

### Episode 3- "Gearing Up"

I spent most of my morning working on learning about Balassario. Celeste sent me a good deal of information about him. He was the don of an intergalactic mob essentially. He was wanted in several solar systems and SPD in several jurisdictions had been chasing him for awhile. He specialized in rare gems. Evidently he hadn't stolen anything in the Milky Way System until now. He was expected to be after several gems on Earth, we needed to figure out which ones. It was also possible he would target some of the other planets as well.

By the afternoon I headed to Blue Dragon. When our 3 Rangers picks walked in for training we called them into Rocky's office.

"Yes Sensei?" Rory said as they bowed.

"We need to talk about something really important. Close the door." Rocky said.

Rory closed the door and I shut the blinds.

"What's going on?" Brielle asked.

Rocky looked to make sure we were secure then he hit a button which opened a door in his wall to a secret room.

"Whoa, what's that?" Finn asked.

"More secrets?" I asked.

"This is the last one. Promise." Rocky said as he led us into the secret room. It was clearly a command center of sorts. I could tell by the computers. Rocky closed the wall/door.

"What is this place? Why is there a secret room in the dojo?" Rory asked.

"I can answer all of your questions." Rocky said

"I'm all ears." Brielle said.

"You guys have heard of the Power Rangers?" Rocky asked.

"Of course! They are Angel Grove legends!" Rory said.

"You're looking at two of them." Rocky said.

Brielle cocked her head, "What?"

"I was the second Red Mighty Morphin Ranger and the Blue Zeo Ranger. Michelle was...well any Purple Ranger you've seen...that's her." Rocky said.

"Are you for real?!" Finn asked.

"Yes. We certainly are." I said.

"OK...so why tell us this?" Rory asked.

"Glad you asked Rory...the answer is really simple...we need a new Ranger team and we are hoping you're that team." I said.

“Really? You spring it just like that? That was anticlimactic No big reveal like Tommy got with DinoThunder?” Rocky pouted.

I rolled my eyes, “Oh please. We have no use for the theatrics Tommy does.”

“Wait, you seriously want us to be Rangers?” Brielle asked.

I nodded. “We do. You see, I’m not exactly an Earthling. I mean...damn I hate explaining this...I am but I’m the reincarnated Queen of Saturn. Anyway, point is my people held a very valuable gem and it’s been stolen. We think the perp is going to strike Earth next and there is another Ranger team that I disagree with on methods that is trying to bring him in. I have to get it back before they do.”

“So wait, you want us to help you get this gem back and fight another Ranger team in the process?” Rory asked.

“Something like that. Yeah.” I said.

“I’m glad you thought of a question cause I’m still hung up on the whole Queen of Saturn thing.” Brielle said.

“I know this is a lot to take in. I hope you will help us though.” Rocky said.

“Like I would turn down the chance to be a Power Ranger. I can’t speak for the others, but I am so in.” Rory smiled.

“Yeah! Totally! No question. This is shocking but I’m not turning this down.” Brielle said.

“Yeah, count me in too.” Finn said.

“Great!” Rocky said as he pulled out a box and opened it. Inside were 3 Morphers. “These are your Sonic Morphers. Their power is based on jet technology.” They were bracelet Morphers. He handed one to each of the kids. “Rory, you’ll be the Red Sonic Ranger and control the Sonic Jet Zord. Brielle, you will be the Yellow Sonic Ranger and control the Sonic Copter Zord. Finally, Finn, you will be the Blue Ranger and Sonic Racer Zord. Together you will be Power Rangers Sonic Boom.”

“I’m a Red Ranger? I’m the leader?” Rory asked.

“You have shown yourself to have natural leadership. But remember, ultimately you are a team.” Rocky said.

“Forgetting someone?” I asked.

Rocky laughed, “Of course not. You will be the Purple Sonic Ranger. I will update your Master Morpher so you can continue to use that. Of course you’ll have access to any of your powers as you need.”

I nodded. “Sounds good. And Rory, you may be leader, but I am your trainer. You will ultimately defer to me.”

Rory nodded, “Understood.”

“A few rules. Obviously your identities are secret. No one can know you are Rangers...that includes Harley. She knows nothing about this. Never escalate a battle. Fight back, but never seek it out. Never use your powers for personal gain or you will lose them. Finally, SPD are Rangers but they are not our allies. Rangers or not we will not let them stop us from stopping Balassario.” I said.

“Got it.” Brielle nodded.

“Good. First thing I have to do is figure out where Balassario is going to strike next. You three go to training as

normal. After your normal training we will have our first Ranger training session.” I said.

“Sounds good.” Finn said as Rocky led them out. I used the computers in Rocky’s command center to get back to work tracking Balassario. I finally hit on something and it was practically in our backyard! The Los Angeles Museum of Natural History was hosting an exhibit that held 3 of the most expensive and rare gems in the world. He would target that for sure. We had to be ready.

Charlie

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“A-Squad to the Command Center.” I said over the PA. I needed my team now.

My name is Officer Charlie Lopez and I’m the Red SPD Ranger and leader of the A-Squad. I’m 19 and I’ve been at SPD for about 5 years now. I worked hard and made my way through the ranks fairly quickly. I am proud of my team. We’ve been through a lot together. We recently lost a team member in battle, our Yellow Ranger. Her name was Adrienne and she was one of the best cadets I ever worked with. She gave her all to SPD right down to her life. I’m still mourning her loss but my team needs me to be strong and carry on and so that is exactly what I’m doing. My Blue Ranger had to return to his home planet and is on a leave of absence now. That leaves me with a 3 person team. My Commander offered me a couple of cadets from B-Squad but I don’t think they are ready yet. I’d rather take on our next mission with a 3 Ranger team. And our next mission wasn’t going to be easy. We were in pursuit of an intergalactic mob boss named Balassario but on top of that we had a veteran Power Ranger trying to stop us and take down Balassario herself. She wasn’t SPD. She was a civilian Ranger that had outdated views about the rules and regulations SPD offered. She was very good and I knew it wouldn’t be easy. I respected her greatly but I also knew that ultimately if she opposed SPD we would have to take her down.

My two team members walked in. Rachel, my Pink Ranger, and Cliff, my Green Ranger.

“You bellowed?” Cliff teased. We’d been teammates for a long time and we could joke...or he could joke with me. I didn’t have much use for such silliness. He’d never talk to our Commander like that. I was used to it and I knew he meant no disrespect.

“I did. We have a problem.” I said as I explained the situation.

“Are you serious Charlie? You want us to take on Ms. DeSantos?” Rachel asked after I finished explaining.

I sighed, “I don’t like it either Rach. We were taught to respect veterans, but we don’t have a choice. If she insists on working against us we have to fight her.”

“Has anyone talked to Dr. Oliver? He’s her brother. Maybe he can talk her down?” Cliff asked.

“I think Commander Cruger was going to try that. I don’t expect it to do much good. She said that Dr. Oliver kept her in check thus far but her people mattered more. I don’t think he can make a difference in this.” I explained.

“So we have to find Balassario AND in the process stop a civilian team led by one of the most powerful veterans there is from interfering with our investigation and take down?” Cliff asked.

I nodded. “That’s about the sum of it.”

“Are we sure we don’t need B-Squad back up?” Rachel asked.

“Those 3 are far too green to be of any use. No offense Cliff.” I said.

Cliff laughed. “None taken. I’m just happy you actually recognized a pun.”

“You’re rubbing off on me.” I smirked.

“About time.” Cliff replied as Commander Cruger walked in. We saluted him.

“At ease.” Cruger said.

“Did you have a chance to speak to Dr. Oliver sir?” I asked.

Cruger nodded, “Indeed. He said he will speak with his sister but he doesn’t expect it to make a difference. To be honest, nor do I. The fact is, for all her antics, Ms. DeSantos is a very devoted Queen to her people and if she feels we jeopardize her planet she will come after us.”

“We could never do anything to jeopardize the people of Saturn.” Rachel said.

“I am aware of that Officer Li. Unfortunately Ms. DeSantos is very untrusting of SPD to begin with. She never wanted us to have the Ranger tech. We may not have a choice than to consider her our enemy.” Cruger said.

“If that’s the way she wants it then we will show her what SPD can do.” I said.

Cruger nodded, “I appreciate your spirit Charlie. Dr. Oliver did ask we take it easy on her for now.”

“To what end? She is one of the most powerful women in the universe and he wants us to take it easy on her? If we do that she will defeat us.” I said in disbelief.

“I understand Officer Lopez. I am not asking you to allow yourself to be defeated, just hold her at bay for a little while. If Dr. Oliver can’t provide an alternative we will have no other option but to fight her with everything we have.” Cruger said.

I nodded. “Yes sir.”

“I ask you again Officer Lopez, are you sure you did not want any of the B-Squad to assist? Cadet Tate shows much promise and Cadets Carson and Drew are not far behind.” Cruger said.

“I understand Cadet Tate is quite good, but he’s simply not ready. Nor are Carson or Drew. If I was going to take anyone it would be Tate. His father’s legacy is well known. That said he’s just not ready.” I said.

“I respect your decision and I can’t say I disagree. Just know the option is there.” Cruger said.

I nodded. “We can handle this. Now, we need to get down to business. If we hope to avoid conflict with Ms. DeSantos we need to find Balassario before she does.”

“Do we know where he will strike next?” Cliff asked.

“We have an idea.” Dr. Manx said as she walked in.

“You got something Dr. Manx?” I asked.

“Nothing concrete but we did look at Balassario’s patterns and based on that I suspect he will strike next at the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History. There is an exhibit of 3 of the most valuable gems on Earth.” Dr. Manx said.

“Ok, then that’s where we will be.” I nodded.

“Before you go...I have something for you.” Dr. Manx said handing us new Morphers.

"New powers?" I asked.

Dr. Manx nodded. "Upgrades. I knew the chances of you taking Commander Cruger up on his offer to promote B-Squad was slim. With that in mind I tweaked your powers. They are designed to work as a team of three."

"But what about Beevor? He will be back." Rachel said.

"And then I will tweak them again. For now, at least you aren't missing a Ranger. You can function as a full 3 person team." Dr. Manx replied.

I nodded. "Thanks Dr. Manx. This will be great."

"Your powers are similar. You do have different Zords. Instead of the Delta Runners, which are designed to work with 5 Rangers, you will be using the Delta Racers. There are 3 of them." Dr. Manx explained.

"But Delta Runner 5 was mine." Rachel said.

"Yes. You will now have Delta Racer 3. Cliff will have Delta Racer 2. Of course Charlie will take Delta Racer 1." Dr. Manx said.

"I'm 2 now? Ah ha! 2nd in command. I like it." Cliff said smugly.

"Only until Beev gets back." I said rolling my eyes.

"Any other questions?" Dr. Manx asked.

We shook our heads. "No ma'am." I replied.

"Then get to LA. Dismissed!" Cruger said.

We saluted and ran to our Jeep. It was time to bring Balassario in.