think she kinda gets it." Rocky said.

"I'm sorry I wasn't here to handle that with you." I said.

"It's ok. Harley is fine. The Sonic Rangers are taking it hard. I think it scared them." Rocky said.

"I bet." I sighed, "They are still very new to Rangering and this happens."

"It's ok Mich. Balassario made this personal. We're here to help the Sonic Rangers however you need. Ninja Storm is back and we're pissed." Tori said.

"Are you sure you're up for it?" I asked.

"Mich, we absolutely are. We need to do this. For Shane." Blake said.

“OK. I’m glad to have your assistance.” I said.

A few hours later the Ninja Storm Rangers headed to their hotel and Rocky and I got in bed. It was nice to be in my own bed with my husband again.

“Are you ok?” Rocky asked.

“Of course I’m not. I feel guilty about Shane’s death...not to mention the grief of losing a friend.” I said.

“You have nothing to feel guilty about baby. Nothing. You stopped Stefano. You did good. And...I know it hurts. I didn’t even know Shane as well as you but it hurts me too.” Rocky said pulling me tightly into his arms.

“I’ve never lost a Ranger before. I mean, Landon Tate died in battle but that was on SPD. We’ve never lost a civilian Ranger in battle. Trini was in a car accident and Kendrix didn’t stay dead.” I said.

“I know...I’m in shock too baby.” Rocky said.

I eventually cried myself to sleep.

The next morning I was getting dressed when my phone rang.

“Hello?” I answered.

“Ms. DeSantos, it’s Commander Crugar. I heard about your loss and I wanted to extend my condolences.” he said.

“Thank you Commander. I appreciate it...but this changes nothing.” I said.

“I didn’t figure it would. I simply wanted to express my empathy of your loss.” he said.

“Thank you sir.” I said.

“If your team needs us know we will be here.” he said.

“I’ll keep that in mind...thank you again.” I said as I hung up. I knew it was a matter of time before that overgrown dog used Shane’s death to show our way was no better than theirs. I couldn’t think about that right now though. I needed to focus on my friends. They needed me.

I went to the kitchen. Rocky had made breakfast.

“This looks great babe.” I said grabbing a plate of bacon, eggs, and biscuits.

“I needed to do something. I’m going to take Harley to the dojo with me for the day. You should be with the Ninja Storm team.” Rocky said.

I nodded. “Thank you babe.”

“Of course. If you need me just call.” he said.

“I will. Where is Harley?” I asked.

“Getting dressed. She’ll be down in a minute.” Rocky said.

A couple minutes later Harley came in wearing jeans, converse, and a purple moto jersey. “Mommy!” she cried as

she ran to me.

I scooped her up in my arms and held her close. "Hi baby. I missed you so much." I said.

"I missed you too. I'm sorry about Uncle Shane." she said as she hugged me.

"Me too baby girl." I said, still hugging her close.

After breakfast I texted Tori to see where everyone was. They had all gathered at Dustin and Marah's house. Since Dustin was in the hospital he told them they could go and congregate at his house. I drove over there and went inside. Kapri and Cam were there with the rest of the group this time. I figured Marah was still at the hospital with Dusty. When I went in I heard yelling.

"Don't tell me what I am and am not capable of Cam! My husband just died! I think I know, better than anyone, what I am capable of!" Kapri cried.

"You are grieving and volatile Kapri. I just don't think you are thinking rationally." Cam countered.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"We told Kapri and Cam that we're going to help the Sonic Rangers with Ballassario and she wants to help by taking on Shane's morpher." Tori said.

"And I was explaining her emotions are running too hot. If we need a Red Wind Ranger we can call Kyle." Cam said.

"This is my fight Cam. You can't take this away from me!" Kapri cried.

"You want vengeance, not justice." Cam said.

"You're dealing with a space alien, not a human killer. In this situation vengeance and justice have the same outcome." Kapri said.

"She's not wrong Cam." I said.

"The fact remains her emotions are too high. She can't think logically in battle right now." Cam said.

"We have always said Kapri would make a great Pink Wind Ranger if there was one..." Tori said.

"That was different. The circumstances have changed." Cam said.

"Yes. They have. Shane is dead. That's what changed. And if anyone is going to have his Morpher it should be me." Kapri said.

"Michelle, you're a trainer. What do you think?" Hunter asked.

"Who cares what she thinks? She's not one of us anymore." Cam snapped.

"Shut up Cam. She will always be one of us. Without her there would be no us." Hunter snapped back.

"I care a lot about what she thinks. I respect Michelle's opinion very much." Kapri said.

"Well, I see Cam's point about your emotions running high...that said you're a trained ninja and if you think you can hold it together in battle I think you deserve the chance to bring justice to your husband's killer. I know if it were Rocky there is nothing that could stop me from bringing his killer down." I said.

"I really think I can hold it together in battle. Shane always did. He taught me how to and he would want me to." Kapri said.

"Then I see no issue with it. I think Kapri should be able to be the Red Wind Ranger." I said.

"Good. Because I'm going to be the Yellow Wind Ranger until Dustin is recovered." Marah said as she walked in.

"You have got to be kidding me." Cam sighed.

"Well, we always said Marah would be a great Orange Wind Ranger. She can be Yellow instead." Tori said.

"This is ridiculous. You don't marry into Ranger Power. It doesn't get passed down to a beneficiary." Cam said.

"It does when you're dealing with trained ninjas." Marah said.

"Does anyone, other than Cam, actually have an issue with this?" Kapri asked.

No one spoke up.

"OK then. Marah and I are Wind Rangers now and we will do all we can to help the Sonic Rangers bring Balassario to justice." Kapri said.

"Spoken like a true leader. Welcome to the team." Hunter said.

"Now...Kapri...I haven't had the chance to say how sorry I am for your loss." I said hugging her.

She hugged me back. "It's our loss Mich. I know everyone in this room loved him."

"Very much." I said. "If you need anything I'm here."

"I know. Thank you." Kapri said.

I turned to Marah, "How's Dusty?"

"He'll be fine. He's probably going to be discharged in a day or two. We're very lucky we didn't lose both of them." Marah said.

"We are. Although I hate that we lost anyone." I said.

"We all do." Blake said.

"Is there anything I can do to help with funeral arrangements or anything?" I asked.

"No. Shane's brother, Porter, took care of that for me. We're having the funeral this Friday in Blue Bay Harbor at 10 AM." Kapri said.

"Rocky and I will be there, of course." I said.

"Actually, there is one thing you can do." Kapri said.

"Name it." I said.

"I'd love for you to sing a song. He loved your voice." Kapri said.

“What should I sing?” I asked.

“Whatever you think is appropriate.” Kapri said.

I nodded. “Consider it done.”

“Thank you.” she said hugging me again.

“Dustin said he will try to be there if he is able.” Marah said.

“I understand if he can’t and if that means you can’t then I understand that too.” Kapri said.

“I’ll be there one way or another.” Marah said, “And Dustin said you guys can head back to Blue Bay whenever. He said he’s fine and he knows you need to be getting home.”

“I’ll head back in the morning.” Hunter said.

“I think I want to go back tonight...I’ll be in Angel Grove a lot for awhile anyway I think.” Kapri said.

“OK. I’ll take you home.” Cam said.

“We’ll head back with you.” Tori said.

Blake nodded.

I hugged everyone as they parted ways. Soon it was just Hunter, Marah, and myself.

“I need to get back to the hospital but you two feel free to hang out here as long as you want.” Marah said.

Hunter nodded. “Thanks Marah.”

“No worries.” she said as she left.

And then it was just Hunter and I.

“Seems surreal doesn’t it?” he finally asked, breaking the long silence.

I nodded. “Extremely. I don’t think it’s even really sunk in yet.”

“Life is short.” Hunter said.

“I feel like you’re trying to make a specific point.” I said.

“Just that we don’t always have a chance to wait to say or do what we feel.” he said.

“And what do you feel?” I asked.

“That seeing you again, knowing that tomorrow isn’t promised....I would never forgive myself if I didn’t kiss you again.” he said as he leaned in and kissed me passionately.