

PRWC 40- "What it All Comes Down To Part 2: Second Chances and Happy Endings"

*"The weight of the world, the need to survive
Has made you believe that you got no right
And out of the blue,
You meet someone who offers a place warm as the sun
Just close your eyes
Reach for the moment before it slips by
Here is your second chance, take it and fly"
~ "Second Chances" Trisha Yearwood*

I had the final shard to the Gem. I rushed to the scene of the battle. I saw Aunt Aria facing off with Michelle. She saw me.

"Arisa! Do you have it?" she asked.

"Yes, here, catch!" I cried throwing it over some Bots. She caught it.

"At last! The Gem of Souls is mine!" Aunt Aria cried as she connected the final shard. The Gem solidified itself and became whole again.

"NO!" Hunter screamed.

"Goodbye Michelle..." Aunt Aria said about to use the Gem.

"I don't think so!" Harley cried hitting Aunt Aria's hand with her staff.

"No! The Gem!" Aunt Aria cried.

"Got it!" April said catching it. A Bot pushed her down and got it, "Correction, the Bot got it."

"Not for long." Jesse said grabbing it, "Chris, catch!" he called as he saw Bots coming at him.

"Caught it!" Chris called as a Bot tackled him and got it, "No! Damn it!"

"Bring me the Gem." Aunt Aria commanded the Bot.

"Not a chance!" Tiffany said getting the Gem.

"Fine, I'll get it myself." Aunt Aria said going after Tiffany.

"Oh no! Derek! Catch!" Tiffany cried throwing the Gem. A Bot and Derek both went for it which knocked it through the air. It flew directly at me and I caught it.

"YES! Arissa, give it to me!" Aunt Aria called.

"No! Arissa, don't...please, give it to me." Hunter said.

"No, don't listen to him, he protects the woman who murdered your mother." Aunt Aria said.

"The only cold blooded killer around here is you, just like your sister was." Hunter said.

"Arisa, just give it to me." Aunt Aria said.

"No, Arissa, please..." Hunter said.

I stood there holding the Gem. I was caught in between two people I cared about. I started to think back to when I was a kid, the stories Aunt Aria would tell me.

"The Princess of Saturn...well soon to be Queen...she did it. She's the reason you don't have a mother." Aunt Aria would tell me.

"Why did she kill my mother?" I asked.

"She is a cold blooded killer, she killed your mother out of spite."

"One day she has to pay for it."

"She will, when you're older we will make sure Princess Michelle pays for what she has done to our family. I promise you, we'll avenge your mother's death."

At the same time I remembered what Hunter told me,

"Arisa, why can't you just stop this revenge plan on Michelle? She doesn't deserve it."

"She killed my mother."

"Do you even know the whole story?" Hunter asked.

"Yes. Michelle murdered my mother in cold blood."

Hunter shook his head, "No, she didn't. She did it to defend herself and her planet."

"What?"

"You don't know your mother, and truthfully I don't either since she lied to me about who she was, but I do know the story about what happened. It started millenniums ago. Lilianna was going to try and take over Saturn, she was jealous of Michelle. Michelle managed to stop her but then some years ago Lilianna returned. She was going to kill Michelle... she tried to kill her, but Michelle managed to barely save herself."

"No, my mom wouldn't do that...that sounds like she was gonna do a hostile take over of Saturn." I said.

"She was. Your mother was power hungry and jealous. Michelle only defended herself. She's never done anything but try her best to be a good person, she hasn't always succeeded but she tried and she would never kill anyone in cold blood, she's not that kind of person." Hunter said.

I remembered the pictures of Hunter and Michelle and the letters. They were so packed with emotion...the emotions of good people...they were so full of love. All Aunt Aria seemed to feel was hate. I closed my eyes. I knew what my heart was telling me.

"I'm sorry mother...I can't do this, I'm not saying you deserved to die but Michelle doesn't deserve to pay." I whispered to myself.

"Arisa! The Gem!" Aunt Aria cried.

"Arisa..." Hunter said.

"No! Aunt Aria, this is wrong! Michelle is a good person!" I cried.

"She killed your mother!" Aunt Aria cried.

"Mother tried a hostile take over a peaceful planet!"

"I don't have time for this! Give me the Gem so I can destroy Michelle or I'll destroy you." Aunt Aria said coming at me.

"You'd destroy me? Then I know this is for the best." I held up the Gem to block her attack. It reflected back at her and hit her.

"She's hit, now Rangers!" Derek called. They formed their blaster.

"Wild Cat Blaster, Fire!" the Rangers called.

In a flash of light my aunt was gone. I stood there in shock. I felt a hand on my shoulder.

"You did the right thing. Thank you Arissa." Hunter said.

"I couldn't let her hurt you...or Michelle." I said softly.

"What made you change your mind?"

"When I went to get that shard, I found it among letters and pictures...I saw the love you and Michelle have for each other...no one who loves like that is capable of murdering someone in cold blood...that's when I realized you were telling me the truth, it was self defense." I said.

"I'm glad you realized it before it was too late." Hunter said.

"Yeah, but what do I do now?" I asked.

"Well, I'd have to talk to Michelle, but you could come help us at the Academy...there's a spare room in the house."

"Are you serious? After everything I did you still want me to be part of your family?" I asked.

"You're my daughter Arissa. Of course...as long as you're over your quest for revenge and you really want to get a new start, then yes, of course I want you there."

"So do I. Thank you for saving me Arissa." Michelle said walking up to me.

"You do? Seriously?" I asked.

"We can trust you right?" Michelle asked.

I nodded, "Yes, I really do want a second chance."

"There was a time your father was after wrongful vengeance and I gave him a second chance...I see no reason not to give his daughter that same chance."

"Even after I tried to kill you?"

"Hunter tried to kill me too...listen, I love your father and if forgiving you makes him happy I'm willing to try."

"Thank you Michelle." I said. I knew right then I had been wrong about her, I was glad I was given this second chance.

"Starlight is all about second chances...if you really wanna change we'll all welcome you, right?" Tiffany said.

April looked me over, "I guess so."

“Hey, we all need a second chance right?” Chris said.

“On that note, let’s get back to the Academy. We have a graduation to prepare for.” Hunter said.

Derek

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“I’m gonna miss you April. I wish you could come with me.” I said. I was talking to April before graduation.

“Maybe I can.” She said.

“What are you talking about?”

“I just got the good news, I’m officially an emancipated youth. I’m an adult for all intent purposes...I can leave here whenever I want...if you’re serious about taking me with you.”

“Of course I am! Are you sure this is what you want?” I asked.

“Yes. I want a new start Derek. Our job as Rangers is over, my battle with Ed and my mother is over...I’m ready to put my past behind me and start again. I’d like to start again with you.”

“I’d like to start again with you too.” I said kissing her.

“Derek! Come on!” Hunter called.

“It’s time...see you after the ceremony.” I said going to join my fellow seniors.

After the ceremony I joined the other Wildcats.

“I can’t believe you’re really leaving.” Tiffany said crying.

“April and I will be sure to write.” I said.

“What?” Chris asked.

“I got emancipation. I’m going with Derek.” April said.

“Oh god, we’re losing you too? I’m gonna miss you guys.” Tiffany said crying harder.

“We’re proud of you though.” Destiny said.

“I’m proud of you.” A voice said behind me. I turned around and saw my dad.

“Dad...what are you doing here?” I asked.

“I came to see my son graduate...Derek, I was wrong to defend your mother. You’re my son, you should have come first...I hope you can forgive me.” He said.

“Sorry, second chances only go so far then you need a new start for yourself, and that’s exactly what I’m going to do with April...make a new start.” I said.

“But Derek, I’m your father...”

“And I’m your son, you turned you back on me when I needed you most...that’s not a father I want. Please leave.”

“Fine...if you ever need anything I’m here for you son.”

“I won’t...not from you.” I said as I watched my father walk away.

April

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After the drama with Derek’s father I went to tell Hunter and Michelle I’d be leaving.

“Why didn’t you tell us you applied for emancipation?” Michelle asked.

“I wasn’t sure if it would work.” I said.

“Are you sure this is what you want? You know you’re welcome to stay here.” Michelle said.

I nodded, “I know, but this is what I want. A new start with Derek...it’s exactly what I want.”

“OK, then we wish you the best of luck.” Hunter said.

“If you ever need anything, any time, call us.” Michelle said.

“And you’re always welcome here, even if it’s just to visit.” Hunter said.

“Consider this your home.” Michelle added.

I smiled, “Thank you so much...for everything.”

I went to the dorm and packed up my things. I couldn’t believe this was really happening.

Arissa

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“Here you go, how’s this room?” Hunter asked.  
I looked around the bedroom, “Nice, very red...”  
“Crimson...Michelle let me decorate it. You’re welcome to redo it if you want.”  
“No, it’s cool. I kinda like it.” I said.  
“Ok, well make yourself at home.”  
“Thank you.” I said.

Hunter left me alone to go do Academy stuff and I sat on the bed. I looked around the room again. For the first time I did really feel at home. I went to look around the house. The room next to mine was decorated in purple, it was obviously Harley’s room. Across from that room was a room decorated in a weird color that looked like a mix of purple and crimson. At the end of the hall was the master bedroom, Hunter and Michelle’s room, it was obvious it was their room because the bed had a crimson and purple bedspread, the rest of the room was done to match it. I went back to my room and fell back on the bed. This was going to take some getting used to.

I jumped from my thoughts when I heard a knock. I hadn’t closed my door. I sat up and saw Harley standing in the doorway.

“Oh...hey.” I said.  
“Listen and listen good, I’ve been fighting you for the last several months because you’ve been trying to kill me and my family. If you haven’t really changed and you try to hurt any of them I will make you pay like you’ve never paid before...and Felicity is coming home today, you better not do anything to that little girl.” Harley warned.  
I nodded, “I know...I would never do anything to hurt Felicity...and I’m sorry for everything else I did...I promise you, I won’t screw up this chance.”  
“You best not.” She said turning and walking away.  
I sighed, “This was not going to be easy.”  
“Hey, Arissa, we’re having a barbeque before Derek and April leave, you coming?” Hunter called.  
“Sure.” I said going to join them.

I got to the area where they were barbequing and was shocked at all the people. Every McKnight, except Anna, was there, all the Wildcats, the Olivers, the Scotts, Harley, Hunter, and Michelle of course, and two people with Felicity I never saw.

“Tony, Mel...this is my daughter Arissa. Arissa, this is Harley’s cousin Tony and his fiancée Melody.” Hunter said.  
“Nice to meet you. You’re Detective Oliver’s son?” I asked.  
“Yes.” Tony said.  
“It’s nice to meet you Arissa. It’s great you switched sides. You’re in great company. Our friend Nick did the same thing you did.” Mel said.  
“You ended up accepting him and being his friend?” I asked.  
“Oh yeah, he’s a great friend. He’s actually dating Harley’s cousin Lindsey...I guess that would make her your cousin too though cause she’s Blake and Tori’s daughter.” Mel said.  
“That’s cool...so where are you guys from?” I asked.  
“We go to school in Florida. We just came for today to bring Felicity home.” Tony said.  
“I’m glad you did. Hey Felicity.” I said.  
“Rissa!” she cried. I smiled and hugged her.  
“Looks like she’s accepted you already.” A voice behind me said.  
I turned around, “DJ! Hey...”  
“So, I hear Harley was right...you were using me to get that Gem.” He said.  
“I’m so sorry...I really, really am.” I said.  
“I also hear you gave up the world domination business...you think that you might have some time to date now?” DJ asked.

I smiled, “You’re not angry?”  
“I was...but everything turned out ok and I really do like you...and since second chances seem to be going around I can give in another try. So what do you say? Go out with me this weekend?”  
“I’d love to.” I said smiling.  
“Come here.” He said pulling me into his arms.  
I hugged him. This was so great. Slowly I might actually be able to fit in here.

“Food’s ready.” Hunter called. We all went and sat down.

As everyone got their food I looked around. Chris and Tiffany were together, Derek and April were together, Harley and Josh were together, Noah and Stacy were together, Mel and Tony were together, of course the adults were all with their spouses, and I was with DJ...everyone looked so happy...even Destiny and Jesse, who weren’t actually together, looked happy.

Derek

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After we ate April and I loaded up our stuff in a rental car. I had enough money in savings to get us started. After everything was loaded up we went to say goodbye.

“I guess this is it.” April said.

“I’m gonna miss you kid...you were pretty cool.” Chris said hugging her.

“Yeah, I’ll miss you too...we had some fun...take care of the Princess.” April said.

“You got it.” Chris said.

“And take care of yourself...don’t give Hunter and Michelle too much crap.” I said.

“It’s gonna be weird in the dorms without you...” Chris said.

“Yeah, you’ll have to mess with Jesse on your own...don’t let him off easy.”

“Count on it.”

“And Jess, don’t let him get away with too much crap...I’m sorry if you didn’t think we were friends...you were a really great friend Jess.” I said.

“I know...we were friends...and you were a great leader Derek. I’m gonna miss you.” Jesse said, “And you April, I really looked up to you for your strength.”

“Really? Thanks Jess.” She said hugging him.

“You...Destiny...you watch yourself...don’t get into too much trouble.” I said hugging her.

“I’ll be good.” She said.

“Yeah right...you good? But seriously, take it easy on the Princess, she isn’t that bad.” April said.

“Listen...April, I know you hated me but I just want you to know I think of you as one of my best friends.” Tiffany said.

“Oh Tiff, I don’t hate you...and you’re one of my best friends too...you’re pretty cool...I’m gonna miss you.” April said hugging Tiffany.

I walked over to Harley, “And you...you were a great trainer and group leader. I couldn’t have done the Red Ranger thing without you.”

“You were a great leader Derek. I’m honored I got to work with you.” Harley said hugging me.

“You take care of her Josh.” I said.

Josh laughed, “You better believe it. You take care of yourself and April.”

“You got it man.” I said. I went over to Hunter and Michelle, “Thank you for everything. Both of you...Hunter, I will never be able to thank you enough for everything you did for me...you helped me find an inner strength I never knew I had and you stood by me when even my own father turned his back on me.” I said hugging Hunter, I started to cry.

“You’ve been like the son I never had. I’m so proud of you and I know you’ll do great out there. We’re gonna miss you here though...you’re welcome back anytime.” He said hugging me.

“Yes, thank you for everything...especially you Michelle...you gave me hope and held hope for me when I wanted to let it go. You helped give me my freedom and a second chance. You showed me I don’t have to live in fear.” April said hugging Michelle. They both cried.

“You two take care of each other...I know you will be fine though. You’re both stronger than you know.” Michelle said.

“And Arissa, if you hurt anyone here I will personally come and kick your ass. Other than that, good luck on *your* second chance.” April said.

Arissa laughed, “Thanks April...good luck to you too.”

“You two take care.” Conner said.

“You bet coach...don’t run them too hard.” I said.

“I wouldn’t dream of it.” Conner laughed.

“On that note we should get going.” I said.

“OK...we’ll miss you guys.” April said as we got into the car.

There was a chorus of “Take care!” and “Be careful!” We got into the car and drove off. April turned around and waved

until everyone was out of sight.

“You sure this is what you want?” I asked.

She nodded. “A second chance with an amazing guy? It’s everything I ever wanted.”

Hunter

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After Derek and April were gone we got the Wildcats back to the dorms and I took Arissa, Michelle, and Felicity home. We all sat in the living room.

“I know I said it already but thanks for accepting me.” Arissa said.

“Rissa play!” Felicity demanded as she walked over with a game.

Arissa laughed, “OK, let’s play.”

I sat and watched as Arissa sat on the floor and played with Felicity. It was so cute and made me so happy. Michelle sat next to me and put her arm around me.

“Life is good?” she asked.

“Life is perfect.” I said kissing her.

She kissed me back. “Yeah it is.”

Harley

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After all the excitement died down Josh and I went to go sit at the lake.

“Do you think April and Derek will be ok?” I asked.

“I think they’ll be fine.” He said.

“And Arissa...you think we can trust her?”

“Babe, I think everyone will be fine...I think everything worked out and I think we should all be grateful.”

I smiled and leaned on him. “You’re right. It looks like I got my happy ending after all.”