

Episode 5- "A Waking Nightmare"

I was sound asleep. I'm pretty sure I wasn't even dreaming. I was just so exhausted with all this Empress crap happening. I'd pretty much passed out the night before. Every fiber of my being was just drained. I was finally woken up by, what sounded like, my phone being possessed. It was going crazy with notifications.

"What is going on?" Rocky mumbled, still half asleep.

"I don't know." I grumbled as I grabbed my phone. I looked at it. 36 texts? And the number was rising. What the hell? I opened my text program and saw the first text from Jen.

"Mich, turn on the news. There's a tape of you and Jon circulating. Since I know you wouldn't be so stupid as to record something like that it has to be the Empress." the text said.

My eyes widened, "What the hell?!" I opened my news app and sure enough, there was the headline in big, bold letters. "Michelle Morris and Jon Giovanni Sex Tape Goes Viral". "OH MY GOD!" I screamed.

"What is it?" Rocky asked sitting up next to me.

I showed him the headline. "She did this. She got to Jon. That is NOT me." I said seeing the safe-for-work screen capture that was with the article.

"Oh god...it's ok Mich. I know that's not you. I believe you...the problem is no one else will." Rocky sighed.

"I have to..." I started but just then my phone rang. Jon's number came up on the caller ID. "This isn't gonna be fun."

"Fortunately he knows your identity. Tell him the truth. Maybe he has an idea on how to handle this." Rocky said.

I nodded and answered the phone. "Hello?"

"Mich, what the fuck?!" Jon cried. "I was there for you. I trusted you. And you betray me like this?!"

"Calm down and think about that statement. "When have I ever betrayed you?" I asked calmly.

"Never...until now." He said.

"Maybe because that wasn't me?! Listen, this is gonna sound crazy but there is another 'me' running around. She's from another universe and she's trying to ruin my life. I would never betray you. For that matter I would never cheat on Rocky with you." I explained.

Jon paused. "That sounds crazy but given what I already know about you it also makes sense. You know, now that I think of it she was acting different. She knew wine in a way you don't and she said a few things that just seemed...off."

"Because it wasn't me."

"OK...fine. I was duped. That doesn't change the fact this video is out there now and the press thinks it's you...and it is actually me. We can't exactly tell the press who you really are so how to you propose we handle this?" Jon asked.

"I was hoping you had an idea."

"I actually might. I'm not sure if Dot will buy it, but the press might." Jon said.

“What?” I asked.

“Have you seen the recent press on the technology that can create videos of people that look real?” Jon asked.

“Yes! Like the one of the former president giving a speech he never actually gave but it looks real?” I asked.

“Yes. We say that this never happened. It’s a doctored video. We stick to that story.” Jon said.

“Got it. I’ll see what I can do to back that up.” I said.

“OK...I’ll have my people get on that...now I have some damage control to do with my family.”

“Good luck...and I’m sorry I didn’t think to warn you.”

“What’s done is done. I’ll be in touch. Bye.” Jon said hanging up.

I sighed. “What a mess.”

Rocky nodded. “I’m going to check on Harley. I’ll let you do what you need to do.” He got out of bed and left the room.

Once he was gone I was left to my thoughts. This really was a disaster. I hoped the press would believe our story. Still, seeing an image of myself and Jon...even if it wasn’t really me, made me think of a time when I was completely in love with Jon...I was so young...more innocent than I realized. I thought about the first time he heard me sing.

I was 12 and had snuck off to join Jon on tour. The band had just finished sound check and I’d been sitting and watching. Jon hopped off the stage and walked over to me. I smiled. He was so hot and I was so in love.

“What did you think?” he asked.

“You were great and that was so cool!” I said as I reached for his hand.

He pulled me in and kissed me. I tangled my fingers in his long hair.

The kiss broke and I smiled. “I wish I could sing on a stage like that.”

He smiled at me. “Do it.”

“What?”

“Go up there and sing me a song.” He said letting go of me.

“Seriously?” I asked.

He nodded. “Yeah. I wanna hear you sing Mich.”

I blushed and nodded. “OK.” I went and hopped on the stage. I looked out and saw Jon had sat down to watch me. I took a breath and grabbed the microphone. I started to sing ‘Unchained Melody’. I saw the look of awe on Jon’s face as I sang. I hoped it was good awe. I finished the song and put the mic back.

Jon stood up and clapped, “Oh my god Michelle. I had no idea you had a voice like that...that was magic. Why are you an actress when singing is clearly your gift?”

“I’ve always been an actress.” I said.

"You should sing. I've never heard a girl your age sing like that. It was remarkable." he said, clearly impressed.

"Maybe someday. I kinda have a show at the moment." I smiled.

"Well, you'll have to sing for me. That voice is just...spectacular." he said pulling me into his arms and kissing me passionately.

I snapped out of my memory as my phone started chiming again. I sighed. I was such a dumb kid...I was so blinded by my love. And my past would always come back to haunt me...no matter how I tried to move on.

I sat down and started to write a statement to the press:

"RE: Fake Video// This morning there is a video circulating online that claims to be a video of myself engaging in adult acts with my ex-husband Jon Giovanni. This video is a fake and as many celebrities before us, Jon and I are the victims of a video manipulation. Quite simply, the encounter portrayed in the video never happened. I have not even been in the same place as Jon since last year's hall of fame ceremony. The fact someone would stage something like this is sick and disturbing. To intrude on the lives of real people in this way shows how far we as a society have fallen. I have not and would not betray my husband in this manner as I know Jon would not betray his wife. We are both happily married to other people and the past we shared is just that...the past. I encourage all outlets sharing this video to remove and destroy it as it is not real and was not made with the consent of myself or Jon. Jon remains a close friend whom I care very much for, but I am a happily married woman. I hope our fans and members of the media can see this for what it is and ignore any attempts anyone makes to profit or seek publicity from this vile act. Thank you very much. "

I sent that press release to Holly, my band, and a few key members of the press. Hopefully this would die down soon because I was already over it.

Universe D- Jon

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Harley smiled and pressed a button. A portal opened. She grabbed my hand and pulled me through with her. We got to the other side and we were clearly on Earth. Not a dark, draconian Earth, but a bright and colorful Earth. It appeared this Earth wasn't ruled by a dictator. There was a sign next to us. "Welcome to Sayreville" it said. Harley looked around. "This isn't Saturn...I don't think...I wonder where we are...green grass...Jon, are we on Earth?"

I smiled. "We are. This is my hometown. But, it's different. I guess Drakkon doesn't rule Earth in this Universe. That must be why your Mommy came here. She wants this Earth".

Harley nodded. "It's pretty. It's colorful." she started walking towards town. "You're connected to this place. That must be why the portal brought us here." She saw a billboard promoting an upcoming concert in New York by Michelle Morris. Obviously this universe's Michelle Morris. "That looks like Mommy...but...different...she has Mommy's name and she looks like Mommy but not really like Mommy." Harley said, slightly confused.

"That's how your Mommy looked when she was younger. I guess in this Universe she didn't take over the outer system" I said as a thought hit me. My family. Could they be alive in this Universe? I tried to push the thought from my mind, but it stayed there, nagging at me. "I'll have to be careful. I don't want the other Jon in this Universe to see me. We should find your Mommy".

Harley made a face. "But this place is awesome! I want to explore. Look a store of some kind! Let's go look!" she

said ran in before I had a chance to say anything.

I sighed and followed her in. She wasn't going to make this easy. I looked around. It was a local record store. There were artists faces all over the place. Some I recognized, some I definitely didn't. I followed her as she bounced around the store and took everything in.

Harley was going down the aisle when she found a record with my picture on it. It was called "Crush". It wasn't one I ever did and there were several others. My counterpart here must have still been a rock star and making music. "That's you!" Harley said excited.

I shook my head. "Not really me. This Universe's version of me. I never made that record" I said, "I guess this Jon is still a rockstar".

Harley nodded. "That's awesome!" she kept walking and came across Michelle's albums. "Mommy has more music here too." she said looking through all of this Michelle's albums.

I nodded. "She does. I always loved her voice. I wish she would do more music" I said.

Harley nodded. "She looks so different here."

A voice called out. "Daddy?"

I turned and saw a girl of about 25 with a boy of about 13 or 14. I didn't recognize them at first. Then I looked again at the girl's face. It was my daughter, all grown up. I wasn't sure who the boy was. He was too old to be her son, but I didn't recognize him. I shook my head and looked away. "I'm sorry. I don't know you" I said quietly. I grabbed Harley's hand. "We need to go" I said.

"I'm sorry...wow...you look just like our father." the girl said.

The boy nodded. "Yeah, you do. It's freaky. And you're by the Michelle albums..." he rolled his eyes.

"Romeo, stop. Michelle isn't that bad and this isn't the time." the girl said.

"Sorry Steph. But she kinda is." Romeo replied.

"I'm Harley." Harley said not listening to me.

"I'm Stephanie and this is my baby brother Romeo." the girl said.

"I'm not a baby." Romeo rolled his eyes.

"It's uncanny how much you look like my dad sir. I really thought you were him." Stephanie said.

Romeo shook his head. "Dad is at home trying to deal with that fake sex tape that someone made of him and Michelle."

My eyes widened. "Fake sex tape of Jon and Michelle?" I asked. It had to be our Michelle. It stunk of her. "When

did this happen?”

“Like a couple days ago. Dad said he hasn’t even seen Michelle in ages but somehow there is a sex tape floating around of him and Michelle in my parents’ bed. Mom is PISSED.” Romeo said.

“Man, you do not have to air all our dirty laundry.” Stephanie sighed.

“What? Dad wanted people to know it was fake.” Romeo said.

“Your mom?” I was about to do something stupid, but I couldn’t help myself. “Is there any way I could speak with her? I know this seems crazy, but I need to talk to her. It’s important” I said.

“Mom and Dad would flip to see Dad’s doppelganger. We should introduce him.” Romeo said.

Stephanie hesitated. “Well, we do have our full security staff on hand so I guess it would be ok. And if you know something about this sex tape thing, and you seem to, Mom would want to know. OK, you are welcome to come back to our house.”

“How do we get there? We walked here.” Harley said.

“Walked? Oh. I have my car...um...I don’t know about giving a stranger a ride though...” Stephanie said.

“Oh come on Steph, he has a kid with him. What’s he gonna do? Besides, if he wanted to hurt us he could have pretended to be Dad. He looks just like him.” Romeo said.

Stephanie thought for a second. “Good point...oh...I’ll give you a ride if you want.”

I smiled and nodded. “That would be great. Thank you”. I said. This was crazy. I had no idea what I was going to do, but it might help us track down Michelle.

“Let’s go!” Harley said.

Stephanie nodded and we went out to her car and she drove to her parents’ house. It was the same house I’d had but this one had clearly been added onto and expanded over the years. It was bigger and was nicer than I remembered. She went and told their security something then she walked back to us. “OK, this way. Mom is out by the pool.” she led us through the house and out back to the pool area where a woman was sitting at a table drinking a glass of wine. “Mom, you will never believe this...this man...he’s not dad...he just looks exactly like him. He said he had something important to talk to you about in regards to that stupid video.” Stephanie said.

Dot turned around and looked. “Oh my god...you do look like my husband...wow. Oh how rude of me. I’m Dot, it’s nice to meet you.”

I shook her hand and held on a second longer than I should have. She was Dot. My Dot. 20 years older, but still my Dot. And, truth be told, she hadn’t aged too badly. She was still beautiful. “Nice to meet you. I’m sorry, I don’t have a lot of time. I need to talk to you and I’m afraid what I have to say is a bit strange. You may want to send the children away” I said.

Dot nodded. "Steph, take Romeo and...I'm sorry sweetie, I didn't get your name." She said to Harley.

"I'm Harley!" she said excitedly. She was like a puppy.

"Hi Harley. Steph, take Romeo and you two can show Harley around the estate. I'll use the intercom when I need you." Dot said.

"Ok. come on." Steph said leading the kids away.

When we were alone she looked at me. "OK, what is it? Whatever you have to say can't be any more strange than what I've been through the last couple of days."

I bit my lip. "OK... Here goes. I'm Jon. But, not your Jon. I'm from a different Universe. In my world, Earth is ruled by an evil dictator. Michelle rules the outer planets from her home on Saturn. That's where I live too. And in my world, you...." I took a breath, "You died, a long time ago. I serve Michelle there.... Anyway, my Michelle came to this Universe to take over Earth and the other inner planets. I need to find her. I have a feeling she's responsible for the tape. I don't know if it's real. I just know it has her written all over it. She would love nothing more than to cause me misery, no matter what Universe she's in" I finished, a little more bitterly than I had intended.

Dot took a breath. "You're insane. Who the hell are you really? What do you want?"

I nodded. "I know it sounds crazy. But, it's true. Harley opened a portal and we came through. Michelle is her mother. We need to find her".

Dot paused. "She does look a lot like Michelle's daughter Harley...but this is insane." she hit the intercom. "Jon, can you come outside to the pool please?"

My eyes widened. I watched as Jon walked out to the pool, saw me, and stopped. "What the fuck?" he said.

Dot walked over to her husband. "This man claims to be you from another universe. He also has a girl with him that looks a lot like Harley DeSantos. I know this is crazy...he's insane...but this has also been a very weird week."

Jon nodded. "I see...". He walked over to me. "You wouldn't be here and claiming these things unless it was important. Who are you?" he asked. I repeated the explanation I had given Dot. He mulled it over for a few moments and looked up at me. "She's here, huh? That explains a lot..." he said. I nodded. "I'm glad you believe me. I need your help. Do you know where she is?" I asked. He shook his head. "No. This video came out a couple days ago. I haven't seen her". Something told me he was holding back because Dot was here. He had seen her. The tape was real. He just didn't know it was a different Michelle. Stupid bastard. He was still the same cocky asshole I had been before Michelle enslaved me. "You fucked her, didn't you?" I asked. He blinked, but otherwise didn't show any sign that I had struck a nerve. "Of course not. I'm happily married and wouldn't cheat on my wife" he said. I nodded, but I knew he was lying. "Of course" I said. "I'm not sure how to tell you to contact me. But if you think of anything else, try to find me. I'll probably be in the area". In truth, I had no idea where this goose chase would take us. But I was ready to be away from these memories. I stood up. "Can you call Harley, please?"

Dot nodded. "I need another glass of wine after this. I'll find her." she said walking away.

“Fuck you. You nearly fucked my marriage more than it already is.” Jon said once we were alone.

“Consider yourself lucky. You still have a marriage and a family. My family is dead” I said, “Michelle is dangerous and if you aren’t careful, your family will have the same fate. I need to find her”.

Jon sighed. “Fine. I fucked her. I didn’t know it was her until after the tape came out. I called my Michelle and she told me about there being an evil version of her. The tape is real but everyone thinks the woman on the tape is my Michelle. That’s evidently why evil Michelle released it. She’s trying to ruin my Michelle’s life and I was collateral damage. I’m trying to do damage control now and you aren’t helping. Dot can look the other way when I fuck Mich but it’s hard for her to do that when there’s video evidence of me fucking Mich in our room. It took a lot of convincing to get her to believe that tape was faked.”

“If you can help me find her, I won’t come back into your life. I promise. The girl with me is her daughter. She’s the Princess of Saturn. I’m in her service. We need to find Michelle. I can’t stop her, but I need to find her for the safety of the Princess”.

“You’re in her service? What the hell? You’re a servant? I’m a fucking servant to a child in your universe? Are you fucking kidding me?” Jon asked, shocked.

I nodded. “Things are very different there. After Michelle killed my family, she enslaved me and took me to Saturn. I’ve been there for 23 years. I only had 2 children with Dot at the time. Michelle killed them all. I had lost my will to live. But now that Michelle is here, I’ve been serving the Princess. She has given me new purpose. I’m sorry. I know this must be a shock to you. But, as I said, things are very different there. My Michelle is very dangerous. Don’t underestimate her. She wants to take over your world” I said.

Jon thought for a second. “I can’t tell you where your Michelle is but I can tell you where to find my Michelle if that would help. My Michelle is wonderful...beautiful...kind...powerful but in a good way. She’s an amazing woman. She doesn’t have an evil bone in her body. She’s the Queen of Saturn but she chooses to stay on Earth and live a normal life...well, normal for a celebrity anyway. Would it help you to find her?”

I nodded. “Yes! I would be very grateful” I said. I had brought a bag of diamonds with me. I kept them in my room in case I ever needed them. Just in case I ever made it back to Earth. I pulled out a small handful. “I can pay you for your help. I know these used to be valuable here. Are they still?” I asked.

Jon held his hand up. “I have all the money I could ever need. No need to pay me. Just get your Michelle out of here. One Michelle is all my world needs. Michelle is in Angel Grove, California. I’ll have my private jet take you there. Once you are there I’ll have a car take you to her place. After that you’re her problem. I can’t be involved any deeper than I am. I have my life to protect. I’m not risking my marriage or career.”

“I understand. Thank you for your assistance. Enjoy your marriage and your career. Protect your family above all. You would miss them very much if they were gone. And, treat Michelle better. That was my fatal flaw. And she took revenge on me” I said.

Jon laughed. “Oh my Michelle zapped my ass with lightning a time or two after she got her powers...she’d never do anything worse than that.”

Harley came bouncing out. "Whoa! Two Jons....weird."

Jon blinked. "Wow, you do look like Harley...I guess you are her but...not. This is too weird. Do you play hockey and ride dirt bikes too?"

Harley made a face. "What's hockey? And I ride unicorns. I don't know what a dirt bike is."

I laughed. "As I told you, my world is very different. Come Harley, Mr. Jon is going to help us. We're going to the Michelle of this world so that she can help us find your Mommy" I said, "we're going to the other side of the country. A place called California. Your Mommy might have told you about it".

Harley nodded. "She said she was from a place called California. I always wanted to see it!"

Jon answered his phone, talked, and hung up. "Your car to the airport is here. Please, fix this."

I nodded. "I'll do my best" I said. I took Harley's hand and we walked back through the house, out the front door, and got into the back seat of the car. "This is becoming quite the adventure, Princess" I said.

Harley smiled. "I know! It's great!" she said as we got to the airport. We boarded the plane and headed on our way.