

## Episode 27- "Desperate Measures"

"There has to be a way to stop Michelle...what if we threaten to blow her secret identity if she doesn't back down?" I asked.

"Charlie, we can't do that. If we did it would ruin her life." Rachel said.

"Exactly. That's why it's perfect leverage." I said.

"Even if you managed to convince us of that, Cruger would never allow it." Cliff said.

"Sometimes it's better to ask forgiveness than permission." Ivan said.

"You make a point." I nodded.

Rachel looked at me, "Charlie, what's happening to you? You used to follow every rule and regulation to the letter."

I sighed, "Maybe I'm tired of being disrespected by my own commander."

"What did Cruger do now?" a voice said. I turned around and saw Beevor.

"Beev!" I cried.

Rachel smiled, "You're home! We missed you."

"I missed you guys too. Commander Cruger just debriefed me and filled me in on some of what I missed...but I get the feeling I missed more than he let on." Beev said.

I rolled my eyes, "You have no idea."

"I got time..." Beev said.

I started to tell him everything that had happened between us and the Sonic Rangers when the whole Academy started to shake and alarms started to go off.

"We are under attack. This is not a drill. Cadets, report to your designated posts. A-Squad to the Command Center." Kat said.

We all ran to the Command Center.

"What's happening?" Rachel asked.

"The Sonic and Ninja Storm teams are attacking with Megazords. No time to plan an attack. I need you all to Morph and fight Megazord with Megazord. Beevor you will stay and keep the cadets in order. For many this is their first battle outside a simulator. Now go." Cruger said.

"Yes sir." We saluted and Morphed then went directly to our Zords.

"Stop this attack or we will destroy your Megazords." I said through the Zord PA as I pushed the Sonic Megazord back with our Megazord.

"Not until you agree to back off and leave us in peace or we will destroy your Academy." Rory replied.

"You're outnumbered. Surrender." Claudia said.

"Not a chance." I replied.

"Charlie, she's right...we are outnumbered." Rachel said.

"Time for Emergency protocol." I said.

"What's that?" Ivan asked.

"You'll see." I said. "Commander, we need to initiate Emergency Protocol."

"Negative Officer Lopez. Once that is activated it can't be stopped. I will not put the cadets through that at this time." Commander Cruger replied.

"They are going to destroy us Commander!" I screamed.

"Stand down Officer. If they are doing this because they want a treaty then we need to sit down with them and talk this out." Cruger replied.

"I will not negotiate with them any further!" I cried.

"You have your orders Officer." Cruger growled.

"And as leader of A-squad engaged in battle I can make whatever decision I feel is in the best interest of my team." I said.

"Only within regulations and disobeying your Commander is not within regulations." Cruger countered.

"I will not back down!" I said.

"Charlie, we have to." Rachel said.

"The entire Academy is at risk, including the lives of all the cadets." Cliff said.

"They knew the risks when they joined SPD." I said as I attacked the Thunder Storm Megazord. All 3 Megazords attacked back. Our Megazord shook and sparks went flying.

"Charlie, you're bucking rules and regulations. You're becoming the very thing you hate. You are becoming everything to accuse Michelle of." Rachel said.

I paused, she was right. I gritted my teeth. "Fine." I lowered our sword. "We agree to negotiate." I said through the PA.

"We will send 2 representatives but our Megazords will be on standby." Michelle said.

"Understood." I replied.

We headed back into the Academy.

"Officer Lopez, you will not be part of these talks...we will discuss your disobedience at a later time. Officer Lanilor, you will attend talks with Kat and I." Cruger said.

I looked at Beevor then at Cruger. "Yes sir." I said through gritted teeth.

Michelle

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It was decided that Hunter and I would attend the talks with SPD and the rest of our teams would stand by. We went inside, still Morphed. Cruger, Kat, and another alien I had yet to meet were waiting.

"This way." Cruger said leading us to the meeting room.

Hunter and I took our helmets off and sat down.

"Commander, you know Hunter Bradley." I said.

Cruger nodded, "Indeed. And this is Officer Beevor Lanilor. He will be joining us today."

"Understood." I said.

"It truly saddens me that you and your team felt the need to attack us in this manner." Cruger said.

"We felt we had no other option for the sake of future non-SPD Rangers." I said.

"Talks have failed up to this point and we were tired of the threat of a two front war." Hunter added.

Cruger nodded, "I understand. What would it take, short of ending the SPD program, to broker peace?"

"An agreement to co-exist. You allow us to fight our battles and we allow you to fight yours...should our interests overlap again we work together, not against each other." Hunter said.

I shot him a look. I didn't like those terms.

Hunter shook his head. "We need to meet in the middle for the sake of peace."

"Fine." I mumbled.

"I believe we can work within those terms. Although I feel the SPD way is superior, I know there is much we can learn from you as well. We would love to have you as a guest speaker to share your experience with our cadets." Cruger said.

I blinked, "You want to collaborate?"

"In the name of peace, yes. We are all Rangers and we all want to protect Earth. I believe it is time to start working with each other instead of against. I do not expect you to suddenly love SPD, but perhaps you'd be willing to use your experience to better it rather than attempting to destroy it." Cruger said.

I didn't like it but it would at least allow things to remain amicable and avoid further wars. "Agreed. I will speak to classes of cadets and do what I can to better SPD."

"We will cease fire and have a formal treaty drawn up. Regardless of it being signed we expect terms to be followed to maintain the cease fire." Hunter said.

Cruger nodded, "You have my word."

"Ours as well." I said shaking Cruger's hand.

The war with SPD was finally over!

Charlie  
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Cruger and Beevor came back to us and filled us in on the treaty and terms. I was not happy.

“You agreed to allow her to be a guest speaker?” I asked.

“Actually it was the Commander’s idea.” Beevor said.

“Those are the terms and we will abide by them. Officer Lopez, Officer Lanilor, please join me in my office.” Cruger said.

Beevor and I followed him.

“Officer Lopez, what you did during battle was unacceptable.” Cruger said once we got to his office and closed the door.

“Sir, I was trying to protect the base.” I said.

“You disobeyed a direct order...a trend I am noticing is becoming more frequent from you.” Cruger said.

“Sir...” I started.

“Let me finish. I also know you’ve been telling anyone that will listen that you feel disrespected. Know this, respect is earned, not given. And as of late you have done little to earn my respect. With Officer Lanilor back with us your team will be at 5 again. The 2 of you will lead together until I can be sure you can lead to the standard that SPD expects of its officers.” Cruger said.

“Yes sir.” I said.

Cruger pressed an intercom button. “Kat, please bring the rest of A-squad in.”

Moments later Kat came in with Rachel, Cliff, and Ivan.

“Rangers, our battle with Balassario and the Sonic Rangers has come to an end and Officer Lanilor has rejoined us. With that in mind you will be reclaiming your former powers and Zords.” Cruger said.

“What about Ivan?” Rachel asked.

“Officer Parker has proven to be a valuable member of your team and as such he will take on the Yellow Ranger powers.” Cruger said.

“Thank you sir. I won’t let you down.” Ivan said.

“Officers Lopez and Lanilor will be leading your team for the time being as a co-leadership. You all need to be prepared. While we have finished with Balassario, there is a new threat we have been monitoring. We don’t yet know what will become of it or if it will be of concern for us, but I need you all ready to go to battle at a moment’s notice.” Cruger said.

“Yes sir.” we said.

Cruger nodded, “Dismissed.”

We went back to the sitting room.

"I wonder what this new threat is." Rachel said.

"I have a feeling we'll find out soon enough." Ivan said.

I nodded.

"Char, you ok?" Cliff asked.

I shrugged, "I guess..."

"Cruger let you have it huh?" Cliff asked.

I chuckled, "You have no idea. And I guess it just has me wondering if SPD is everything I thought it was."

"Hey, you know whatever the formalities may be, you're our leader Charlie. We'd follow you anywhere." Beevor said.

Rachel nodded, "Without a doubt."

I smiled, "Thanks guys...I'm lucky to have you guys as my friends."

Ivan blinked, "Did you seriously just call us friends? Mark it down...this is a historic day!"

I rolled my eyes, "Don't let a sad moment of weakness fool you. I am still me."

"Which means you should be very afraid." Cliff teased.

"Whatever comes next we do it together." Rachel said.

"Always." I said.

I smiled. I didn't often show real emotion, but regardless of how I felt about SPD right now, I knew my friends would always have my back.