

PRT 250- "Inescapable Destiny"

"Ok, I think that just about does it." I said as I set the last box down in the living room.

"About time. God, I forgot how much work moving is...no more moving for awhile, ok?" Hunter said as he leaned on the bar area of the kitchen.

I laughed, "Deal."

Hunter and I had just finished moving from our apartment in Lakeview to a new one in Briarwood. Granted, it wasn't a long move, not like cross country or anything, but it was still a lot of work to load up a U-Haul and then unload everything...not to mention the packing and unpacking of everything. I'd been making Hunter unload most of the things while I unpacked as he went. Doing this had led Hunter to complain, but had also gotten most of the kitchen and bathroom set up. Later in the afternoon Hunter demanded I help him unload, and so I did. All I had left to unpack though was the bedroom, living room, and the computer room. That was fine with me. Anyway, our Briarwood apartment wasn't quite as big or posh as the Lakeview apartment. It didn't bother me though and I think Hunter actually liked it better. While I was comfortable in a huge, fancy apartment, Hunter had always felt out of his element. Not to say the Briarwood apartment was trashy or anything. It too was a very nice apartment. It had two bedrooms and a bath and a half along with a very nice size living room, kitchen, and dining area. It's the type of apartment any normal newlywed couple would want...and since I wanted normal it was perfect.

And all things considered I had to say it was nice to be moving at all. After Hunter's accident it was a little touch and go as to how long he'd be off his feet. After the first week the doctor was amazed at his recovery speed. A few days later he was out of the hospital and moving around. By the second week he had been told to take it easy, but otherwise could resume normal activity...of course the doctors really didn't know Hunter very well or they would have known that for him 'taking it easy' involved moving to a new apartment. I really wanted to wait another week but Factory Blue had already set up their offices and Hunter was very eager to get the move done. After two days of arguing I finally gave up...it was pointless to argue with him when he was already packing boxes to prove he could.

And so here we were...in our new apartment. It was sad to leave Lakeview behind because it was the first apartment we ever had together. It also meant really leaving the Thunder Academy. Not that we saw Bryan, Steph, or Todd that much anymore, but it was nice to be able to check in. It also meant moving away from LeAnn, Sensei Omino, and Haley...but Hunter had Blake here (he had moved into a one bedroom on the other side of the same complex as us) and so I figure it balanced out for him. Most of all I was glad to have a normal life. I had the Euro album finished (at last), I had taped guest appearances on various TV shows, I did my photo shoots, and I finished both music videos (the US and Euro ones)...now I could spend a couple of weeks acting like a housewife and organizing my new apartment before I had to fly to Europe to promote the new album.

And that's exactly what I did. I spent the next two days setting up the apartment. By the end of the second day I was done and it looked like home. When Hunter walked in from the track he was thrilled.

"Oh wow...Mich...it looks great." He said.

I smiled, "Thank you, thank you...I try."

He walked over and kissed me, "So what are you gonna do the rest of your downtime?"

"Shop, keep the house clean, maybe try to cook something edible...normal housewife type stuff."

Hunter laughed, "Never pictured you as the housewife type...I think it's kinda sexy."

"You would." I said as I kissed him, "How was your day?"

"Pretty good...everything at Factory Blue is back to normal. Blake and I are working our butts off to make up for those losers but it's ok...it's worth it to have them gone."

"Yeah...I wish you would have told me what was going on sooner."

"I know...I just didn't want you to worry...besides, it was kinda humiliating being called 'Tink' and all that other crap."

I sighed, "I know and I'm so sorry. I never meant for our relationship to cause you so many problems."

"It hasn't. It's those no-brain morons that did. You and I are perfect."

I smiled, "We are."

"Hey, you want to come to lunch with me tomorrow? I'll get a break around 12:30...you wanna meet me at the track?"

"Sure! I'd love that. It's so totally domestic."

Hunter laughed, "I'm glad you're enjoying your domestication."
"I know, who ever would have thought I'd be all domesticated? It's great!"

That night I curled up in Hunter's arms and slept soundly. I was so happy. I finally had everything I wanted. Little did I know what waited for me.

The next day I spent the morning being more domestic. I watched a couple of cooking shows then I vacuumed the carpet and made the bed. After that I got read for lunch and went to meet Hunter. When I showed up in my fitted jeans and tank top all the riders took notice, even Blake (this earned him a smack on the back of the head from Hunter).

"Ouch!" Blake cried.

"Stop staring at *my* girlfriend bro." Hunter said.

"Sorry...but...you look great Mich. Better than normal. You have this glow that's just...wow..."

I smiled, "Because I'm free and happy. It's a great feeling."

"It shows."

"You ready Hunter?"

Hunter nodded, "Yes. Please...let's go."

We left the track and went to a restaurant downtown.

"How's your day so far?" I asked.

"Pretty good. Yours?" he replied.

I nodded, "Good. Just did some cleaning and stuff."

He smiled, "More domestic stuff."

I smiled and nodded.

"You really do look beautiful."

"Thanks." I said as the ground started to shake. Hunter and I took cover until the shaking stopped and then we went back to our table.

"What was that?" Hunter asked.

"I don't know."

"You think it was natural?"

"An earthquake in California? It could go either way but it's not our problem."

"Isn't it?"

"I'm retired. Even if this is Ranger related I'm out of...it." I said as a glowing cell phone appeared at my feet.

"Maybe not." Hunter said as the cell phone started to ring.

"No..." I sighed as I looked at the phone

"Are you going to answer it?" Hunter asked.

"No...this call is Ranger related. If I pick it up normal is out the window." I said.

"Michelle, answer it."

"But...I'm retired. I said it was over. We agreed."

"I know...but it's time to face it Mich, this is your destiny. It's over when it's over...not just because you say so...look If there are Rangers in need of a trainer you can't leave them hanging."

I sighed, "But all I want is to have a normal life with you."

"Destiny brought you here for a reason. Answer it Mich."

I wanted to cry. I hated this. I let out a deep sigh and answered the phone.

"Hello?"

"Michelle?" a woman said.

"Oh great, you already know my name. I assume you want a Purple Ranger."

"We need a trainer."

"No. I'm sorry. In case you haven't heard the news on the Ranger grapevine, I'm retired."

"Please Michelle. We need a battlefield trainer and you're the best."

"I know, but no."

"We need you...please...if you decide to help the trees will be your entrance."

"Yeah, ok...fine, bye now." I said hanging up.

"Michelle, you have to do it." Hunter said.

I shook my head, "No, I don't."

“Michelle...”

“N-O”

“You should at least see what this team is up against.”

I sighed, “FINE! You’re coming with me though. Let’s go.”

Hunter and I left the restaurant and I thought about what the lady said.

“I guess the trees are a portal of some sort.” I said as I touched a tree and fell through. Hunter came in right behind me and we ended up in a forest on the other side of the portal. We saw a group of four kids fighting. I hid behind a tree and watched them fight. They were doing ok.

“See, they don’t need a trainer.” I whispered.

“Yes, they do.” Hunter said as they started getting their butts kicked. That’s when the five teens Morphed. They were the Blue, Yellow, Green, and Pink Rangers...and they had capes! I was just in...in...bleh as I watched them. I didn’t like the way this was going.

We continued to watch the Rangers fight. Then this guy in purple showed up and started beating their asses.

“Shit...evil purple dude.” I sighed.

“Michelle, you have got to help them.” Hunter said.

I sighed, I knew he was right, “Are you sure you’re ok with this?”

“I’ve known all along it was a matter of time. This is who you are. It’s time to accept it. Do it Mich.”

I nodded, “Ok ok...” I held out the phone and pressed the button, “Magic Source, Mystic Force!”

In a flash I had a new Ranger suit on. It was at this point I realized I had something hanging from my back. Yes. It was a cape. Crap. I had one too.

“No fucking way. What kind of Rangers wear capes? We’re not DC superheroes...Rangers don’t wear capes!” I couldn’t believe this.

Hunter laughed, “Evidently they do now. Go get ‘em caped crusader.”

I glared through my helmet and made a mental note to get Hunter later as I ran towards the battle. I jump kicked the evil purple dude.

“Who are you?” the dude asked.

“Fierce as nature I am the Purple Mystic Force Ranger!” I cried as I automatically called on my staff. How did I know I had access to one? I always did. I think a staff must have been part of the Purple Ranger powers or something. Anyway, I went up against the purple dude and gave it all I had...actually, that’s not true because I didn’t want to be fighting again so I probably didn’t really give it my all. Because of that I started to get my butt kicked bad. I thought it was all over until this dude rode in on a motorcycle. He ended up Morphing into the Red Ranger and then he took on the purple dude’s army. I stood back and watched. He turned one of the henchmen into a ball and started to play soccer. He’d already reminded me of Conner in more than one way.

“Oh dear god, not another one.” I sighed.

I watched as the Red Ranger finished the job. The purple dude retreated and the Rangers gathered. I stood back. They had a celebration call and then they headed towards me.

“Who are you?” the pink one asked.

“None of your business.” I said.

“You’re a Ranger too, right?” the yellow one asked.

I sighed, “Power down.”

“Power down.” They repeated.

“Michelle Morris?!” they all cried.

“I see you’ve seen me around.” I joked.

“You’re a Ranger? A country superstar is a Ranger? How cool is that?!” The yellow one cried.

“Yeah, well I’m retired so good luck and I’ll see ya round Briarwood.” I said.

“Wait...you came here for a reason...at least talk to Udonna.” The blue one said.

I sighed, “Your mentor?”

She nodded.

“She must be the one who called me, fine. I’ll talk to her. Take me to your leader.”

“This way.”

I followed them into this dragon looking tree thing and when I went in I saw this older lady with a blonde Krista.

"Krista?!" I asked.

"Excuse me? I'm Claire." She said.

"Ohh, ok. Sorry, you look like someone I know."

"Welcome Michelle. I'm glad you decided to come." The lady said, "I'm Udonna."

"Yeah, I figured as much. Now as you can see they have a good Red Ranger, they don't need a trainer so I'm leaving now. Nice to meet you."

"No, please. They need a battlefield trainer. I would do it but my power is down. I can train them in magic, I need you to train them in battle."

I took a breath. "Are you insane? Do you have any idea how dangerous this mission would be? We're not talking about me ninja streaking to an academy here. We're talking about protecting a whole magical world! That's too risky. All it would take is one photographer to see me pass through a tree and your whole world is in danger. It's insane to even ask me to do this. In all my years as a Ranger I've never been asked to do something so risky."

"We need you Michelle..."

"It's too dangerous."

"Then do not be Michelle any longer."

"What are you talking about?"

"Magic." Claire said, "Mask who you are. Become someone else."

"Someone else? Who?" I asked.

"An average high school student. You will blend in and be able to bond with your fellow Rangers."

"That's a great idea Claire. It could work." Udonna said.

I sighed, "This is insane."

"Do you have a better idea?" Claire asked.

"No, no...I can't believe I'm saying this...fine...but no promises how long I'm sticking around for."

"Understood. Alright, do you know magic?" Udonna asked

"I think I have a handle on the basics of it."

"Then you can do the spell yourself. Your Amethyst should protect you from it going too horribly wrong."

"It won't go wrong."

"Here's the spell. It has simple human words in it since you don't know the magical language yet. With the power you already possess it should work fine."

"Yeah, thanks." I sighed and looked at the spell, "In this time and in this place let me see a brand new face."

"Whoa..." the Rangers said.

"Nicely done Michelle. I'm impressed." Udonna said handing me a mirror.

I looked in it and sighed. I looked 16 for sure.

"You need an identity now."

"Yeah...I also need a reason to still live with Hunter...cousin. I'll be a Bradley...his cousin. And..." I thought of a first name, I liked the lead character on Zachary's show, she played the first female president and I looked up to that, I'd use that character's first name, "Mackenzie. Mackenzie Bradley."

Udonna nodded, "OK Mackenzie, I'll use magic to create all you will need from legal documents to school files. Go to your new school tomorrow and tell them you're transferring. They'll find all your paperwork then. And Rangers, you must refer to Michelle as Mackenzie so not to blow her cover."

"Of course." The yellow one said.

"Ok, and who are you guys?" I asked.

"Oh, right. I'm Madison, this is Xander, Chip, my sister Vida, and Nick."

"Yeah, ok, got it."

"And now Rangers, return to the outside world to live your normal lives. You'll know when you're needed." Udonna said.

The Rangers nodded and we left.

We took a tree portal and ended up in front of a music shop. I went in with them. Evidently all of them but Nick worked there. I sat there trying to take this all in.

"Nick, now that we're a team, do you feel like helping?" Xander asked as he moved boxes.

"I fight soul less mutants. I don't clean." Nick said.

"Then out of the way bucko." Vida said.

“OK. But, as a wise old woman once asked...do you believe in magic?” Nick asked.

“You think?” Vida asked.

“Well, I believe.” Madison said as she pulled out her Morpher and set it to wand mode.

I stood up fast, “No...”

Madison cleaned up some comics with magic.

“It works!” Nick cried.

Chip and the others started using magic to clean up too.

“No! Guys! What if someone walks in and sees you?!” I cried.

“Chill Macelle, it’s cool.” Nick said.

I glared, “Don’t call me that! It’s too close to Michelle!”

The Rangers continued their magical cleaning, “Stop! You shouldn’t use magic for personal gain!”

“Hurry, someone’s coming!” Nick said.

“I knew it.” I sighed.

They finished just as their boss walked in.

“Ok...I knew you wouldn’t ...oh, you would...it’s clean.” He said, “Very clean...the cleanest it’s ever been. Maybe it’s lost it’s edge.”

“Hello, I’m new in town, can somebody help me?” this blonde girl asked as she walked in. She sounded so snooty yet both Chip and Xander wants to help her but she wanted Nick to help her.

“Sorry, I don’t work here.” Nick said.

“You know Toby, you really gotta hire this guy cause he was instermental in cleaning the store.” Madison said.

“Wait, I wasn’t looking for a job.” Nick said.

“Who’s the greatest guitarist ever?” Toby asked.

“It’s gotta be Jimi, but still...”

“You’re hired. Now help the customer.”

“Whoa, whoa...you’re kidding right...you do realize Jimi is overrated right?” I asked as Nick went off to help the girl.

“Who is this girl?” Toby asked.

“This is our friend Mac. She’s new in town.” Madison said.

“Obviously. OK, who would you say is the best?” Toby asked.

“Rich from Toxic ranks up there...Eddie Van Halen, although he’s overrated too...but then you have the country guitar players...don’t forget some of those greats.” I said.

“You know your music don’t you?” Toby asked.

“Yeah of course, I’m a singer.” I said. It slipped before I had time to catch myself.

“Oh really? What kind?”

“Um...all kinds...mostly rockish.”

“You should perform here sometime. We could use some live music to attract customers.”

“Yeah, sure. Sometime. I should get home now. My cousin will be worried.” I said.

“OK, I’ll see you tomorrow at school Mac.” Madison said.

I nodded and left. I hoped Hunter had made it home because I hadn’t seen him in the forest when I was leaving.

I walked into the apartment. I was not happy. Look at me! I was 16 and a high school student again. Would you be happy if you were me?

“You won’t even believe my day.” I said as I walked in.

Hunter looked at me, he was on the sofa, “Who are you?”

I sighed, I’d almost forgotten, “Your new cousin.” I said sarcastically.

“Huh?”

“It’s me! Michelle! I’m using magic to mask my identity so that the magic world stays protected.”

“Michelle?”

“Well Mackenzie Bradley now.”

“How do I know it’s you?”

I threw out my hands and aimed some purple lightning just above his head.

“Oh...ok.”

I sighed and turned the TV on. Jon’s new video was on. I turned the TV off and slammed the remote against the wall,

“FUCK!”

“You don’t seem happy.”

“Of course I’m not! Look at me! And I have school in the morning of all things!”

“This is bizarre...even for us.”

“Yeah, well let’s just go to bed. I need you to hold me so I can just forget about this.”

“I...I don’t think I can.”

“Why?!”

“You’re 16!”

“I look 16. I’m still the same person.”

“I’m sorry Mich...um...Mac...what do I call you?”

“Mac. You can’t slip up in public.”

“OK, I’m sorry Mac, I just can’t. It’s too bizarre. You take the bed. I’ll sleep on the sofa and we’ll figure this out tomorrow.”

I glared and went to the bedroom and slammed the door. I curled up in bed and cried. This wasn’t at all what I wanted... not even close. How did I get myself into this?

PRT 251- "My Space"

"Mackenzie Bradley?"

"Here!" I called. I was sitting in last period, which was my computer basics class. I hated this with a passion.

"Madison Rocca?"

"Here!"

"Nick Russell?"

"Yeah, here."

I'd tuned out the rest of attendance.

"Ok, let's begin. Everyone log on to your computers and open a blank Word document. We're going to discuss formatting today." Mr. Smork said. This is where I started to day dream. I knew all about Word. I knew all about computers. Hell, I'd run numerous Zord and Ranger computers.

After class I went to my locker.

"Mackenzie Bradley?" a girl asked.

"Yeah, that's me." I said.

"I'm Courtney Andrews, head cheerleader."

"Yeah? Nice to meet you. What can I do for you?"

"Well, word has it that you were a star cheerleader at your last school."

"Something like that."

"We could always use new talent. You interested in trying out?"

Was this girl for real? I was a great cheerleader in my day but I was almost 27. Then again maybe I still had it. No harm in trying. "Sure, I'll try."

"You have time now?"

"Yeah, sure." I said as Madison came up.

"Hey Mac." She said, "Hi Courtney."

"Hey Maddie. You coming Mac?" Courtney asked.

"Yeah. I'll catch you later Maddie. I'm gonna do the cheer thing." I said.

"Oh, ok." Madison said.

Courtney and I went to the gym. I did a dance routine to one of my ow...I mean Michelle's songs and then I did a cheer routine and wowed the whole squad. I was accepted easily. I still had it.

After practice I went back to the apartment. Madison tagged along.

"Can I help you?" I asked as I unlocked the door.

"Actually I was thinking about it. I think I can help you." She said.

"Oh?"

"The others and I were talking about it and we think you could use a little...teenage behavior 101. You...you're a bit outta touch with us."

I laughed, "That's because I'm not 16...I'm 27...almost anyway."

"Well if the world is gonna believe you're 16 you have work to do."

"Ok, fine...right now we have to get to the forest. There is training to be done."

"But..."

"No."

"Mac, you have to fit in."

"OK! OK! I'll let you train me in the art of being a teen if you train in the art of being a Ranger first."

She nodded, "Sounds good to me."

And so with that I grabbed my Mystic Phone and we headed into the woods. First order of training (as ordered by Udonna) was flying. No, not flying with the capes (thank god). Flying with these brooms that turned into machines. It was very interest to say the least. In any case we Morphed and got the vehicles and went on a test run.

"You guys need to exercise better control. Except Nick, he's doing fine...god did I just say that?" I said...then I realized

no one was listening to me because Nick and Vida were having a race. “HEY! Vida! Stop! Nick! These aren’t toys!” I cried for all the good it did. Chip joined in and soon they were racing, not training. “Enough!” I cried.

“Dismount, alright!” Nick cried as we jumped off the broom flying thingies and demorphed.

“Very good Rangers. That’s enough Mystic Racer practice for today.” Udonna said.

“What?! That was good?” I asked.

“Come on, just one more lap around the forest?” Chip asked.

“Yeah, I’m just getting warmed up. I wanna see what this bad boy can really do.” Vida said.

“I’m afraid not. It’s time for elementary incantations.” Udonna said.

“Boring.” Everyone groaned.

“Ah, this is your territory. See ya!” I said.

“No, no. You are a Ranger too Mackenzie. You must stay and learn as well.” Udonna said.

“I don’t remember *that* being in my contract.”

“I think it sounds kinda interesting.” Madison said.

“Only you sis.” Vida said as we started walking back to the tree. “Udonna, the Mystic Racers are amazing but we’re Power Rangers. Don’t we get lots of other cool stuff too?”

“Like Zords?” I mumbled.

“Yeah, I mean no one’s more excited than me to finally get to wear a cape.” Chip started.

I groaned.

“Finally? If I remember correctly you used to come to school with a pillowcase pinned to your back.” Xander said.

“Yeah, well that was a long time ago.” Chip said.

“That was last week mate.”

“Well, anyway, Vida’s right. We’re official superheroes now. Where’s the rest of the vehicles, weapons and gadgets that we get?”

“The Xenotome holds the spell codes that can unlock magical powers beyond your imagination.” Udonna said.

“So what are we waiting for? Let’s bust it open, load the codes, and get our booty.” Vida said.

I sighed. How could Madison and Vida be sisters yet so very different? Then again Eric and Conner weren’t exactly carbon copies of each other’s personality.

“It doesn’t work that way Vida. As you perform heroic deeds and grow as Rangers, The Xenotome will reveal the spell codes. When the time is right.” Udonna said.

We headed on to the tree cave thing. Vida and Chip said they’d catch up.

“Man, look at all these incantations.” Xander said once we were in the tree cave thing, “How is my brain supposed to fit all this information?”

“Why don’t you let me help you with that?” Madison said as she pulled out her wand.

“Maddie, no...don’t do it.” I warned.

“Craneor Magnus!” Madison called. Xander’s head swelled...well his brain did.

“Now you have lots more room.” Madison said.

“And I thought he had a big head before.” Nick said.

I sighed, “Maddie, you can’t do crap like that. Fix him.”

“Very funny. Madison, if you wouldn’t mind.” Xander said.

Madison fixed him.

“Claire, didn’t I ask you to gather stickle berries for this protection potion?” Udonna asked.

“Oh, I did have a big basket of them but I accidentally dropped it when I was attacked by the giant worm. I’m really sorry.” Claire said.

“Giant worm?” Udonna asked.

“Oh...that doesn’t sound good.” I said.

“I think it was a giant worm. I didn’t really see it because it never surfaced. But then this freakish looking gnome or troll or goblin knocked me out of the way and saved me.” Claire said.

“Did you see who it was?” Udonna asked.

“No, he took off before I could thank him.”

“This is troubling.” Udonna said.

“Yeah, it is...not the gnome thing but the worm. If giant worms are attacking innocents...creatures then we should be doing something.” I said.

“There isn’t anything we can do now. Rangers, go home. We’ll pick this up later.” Udonna said.

“SWEET! Don’t have to tell me twice.” I said.

“Yup...it’s teen 101 time.” Madison said.

I groaned.

“What?” Xander asked.

“Mac here needs help fitting in. I’m gonna go over the basics of current teen life with her.” Madison said.

“Sounds fun. Can I come watch?” Nick asked.

“Sure. You can both come help if you want.”

“Alright.” Xander said.

I growled and we headed back to town.

We were headed towards my apartment.

“You know, Chip and Vida never showed. Where do you think they went?” Xander asked.

“I don’t know. But when my sister gets that crazy look in her eye, it usually means trouble.” Madison said.

“Big surprise.” I said.

“I’ll show you real trouble.” A monsterish looking thing said as it appeared.

“Perfect.”

“Who are you?” Nick asked.

I am Necrolai, dark mistress of the underworld.” She said.

“Underworld? Why do I feel like I’m in an episode of Charmed?” I asked.

“I’ll handle this one.” Xander said walking towards Necrolai.

“Xan, don’t do it. Did you learn nothing last time? You can’t reason with them.” I said.

“Hi. Xander Bly. Whatever the problem is here, I’m sure we can just talk this one out.” Xander said.

“You wish!” Necrolai cried as she blasted Xander. The three of us caught him.

“You gonna learn something this time?” I asked

“Not a big talker I see.” Xander said.

“No shit.” I grumbled.

“Let’s Ranger up.” Nick said.

“Yes, instead of trying to fight in civilian form first.” I groaned as we reached for our Morphers.

“Magical Source, Mystic Force!”

We went and fought Necrolai and managed to get our asses kicked. Not only that...we managed to get our asses captured. Necrolai grabbed all of us and started flying away.

“Damn it! A week as a Ranger again and I’m already captured. I’m losing my touch.” I sighed as we all tried to wiggle free. Necrolai dropped us in the mouth of this monster and we were trapped in the slime thing. Kinda reminded me of when Hunter and Blake were trapped in that big monster and the Winds had to ride the Tsunami Cycles into the monster and save them. It was highly icky and uncomfortable.

Needless to say I was quite happy when Vida and Chip saved us.

“Oh ick! Gross!” I cried as I tried to get the slime off myself, “I wonder if it’s too late to go back into retirement?”

Then the monster stood up and we saw how big he was.

“Oh great. We better get Zords soon.” I said.

“I’m not afraid of him. Come on Rangers.” Xander said, “Strong as a tree, Green Mystic Ranger!”

“Ever changing as the wind, Pink Mystic Ranger!”

“Fluid as the sea, Blue Mystic Ranger!”

“Fast as lightning, Yellow Mystic Ranger!”

“Fierce as nature, Purple Mystic Ranger!”

“Forceful as fire, Red Mystic Ranger!”

“We call forth the magic! Power Rangers Mystic Force!”

Just then something happened to their phones.

“Hey! It’s a new spell code!” Vida said.

“I get it now. Udonna was right.” Chip said.

“Imagine that.” I said.

“Alright Rangers, let’s do it.” Nick said.

I stood back and watched.

“It’s titan time!” they called.

“Mystic Minotaur!”

“Mystic Sprite!”

“Mystic Mermaid!”

“Mystic Garuda!”

“Mystic Phoenix!”

And I stood back and watched as they Rangers transformed into their own Zords...were my eyes deceiving me? This was too odd...even for me. I sure didn’t wanna turn into a Pegasus. What was going on anyway? This whole mission was getting weirder and weirder.

Anyway, they defeated the monster way too easy. We all reported back to Udonna, who sent Nick to get some stickleberries.

“I’m proud of you all. And you’ve only begun to tap into the potential of the Mystic Titans.” Udonna said.

“Yeah, but now green freak is gone, right? So it’s all good in the woods?” Madison asked.

“That was way too easy.” I said.

“Well, let’s hope so. We still don’t know if that was the same creature that attacked Claire.” Xander said.

I nodded, “Exactly.”

“Nick’s investigating that.” Udonna said.

“That’s why you sent him for the stickleberries. I see now. Alright.”

A few minutes later Nick called for help. We Morphed and went to go help. Not that I did much. I watched them turn into the Titans again and combine. It was TOO weird. I stood back and watched as they defeated the worm.

With Udonna satisfied that everything was safe Madison, Xander, and I went to my apartment and sat down at my computer.

“Ok, first thing you need is a MySpace account.” Madison said.

“MySpace? I’ve seen them on the news a lot lately. It’s like pedophile central.” I said.

“That’s so been blown up. It’s all about common sense.”

“OK, fine. Why do I need this?”

“Because everyone has one.”

“I don’t.” Xander said.

“Yeah, but you’re weird. Anyway, Mac is gonna be a cheerleader. All of them have one.”

“OK, true.” Xander agreed.

“So what do I need to know?” I asked.

“Put up pictures...especially some that are kinda sexyish. You’re a cheerleader, they all have some.”

“But...I’m 16!”

“Yeah, I know...maybe we can find some that look like you so you don’t have to actually pose for any.”

“Fine. You search.”

A few hours later I had a [Myspace profile](#). Complete with pictures, even a couple that weren’t me.

“Perfect! Now, make sure you blog every now and again...you know what that is right?” Madison asked.

“YES! I know what that is! I have my own [blog](#) I keep very up to date.” I said.

“She does. I read it the other day. She wrote a love letter to her ex-husband, Jon Giovanni.” Xander said.

“You what?!” Madison asked.

I laughed, “Beautiful wasn’t it? Oh, come on, I don’t want Jon back. I have a plan. It’s all part of a bigger plan. He’ll never mess with Hunter or I again after I’m done with him.”

“You’re devious aren’t you?” Madison asked.

“When I wanna be.” I said as Hunter walked in.

“Oh, hi guys.” He said.

“Hey Hunter.” Maddie said.

I smiled, “Hey swe...um...Hunter.”

Hunter sighed, “Hi Mac.”

“This has got to be odd for you.” Xander said.

“You have no idea.”

“Hunter...”

“I’ll be in the other room. I’ll fix dinner in a little while.”

I nodded.

“I really hate this.” I said as he left the room.

“It can’t be easy. You know, Toby said you could sing at the store. Have you considered using some songs in a different style? I’m sure singing is your outlet.” Maddie said.

“You mean like letting Mac sing more rockish music? Something Mich could never do?”

“Exactly.”

“Hmm...that could work...I like that idea. Thanks Maddie.”

“Any time. Well, we should go.”

Xander nodded, “But if you need anything, let us know.”

“Thanks guys...I mean that. This is really hard for me. I actually need friends to stick with me here.” I said.

“You can count on us Mac. Anything we can do.” Maddie said.

I smiled, “Thanks.”

After they left I sat back and the computer and started writing my first entry on MySpace. Well...if nothing else it would help me keep Mac as her own person...and that was important because Michelle and Mackenzie couldn’t blend together or I’d lose myself...I couldn’t let that happen...no matter what I had to keep hold of who I was at all times.

"Mac, wake up, you're gonna be late for school." Hunter said as he sat on the edge of my bed shaking me.

I grumbled, "I'm not going."

"Um, yeah you are."

"No. My birthday. I'm not going."

"Get your ass out of bed. You're going."

I turned my head and glared at him, "Fuck you."

"I'm your guardian. You're going."

"You're getting carried away with this. I'm 26...27."

"You're 16. Come on. I'll take you to breakfast before class."

"Fine, fine." I rolled out of bed and started to take my pajamas off.

"Whoa! Whoa! Let me leave the room first!" Hunter cried.

"Oh geez. You're my boyfriend."

"No, I'm Michelle's boyfriend. You're not her. I'm Mac's cousin."

I sighed, "Fine."

I waited until Hunter left the room then I changed into jeans and a purple shirt. I put my Converse on and grabbed my backpack and then went to the living room.

"Let's go." Hunter said.

Hunter drove me to Starbucks and I got a muffin and a vanilla crème. We sat down in the big cushie chairs and I ate.

"Happy Birthday Kenz." Hunter said.

I smiled, "Thanks Hunter."

"Are you ok?"

"Yeah...just thinking about last year. It was the most amazing birthday ever."

"Yeah, that was pretty amazing. Who ever thought we'd end up here in just a year?"

"Not I."

"What do you want to do tonight?"

"I can think of a few things."

"Kenz, no. We've been over this."

I sighed, "Yeah, yeah. How about we just go to dinner? Or we could go to Avalon. They have one here."

"Kenz, you're 16, you can't even get in to Avalon."

"Fake ID."

"No."

"Fine, fine. Dinner then. The city diner? You think I can get in there?"

"Yes, that's fine. We should get you to school."

"Fine."

Hunter dropped me off at Briarwood High and I went to my locker.

"Hey! Happy Birthday Mac!" Madison said as she ran up with the others.

"Thanks Maddie." I said.

"So, you want a birthday gift you'll never forget Macelle?" Nick asked putting his arm around me.

"If you want to keep your arm then move it."

"Ok, ok...point made."

"Seriously though. Happy Birthday Mac." Xander said.

"Now that I'll take. I love your accent Xan." I smiled.

"Thanks Mac."

"So what are you doing for your birthday?" Madison asked.

"Eh, Hunter is gonna take me for dinner. I can think of some things I'd rather be doing." I said.

"I'm sorry."

"Not your fault. Anyway, let's get to class."

We went to class. I logged on to my computer and started working on my class work.

“OK class, today we’re doing to start a discussion about the principles of design.” Mr. Deji said. He was my Instructional Design teacher and we all called him Mr. D. Anyway, I liked him. He was cute too...but he was married and technically so was I. I took some notes and then as the lecture was winding down Madison raised her hand.

“Mr. D, it’s Mac’s birthday.” She said.

“Oh, Happy Birthday Mackenzie. Let’s sing to her.” Mr. D said.

The class sang to me then we started on class work. When Mr. D left the class for a second I packed my bag up.

“Where are you going?” Madison asked.

“Out of here. I’m bailing. I have better things to do than sit here on my birthday.”

“I like the way you think.” Vida said.

“Oh no you don’t. You stay. You guys are first time high schoolers. I’ve technically graduated.”

“Oh no. You go, I go.”

“Vida, Mom will kill you if you skip.” Madison said.

“Not if she doesn’t know.”

“She will find out.”

“Seriously, you sisters stay put. See ya later gators.” I said as I left the room and snuck off campus.

I spent the rest of the day at the apartment watching TV. I watched Dukes of Hazzard, Heathcliff, and Garfield before Hunter came home.

“You cut class.” He said.

“Yup.”

“Mackenzie Bradley!”

“Oh give me a fucking break. Stop treating me like a cousin.”

“How am I supposed to treat you?!”

“Like a girlfriend!”

“You’re not my girlfriend anymore!”

“But I’m still me!”

“You’re not!”

“Enough. Come on, I’ll use a magical ID to get into Avalon. Let’s go eat then we’ll club.”

“I’m not taking you to Avalon.”

“Why the hell not?!”

“Because you’re 16!”

“I’m 27!”

“Not anymore you aren’t!”

“Oh god! Fuck off!”

“Gladly!” Hunter stormed out of the apartment and slammed the door.

I sat on the sofa and cried. What a mess.

I was just recovering when there was a knock on the door. I went and answered it. Jon was standing there.

OK, now this was a problem for many reasons...not least of which...I wasn’t ready! I didn’t have the camera, I couldn’t execute my plan! I had to play like Mac though if I had a prayer of setting him up later.

“Oh my god...” I gasped.

“Um, hi...I’m looking for Michelle.” He said.

“Oh, she’s not here right now. But...you’re Jon Giovanni aren’t you?”

“Yeah.”

“I know it. Oh my god. I’m such a fan. I can’t believe you’re standing here. What a birthday treat! This is an honor!”

“It’s your birthday too?”

“Yeah. Michelle and I share a birthday.”

“Ah. Who are you?”

“Oh, right. Mackenzie Bradley. I’m Hunter’s cousin.”

“It’s nice to meet you Mackenzie.”

“Please, call me Mac.”

“Ok, Mac, do you know when Michelle will be back?”

“Not for awhile...”

“Oh...hmm...I wanted to see her.”

“I’m sorry.”

Jon got an evil gleam in his eye. I knew that look well. He had a plan.

“You want a birthday you’ll never forget?” he asked.

“Sure, what did you have in mind?”

“Well, I’m not sure if you know but I own an arena football team in Philly. They’re playing tonight and I was gonna forego the game but we could hop a private jet and I could show you around.”

Oh god...this was trouble...but how could I say no? Besides, at least I’d get some fun on my birthday. Hunter certainly wasn’t gonna make it special for me.

“Sure, let’s go.” I said.

Next thing I knew I was on a jet with Jon on the way to Philly. Jon was on the phone doing work most of the trip there. That was one thing I admired about Jon. He wasn’t just a singer. Like me, he was a businessman (person, whatever). He had his fingers in multiple pies. Music, movies, sports...the list went on. Anyway, we got to Philly and took a limo to the stadium.

“Welcome to my world.” Jon said as he led me to a skybox. Jon’s right hand man, Rich, was up there with Jana and Casey, two of my friends from the groupie days. They’d taken the Lakeview apartment when Hunter and I moved out. This was going to be interesting.

“Hey guys, we got a new friend. This is Mackenzie Bradley, Hunter’s cousin.” Jon said.

“Hi everyone!” I said as I waved. It was so frickin’ weird to ‘meet’ these people. I’d known them since I was a kid.

“Uh, hi.” Casey said. I couldn’t even imagine what was going through her head to see Jon with a teenager.

“This is Jana and Case and I’m sure you know of Rich.” Jon said.

“Of course! I’m such a fan. It’s an honor to meet you.” I said happily.

I’ll spare you the details. Casey wanted to know where Michelle was. Jon explained how he found me first. She was pretty cold to me after that. No surprise that she was flipping about me being 16.

“Jon, face your senses...she’s 16 Illegal, I’m not into makeup anymore and I am not gonna make her look older, your gonna get caught...so I wish you luck.” Casey said.

I couldn’t help but smile. Casey had taught me how to do make up back on the set of PH where we’d met. She taught me to do it so I’d look 18 when we went clubbing with the band. She’d totally flip if she knew I was Mac. This almost reminded me of the old days. Almost. The fact I wasn’t me and had to play like I was a 16 year old named Mac kinda put a dent in it.

Anyway, fast forward about an hour and Jon had given me a couple of beers, which seemed fine to me. I was good with holding my alcohol. Then he wanted to be alone with me. He took me out of the skybox and we went for a walk around the stadium. He showed me all these restricted areas.

“Wow...this is really impressive.” I said.

“Thanks...hey, you want a shot to commemorate your 16th birthday?” he asked.

I nodded, “Sure.”

“You know, you’re so beautiful...and you remind me so much of Michelle when she was your age. She had a spark in her just like you. I miss her so much.”

“I’m here now.”

“You are...and I’m so glad to have you. I promise this will be a birthday you never forget.” He said as he pulled me into his arms and kissed me.

Several shots later we headed back to the skybox...not that I remember much of this. I hadn’t taken into account that my body was smaller and not used to alcohol and this might affect my tolerance. I was way drunk. Casey noticed this.

Casey grabbed my arm to help me stand, “Are you okay sweetheart? He didn’t hurt you did he?”

“I’m fine Case, chill! Just having fun. Right Jonny?”

“Yeah, sure are...and we’ll have more fun later.” Jon said as he pulled me away from Case and kissed me.

“She’s not Michelle, don’t try to protect her like she is.” David, one of the other band member, said.

"I can't help it. She has innocence in her eyes like Michelle did." Casey said.

"I'm more like Michelle than you think" I said.

"You remind me of her a lot, like she used to be." Jon said.

"I'm not like her. I am her." I said. Yes. This was stupid. Get me too drunk I do stupid things. Case in point...now.

"For tonight you could be." Jon said.

"Just like it used to be." I said.

"You're not Michelle, darling that's the thing. Jon's just gonna think your Michelle cause he wants you to be, Jana and I have both been in your place before." Casey said.

See, lucky for me Casey had no clue about my powers so she assumed it was the liquor making me nuts. Talk about a lucky save.

And this arguing continued for the next hour or so before Jon got sick of it and took me back to the limo. We made out for awhile and were headed back to his hotel...that's the last thing I remember before passing out.

When I woke up I was half dressed and there was screaming.

"She's fucking 16! What are you even doing with her?!" Hunter screamed.

"She wanted it." Jon said.

"You're lucky I don't call the cops!"

"And tell them what? She won't testify against me."

"She's a kid!"

"So I can't have Michelle, I can't have your cousin...someone is selfish."

"Stop the sarcasm Jon."

"What's going on?" I groaned.

"You're awake...you were out cold and your cousin here found out we were here somehow." Jon said as he sat next to me and pulled me into his arms.

"Get your hands off her." Hunter said as he pulled Jon away from me, "Get dressed Mac. We're going home."

I pulled myself out of bed and put my shirt on.

"I'll see you later baby. This isn't over." Jon said kissing me again.

"I said stay the hell away from her!" Hunter screamed as he grabbed my arm and pulled me out of the room. He picked me up in his arms and ninja streaked home.

We went into the apartment.

"WHAT IN THE HELL WERE YOU THINKING?!" he screamed.

"That I wanted to have fun! I wanted to be seen and my own boyfriend won't even look at me!" I cried.

"You're fucking lucky Madison started looking for you and had Udonna use magic to track you down. If I wouldn't have gotten there when I did he would have raped you! You were out cold and he was fucking undressing you! Do you want to get raped again?!"

"Don't you dare insinuate what James did to me was my fault!"

"No, but this would have been!"

"Fuck you Hunter! Just stay the fuck away from me!" I cried as I ran to my room and fell in bed. I cried myself to sleep.

Jon was right about one thing....this would be a birthday to remember...I just didn't want to. I think I could safely say my plan to trap him backfired.

PRT 253- "I'm Still Me"

I was sitting in my room...which was formally our guest room. I'd made the guest room look like a teenager's room and since my own boyfriend would have no part of getting anywhere near me, let alone sleeping in the same bed with me, I'd been sleeping in Mac's room and he'd been in our room. Anyway, I was sitting in my room on the bed with my guitar. I was really upset because my friend Casey had gone missing and Udonna refused to let me use magic to track her down because her disappearance had shown no signs of being magical or Ranger related. As far as anyone could tell she'd either runaway or been kidnapped by another human. No supernatural links at all. What good was being a Ranger if you couldn't even save your friends? I'd talked to Jon via IMs and we'd posted a reward for her safe return but that was all I could do since I wasn't actually me. It sucked. And so since there wasn't a hell of a lot I could do about anything I sat with my guitar and started to write.

*"I feel chained, chained down
You shoved me to the ground
I can't run, I can't shout
Just let me out*

*So heartless, this couldn't mean less
Hmm...da da, da da
I'm only human
And I got something to say"*

"I need a line there...damn it...what's wrong with me?" I grumbled to myself. I heard Hunter come in and I put my guitar down and went to the living room. "Hi."

"Hi. I brought home dinner. Fish sandwich?" he asked.

I nodded, "Thanks."

"No worries." He said as he put the food on the table.

I sat down and started to eat.

"How was school?"

"Fine I guess. I hate it."

"I know, you have to go though."

"It'd help if I had a boyfriend to come home to."

"You know I can't Mi...Mac."

"Why can't you see me as Michelle? Hunter, I'm still me! Look at me! Can't you see it in my eyes?! I'm still me!

Touch me...I'm me...I am me! If you kiss me you'll feel it. If you hold me you'll know it. If you look in my eyes you'll see it. I am me!" I cried. I was so frustrated.

"No you're not! You're 13! You're a child!" he screamed.

"Fuck you! I've had it!" I screamed as I ran out of the apartment.

I ran and ran. I finally found a bench by a tree and sat down. That's when it hit me...Hunter said I was 13...I was 16... why would he...oh god...I understood now.

"Hey Mac." Madison said walking up, interrupting me from my thoughts.

"Oh, hey." I said.

"What's wrong?"

"I can't write a song for Mac, Hunter is fed up with me...everything."

"I don't think I can help from Hunter but as far as your music goes maybe you're trying too hard to define a style for Mac. Write from your heart. That's part of what makes you so great. You sing from your soul. You mean what you sing and it shows."

I gave this some thought, "Thanks Maddie...I know what to do."

I went back to the apartment and finished my song. Just in time too. I'd told Toby I'd give singing a try the next day at the store. A three song run to see how it did. I was gonna do two covers but I also wanted one original and I had it now. After I was done I got in bed and went to sleep.

The next day after school I went to the store and found Toby.

"Alright, you got a band?" I asked.

"Yeah, sorta." He said.

"What does 'sorta' mean?"

"Well...AARON!"

"Yeah?" a guy asked walking up.

"This is Mackenzie Bradley, the singer I told you about. Mackenzie, this is Aaron Lee. He's the guitarist of The Project."

"Original."

"It started out as a joke name and it stuck. It's nice to meet you Mackenzie. I've seen you around school right? You're new?" Aaron asked.

I nodded, "Yeah."

"I'm sure you're a great singer but...Tobe, we need a real singer. A guy...someone who can write."

I raised my eyebrows, "Excuse me?"

"Uh-oh...shouldn't have said that." Toby said.

"Give me one chance. You'll be surprised."

"I don't know..." Aaron said.

"Aar...you need a new sound, fresh songs. You wanted to start from scratch. What do you have to lose? This girl is fresh as they come." Toby said.

"Alright, fine. You have anything original?"

"As a matter of fact, yes. I have one original with me." I said.

"You need a three song set Mac." Toby said.

I nodded, "You guys know 'Stupid Girl'?"

"Garbage?" Aaron asked.

"Yeah."

"Yeah, we know it."

"Alright...and I figure you'll want to test me so pick a cover and we'll do it."

"Ok, some real rock. AC/DC, 'Highway to Hell'."

"Consider it done. Here's my original. Think you can learn it in 20 minutes?"

"I know we can."

"Good."

I hung around and did some vocal warm ups then 20 minutes later Toby introduced us. I opened with 'Stupid Girl' and then 'Highway...'. Finally we got to my original.

"This is one that I just wrote. A good friend told me the best music comes from the soul. This one is from mine. I hope you like it." I said as the music started. I was actually nervous...I was never nervous onstage. It was odd, but exciting.

*"I feel chained, chained down
You shoved me to the ground
I can't run, I can't shout
Just let me out*

*So heartless, this couldn't mean less
Gonna push it in your face
I'm only human
And I've got something to say*

*Let me rise, let me fall
Let me breathe
I wanna lose control, I'm not afraid to lose it all
Let me break, let me crawl
Cause I'll get back up again if you let me fall*

*If I burn down in this fire
Well, I got myself to blame
I can't stop or give it up
I need to feel the pain*

*Can you hear me?
Don't come near me
You'll just get in my way
I'm only human
And there's nothing you can say*

*Let me rise, let me fall
Let me breathe
I wanna lose control, I'm not afraid to lose it all
Let me break, let me crawl
Cause I will get up again if you let me fall*

*Say you know who I am
And what I'm about
Then you'll understand that I feel alone
I live my own life*

*Let me rise, let me fall
Let me breathe
I wanna lose control, I'm not afraid to lose it all
Let me break, let me crawl
Cause I will get up again if you let me fall*

*Yeah, yeah, yeah
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
If you let me fall
If you let me
If you let me fall
If you let me fall*

*I will get up again if you let me fall
Yeah, yeah, yeah
Yeah, yeah
If you let me fall
If you let me fall
Let me fall"*

After the song ended I closed the set and we got off stage.

"So, what did you think?" I asked.

Aaron nodded, "I'm surprised. You're good...very good. You have it...what I've been looking for...and you're a chick...wow...if you want in you're in."

I smiled, "Consider me in."

I went over to the others.

"That was awesome!" Vida said.

"Yeah, it was. I loved your song." Maddie said.

"Very impressive." Xander agreed.

"Yeah, not bad Macelle." Nick said.

I rolled my eyes and headed off to grab a soda. When I got back Vida had taken over the turntable and was DJing. I

started dancing to the music as Maddie recorded everyone.

“Hey Mad, you record my performance?” I asked.

“Yup, sure did.” She said.

I smiled, “Kickin’.” I kept dancing to the music.

“Move it Mac.” Vida said.

“Keep playing awesome music and I’ll keep movin’.” I retorted.

“Been another attack right around here.” Xander started as she held up the paper so Maddie could get it on film, “Man turned to stone.”

“Yes, which probably means trouble.” I said.

“Unless we’re told it’s trouble what can we do?” Xander asked.

“Good point...” I said.

“Um, Chip, we’re meant to be marking them down.” Xander said as Chip was looking at a record, not working, just looking.

“Yeah, *we* are. I supposed you’re supervising, right?” Chip asked.

“He catches on fast.”

“Every price shall fall under my mighty hand, for I am Count Discounts...defender of the bargain bin, hero to slacker and collector alike. Pow! Pow! Pow!” Chip said as he started to aim the price tag gun like...well, a gun.

“OK, that does it, come here man.” Xander took the gun and started sticking price tags all over Chip, “One last touch...” he lifted Chips collar, “Now you’re really Count Discount.”

“You guys are great.” I said as I laughed. Being with Xander, Maddie, and Chip really made me feel like a teenager again. Even Vida had her moments...although I still didn’t know what to make of Nick. He was a bit too early Conner-ish for me and he lacked the McKnight charm. Yes, I HATE to admit it but it does exist. Those McKnight boys could charm the pants off a homeless man.

Anyway, Maddie moved on and I kept chatting with Xander until I saw LeeLee. She was one of the cheerleaders on the squad and one of Courtney’s best friends.

“Why do you hang out with them?” she asked, “You’re a cheerleader...”

“Yeah, and I’m also a singer and this is a music store and they work here...besides they’re cool. Maybe if you pulled your head out of your poms and gave them half a chance you’d see that.”

“Yeah, I’m sure.”

I rolled my eyes and went back to talking to Xander. Around then our Morpher phones beeped.

“Oh great.” I groaned as we took cover.

“Xander here, what’s up?”

“I’m sensing dark magic energy just outside the perimeter of the forest.” Udonna said.

“It could be that thing that’s turning people into statues. We gotta stop it.” Chip said as he joined us.

“Wait, where’s Maddie?” Vida asked.

“Oh, she got all mad about something and left.” Nick said.

I glared at him, he was the last one I saw her with, “I wonder what could have caused that.”

“Look, we’ll call her if we get into trouble.”

“Yeah, right...” we all agreed as we ran out. The others informed Toby we were taking a lunch break and we ran off.

We Morphed and found the monster. We got our asses handed to us...bad. So bad the monster retreated because we weren’t enough of a challenge. How sad is that? Of course we went after it but when we caught up to it we saw it’d turned Maddie into stone!

“Maddie!” Vida cried.

“Hard luck.” Necrolai said.

“Oh no! You witch! You’re gonna pay for that!” Vida cried.

“Oh god...Maddie...” I echoed, “Get ‘em V.”

“Magi Staff, Wind Power!” Vida cried as she attacked, “Want more?”

“Foolish girl, don’t you see you can never stop up, especially now you’re down a Ranger?” Necrolai said. She disappeared with the stone making monster.

“Maddie...god...” I said. Maddie had really been Mac’s best friend since this whole mess started. I couldn’t have made it without her.

“We gotta get her back to Root Core.” Vida said.

“You’re right.” I said.

We got her back and Udonna tried to reverse the spell, with no success.

“This creature’s magic is very strong. Only by destroying him can the spell be broken.” Udonna said.

“Oh, I’ll destroy him alright. With my bare hands.” Vida said as she tried to storm out.

“Vida! No! Stop!” I cried.

“Slow down V.” Xander said as he ran to stop her, “Cool it V, cool it please. If you rush out without a plan you’ll end up just like her.”

“Xander’s right. That’s how Maddie got into trouble in the first place. She shouldn’t have been out there alone.” Nick said.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Vida asked.

“She probably got in over her head V.”

“Man, you don’t know my sister. She maybe shy on the outside, but inside she’d got the heart of a warrior.”

“Right, that’s why she’s always hiding behind that camera.”

“You are so clueless. Here’s why she’s always behind the camera.” Vida said as she turned on the camera so we could see what Maddie was working on.

“Introducing DJ Vida...the best sister ever. Can’t forget Xander...not only a great friend but his sick on his board. Chip Thorn...known him since grammar school. There’s nobody in this world quite like Chip. Yeah! How about a little extreme Xander? And of course Mackenzie...or just Mac. She’s new and a bit confused but she’s a great friend and super talented at everything she does. Then there’s Nick, the new guy in town. We don’t know too much about him yet, but I can feel it, he’s something special. So those are my friends, old and new. I know I can count on them for anything.”

“Everyone has a different way of expressing themselves Nick.” Udonna said.

“Yeah, for me it’s song, for Maddie it’s film...it happens.” I said.

“You’re right, I was clueless.” Nick said, “I shouldn’t have gone shooting my mouth off.”

“Eureka!”

“I’m gonna get you out of this Maddie, I promise.”

Just then we got a new spell code.

“Apparently you now have a clue.” Udonna said.

“A new spell code.” Chip said.

Just the we saw the city was under attack.

“He’s back. You guys ready to do this for Maddie?” Nick asked.

“Yeah! Let’s rock! Sorry sis.” Vida said.

“Ready?” Nick asked.

“Ready!”

“Magical Source, Mystic Force!”

We headed out towards town but were attacked by Knight Wolf on the way.

“You guys go. I got this.” Nick said.

“You sure?” I asked.

“Yes! Go!”

While Nick took care of Knight Wolf the rest of us took on the monster in town. We got worked bad. It was so sad. Even sadder? Nick saved us. He saved our asses then the monster grew. BIG surprise.

What was a surprise was Maddie showing up.

“Maddie!” I cried.

“You’re ok!” Vida cried.

“Looks like I got here just in time.” She said.

“Hey Madison, I was a jerk. I’m sorry I said you were too shy.”

“Apology accepted. Let’s just forget about it.”

“Look...”

Now it was Maddie's turn to get a new spell code.

"I guess we both learned something today"

"Go for it guys." I said. I stood by and watched them turn into the Titans again. They used the spell code and combined but this time I felt myself getting teleported. When I landed I was in a cockpit with the others. "OK, wow...a Zord...sorta..."

"Whoa, this place is freaky." Xander said.

"You got that right." Vida said.

"I get it. The cockpit is like a chessboard. We control our fight with strategical moves."

"Wow...guess I learned something today too." I said.

"Hey, lucky for me I belong to chess club in school." Chip said.

"You do?" I asked.

"Yeah."

"Ok guys. Let's get serious." Nick said.

We worked together and took down the monster. I'll be honest, it was a hell of a lot of fun. I couldn't remember the last time I had such a great time in a Zord fight...although this wasn't really a Zord right...it sorta was though. Anyway, it was fun.

Now that the underworld was taken care of for another day I could focus on more important things like my revelation from the day before...or so I thought. As I got home I noticed Jon waiting in the parking lot.

"Jon?" I asked walking up to his car.

"Mac, hey. Do you know where Mich is? I really need to talk to her. It's about our friend." He said.

I sighed, this was actually important. "You know what, let me see if I can go find her."

"Thanks babe. You're the best." He said as he kissed me.

I nodded and took off. I found the nearest safe tree and went through it and to Root Core.

I went in and found Udonna.

"Ok, enough is enough. I need Michelle back. I need to be me." I said.

"You can be. Anytime you wish." She said.

I looked at her, "I can?"

"Yes. Of course the more you switch the more magic is used. You don't want to over use magic so you should only switch in an emergency."

"This is an emergency."

"OK. Same spell with a minor change. Here you go." Udonna said showing me.

"Awesome. Thanks."

I went back through the tree and made sure it was clear.

"In this time and in this place let me see my truest face." I said. Sure enough in a blink of an eye I looked like me again.

"Oh man is this nice."

I went back to Jon.

"Hey Jon." I said.

"Michi...it's good to see you." He said as he hugged me tight. I hugged him back.

"Any word about Case yet?"

"No, nothing. Jana is freaking out...everyone is so worried. There has to be something you can do with all your...power and all."

"I'm sorry, I can't."

"You can't or you won't."

"It's forbidden."

"You realize Casey's life is on the line here right?"

"Jon, believe me, if I could do anything I would. You have to know that."

Jon sighed, "I do know that. I'm just so worried."

"I know you are. It'll be alright though. Case is tough. We'll get her back...somehow."

"Where have you been Mich? I've really missed you."

"I hear Mac's been keeping you company."

“She’s a sweet kid but she’s not you. I miss you so much Mich.”

I sighed, “Jon, we’re divorced for a reason.”

“I know...because I treated you like crap. We can still be friends though...”

“Maybe someday...not today...listen, I should go.”

“Alright...if I hear anything I’ll call you.”

“Please do.” I said as I went inside.

I decided that there was no harm in staying as myself until Hunter came home. Get me a little affection and then maybe if he actually saw me change back into Mac it’s be easier on him. I sat on the sofa watching TV until Hunter came in.

“Hey babe.” I said.

Hunter froze, “Mich...Mich...oh baby...” he pulled me into his arms and held me tight then kissed me passionately.

When the kiss broke I looked at him. “I can’t stay this way.”

“But why?”

“Because of this mission, but it doesn’t matter. I’m still me. Watch...”

“Mich...”

“Watch...” I took a breath, “In this time and in this place let me see another face.” And in an instant I was Mac again.

Hunter sighed and sat on the sofa.

“Hunter, I’m still me.”

“No, you aren’t.”

“I know why this is a problem for you. It’s the rape. You remember getting raped as a teenager and the idea of being with me takes you back there...but it’s not the same. I’m still me, only my physical appearance has changed. I’m me.”

Hunter looked at me, “It doesn’t matter.”

I sighed and plopped on the sofa. He sat on the other side.

We watched CMT for awhile. I couple of episodes of ‘Dukes of Hazzard’ then they played music videos. My latest video came on and I couldn’t help but smile. It was the number 18 video of the week on its first week on the countdown. Not a bad start if you ask me. Anyway, I started to sing along and move to the music...a girl had to have some fun. As the song ended I noticed Hunter staring at me.

“What?” I asked.

“Mich...”

“What?”

“I see it...the way you move, the passion in your voice, the look in your eye...it is the same...you are still you.”

I let out a sigh of relief, “I’m so happy to hear you say that. Show me you still see me.”

Hunter pulled me into his arms and kissed me. He pushed me back in the sofa and we made out for awhile before he pulled away.

“One step at a time.”

I nodded, “I understand. One step at a time...it’s not a bad start though. Maybe we can sleep in the same bed?”

“We can try. Come on, let’s go get something to eat then we’ll see what we can manage.”

I was so relieved. Maybe I had a chance at a semi-normal life yet...at least as normal as a Ranger could have in my situation.

PRT 254- "Under My Skin"

I got to my locker after school and put my books in. As I was getting out what I needed to take home Greg Walter, one of the football players, walked up.

"Hey Mac...how's it going?" he asked.

"Pretty good." I said.

"Awesome. You look good today...but you look good everyday."

"Thanks."

"So...you have plans this weekend?"

"Um, not sure really. Kinda depends what my bo...cousin wants to do."

"Well you think you're cousin will let you go out with me?"

I raised an eyebrow, "Um...are you asking me on a date?"

"You could say that."

"I don't think so, thanks though."

Greg just looked at me. I don't think he'd ever been turned down before. "Did you just say no?"

"Yeah, think so."

"OK, I don't think you understand what I'm asking you here. Every girl in school would jump at the chance to go out with me and I chose you."

"Yeah? Well flattered as I am the answer is still no."

"Are you stupid?"

"No, I just have taste. Now if you'll excuse me I'm late for practice. See ya." I said as I closed my locker and headed off for Aaron's.

"Alright, let's rock." I said as I walked into Aaron's garage. It was time for another fun day of band practice. Who ever thought I'd be in a garage band. I was a multi-platinum artist...at least Michelle was. This was too odd.

"Good, you're here. We can get going. You have anything new?" Aaron asked.

I nodded, "Actually, yes. Here." I handed him and the rest of the band sheet music. They looked it over.

"Ok, wow...this is really good Kenz." Joey said. He was our drummer.

"Yeah...it is...where did this come from?" Aaron asked.

"I don't know actually. It was almost like I channeled it. I saw this college girl the other day and she looked so sad. It was like I felt a sudden connection to her. Like I could have been her. I sat down and this is what resulted." I said.

"Ok, freaky...but however you did it, it looks good." Tyler, our bassist said.

"Then what are you guys waiting for. Learn it. I'm gonna warm up." I said as I started doing vocal warm ups.

We got to work a few minutes later and worked until we nailed the new song, which was great since we had a gig later that day. After practice I headed to the store.

I walked up to Rock Porium and saw LeeLee asking out Nick. He turned her down flat. I laughed

"Tough luck LeeLee." I said.

"You know, I could have Courtney kick you off the squad." She said.

"Yeah, but then who would get you to nationals?"

"You're nothing but a freak singer."

"Actually I'm the best squad member you've got."

LeeLee glared as I walked inside and saw Maddie. I went over to them.

"Hey guys." I said.

"Hey Mac." Maddie said.

"You ready for your set later?" Vida asked.

"Totally! This whole singing as another person is actually fun." I said.

"Guys, we have a problem." Xander said walking up.

"Yeah, we're late for training."

"No. Nick stole 1000 dollars."

"What? You're kidding."

“No, I’m not.”

“Why would Nick steal money?” Maddie asked.

“Let’s talk about this at Root Core...we have training...” I said.

“Ok, fine.” Xander said as we headed out.

“Look, I’m not saying for sure it’s Nick, but I know I didn’t take the money, and I know you probably didn’t take the money.” Xander said once we were there and settled. Chip ended up being the only one to actually train.

“What do you mean ‘probably’ Xander?” Vida asked.

“I don’t mean anything. I just know I didn’t take the money.”

“And you know that we ‘probably’ didn’t take it?”

“Hey, hey, hey...cool it V. Xander knows we wouldn’t steal from Toby or anybody. Are you sure you didn’t just misplace the envelope?” Maddie asked.

“I put the envelope into the box, and then it was gone. Trust me. Someone took it. I mean, it can’t just fly away.”

Xander said as we all looked at Chip, who was working on levitating.

“Oh, so just because I can fly, you think I stole the money?” Chip asked.

“No, no. Look, I’ve known you guys ever since I moved to the States. I know you wouldn’t steal from Toby. I’m not saying it was any of you.” Xander said.

“And it certainly wasn’t me. I have more money than I know what to do with as it is.” I said.

Xander nodded, “I know it wasn’t you either Mac...”

“Ok, maybe we should just go look for it?” I asked.

“Can’t hurt.” Maddie said.

We went back to the music store and started to look around. Chip used his levitation to look high.

“No magic in public.” I said as Toby came out. I sighed. There were way too many close calls with these guys. We distracted Toby while Chip got himself down. We finally decided the money wasn’t there and the others decided Nick took it.

“Guys, are you sure about this?” I asked as they headed out to confront Nick.

“Who else could it be?” Vida asked.

I sighed, “Just be sure...if you’re wrong your friendship may not recover. Besides, Nick is your leader, would he really do this?” I couldn’t believe I was defending Nick.

“Only one way to find out.” Xander said as we all headed out to Nick. He was outside working on his bike.

“Hi, Nick.” Xander said.

“Look, Nick, there’s 1000 dollars missing from the store.” Maddie said.

“Oh. I get it. I’m the new guy. I must have stolen it, right?” Nick asked, “I charmed my way into your lives just so I could rip you off. Is that it?”

“Yeah, well that just about covers what we were thinking.” Chip said.

“Not everyone Nick...we’re just asking if you took it.” I said.

“Great. And I thought you guys were my friends. I can’t believe I actually thought...never mind. Nice knowing you.”

Nick said as he started his bike up.

“Nick, wait...” I started, but he was already taking off.

“Maybe we made a mistake.” Maddie said.

“He just took off, didn’t even deny it.” Chip said.

“Yeah, he did. If you listened close enough, he did.” I said.

“Come on, we have to tell Toby.” Xander said.

We went inside and walked up to Toby.

“Hey Boss.” Xander said, which startled Toby and caused him to knock over a display.

“No! What! Sorry...oh...oh, something’s going on. I can see it on your faces. You’ve got something to tell me that you don’t want to tell me.” Toby said.

“Yeah, we do.” Xander said.

“Well, you’re gonna have to tell me. No, you don’t. No, tell me. No, don’t. No, tell me. No, don’t. Do. Don’t. Do.

Alright. Tell me how you lose the 1000 dollars.” Toby said.

We all looked at each other confused as Toby pulled out the envelope with the money.

"I found it behind the register. Now, guys, I may be your boss but I'm also a...f-friend." Toby said.

"I thought Nick stole the money." Xander said.

"Nick? What? Are you kidding? That guy's as honest as...as the Stones are classic rock. What made you think Nick took it?"

Everyone looked at LeeLee, who was behind us.

"Oh, wow...big shock...figures she'd be in on it." I said.

"Why are you looking at me? You guys are the ones that accused your friend." She said as she opened a soda and it sprayed her, "Oh my new leather jacket! It's ruined. I hate it when bad things happen to good people!"

"Like what you did to Nick?! Yeah, me too. Get out of here LeeLee." I said.

She ran out as our phones beeped. Madison took out her Morpher and looked at it.

"Oh, Toby, do you mind if we go find Nick? We have a serious plate of crow to eat, and guys, he needs us." Maddie said.

"Oh...right." I said.

"Sure. Why not?" Toby said.

We Morphed, saved Nick, and apologized. Then the Purple dude we fought grew and combined with a Zord thing that he used to defeat Udonna I guess. The Rangers went into Titan mode and fought...only it didn't work so well.

"The time has come to take this fight to the next level." The purple dude said as he used a spell to steal the magic that enabled the Rangers to combine their Titan forms.

"Hey, that's my bro's line." I mumbled as I watched him bring forth a creature named Morticon. Nick managed to send Morticon back to the underworld and the purple guy left with his new power...our power. This was bad...but Nick certainly proved himself.

After the battle Nick took off. We all went to go find him. He was in front of the store on his bike.

"Look, we just...no, I just wanted to say that I'm sorry. I really am." Xander said.

"You're our friend Nick, and you deserved better." Maddie said.

"No more jumping to conclusions. Promise." Vida said.

"We should have trusted you." I said

"It was Xander's fault." Chip said.

"Thanks guys...and I owe you guys an apology too. I should have come to you when I started hearing Koragg's voice. So, I guess we both learned a lesson about trust and friendship?" Nick said.

"No more secrets between us." Xander said.

"No secrets man."

"Well, this is nice, but we're late for work." Maddie said.

"Maybe you are..." I said.

"You have a set to get ready for, remember?"

"Oh, right...I should see if the guys are here."

We all went inside the store. Aaron and the guys were already there setting up.

"There you are!" Aaron said.

"We were about to think you bailed on us." Tyler said.

"Of course not. Would I do that?" I asked.

"Would you?" Aaron asked.

"No!" I cried.

"Can we get this started?" Joey asked.

"Totally. Let's rock!"

We started our set, which was mostly cover songs that were from a list Toby gave us. Once we proved ourselves he said he'd let us do full sets of originals. I did however get to do my new song.

"I drift away to a place

Another kind of life

Take away the pain

I create my paradise

*Everything I've held
Has hit the wall
What used to be yours
Isn't yours at all*

*Falling apart, and all that I'm asking
Is it a crime, am I overreacting*

*Oh, he's under my skin
Just give me something to get rid of him
I've got a reason now to bury this alive
Another little white lie*

*So what you had didn't fit
Among the pretty things
Never fear, never fear
I now know where you've been*

*Braids have been un-tied
As ribbons fall away
Leave the consequence
But my tears you'll taste*

*Falling apart and all that I question
Is this a dream or is this my lesson*

*Oh, he's under my skin
Just give me something to get rid of him
I've got a reason now to bury this alive
Another little white lie*

*I don't believe I'll be alright
I don't believe I'll be OK
I don't believe how you've thrown me away
I do believe you didn't try
I do blame you for every lie
When I look in your eyes, I don't see mine*

*Oh, he's under my skin
Just give me something to get rid of him
I've got a reason now to bury this alive
Another little white lie*

*Oh my permission to sin
You might have started my reckoning
I've got a reason now to bury him alive
Another little white lie”*

After we finished the set I helped pack up then I headed home. Hunter already had dinner made.
“Hey baby.” I said.
“Mac, hey...how was...school...god this is hard to adjust to.” He said.
“I know. I’m sorry. Anyway, school was fine. I got asked on a date.” I laughed.

“Oh really?”

“Yeah. Poor guy, never got turned down before.”

“If he only knew who he was really asking.”

“Yeah...how was your day?”

“Fine. Not looking forward to all the traveling considering your situation.”

“I’ll be fine...you think we can...get closer before you go?”

“You mean make love?”

“Yeah. I mean, I don’t wanna pressure you but I miss that. And this will be special. You had me as an emotional virgin when I had amnesia. This will give you the chance to have me as a physical virgin. I know it’s not the same but it’s as close as we’ll get to you being my first.”

“Oh yeah, no pressure.”

I laughed, “I don’t mean it like that.”

“We’ll see what happens.”

I nodded, “Alright.”

After dinner we watched some TV and then went to the bedroom. Hunter still turned his back when I changed clothes so I figured tonight wouldn’t be the night I got to make love to him. I put my pajamas on and climbed in bed. Lucky for me he was ok with holding me again. I curled up in his arms and closed my eyes.

“Do you think you’ll ever be ok with me again?” I asked.

“Maybe...I am working on it. I know it’s you I love, not your appearance but...” he started.

“I know...I know. It’s awkward when I’m your 16 year old cousin in public and your 26 year old girlfriend in a 16 year old body behind closed doors.”

“Yeah...”

“I understand. Just remember, I am still me.”

He nodded, “I know.”

“Alright, goodnight. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

I started to doze off thinking about how I was gonna get Hunter to make love to me before he left to race. It was something I needed and I felt he did too. Oh well, there was always tomorrow.

PRT 255- "A Spell for Disaster"

I walked into my art and heard giggling. People were looking at me and laughing. I rolled my eyes and sat down. That's when Mr. Garnet walked in. He started class by passing out grades on our last assignments, which was to draw a map. I got a 78 on it. A 78!!! Fucker. If there was ever someone I wanted to use my magic to turn into a not-so-cute animal it was him. Gah, I hated that guy...and I was stuck in his class! I tried to focus on his boring lecture and then the second the bell rang I sprinted for my locker.

As I was getting a book for my next class LeeLee walked up to me.

"So, you resigning your poms?" she asked.

"Why would I do a stupid thing like that?" I asked.

"Well now that you're out...you can't honestly think you're wanted on the team."

"What are you babbling about LeeLee?"

"Oh, it's ok. Greg told us."

"Told you what?"

"That he asked you out."

"Yeah, I turned him down."

"I know. He told us why too."

"Oh did he now? Enlighten me."

"Stop playing dumb. Greg told everyone that you're a lesbian."

I laughed, "Are you fucking kidding me? Oh dear God that boy has an ego. Sorry to burst your bubble LeeLee but I'm not a lesbian, I just didn't want to go out with Greg."

"Oh please. Come on Mac, who turns down Greg? And more than that you haven't shown the slightest interest in one guy since you got here."

"You're right. Doesn't mean I'm not interested in guys...and since when does a girl need a guy to be complete anyway?"

"See? Total lesbian behavior."

"No. Total independent woman behavior. When you grow up and mature you'll see there's more to life than guys...if you're lucky."

"Oh, right, like you're so much older than me Sweet 16."

I narrowed my eyes, she was right, I hated being 16 with 26 year old knowledge.

"Listen, I'm just saying, now that you're out you might want to consider resigning," LeeLee finished as she walked away.

"Oh you've got to be kidding me." I mumbled to myself. The last thing I needed was to be part of a big rumor scandal. There was only one thing to do. Mac had to get a boyfriend...god, Hunter was so going to kill me.

For about a split second I considered going out with Greg...but why give him the pleasure? No way. I decided to do better. Go out with Greg's teammate and best friend Kevin. After school I went to the training room and found Kevin.

"Hey." I said.

"If it isn't the happy lesbian." He said.

I laughed, "Oh come on, you know that's just a rumor. I'm not a lesbian."

"Then why did you turn down Greg?"

"He isn't the guy I was wanting to go out with."

"Oh? Really? Who then?"

"You Kevin. You."

Kevin stopped what he was doing and looked at me, "You want to go out with me?"

"Yeah...I turned Greg down hoping you'd ask me out."

Kevin smiled, "I knew you were too beautiful to be a lesbian."

"So you gonna ask me or do I need to ask you?"

"You wanna go out tomorrow night?" he asked.

I nodded, "I would love too. Call me later and we'll set it up."

"Will do. See you later beautiful." He said.

I smiled and walked out. This was perfect. Word would get back to the cheer squad that I played Kevin against Greg

and they'd be so impressed that the lesbian rumor would die and I could go back to being in the background. Which was good. I may not be a celebrity as Mac but Hunter was a celebrity by association which made anyone living with him, including his cousin, a celebrity by association as well. If anyone figured this out and started selling stories about me to the tabloid I was sunk. The whole reason of being Mac was to keep the press off my back...not attract more with another face.

After school that day we had training. After some basis drills Udonna asked us to gather around while she told a story. "The legendary Catastros." She started as a holographic horse jumped from the book and over our heads, "Many have tried in vain to break the mightiest creature of them all, but Catastros was stronger than a hundred men and no one was able to harness his fearsome power. Catastros fled into the forest during the great battle of good and evil. But before the seal closed evil reached up and dragged Catastros down to the lowest depths of the pit."

"That was the scariest story I ever heard. Tell it again." Chip said.

"Even I'm a little freaked out...just a little." Vida said.

I rolled my eyes, "Whatever. It's a legend, Rangers have a ton of those in our past."

"Well I'm not scared." Xander said with a chuckle as the lights went out.

"Oh really now?" I asked as the light came back on and Xander jumped up into Vida's arms like a scared kitten.

"Just making sure you're safe V." He said.

"I'm fine, thanks." Vida said as she tosses Xander off her.

"You guys can't possibly be afraid of a silly horse." Nick said.

"Make no mistake. Catastros is a force to be reckoned with Nick." Udonna said.

"But Koragg must have tamed him since he has control over him." Maddie said.

"Yes, for Catastros remains loyal to Koragg to this day." Udonna said as Claire walked in.

"Don't you just love a good brain storm? Washes away the stress of the day." Claire said.

"Hey Clarie." I said as I noticed she'd turned her hair to whipped cream. I sighed.

"Claire, you're steaming." Maddie said.

"Oh, yeah. I crossed a hot-cocoa spell with a spell of protection. Keeps me warm on these cold stormy nights.

"You hair." Vida managed to get out between laughter.

Claire felt and then screamed a bit, "I forgot to omit the part about toppings. I'm allergic to whipped cream!" Claire said as she started to sneeze. We all took cover, except Udonna who got hit with projectile whipped cream.

We all started cracking up, including me.

"Quick, Nick, point your wand at me and say 'Finishio'." Claire said.

Nick did as she said she sure enough Claire had hair again.

"Thanks Nick. Well...I...uh...better go." Claire said as she slipped away.

"Yeah, me too. Hunter should be home by now." I said as I took off.

"Hey sweetie." He said as I walked in and threw my bag down.

"Hi." I said.

"You wanna go see a movie tonight?"

"Sure."

"Are you ok?"

"Yeah...just...you're gonna be so pissed."

"What did you do?"

"OK, so that guy who asked me out? He started spreading rumors about me and I didn't need the attention so to stop the rumors I made a date for tomorrow with another guy."

"You what?!"

"Hunter, please, I need to do this for appearance sake. You know it doesn't mean anything to me. You're the only person I love."

His eyes narrowed, "Alright, fine...but if you fuck him..."

"I won't, I promise. It'll be totally innocent."

"I can't believe I'm understanding this. My life is too weird."

I forced a smile, "Thanks babe...um...movie?"

"Yeah, let's go. We'll eat first."

And so we went and ate then went to a movie, which was weird. I wanted to cuddle with him in the theater and I

couldn't even hold his hand. I hated this Mac thing. Anyway, we got home and went to the bedroom.

"Baby, come on...I want to be with you." I said as I grabbed his hand and pulled him close to me and kissed him.

"I'm not sure I can do this." He said.

"Can we try?"

He sighed, "Yeah, we'll try."

I smiled and kissed him for awhile before I slid my hands up his shirt and got it off. He seemed ok with that so I kept going. I guided his hands up my shirt and took it off. I had a hard time doing much while standing because he had quite the height advantage on me now. Mac was considerably shorter than Michelle. I guided Hunter to the bed and pushed him back then I straddled his stomach. I could actually get something done this way. I started to kiss his neck while he ran his fingers through my hair. I kissed my way down his chest and to where his pants met his waist. I unzipped his pants and reached my hand into his boxer-briefs and started to stroke him. He moaned. He was really getting into this when he suddenly pulled away.

"I'm sorry, I can't." he said.

I sighed, "Why? You were enjoying it."

"I was. I just...I can't. I'm sorry."

I sighed again, "Fine." I got up and changed into my pajamas and got in bed.

The next day I met with the others at the store. Everyone was there but Nick, who was late.

"So, someone's got a date with Kevin Summer." Vida teased.

"Ugh...good news travels fast. Shut it V." I groaned.

"Don't look so happy."

"I don't want to go out with him, I just had to counter those stupid rumors."

Xander laughed and put an arm around me, "It'll be ok Mac. Just be careful."

"Why?"

"Guys like Kevin only want one thing...that's something I don't think you're willing to give."

"Don't worry...this date will be strictly innocent. I got it under control." I said as Nick came in. He looked exhausted.

"Nice of you to join us." Xander said.

"Sorry I'm late. Didn't sleep much." Nick said.

"Ah, did that scary thunder keep you up?" Vida teased, "Oh, I forgot, you're not afraid of anything, right?"

"Very funny." Nick said as our Morpher Phones chimed.

"No rest for the weary." Maddie said as we ran out of the store.

We ran to the source of the trouble. It was Koragg with Catastros and he was already large and in charge.

"Let's Ranger up!" Nick said.

"Magical Source, Mystic Force!"

"How can we fight him without our Megazord Power?" Vida asked.

"Good question." Maddie said.

"Come on guys. We can do this. We don't have a choice." Nick said.

"He's right. You guys have got to do something." I said. I hated being helpless. With not physical Zords to pilot there was nothing I could do.

"Yeah, let's Titan up!" Xander said.

And so they did. I stood back and watched, which was massively hard for me. As I was watching Koragg started to retreat after Necrolai attacked him. Nick tried to stop him and was pulled through a portal with him.

"NICK!!!! No!" I cried. He was gone.

The Rangers came back for me and we de-morphed before heading to Root Core. We ran in to fill in Udonna. She said that since we didn't know which dimension Nick was in we couldn't teleport there. We tried the crystal ball...nothing.

"This is bad. This is really bad." Vida said.

"Thank you Captain Obvious." I said.

Vida glared.

"Sorry V...this is my fault." I said as I went and sat on one of the steps.

"How is this your fault Mac?" Maddie asked.

I sighed, "I'm the trainer. It's my job to protect you guys."

"There's nothing you could have done."

"I should have. I hate this! I can't even fight beside you guys hardly at all because the underworld makes things big before we even have a chance on a normal battlefield. I'm useless." I said.

Xander say next to me and put an arm around me, "You aren't useless Mac. What you teach us about fighting has helped us on the battlefield many times. Without you none of us would stand a chance."

I leaned into Xander and sighed again, "Thanks Xan."

"Come on guys, let's go get some air." Maddie said.

We all went for a walk in the woods. We were discussing the hopelessness of the situation when this...creature jumped in front of us. I took a fighting stance.

"Nick's in trouble?" he asked...I think it was a he.

"Who are you?" Xander asked.

"More like what are you?" Vida added.

"Drumroll please. I'm Phineas." The creature said.

"Oh, you must be the troblin." Chip said, "Nick told us about you, but he didn't tell us that you were so...well...freaky."

"Oh, stop it, I'm blushing. Come on, come on, give me a hug." Phineas said as he hugged a reluctant Chip. "OK, too soon...oh, girls. I love that." He added as he looked over Maddie, Vida, and I, "Oh...what's this about Nick being in trouble?"

"He's trapped in an evil dimension, and there's nothing we can do to get him out." Maddie explained.

"Oh, yeah, well I guess giving up is the right thing to do. Hey, no point in getting up just to fall back on your face again, I always say."

"Well, hold on. We didn't say we were giving up." Xander said.

"Oh, oh, my mistake. So, your moping around here with the, uh, long faces is actually helping Nick. Yeah, I get things wrong sometimes."

"He's right. Walking around feeling helpless isn't gonna bring Nick back." Vida said.

"Yeah." Maddie said.

"I agree." Xander added, "We gotta at least try."

"After all, we're Power Rangers." Chip said.

"That's a good attitude guys. Let's do this." I said.

We went back to Root Core. We each tried various magic. The Rangers tried Udonna's brand of magic while I tried to combine fantasy magic and Sataurian magic (which were normal English spells, thank god).

"Power of the Ranger rise, come to me, I call you near, come to me and settle here." I said. I heard that spell on 'Charmed' a few times. It was to call a lost witch. I figured with some tweaking it could call a lost Ranger. Didn't work.

"Damn it! He who was lost, let him be found. I command thee, bring Nick back around." Nothing. "Power of Saturn, I command thee, bring my lost friend back to me!" Nothing. "Damn it!" No one else was having luck either.

"Hey, don't get frustrated, just keep trying." Maddie said.

I cycled through the spells again and varied them a bit. Still nothing.

"Hey guys, it says here, 'A spell of transport is a one way deal unless a source can reverse the seal.'" Vida read.

"Oh, goody, a riddle." Maddie said.

"Reverse the seal? But how?" Chip asked.

"Hey, remember that record that came out last year? I used it all the time for scratching because if you play it backwards it has different lyrics." Vida said.

"So you think if we say the spell backwards, it might release Nick." Maddie said.

"It's worth a shot. Can anyone remember Koragg's spell?"

"It was something like 'Fettuccine Alfredo!'" Chip said.

I sighed, "That's an Italian dish dude."

"Oh...looks like we gotta deal with him first." Xander said as we saw a monster was attacking.

We Morphed and headed out.

"Oh yes! Finally, a human sized monster for me to play with. Let's have some fun." I said.

"Let's make this interesting." The monster said as he used the Ranger's Zord powers to grow.

"Aww man! Not again!" I cried as the Rangers went into Titan form.

I stood on a building to watch the fight. I noticed when Koragg showed up on another building. I ninja streaked over and stood behind him to see what he was up to. I didn't watch long before the Rangers remembered the spell, said it backwards, and released Nick. Nick came back in Titan form...and get this...he was riding Catastros! More than that... he combined with Catastros to form a new Megazord formation.

"He bonded with Catastros. How is that possible?" Koragg said.

"Anything is possible Koragg...we're the Power Rangers." I said.

Nick defeated the monster and this really pissed Koragg off. He went and called Catastros back to him. The horse threw Nick off and went back to his master.

"I don't know how you were able to combine with my mighty Catastros, but I promise you I will find out. Something about you is troubling." Koragg said to Nick.

"I don't understand, what are you talking about?" Nick asked.

"We will meet again, Red Ranger." Koragg said as he vanished.

This was very odd...there was something different between Koragg and Nick...something was off. I didn't know what but I had a feeling it was only a matter of time before I figured it out.

In the meantime I had a date to get ready for.

I went home and picked out some jeans and a purple top with split sleeves. It was cute but not too sexy. I got dressed and fixed my hair and makeup. I was ready just as the doorbell rang. I tried to get to it before Hunter but he beat me. He wanted to play overprotective cousin.

"Hi, come in. I'm Mackenzie's cousin, Hunter." Hunter said as he let Kevin in.

"Hi, I'm Kevin Summer." Kevin said.

"And I'm Mackenzie Bradley. Everyone knows everyone. Can we go Hunter?" I asked.

"Just a second Mac. How would your parents feel if I let you just take off with some guy I barely know?" Hunter asked. I sighed, "Fine."

"So, Mac tells me you're a football player?"

"Yeah, first string." Kevin said.

"Yeah? Try 'yes sir' next time."

"Come on man, you're not that much older than me."

Hunter glared, "I'm 22, you're 17. I might only have 5 years on you but I'm a hell of a lot more mature than you...and I certainly am your elder. And I'm the guardian of the girl you want to take out. Now, if you expect to take out my cousin you will show me some respect."

"Yes sir." Kevin grumbled.

"That's better. Now, you will treat my cousin right or you will be more sorry than you can imagine."

"Yes sir."

"Good. Glad we're clear. Have fun Mac. Remember to be in bed by curfew."

"Alright. Later Hunter." I said as I took off with Kevin. I couldn't believe how over protective he was. It was kinda cute.

"Your cousin is scary." Kevin said as we got in the car.

"Yeah, he can be. He's just looking out for me." I said.

Kevin reached for my hand, "Thought we could go to a party."

"A party?"

"Yeah. Greg's parents are out of town so he's throwing a kegger. His older brother took care of the beer and everything."

"I'm not sure that's a good idea. If my cousin finds out..."

"He won't."

"I thought the point was to go out together."

"We are together."

"But alone..."

Kevin smiled, "We'll be alone later. Count on it."

"Uh, I...ok."

Being at that party was like being in a gorilla cage. They were all so barbaric and...it was disgusting.

“So Mac, your cousin is with that hot singer right? I hear she gets around.” One of the guys said. I rolled my eyes, “She was a kid then. She loves Hunter now.”

“Too bad. I bet she’s good in bed. No chance I could get you and her into a threesome?”

“Oh god.”

“Back off man, she’s mine. If anyone gets the threesome it’s me.” Kevin said.

“Right. I’m sure. Shouldn’t you guys be doing something more constructive? Like homework?” I asked.

“We know all that crap.”

“OK, pop quiz, what is the capital of Nevada? It’ll be on the next test in geography.” I said.

“Easy. Las Vegas.”

“Wrong. It’s Carson City. Ok, what continent is England on?”

“Trick question. England is a continent.”

“Dear god...ok, where is Paris?”

“Texas. Duh.”

“No, not that Paris...oh god...I give up.”

After a couple of hours Kevin took my hand and led me to a bedroom and locked the door. He led me to the bed and started kissing me. We made out for a bit before he slid his hand up my shirt. I pushed him away.

“No, don’t.” I said.

“It’s ok. No one will know.” He said as he tried again to get my shirt off.

“I said no. Kevin, stop.”

“You’ve been teasing me all night Mac, you know you want this.”

“Actually I don’t. Stop.”

“See, you said don’t stop.”

“I’m serious. No.” I pushed him away again.

“So you’re a tease?”

“I didn’t mean to tease you, now stop.”

“No, you need to learn to follow through when you tease a guy.”

I pushed him away again, this was starting to remind me way too much of James raping me, “STOP!” I screamed as I pushed him hard. He flew into the wall and I got up and ran out of the room. I went outside and took cover. Too many people were outside. I couldn’t ninja streak and if I called Hunter he’d kill Kevin. I pulled out my phone and dialed Xander’s number. I felt safe with him.

“Hello?”

“Xan? Can you come to Greg’s and get me.”

“What? Why?”

“Just...please. No questions. I’ll explain later. Just get me out of here.”

“Ok, I’m on my way.”

A few minutes later I saw Xander pull up. I came out of hiding and ran to the car and got in.

“Drive...drive.” I said.

“What happened? You look shaken.” Xander said.

I just started crying. It was too much for me. I was normally so strong but remembering what it was like to be broken by James and raped...forced to be with him...and the joy he got from it...it was too much.

Xander got a safe distance from Greg’s then pulled off the road.

“Hey, hey...what’s wrong Kenz?” he asked as he pulled me into his arms and held me.

“I’m sure you know I was raped last year.” I said through my tears.

“Yeah, it was all over the news. Wait, Kevin didn’t rape you did he?”

“No...he tried. I got away. He was drunk and...he wouldn’t take no for an answer.”

“And it brought back all your bad memories. Oh god...I’m so sorry Mac.” He said as he held me tighter. I felt safe so I cried more.

After I calmed down he drove me home.

“You gonna be ok?” Xander asked.

“Yeah, fine. Thank Xan...for everything.” I said.

“No worries.”

“Please don’t tell anyone about this?”

“Our little secret.”

“Thanks. See you later.” I said as I kissed his cheek and got out of the car.

I went into the apartment and Hunter was waiting up.

“Have fun?” he asked.

“Fun is not the word I would use.” I said.

“Well you’re home now. Is Kevin gone?”

“Yeah. He’s gone.” I went and hugged Hunter, “Hold me.”

“You ok?”

“Fine...just remembered how lucky I am to have you.” I said. I knew I should have told him about what Kevin did, but I just couldn’t.

PRT 256- "Memory Lane"

"Great practice guys. See you tomorrow." Courtney said as we finished cheer practice. I grabbed my gym bag and ran out of the gym, hopped in my car, and drove to Aaron's for band practice. I ran in still in my cheer sweats.

"Ok guys, let's do this." I said.

"About time you showed up." Joey said.

"I told you guys I had cheer practice today."

"She did. It's not her fault. Let's just do this." Tyler said.

Aaron nodded, "Alright, let's do it."

After practice I sat down and took a breather.

"So, someone is moving up in the world. I heard you went out with Kevin." Aaron said.

I nodded, "Yeah...one time only thing."

"You know what Kev is saying, right?" Tyler asked.

"Oh god, more rumors. What?"

"That you fucked him and were so awful he dumped you."

"WHAT?! Oh that asshole! He tried to rape me!"

All three guys looked at me, "WHAT?!" they cried.

"Kevin and I were making out but I didn't want to have sex. When he made a move on me I stopped him. He kept trying to force me. I finally got away and ran off. I called Xander Bly to come pick me up, I was so scared."

"I'm going to fucking kill Kevin." Aaron said.

I looked at him, confused.

"What? You're like a sister to us Mac."

I smiled. That was kinda cool, "Thanks guys, but you don't need to kill Kevin. I don't think you guys could anyway, but it won't do any good."

"She's right. He's a football player...we couldn't take him...wait, how did you get away Mac? Wouldn't he have overpowered you?" Joey asked.

"I'm stronger than I look. All it took was one good push then I ran." I said.

"If he touches you again he's dead." Aaron said.

"Thanks guys...now I should probably go. Hunter will start to worry if I'm late."

"I bet you cousin wanted to kill Kev."

"Um...he doesn't know....and he can't. He will kill Kevin and he could. I gotta go."

I got back to the apartment and Hunter was on the sofa. He had his shoes on and looked ready to go out.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I was waiting for you. I figured we could go to the movies." He said.

"Again?"

"Yeah."

"Well I guess that's about all we can do since we can't go to Avalon...alright, let's go. What are we gonna see?"

"Brokeback Mountain."

"Dude, that's rated R. I can't see it."

"I'm your guardian. I can take you."

"Ahh, yes, sweet. Let's go. Gay cowboys and popcorn. Sounds perfect."

And it was. I'll keep out too many details because you gotta see this movie for yourself, but I will say the first sex scene was hot. It was pure aggressive sex. It wasn't rape because it was consensual but it also was aggressive...that gave me an idea...

Anyway, we got home after the movie and I went to Mackenzie's room and sat at the desk and started on my homework. Gah...homework. Anyway, I had the radio on as I worked. I was working intently when 'Dreams' by Van Halen came on. I stopped what I was doing and listened. This was a song Rocky and I both loved back in high school. It reminded me of him. It reminded me of when I was a teenager...for real. That was it! If anyone could help me

remember how to be a teen again it was Rock. Hunter wouldn't like it but I was really having trouble adjusting to this and I had to do something.

I reached for the phone and dialed Rocky's number.

"Hello?"

"Rock? Hey, it's Mich."

"Mich? You ok? You sound different."

"I'm fine. It's a long story. I need your help. Any chance of you coming to Briarwood to see me?"

"Sure, you need me and I'll always be there. I can be there tomorrow."

"Alright. Afternoon is good. I'll explain everything then. I'll see you then."

"Ok. See you then."

The next day, before I headed out for school, I went to hug Hunter.

"See you tonight babe...oh, Rocky will be by later. He'll probably be staying for dinner." I said.

"What? Rocky?"

"Yeah...just a visit from an old friend. Knew you'd be ok with it. Love you, bye." I said as I ran out before Hunter could say another word.

And so the next day, after school, I bailed on cheer practice and explained to the guys in the band I needed the afternoon off. They weren't happy but they understood. I rushed home and got there right before Rocky showed up. He rang the bell and I answered the door.

"Rock! God is it good to see you." I said jumping into his arms.

"Um...who are you?" Rocky asked.

"Oh, right...sorry. I forgot. It's me...Mich."

"What?"

"Long story. Come in. I'll explain."

"Um...ok."

Rocky came in and sat down and I explained everything.

"...and so that's why you're here. I need to remember what it was like to be 16. Since you were the best part of my teenage years I figured we could reminisce and maybe it would remind me."

"Ok...whoa...do you have any idea how crazy this is? How do I even know you're really Michelle and this isn't some evil plan by some creature?" Rocky asked.

"Spoken like a true Ranger. You're right. Ok...proof...I remember the night we got together. After that dance...you went with someone else. I couldn't handle seeing that and I left early. You can to my house later...it was pretty late...you threw pebbles at my window to get me to come down and you got me to tell you how I felt about you. You told me you felt the same then we kissed for the first time. I remember the first time we made love. I remember how perfect it was and how much in love we were. It wasn't typically romantic in a candles and soft music sort of way but because we were together it was perfect in every way. I remember when we broke up at the beginning of senior year. It lasted all of three weeks before we decided we couldn't live without each other. I remember breaking up after graduation and wondering how I would ever be whole again. Do I need to go on?"

"I believe you...almost. Name our song."

"Trick question. We have two. "You're Still the One" and "And We Danced""

Rocky nodded, "Oh wow...god...Mich..."

"Yeah, I know."

"Of all the weird things being a Ranger has done to you this has got to be the weirdest."

"Tell me about it."

"What does Hunter think of this?"

"What do you think? He hates it. His girlfriend has to be his cousin publicly. It's not fun."

"Wow..."

"Yeah...and so this 16 thing isn't easy. I need you to help me remember what it was like."

"Mich, I'm as old as you..."

"I know that, but maybe you can help?"

"I can try. Start with the other Rangers though...they are teenagers."

“Ok...good idea. Come with me to Rock Porium. It’s the music store the Rangers work at and it’s a nice hang out.” Rocky nodded, “Alright.”

We went to the store and the first person I saw was Xander, he was supervising the other Rangers as they worked. “Hey Mac.” He said.

“Hey Xan...this is my friend...” I started.

“Rocky DeSantos...I know, I’ve seen you in the tabloids. I’m Xander Bly. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Um...likewise.” Rocky said.

“Speaking of tabloids Mac, your cousin’s girlfriend is in this week’s Inquisitor.” Xander said as he handed me the tabloid.

I read over it. You can see for yourself what it [said](#).

“Fuck...you’ve got to be kidding me...pregnant? Break ups? Damn it!” I cried.

“Calm down Mi...Mac...it’ll be ok.” Rocky said.

“No it won’t.” I said, “I have to learn to be 16 and fix this mess too.”

“You will...hey, hang on just a second. My staff is slacking.” Xander said as he slid his chair over to the other Rangers,

“OK, work the beat, work the beat. Stocking doesn’t have to be boring.” He turned around and freaked as Toby held up a lifesize cut out right in front of his face, “Oh, it’s you boss.” He said when he saw Toby.

“Nice work Xander. I like that was you’ve got everyone working. You are a born leader.” Toby said.

“Hear that guys? Born leader.” Xander said.

I smiled, “Yeah, you do leadership well.”

Meanwhile the others rolled their eyes.

“Who’s the old guy Boss?” Xander asked as he looked at the cut out Toby had.

“Who’s the old guy?! Guys, Jake Bonebreaker, the man who put metal in metalhead...lead guitar and vocal of metal megaclassic Harry Hatchet. Ok, your lesson...play it, like it. Class dismissed.” Toby said as he walked away.

“Guys, who wants to take care of the King of Metal?” Xander asked.

“Not me.” Nick said.

“Me either. He’s older than my dad.” Maddie said.

“I got things to do.” Vida said.

“Sorry, heavy metal makes my nose bleed.” Chip said.

“Fine. I’ll do it myself, like everything else around here.” Xander said as he reached for his wand. I saw him as he pointed his wand at the cutout and said some magic words.

“Xander, no!” I cried, but it was too late. Xander brought the cutout to life!

“Oops, there’s a slight magical malfunction.” Xander said.

I sighed, “Lesson in Magic 101...this is exactly what I’ve been trying to warn you guys about from day 1. Magic for personal gain is a no-no. You use magic for personal gain and you will eventually get hit with a consequence...case in point.”

“Rangers, there’s a very dark magic presence in your area.” Udonna said over the phones.

“We can’t all split on Toby. V and I will check it out. You guys help with, uh, heavy metal boy.” Nick said.

I nodded, “Good plan. Call if you need back up.”

Nick and V left and we were left with Xander’s magical consequence.

“I take it these guys are still newbies.” Rocky said.

I nodded, “Is it that obvious? Maybe I can reverse it. What was done, now undo, send the metalhead back to his form true.” Nothing happened, “Yeah, didn’t think so...ok you guys have fun.”

I sat back and watched at the live action cutout reeked havoc on the store. Xander tried to stop him but it was no use... then Toby came in and saw. He freaked at the sight of his idol in his music shop. This was bad. Very, very bad.

Of course things went from bad to worse when we were called out to help Nick and V.

“Ok Rock, duty calls. I’ll be back. Xander, undo this now. Only you can undo the spell you cast.” I said.

“Oh right. Almost forgot.” Xander said as he reversed the spell and we took off. We’d have to deal with Toby later.

“Be careful.” Rocky said as we took off.

Necrolai kicked our asses and then to boot we noticed we got caught on a security camera. Thank god we didn’t morph in front of it.

Needless to say Udonna was unhappy...so was I.

"You need to protect your identities at all costs. This tape could put us all in danger." Udonna said.

"No lie guys. I'm Mac for a reason...and trust me, it's not to relive my lost youth. Michelle would have been far too much of a risk. You guys don't have any idea what's at stake here. And not just for Hunter and I but for you guys and the whole magical world." I said.

"Wait, what's that?" Maddie asked as she paused the tape and zoomed it.

"Looks like some kind of map." Nick said.

"Yes, but...there's more to it than that." Udonna said.

"Isn't there always?" I asked.

"It's a map written by the ancients."

"Hmm...let's take a closer look." Maddie said as she magically recreated a physical copy of the map for us to look at.

"Oh my...I thought this was lost. It's the map to the Fire Heart." Udonna said.

"The Fire Heart?! No way!" Chip said, "What's the Fire Heart?"

"The ancients believed it to be the source of tremendous power."

"Which means we need to find it before Necrolai gets her scaly little hands on it." Vida said.

"Oh, that won't be easy. It says that you must traverse the Cimmerian Forest."

"That's all right. We like forests, don't we guys?" Xander asked.

"Not really." I mumbled.

"This one is like any you know. Imagine your worst nightmare." Udonna said.

"That's easy. My mom puts my cell phone in the dryer and the next time we Morph my uniform is really tiny." Chip said.

"Oh dear god." I grumbled as the others laughed.

"Enough!" Udonna yelled, "You are about to begin the most dangerous journey you have ever undertaken. Your path will be filled with unimaginable danger, evil creatures, ravenous demons. Now go."

"Sounds like I finally get to have some fun. Let's do this." I said.

"Remember, returning with the Fire Heart will not be your success. Your success will be to return at all."

"About time I got to do something life threatening. If I have to train we can at least make it fun."

And so we headed off into the forest. Xander got cocky and took the map from Nick and proclaimed himself leader. No one challenged him.

"Um, Xan, you're a great leader, mind if I co-lead on this one though? I think two leaders might be better than one." I said.

Xander nodded, "Fine, every leader needs a cute female companion."

I rolled my eyes, "Thanks...I think."

And so we headed off. It was really creepy. Bones littered the ground and the air was cold and clammy.

After a while we ran into Phineas, who really creeped us out at first. He kinda snuck up on us. Anyway, Phineas offered to take the lead, he knew his way. Xander would have no part of that though.

And so we spent the next couple of hours following Xander. I tried to keep him on path but he insisted he knew the way. We ended up walking in circles. Nick finally called him on it. While Nick and Xander argued about if we were lost Chip noticed we were sinking...we were standing in swamp sand! We tried to Morph our way out of it but our Morphers didn't work. I tried to ninja streak out but I was in too deep already. Nick managed to grab a branch and pull himself out, then the rest of us. Unfortunately the map didn't make it out.

"Map? Who needs a map? I've looked at that thing a million times. It's all up here." Xander said.

"And that's supposed to make us feel better?" Vida asked.

"Xander, face it, we're lost." I said.

"No, we're not. Come on." Xander said.

We sighed and continued to follow him. Lucky for us we ran into Phineas again. Maddie and I wanted to get Phineas to help but Xander still insisted he had things under control. This time Nick turned on Xander and went with Phineas instead. The others followed suit.

"Guys, I know where I'm going." Xander said, "Wait...I'll cover your shifts at Rock Porium for two weeks if you stick with me."

"Make it three." Maddie said.

“Deal. Chip?”

“Deal.”

So Maddie and Chipe stuck with Xan and Nick and Vida stuck with Phineas. Now I figured following Phineas was the smart move...which is why I had to stick with Xander. They would probably need my help more.

And so after following Xander for awhile longer we finally found a clearing.

“See guys, Team Xander comes through safe and sound.” Xander said.

That was right before a giant spider attacked us and trapped us in a web.

“Xander, what exactly is your definition of safe and sound?” Chip asked.

“Great work Xan. This is brilliant.” I said.

“Guys, it’s all my fault.” Xander said.

“A little late for that.” Maddie said.

“No fucking kidding...god, even I can’t get us out of this. My hands are stuck so I can’t summon my power.” I said.

Just then Phineas showed up and saved our butts. After we were free Xander finally asked Phineas to lead us. We were led to Nick and Vida, who were engaged in battle. We helped them defeat a monster but then Koragg made it grow...shocker huh? Anyway, the Rangers went into Titan mode. Lucky for me they went into Megazord form this time and so we got a cockpit. I actually got to help finish the monster for once!

After that we noticed Necrolai with a map. Vida went after her and tried to grab it. She ended up tearing it in half. Necrolai was pissed and retreated.

After the battle we went back to Root Core.

“OK guys, we have to talk.” I said as I noticed Rocky was there, “Oh hey...how did you get here?”

“Udonna helped me get here.” He said.

“Rocky is a former Ranger, I felt he could be of some use to you in your talk with the Rangers.” Udonna said.

“Yeah, he can. He’s a great example of what happens when our identities get out...in more ways than one.” I said

“Ha, ha.” Rocky said.

“What do you mean?” Nick asked.

“Rocky and our friends Adam and Aisha became Rangers after finding out our identities by accident. It was the original Power Ranger team...three of our members were moving and Rock, Adam, and Aisha were their replacements...you see, the three were captured and we had to save them...in the process of saving them we ended up having to reveal our identities to them and of course they knew us from school already. Then, three years later, Rocky was in the hospital and while visiting we accidentally revealed our identities to a 12 year old named Justin...Rocky named the kid as his replacement soon after.” I finished bitterly.

“Yeah, she never really forgave me for that.” Rocky said.

“It was what ultimately led to our break up Rock. If you would have stayed a Ranger just a little longer we would have stayed together. We’d probably be married now.”

“Yeah, and you either would be with Hunter or you would have cheated on me with him.”

I sighed, “Maybe you’re right. But hey, hey, I’m trying to train here.”

“You’re right, we’ll talk later.”

“Ok, so the point of this is that magic for personal gain is bad...you will be hit with consequence. And our identities have got to stay secret. If my identity ever got out my career...my life and Hunter’s life would be over as we know it. Same for you guys...you guys ever reveal your identities and your lives will never be the same again. You’d be hounded by the press 24/7...you’d never be left alone. As intense as Michelle’s life as a celebrity is yours would be worse...and beyond that, if you’re hounded by the press 24/7 it makes it hard to save the world. Just ask Dustin Brooks. Dustin was the first Yellow Wind Ranger three years ago. One time Dusty used his Ranger powers to save a friend in a civilian situation...now that in itself wasn’t as bad as Sensei tried to make it out to be. The point is that Kelly, the friend he saved, told reporters about it. She didn’t do it to be mean or anything, she was excited a Ranger saved her. Well after that the tabloids picked up on it. Thankfully his identity stayed secret but the headlines that read ‘Is Yellow Going Solo?’ swelled Dusty’s head and drove a wedge in the team. It got so bad that Dusty thought he could go solo...and each time he did the reports swarmed around him, putting themselves and others in danger for the story and distracting Dusty from his work. Thankfully we got them to back off before it was too late and things went back to normal. My point is that it’d very dangerous to get reports in the mix here and can you imagine if people ever found out Dusty was the Yellow Ranger? Then things would really have gotten bad.”

“Another Yellow Ranger? I wanna meet him.” Chip said.

“Out of that whole story you got that?!” I cried.

“Relax, we get the point Mac.” Xander said.

“You guys better because this is no joking matter.”

“She’s right. Being a Ranger is serious business. I know it’s new and exciting to you guys but you have to remember what’s at stake here. I know what it’s like to be new at this. I was new once too and the existing members of the team had to help me realize the importance of it all.” Rocky said.

“We get it, we do. We’ll be more careful.” Vida said.

I nodded, “You better be. Now come on, you guys gotta get back to work.”

We headed back to the store. Xander went on and on about how sorry he was.

“Yeah, and maybe you all will learn some responsibility with your powers too. You are much too careless.” I said.

The Rangers looked down.

It was about this time that the real Jack Bonebreaker came in. His tour bus broke down. We tried to get Toby out but he thought it was another trick and blew us off.

“Ok, this is fun, but I have better things to do. Later guys. Rocky?” I said.

Rocky nodded and followed me, “Nice to meet you guys.”

Rocky and I went back to the apartment and I turned the TV on. There was a special about Japan on. We watched for a little while then they started talking about the insane popularity of the pachinko machine in Japan. They talked about how addictive the machine could be. I started cracking up.

“Oh cut me a break, it was a spell.” Rocky said.

“You were such a dork. Playing Frisbee with the pachinko monster while we were getting our asses kicked.”

“You didn’t think it was funny back then. You were so pissed at me.”

“Well yeah! You got us turned into pachinko balls!”

“Tommy saved us.”

“Yeah, lucky for you.”

“Seems like I made it up to you pretty well.”

I smiled, “Yeah you did. I remember that night. We spent hours at the lake that night.”

“Yeah, and if I recalled not much talking got done either.”

“No, but we were using our mouths. Those were great times...you really were the best part of being a teenager.”

“We were great together.”

“We were...god...I miss you Mich.”

“I know...sometimes I miss you too.” I said softly.

“Do you really think we’d be married now if I wouldn’t have broken up with you?”

I nodded, “Rocky, I was already planning on marrying you at the end of senior year. In fact when we went off to talk after graduation, when you broke up with me, I thought you were gonna propose. I wanted to marry you right after graduation.”

Rocky looked horrified, “You mean if I would have proposed that day instead of breaking up with you...you would have said yes?”

I nodded, “Yeah...without hesitation.”

“I would have loved to spend my life with you...you know I never stopped loving you.”

“I never stopped loving you either...it just...I moved on.”

“I know...I’ve moved on too...doesn’t mean I don’t wish things could have been different...that we could have another chance.” Rocky said as he moved closer to me.

“Rock...this isn’t why I called you.”

“I know...but...Mich...”

“You don’t even care what I look like...”

“Why should I? You’re still you.”

“Oh god...Rock...I’ve been needing to hear someone say that.”

“I’ll always love you, no matter what.” Rocky started to lean in to kiss me.

“I’m not interrupting am I?” Hunter asked as he walked in.

“Oh...of course not. Hey baby.” I said as I pulled away from Rocky

“Did you and Rocky take care of what you needed to?”

I nodded, "For now..."

"Yeah, and I should really get going...if you need anything else Mich..." Rocky started.

"I'm sure I will...I'd like to see you again soon."

"Just say when."

I smiled and hugged him, "Thanks."

"Take care. Bye Hunter."

"Yeah bye." Hunter said as Rocky left.

After Rocky was gone I noticed Hunter take off to the bedroom.

"What is your problem?" I asked.

"I don't like the idea of you spending time with your ex...especially with one you loved so deeply."

"He's a friend and I need his help...besides, you don't like being near me."

"I'm working on that...we kiss and make out."

"We don't make love."

"I'm working on that."

"Work harder."

"Is that what this is about?"

"What?"

"Rocky...you're trying to make me jealous."

"No, I just want you to love me." I said as I pushed him against the wall, "I want to know you want me...I want to feel sexy again." I kissed him.

"Mac stop." He said as he pushed me back.

"I'm Mich damn it!" I cried as I pushed him.

"Stop."

"Why? So you can keep running from me?" I pressed my body against his and slid my hands up his shirt. He tried to resist but I kept pushing him. Next thing I knew he was pushing back but undressing me in the process. "You want me. You know you do. Fuck me Hunter...you want to." I hissed.

"Oh god..." Hunter picked me up and threw me on the bed, "Wait...this is your first..."

"It's with you...that's all that matters. Do it." I said.

"But..."

"Do it!" I said.

Hunter got aggressive again and next thing I knew we were thrashing around the bed going at it hard.

When it was over he held me.

"You used the Brokeback thing on me." He said.

I smiled, "I had to do something to get you past this."

"You're good. I'll give you that."

"And you love it."

"I do...I love you Mich...no matter what you look like I love you."

I let out a big sigh of relief. Since this whole mess started those are the words I'd been wanting to hear. Now I was starting to have faith I'd be ok.

Ring, Ring

"Damn it, can I not get any homework done around here?" I mumbled to myself as I walked across the room and answered the phone. "Hello?"

"Is Michelle there?" a voice asked. I knew that voice. It was my father.

"Um, speaking," I said as I tried to impersonate...myself.

"You sound different."

"Slight cold. What's up?"

"Making sure you're ok. I've seen the tabloids."

"All lies I assure you."

"You're such a selfish, self centered, immature, mean spirited person."

"Excuse me?"

"Leaving everyone to worry about you."

"Oh god...yes, heaven forbid I have my own life."

"You gave that up when you became an actress."

"Oh god...I don't even want to hear this."

"I don't know how I raised such an evil daughter."

"Evil? Evil? I'm not fucking evil!" I cried.

"Yes you are...how else do you call a person who treats their father the way you treat me, who treats their husband the way you treated Jon, and who treats their public the way you do?"

"You abused me...Jon abused me...and I'm entitled to a little privacy."

"I never abused you and I doubt Jon did either...anything you got your deserved."

"Fuck you."

"Yeah, you're not evil."

I fought back tears, "Go to hell." I slammed down the phone and sat in the nearest chair while I tried to calm down.

Was I evil? Of course not. If I was I'd be working for the Underworld...right?

As if on cue Hunter walked in. He was covered in mud and sweat...obviously he hadn't showered before he left the track.

"Hey sweetheart I'm...home...Mich are you ok?" Hunter asked as he closed the door.

"I'm not evil am I?" I asked as Hunter pulled me into his arms and held me. I just hung on to him tightly, not even caring about the sweat or the mud.

"Of course not...what would even make you ask something like that?"

"My father called and..."

"Oh god...not again. I thought we were rid of him. Mich, you can't listen to a word he says. He said you were evil?"

I nodded.

"If anything he's the evil one. After the way he's treated you...Mich, blow him off."

"I know...I just..."

"You're as sensitive as I am about being told you're evil...I know. But you're not. Anything evil you've ever done was the result of a spell."

"That's true."

"You're good...through and through. Now come on, I need a shower and after being in my muddy arms you could probably use one too."

I smiled, "No argument here."

Hunter and I took a nice long shower then we went to dinner then I had to head to Root Core. By the time I got there everyone but Vida was there. We started looking through books and trying to figure out the Fire Heart...after a couple of hours we were ready to give up. I dismissed everyone and I headed directly home, cuddled up with Hunter in bed.

"Mich?"

"What Hunter?"

"I was thinking...Mac could take a few days off. I have a short tour...the season starts in two weeks. I'd like to spend every moment with you I can. The Rangers can go a few days without you, right?"
I smiled, "Sure. You don't mind your cousin tagging along?"
"Of course not...as long as I can come home to my girlfriend at night."
"You have a deal."

So the next morning I told the Rangers and Udonna I was leaving for a couple of days. Now, Vida was missing so I was a little worried about leaving but I had to have faith...and Mac did need a break.

After all my bases in Briarwood were covered I met up with Hunter at the track and we headed off for the first town. When we got there we went to the hotel and settled in. Hunter got a room with two beds to keep up appearances even though we were going to sleep in one.

Anyway, after we got settled we met up with Blake.
"Hey cuz." I said with a smile.
Blake laughed and shook his head, "Hey cousin. You two hungry?"
"Now that you mention it...always." Hunter said.
"Food, sex, and riding...the only three things Hunter thinks about." I teased.
"Now, now cousin...behave yourself."
"What fun would that be?"
"Come on you two. Let's find some food." Blake said.

We ended up at a Chili's. I ordered some pasta that was really good. Anyway, while we were eating one of the other riders walked up.
"Well look at what we've got here...the Bradleys of Briarwood." He teased.
"Very funny Matt." Hunter said.
"So, you gonna introduce me to your cousin or do I have to do it myself?"
"Calm down. Mac, this is Matt. Matt, this is Mackenzie, my 16 year old cousin."
"Nice to meet you." I said, "And for the record, the Dukes, of which you're referencing, were all cousins. Hunter and Blake are brothers so your reference doesn't really work."
"Smart kid." Matt said.
"Yeah, we're really proud of her." Blake said.
I stuck my tongue out at him.
"And you're only 16?" Matt asked.
"Physically." I said.
"Too bad...you sure are hot."
"Thanks...age is just a number to me but...my cousins are pretty strict."
"Yeah, we are, so don't even think it." Hunter said.
"Seriously, stay away." Blake added.
"Alright, alright...I'm backing off. See you guys later. It was nice to meet you Mackenzie." Matt said.
"Likewise." I said.

After dinner Hunter and I went to the room and cuddled in bed. The room had free Showtime so we turned on 'Queer as Folk'. As the theme song started I cuddled up closer to Hunter.
"This is my favorite way to spend time." I said as the show started and opened with a scene of Justin and Brian making love, "Ohh...now this is my favorite way to spend time."
Hunter laughed, "Yeah, mine too. I love holding you."
"While we watch this show." I added.
"Of course."
We watched the rest of the show then turned the TV off. I rolled on top of Hunter and kissed him.
"Mmm, what was that for?" he asked.
"What do you think?"
"I think you got turned on watching Brian and Justin again."
"And you didn't." I teased as I reached down and grabbed him over his pants. He was hard.

“I didn’t say that...”

“Then what are we waiting for?” I asked as I started to kiss his neck.

“You tell me.”

I smiled and slipped my shirt over my head. I grabbed Hunter’s hands and put them on my chest, which was considerably smaller now...another draw back to being in a teen’s body.

“There’s certain things about Michelle’s body I miss.” He said.

I smiled, “I know, but you still have me.”

“You’re so tiny now though...you’re shorter and smaller and...did you really have to pick a body with such a small frame?”

“Hey...I’m small as myself.” I said, slightly offended.

“You are, you are. I didn’t mean it like that. I mean when you’re you you’re taller and...you’re a woman. You have the body of a woman. You have the curves and muscle and build of a real woman. Mac is...Mac has the body of a typical athletic teen. Still not fully developed.”

“Oh...ok.”

“You can’t tell me sex isn’t a little uncomfortable for you.”

“Because of my body size compared to yours? Well...yeah, it feels different...and it does hurt at first a little, but it’s not like I want to stop or anything.”

Hunter laughed, “Didn’t think you did.”

“Enough talking...there’s better things to do.” I said as I slipped his shirt off.

“I love the way you think.” He said as we continued to undress each other. When we did that we made sure we were protected then Hunter pinned me to the bed and slowly slid into me. It felt so great to be with him again.

After we finished Hunter held me close until I fell asleep in his arms.

The next morning Hunter had to get to the track early but I slept in. When I did finally get up I took a shower and got dressed then I went to the track for the first race. I cheered on Hunter and Blake. I was still cheering when I saw a familiar face. Tori had come up for the first race. I walked over to her.

“Hey Tor.” I said.

“Do I know you?” she asked.

Damn it...Mac. I sighed, “Yeah, I’m Mackenzie Bradley, Hunter and Blake’s cousin.”

“I didn’t realize they had a cousin.”

I sighed, “Hey, got a secret for you.”

“Um...ok...” Tori said.

I moved right next to Tori’s ear and whispered, “It’s me, Michelle. I’m using magic to mask my identity and so just go with me here.”

“Are you serious?”

I nodded.

“Oh...wow...”

“Yeah, I know.”

Hunter ended up winning the race by a tenth of a second over Blake. After the race the guys had work to do so Tori and I went to the hotel.

“Ok, explain.” Tori said.

I sighed and told her the whole sorted tale about Mystic Force and...everything.

“Ok, that’s quite a story.”

“Tell me about it. Welcome to my life.”

“I thought you retired.”

“So did I.”

“Dustin will never believe this.”

“He’s not alone. I had to convince Rocky and Hunter both I was really me.”

“How’s Hunter taking this?”

“Better now than he was. It was rough for awhile.”

“But it worked out?”

“Of course.”

A few minutes later Hunter walked in and Tori left.

"Nice race babe." I said as I hugged him.

"Thanks." He said.

I smiled and sat on the bed and clicked the radio on. One of my songs from my PH days was on.

"Oh shit...teenage flash back!" I laughed.

Hunter smiled, "Come here."

"Are you ok?" I asked as he pulled me into his arms.

"I'm fine. I just...I missed you out there."

"What? I was there."

"Yeah, but not really. Not as the supportive girlfriend...as the supportive cousin."

"Ohhhh, I get it. I'm really sorry."

"I know...and I know there's nothing you can do...still."

"Yeah, I know." I said as Michelle's cell phone rang.

"That's Mich's phone..."

"Answer it for me. I'm not in the mood to fake a cold again." I said.

Hunter laughed and kissed me, "Fine."

I smiled at him and watched as he grabbed my phone. He was so perfect...it amazed me how much in love I was. He was amazing.

I was pulled from my thoughts when Hunter hung up the phone and looked somber.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"That was Jon."

"Ok...something about Casey?"

"No. Brett."

"Brett?"

"You remember hearing about a shooting a few months ago?"

"Sorta...a shot knocked the window out of his bus. It was an accident though."

"They're not sure anymore. Brett was in his car today and he was shot at again."

"WHAT?! Shit. Is he ok?"

"Yeah, but the police are taking his one seriously. They think there might be a hit on him."

"Oh fuck. And there's not a damn thing I can do...especially as Mac."

"There's nothing you could do as Michelle."

"I could be a supportive friend."

"Ok, true."

"I fucking hate this Hunter...I hate it." I said as I started to cry.

Hunter pulled me into his arms, "I know. I hate it too baby."

"I don't want to be Mac anymore."

"You don't have a choice."

"I know...god, I know."

"Shh, it's ok baby...you want to skip dinner? Just cuddle?"

I nodded, "I'd love that."

"Ok..." Hunter slipped out of his shoes and his shirt then took my hand, "Come here." He helped me into bed with him then he held me.

Eventually we decided we wanted some dinner so we ordered room service. As we ate we watched CMT. They were playing music videos. They showed mine, then Jon's...which was just weird. Then some others...after a few more they played Raye and Serena's new video (my keyboardist and bassist). They were working under mine and Mina's label and they were releasing an album as a duo. I was glad they were getting airplay. It was good for them as artists and good for my label's pocket book.

Which brought me to the next day. With an artist actually active I had work to do. I couldn't work over the phone because it was too hard to play like I had a cold. I logged on to my computer after Hunter headed to the track and I started emailing people. I had budgets to approve, schedules to approve, and of course I had to make sure everyone

knew what they had to do to promote the album.

I was in the middle of writing an email when my Ranger phone beeped.

“Hello?” I answered.

“Mac, it’s Maddie. There’s a problem.”

“What’s up?”

“Well, we don’t know...Vida is acting weird. You think you can get back to Rock Porum and help us figure it out?”

I sighed, “Sure. Give me a few minutes.

Go figure.

I called Hunter’s cell. Luckily he was on break and answered.

“Hello?”

“Hunter, babe...I have to get back to Briarwood. There’s a problem of some sort.”

“Ok...should I come back?”

“No. Finish your racing stuff. You’ll be home in a couple of days, right?”

“Yeah.”

“I’ll be find until then. I’ll see you at home. I love you.”

“I love you too. Be careful.”

“I will. Bye.”

I ninja streaked back to the music store and found Xander, Maddie, and Nick.

“What’s the deal?” I asked.

“Something is going on with V. I’m worried.” Maddie said.

“Yeah, Chip thinks she a vampire.” Nick said.

“Crazy huh?” Xander said.

“Guys, don’t be so quick to dismiss what Chip said.” I said.

“Vida isn’t a vampire.” Maddie said.

“Vampires don’t even exist.” Nick said.

“Oh, and I guess magic doesn’t exist either?” I asked.

“That’s different...have you ever seen a vampire?”

“Yes.”

They looked at me.

“Listen guys, I’m serious. There’s three enemies I have on Saturn.”

“Saturn?” they asked.

“Oh, yeah...Saturn princess here...long story. Forget I have to tell it every year. Just go with me here. There’s three enemies I have on Saturn. Lilianna, who is dead...hopefully for good this time, thank god. The rebels who are quiet for the moment...thank god. And finally the Vampiresses. They are a breed of all female vampire and they are very dangerous. They’ve tried to turn me god knows how many times...almost succeeded once too. Long story though. Bascially it’s not so far fetched that the underworld has their own breed of vampire and that they somehow turned Vida.”

“No way.” Xander said.

“Way.”

“We should go back.” Maddie said.

“You’re not buying this.” Nick said.

“Better to be sure.”

We went back to Root Core but there was no sign of Vida or Chip. We told Udonna about the vampire theory and she backed me up about their existence so Maddie did a test. She took some video of V earlier. She went to play it back... Vida wasn’t on the film. That confirmed it. We headed out to find them.

We caught up to them and they were facing off with a monster. We Morphed and did our intros as we faced off with him. We were kicking ass till the damn thing grew...lucky for me we went into a real Megazord mode so I got to go in the cockpit and help. The sun was rising so we had to work fast. We finished the monster and freed the vampires just in time...including Vida. Or so we thought.

Later at the store Chip was trying to sell a vampire safety kit for 200 bucks that included vampire chalk. Yes, vampire chalk. The way this stuff worked was you drew a circle around a vampire and then the vampire couldn't cross the line. So V and LeeLee were talking...Chip drew a circle around V...LeeLee backed off. Anyway, Vida tried to leave the circle, but couldn't...then her fangs came out again. V was still a vampire!

PRT 258- "Motocross and Vampires Part 2"

Ok, recap. Vida is a vampire. Hunter is at a moto demo. LeeLee saw Vampire Vida. OK, now that you're all caught up, let me fill you in on what happened next.

We returned to Root Core and we trapped Vida in a circle. We really didn't know what to do.

"Guys, I know you think you need to do this, but I'm alright. Please, let me out." Vida said.

"We're gonna help you V. I promise." Chip said.

"Maybe you should let her out." Claire said as Vida attacked the energy barrier, "And maybe you shouldn't." she amended.

"If flytrap was destroyed, Vida should be fine. She must be under the spell of another vampire." Maddie said.

"What if it's Necrolai?" Chip said.

"Koragg would know that." Xander said.

"Nick, Koragg seems to be able to contact you whenever he likes. Have you ever tried to contact him?" Chip asked.

"No. Well, I can try." Nick said. He closed his eyes and tried, then shook his head, "I guess it doesn't work..." he started as he cried out and held his head, "Next time Chip, you can call him yourself. He's in the Glen."

"While you go after Koragg, there's something I need to do." Udonna said.

"Who's gonna stay with V?" Madison asked.

"I will." Claire said.

"She's gonna try anything and everything to get you to release her. You sure you're up for it?" Xander said.

"Yeah, vampires are tricky. You can't think with your heart here." I said.

"Don't worry. I am a lot smarter than I look...or...nevermind, I'll be fine. I promise." Clarie said.

"Where's Chip?" Nick asked.

I sighed, "Probably taking on Koragg alone."

"We should go after him." Xander said.

"Why do they insist on taking on evil alone every year?" I said as I pulled my Morpher out.

We Morphed and went and found Chip getting his ass handed to him by Koragg. Before we could attack Koragg told us that Necrolai is the one that turned Vida. After that he vanished. He said we had to get Vida back to earn the right to fight him.

So we headed back to Root Cord. Claire was standing alone. Vida was gone.

"Oh no." Maddie said.

"I'm so sorry. But she got really sick and then she fainted and so..." Claire said.

"It's ok, you don't have to explain Claire." Nick said.

"I just thought, what if something really bad happens I would never forgive myself, do I just erased a little but of the circle and she got out?"

"Well, at least she didn't bite you." Chip said, "She didn't bite you did she?"

"No, but she put me in the circle. Can you let me out?"

Xander erased part of the circle and let her out.

"Um, Xander..." I started, but it was too late.

"Thanks. Uh, I better find Udonna." She said as she took off.

"I still say anyone with half a brain wouldn't have been tricked." Xander said.

"Oh, hi guys, I didn't hear you come in. That Vida is a tricky one. She pretended she was sick but...hey, where did Vida go?" Claire asked walking in.

"What was that half brain theory of yours again?" Maddie asked.

"As I was trying to say, Um, Xander, only vampires can be trapped in the circle." I said.

"Oops." Xander said. He looked pissed.

So we started racking our brains about how to defeat Necrolai. Xander finally suggested the Xenotome. We found out we needed to make a Dawn Crystal. Just then Udonna walked in with the ingredients. She said we were running out of time and we were in danger of losing Vida. Chip and Udonna started to make the crystal while we went looking for Vida.

I was a long intense search that seemed impossible. We searched all night with no luck. We finally ended up at Rock Porum.

"Maybe she left town, maybe she was taken." Maddie said.

"We'll find her Maddie, I promise." Nick said.

"Find who?" Vida asked as she walked in.

"Vida..." Maddie ran to Vida and hugged her.

"Sis, I'm fine. Calm down. I had quite a night, but I'm ok" Vida said.

"What happened to you?" I asked.

"Are you ok?" Maddie asked.

"I'm fine. I took down Necrolai. I'm me again." Vida said.

"You did?" I was skeptical.

"I did. I came here in daylight didn't I?"

"She's right, she did." Xander said.

"We should get back to Root Core." I said. Something didn't seem right.

We walked in just as Chip finished the Dawn Crystal. Nick told him about Vida defeating Necrolai. Udonna seemed as suspicious as I was. Xander and the others were convinced that Vida was ok because she walked around in daylight. I still wasn't convinced. Necrolai would walk in daylight too. Anyway, Vida handed us each an apple. She said she picked them. Just as everyone was about to eat their apple, except Udonna and I, Chip stopped. He remembered apples weren't grown in Briarwood. Vida said he 'picked them up at the store. She took a bite out of her apple and the others were about to as well but Chip and I stopped them. The apples fell to the floor and collapsed into black mush and Vida vanished. We ran after her. Necrolai showed up to command her to destroy us. No one moved as a Morphed Vida ran at us.

"Come on guys Morph! We have to fight her, Vida or not!" I cried.

No one listened to me. Chip Morphed to take on Necrolai and I Morphed and tried to get to Vida but the others were trying to hold her back while Unmorphed and it made it hard to fight. She finally blasted them off a building and they Morphed as they fell.

"Now you listen. Vida or not, she's evil, fight her." I commanded. I was the only one really fighting her though. The others were still going easy on her. She ended up going after Chip to protect Necrolai. I didn't see much of that because I was busy checking on the other Rangers. Vida did a number on them.

After they were up we went running over. Chip was aiming the crystal at Vida because she was in front of Necrolai. Xander, Maddie, and Nick tried to stop him but Chip shot anyway. Vida stepped out at the last minute and Necrolai was it. She attacked Vida and we launched a final attack on Necrolai and took her out. Vida really was Vida again and Koragg made good on his promise. He went large and attacked us. We formed the Megazord (yes I got to help) and fought Koragg. We gave it all we had and we got a new spell. That spell gave us a new Megazord and it was enough to get rid of Koragg...or get him to retreat anyway.

After the battle we went to Rock Porum. The guys were lucky to still have jobs after this mess. LeeLee happened to be there and Vida told her she was just playing a joke on us with the vampire thing. She bought it and left the store. She was acting odd, even for LeeLee.

"O...K...I don't think I'll ever understand LeeLee." I said.

"Do you really want to?" Maddie asked.

"Probably not." I said, "I should get home. Hunter was supposed to come back today."

"Can I walk with you?" Xander asked.

"Um, sure...if you want."

"We'll see you later." Maddie said.

"Bye guys. I'm glad you're ok V."

"Thanks Mac." V said.

Xander and I walked out.

We started walking to the apartment. I yawned.

"Rough day huh?" Xander asked.

I nodded, "Yeah...very rough."

"But, we got Vida back."

"Yeah, we did. I hate vampires."

"So, what's with this supposed Saturn princess thing?"

I laughed, "Long story. But I'm a reincarnated Saturn princess. My life force is connected to my power Amethyst. That's the short version."

"Wow...and so you dealt with vampires before?"

"Yeah. The vampiress race...all female breed. Evil suckers."

"Ha ha."

I grinned, "No one can say I lack wit."

"You are a witty girl."

"And pretty."

"Yes, and pretty."

"I'm a total package."

Xander laughed, "Yeah, you are."

"Hunter is a lucky man."

Xander smiled, but it looked forced, "Yeah, he is."

"Are you ok?"

"I'm fine."

We got to the apartment and went in.

"Hmm, I guess Hunter isn't home yet. You want anything?" I asked as I grabbed a soda out of the kitchen.

"No, thank you." Xander said.

"Ok."

"Yeah...so, I guess I should go."

"You can stay. I was just gonna go lay down for a bit but you can sit in the room and we can talk for awhile."

"Um, alright."

We went to Mac's room. I laid on the bed and Xander sat at the foot of the bed.

"I really hope the Underworld takes a few days off. I need sleep." I said.

"Yeah, really. I'm exhausted." Xander said as he yawned.

"This is a big bed. You can lay down on the other side if you want."

"You sure?"

"Yeah, sure."

Xander laid on the other side of the bed and soon after we were both out.

I woke up to the sound of the phone some hours later. When I woke up I noticed I was in Xander's arms. I must have rolled over and he was holding me. I pulled away and grabbed the phone.

"Hello?" I asked.

"Hi, is Michelle there?" Zachary asked.

"Oh...hey, it's me." I said.

"Mich? You sound different."

"Yeah...long story."

"I have time."

"Ok, you heard about Mac? Hunter's cousin?"

"Yeah. In the news."

"Well, meet Mac."

"Wait...Mich? You're Mac?"

"Yes...it's a Ranger thing."

"Why am I not surprised?"

"I know, I know. What's up?"

"Oh, right...big news. Guess who's gonna be a father...again..."

"What? Kelly is pregnant?"

"Yes!"

“OH MY GOD!!! Congratulations.”

“You’re gonna have a little niece.”

“It’s a girl?”

“We think so.”

“Oh god, that’s amazing!”

“I know, we’re thrilled.”

“When is she due?”

“Soon...”

“What...”

“I wanted to tell you before but Kelly didn’t want the press all over her and since you’re a press magnet...”

I sighed, “Sadly, I understand. I want to know when the baby is born though.”

“Of course.”

“This is great news.”

“So...Mac...wow...how is everything else?”

“Alright I guess. Hunter has pretty much adjusted to the Mac thing. I’m getting by. I hate it, but I’m handling it.”

“Wow...so those tabloid rumors about you being pregnant are false?”

“Of course! No baby for me any time soon.”

“And Jon...has be backed off?”

“Yeah. Pretty much.”

“Good. I really hate that guy.”

“No, really? I thought you loved him to bits.”

“You’re a riot.”

“So I’m told.”

“Well, I should probably get going. I love you sis.”

“I love you too.”

I hung up just as Hunter walked in.

“Oh...Hunter! Great timing. Zachary just called me.” I said.

“And?” Hunter asked.

“Kelly is having another baby!”

“That’s great!” Hunter said as he hugged me.

“I know!”

“Oh, hey Xander.”

“Hi Hunter. Good race?” Xander asked.

“Yeah, very.”

“I should really god now. I’ll see you later Kenz.”

“Ok, see you tomorrow. Bye.” I said.

Xander waved and left.

“Nice kid.”

“Yeah...he is. Seems level headed.”

“Yeah, he is.”

“So, everything here ok?” Hunter asked.

I nodded, “Yeah, fine. Vida is fine...it was a rough battle though. The Underworld really isn’t messing around. They are strong.”

“You gotta be on your toes.”

“Very much.”

“You look exhausted.”

“I am.”

“What do you say we exhaust you a bit more then get some sleep?” Hunter asked as he pulled me into his arms and kissed me.

“Sounds like a plan.”

PRT 259- "Me for a Day"

"I hate homework." I grumbled as I printed out my complete assignment.

"If you wouldn't wait until the last minute you wouldn't have to stress so much about it." Xander said.

I glared, then sighed, "OK, point. Anyway, thanks for helping me."

"You're welcome. Although you didn't need it. You're much better at this stuff than you think."

"Which is surprising. I haven't been in school for almost 10 years."

"This is just computer basics though. You're a lot smarter than you give yourself credit for."

"Thanks." I said as I turned the computer chair around and turned the TV on. A music video was ending and they were going to commercial.

"Don't miss the 2006 CMA Fest in Nashville. Formerly known as Fan Fair, this event features some of the biggest names in country music. This years participants include Carrie Underwood, Emerson Drive, Martina McBride, Brad Paisley, Michelle Morris, Miranda Lambert, Sara Evans, Trace Adkins, and many more. For more information visit www.cmafest.com."

I froze.

"Did that announcer just say 'Michelle Morris'? That Michelle Morris will be at Fan Fair?" I asked.

Xander nodded, "That's what I heard."

"Shit." I turned back to the computer and went to the website. Sure enough my picture was right there. Number 7 on the front page. "What in the hell am I supposed to do? Fan Fair is coming up, I'm supposed to be there, and yet I'm not... me."

"You could always reverse the spell for the weekend."

"That puts you guys down a Ranger. It's too risky for me to enter the forest as myself anyway and besides that, I'll be surrounded by fans all weekend...very little privacy."

"I'm sure we can handle the underworld without you for a weekend. Besides, it's not for a few weeks. Lots of time to figure this out."

"I hope so. God...JessLyn did this...sometimes I wish she knew about my Rangering so she'd stop pulling this scheduling crap on me."

"You can't trust her to tell her?"

"No way. She's use it to promote my career."

"Ah, I see."

"Exactly."

"I guess there's nothing I can do right now." I said as Hunter walked in.

"Hey guys." Hunter said.

"Hey baby, how was practice?" I asked as I went and kissed him.

"Fine. I think it's gonna be a great season." Hunter said as he hugged me tightly.

"You two have any idea how gross that looks?" Xander asked.

"I know...but it's not...I'm still me...I just don't look like me." I said.

"Yeah, I know."

"Did you two get that homework done?" Hunter asked.

I nodded, "Yeah."

"Awesome. Xander, would you like to join Mi...Mac and I for dinner?"

"I don't think so." He said.

"Oh come on, join us. It's the least I can do to thank you." I said.

"Well, alright."

"Awesome! OK, so, what's for dinner?"

"How about that buffet that just opened downtown?" Hunter asked.

I nodded, "Sure. That OK with you Xander?"

"Sure, that's fine."

At dinner we each got a plate of food and talked while we ate.

“So, Xander, how’s the...special project coming?” Hunter asked.

“Um, pretty good. I’m enjoying it.” Xander said.

“Is Mac doing her job?”

“Yeah, she’s a great trainer. It’s obvious she’s been at this awhile.”

“And Mac, how’s school?”

I sighed, “School. I hate it. No one should ever have to be forced to relive high school.”

“What about you Hunter? The season should be starting soon right? Are you ready?” Xander asked.

“Yeah, I’ll be leaving in about a week to start racing. I think I’m ready and the team is looking pretty good, despite our set backs.” Hunter replied.

“Kenz, what are you gonna do while Hunter is gone?”

“Stay here and live up to my responsibilities.” I said.

“Alone at the apartment?”

“Yeah. I think I can handle it.”

“Oh, right...of course you can.”

“What wouldn’t she?” Hunter asked.

“He forgets I’m not really 16.” I said.

“Oh...yeah I guess I can see that.”

After dinner Hunter and I went back to the apartment and turned on the Top 20 countdown. I was up to 13 and Jon was down to 10.

“HA!! I’m gonna beat him in a couple of weeks...maybe even next.” I said.

Hunter laughed, “Why are you competing with Jon?”

“Eh, I always have...it used to be more friendly than it is now, but now I just wanna beat him.”

Hunter just laughed and shook his head.

I giggled and changed the channel. The new Dixie Chicks video was about to come on and I didn’t have any desire to see it. I turned it to a music only channel and my song was playing.

“WOO! I got airplay too!” I cried.

“You’re too funny.”

“Why? Cause I get excited about my career?” I asked as I danced to my song.

“You get so excited. It’s not like you’ve never seen yourself on TV before...or heard yourself on the radio.”

“Doesn’t matter. Every time I get airplay it means people out there still want to listen. When I’m on high rotation, like I am these days, it means I have a real career. With a ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ career like mine it’s always exciting to know you’re still ‘here’.”

“When have you ever been gone?”

“There was a time in my career I had been written off.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Before I did Coyote Ugly. The two or three years before that people wrote me off as yesterday’s news...a has-been child star...all at the ripe old age of 16.”

“And you didn’t care?”

“I had Rocky and my friends. I didn’t care at the time. Then I turned 17 and graduated and lost Rocky and...I realized I was about to lose my career. I threw myself into work, put out a new album that did alright in country music but not great and I was about to get dropped from my label. It was do or die. I got involved with a boy band member and he helped me get back on track. I did Coyote Ugly and Can’t Fight the Moonlight went to the top of the charts. It put me back on the map. A couple of years later I got involved with Jon and did the Twisted Angel album. That didn’t do great but it kept me afloat and my marriage to Jon kept me in the spotlight. After that I met you and well...you know what happened there. All that inspired This Woman, which is really reviving my career in a HUGE way. It’s all thanks to you.”

Hunter pulled me into his arms and held me tightly, “It’s your talent.”

“My talent is nothing without inspiration and you inspire me. If people didn’t get that with This Woman they’ll certainly get it with Whatever We Wanna.”

“The Euro Album?”

“Yeah, it’s not codenamed The Euro Album anymore. We finally named it.”

“And I inspired that album too?”

“Whatever We Wanna is just as much inspired by you as This Woman, if not more so.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too Hunter...so much. I’m gonna miss you a lot.”

“I’ll miss you too baby...this is gonna be hard.”

“But you’ll get short breaks every few weeks, right?”

“Yeah, and I promise to spend every second of my breaks at home.”

“You better. I’m not complete without you.”

“I feel the same.” Hunter said as he turned the TV off and took my hand. He guided me into the bedroom.

“What are we doing?” I asked.

“We haven’t made love since this happened.”

“Yeah we have.”

“No...we’ve had sex. I want to make love.”

I smiled, “Let me make it easy for you. In this time and...”

“Don’t. It doesn’t matter how you look. I love you.”

“And I love you for that...this is as much for me as it is you. *I* want to make love to my boyfriend. In this time and in this place let me see my truest face.” I said as I became myself again.

“My god...you’re so beautiful.” Hunter said.

“You’re not so bad yourself.” I said as I kissed him.

Hunter and I started to slowly undress each other, eyes glued to one another’s bodies as we did. When we were both undressed Hunter slowly pushed me back on the bed and just looked at me. I noticed tears in his eyes.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Nothing. Everything is right for once. The moment is right, this is right...I love you Mich.”

“I love you too Hunter.” I said as I reached up and slid my hands across his abs. He leaned down to kiss me then slowly I felt him enter my body. It felt so much better doing this as myself. It felt like my body was made for his again. It was amazing. He went slow and was very tender. Each time he touched me I could feel the love in his touch. It was perfect. After we finished he held me tight and we eventually fell asleep that way.

The next morning we woke up and took a shower and I got dressed in my own clothes. We both had the day off and I decided I wanted to spend the day with my boyfriend, not my cousin. If the Rangers needed me I’d Morph and meet up with them. Root Core would be ok with me for a day.

At least that was the plan. When Hunter and I went downtown we were bombarded with press in just minutes.

Seriously...in no time we were surrounded.

“Michelle, where have you been?”

“Are you pregnant?”

“Are you on your way to Europe?”

“Have you and Hunter gotten back together?”

These questions and more were shouted. I got sick of it. The first bench I saw I jumped up on it and screamed, “HOLD IT!!!! HOLD EVERYTHING!!!!” everyone quieted, “Now listen and listen good! I have just been laying low. I want some damn privacy. Hunter and I never broke up, we’re still very happy together. I’m not pregnant. The Euro album will be out soon but promotion is still being determined. I obviously can’t have privacy so I’m gonna have to go back to laying low again. That is all I have to say now please leave Hunter and I to enjoy our day in peace or I’ll have you all arrested for harassment.” I said. I posed for a few pictures and everyone started to go away. Hunter helped me off the bench and I sighed.

“Nice work.” Hunter said.

“Thanks. Hey, look, Rock Porum. Let’s go in there until things finish quieting down.” I said.

We went into the store and Toby was at the register.

“Welcome to Rock Poru...hey, you’re Michelle Morris!” Toby said.

I smiled, if he only knew that he’d been working with me at part of The Project on an almost daily basis. “Yes, I’m Michelle...and you must be Toby. Mac has told me a lot about you and how you helped set her up with a band.”

“Mac really is your cousin?”

“Cousin-in-law, but yeah, I consider her a cousin. You didn’t believe her?”

“I did...I just wasn’t positive. You must be Hunter Bradley, Mac actual cousin?”

Hunter nodded, "Yeah, that's me. Nice to meet you."

"Like wise. Michelle, would you be open to performing here some time?"

"I don't see why not. It could be fun."

"That's amazing...thank you...wow..." Toby said as Xander walked over.

"Hunter...oh...Michelle. Hi." Xander said.

"Hi Xander. How are you?" I asked.

"Fine. What are you two doing?"

"Enjoying the day together."

"Where's Mac?"

"At home doing her own thing. Taking a break from life."

"Oh, ok. Well tell her I'll call her later." Xander said as he went back to work.

"Poor guy." Toby said.

"What?" I asked.

"Between you and me I think he's got a bit of a crush on Mac but she doesn't seem to return it."

I raised an eyebrow, "A crush? On Mac?"

"Is it really that surprising? She's an attractive young girl, he's an attractive young guy...they'd actually make a cute couple."

"There's no way Xander has a crush on Mac. He just couldn't. Anyway, we should be heading out. Just wanted to come in and check out the place Mac is always on about."

"Nice meeting you. Come back anytime."

And so Hunter and I spent the rest of the day together. We went shopping, we had lunch, and we sat at Starbucks and just talked about things. That was fun.

"So the album is finished?" Hunter asked as I sipped my drink.

"Pretty much. Just a little final adjusting but that's not my thing. My part is done. The first video for the album has been filmed and...well I'm all set. I think you'll love the album." I said.

"I'm sure I will."

"And then of course I have fan fair to worry about."

"How come?"

"Jess booked me."

Hunter looked at me wide-eyed, "What? Are you serious? You haven't exactly been yourself lately. Are you sure that's smart?"

"Nope. It's not smart at all but what else can I do? Mac and I are headed to Fan Fair in a few weeks."

"You and Mac?"

"Yeah...people will start to talk if Mac and I are never seen together. I'll get Mina to be Mac for me."

"Why Mina?"

"Raye and Serena have to worry about actually having a booth...they're a duo now and all."

"Oh, right. How's that going?"

"Massive airplay on their first single and their debut album is already being talked about and it's not even out yet. It's gonna make Starlight Records a ton of money. If they do better than Raye did as a solo artist it might actually put Starlight on the map."

"That's great."

"Yeah, it is. Mina and I are very excited."

"How's her solo album coming?"

"Almost done from what I hear. I'm trying to stay out of it though."

Hunter nodded, "No release date?"

"Well, yeah. Actually she sent me an e-mail the other day with an album title and release date."

"What is it?"

"The title is 'Bleeding Heart Graffiti' and the release date is July 18th. She'll tour with me in Europe to promote both our albums then she'll tour the US alone while I prepare to record the new US album then she'll record the album with me and we'll start promoting that."

"WOW...she's gonna be busy. Is Adam ok with that?"

"He knows it makes her happy."

“And how are you gonna handle a tour in the summer?”

“I dunno yet. Might have to find a stand in for me. I honesty don’t know. I cross that bridge when I get to it.”

“Life isn’t gonna get simpler any time soon is it?”

I sighed, “Afraid not. You wanna bail while you can?”

“Babe, I couldn’t bail if I wanted to. I need you.”

“I need you too.” I said as I reached for Hunter’s hand.

We ended the day by going to Avalon...the thing I’d been wanting to do most since this mess happened. We went in and hit the dance floor. “Unwritten” by Natasha Bedingfield was on. I LOVED that song so I was psyched to get Hunter on the dance floor. We danced to that song and a few others then I got a drink. I avoided getting drunk this time, but Hunter didn’t. After a couple hours at the club I was buzzing mildly but Hunter was plain drunk. I knew this because I went to the bathroom and when I came back Hunter was grinding with a very hot guy. Now, Hunter was bi, I knew that. That wasn’t the odd part. The odd part was his hitting on anyone else while he was with me. I stood back and watched him and the guy for a bit. It was hot as hell. After a few minutes I got closer and cut in.

“Oh, hey Mich.” Hunter slurred.

I smiled, “Hey sexy...who’s your friend?”

“Brandon.” The guy said.

“Well Brandon, it’s nice to meet you but I’m afraid this one is spoken for. Come on babe, we should get you home.”

“No.” Hunter said.

“Yes, come on...I’ll make it worth it.”

“Really? How?”

“I’ll fuck you till you pass out.”

“Ok, let’s go.”

I smirked and we left the club. We went home and I kept my promise.

The next morning I woke up and took a shower. I didn’t want to become Mac again. I liked being me. Whoever would have thought that being one’s self would be such a treat?

I was at the table at eating breakfast when Hunter stumbled out of the room.

“Morning Sunshine. How are you feeling?” I asked.

“Like shit.” Hunter groaned.

“Have a seat. I’ll get you some Motrin.”

“Thanks.”

I grabbed some medicine and poured a cup of coffee, “Here you go.” I said.

“Thanks Baby.” He said.

“Need anything else?”

“No, I’m alright. I guess I had a bit too much to drink.”

“Yeah, just a bit. It’s ok though. You were hot.”

“I was?”

“Grinding up on Brandon like that...yeah, that was hot.”

“Brandon?”

“You don’t remember?”

“No...I...oh...ohhhh...yeah...I remember...oh my god, I’m so sorry.”

“It’s ok. Had it been another woman I would have been pissed but seeing you grind up on him was just too hot for me to be mad.”

Hunter forced a smile, “Glad you thought so.”

I smirked as there was a knock on the door. I went to get it.

I opened the door. Maddie and Xander were there.

“Oh, hey Michelle.” Maddie said.

“Hey guys. Come on in.” I said.

“Mac still taking a break?” Xander asked.

I sighed, “Yes. I don’t really want her back anyway.”

“What? Why?! You have to...I mean...we need Mac.”

I nodded, "I know, I know."

"Hunter? Are you ok?" Maddie asked.

I laughed, "He's fine...had a little too much to drink last night. We went to Avalon since...well...since I could."

"Did you have fun at least?"

"Yeah, it was fun." Hunter said.

"Hot too." I smirked.

Hunter shot me a look.

"Well now you've had your fun...it's time to train which means we have to go to the forest, which means we need Mac." Xander said.

I sighed, "Fine, fine. Hunter, come give me a kiss before I switch back.

Hunter walked over to me, "Gladly." He took me in his arms and kissed me passionately. "Oh god, that was nice." I said as the kiss broke.

"O...K...magic time." Xander said.

Maddie smiled, "You two are so sweet."

"Alright, here it goes. In this time and in this place let me see my other face." I said as I became Mac again.

"Welcome back." Xander said hugging me.

"Yeah, thanks. Ok, let's go...we have training to do."

And we I went off with the two Rangers and headed off to train. It wasn't what I wanted but it was nice that I had the chance to be me again...even for a day.

PRT 260- "A Different Kind of Love"

"I'm gonna miss you so much." I said as I hugged Hunter tightly.

"I know. I'll miss you too. Whoever though I'd be the one leaving you to go on tour?" he asked.

"I know...kind of a trip."

"You'll be great though. Go out there and kick butt."

"You know it."

"And call me."

"I will. You take care of those Rangers."

"Of course. Promise you'll stay away from Moto Bunnies?"

"Of course! Don't you trust me?"

"I do. I don't trust them. I know what those girls are like. I used to be a groupie too. I know the life. I've lost lovers, friends, and...so much to the road. I don't want to lose you."

"You won't."

"OK...just promise if you slip up you'll be honest. We'll find a way to work it out. Just be honest with me."

"I promise."

"Ok...you should go before I get all teary."

"OK...I love you Mich."

"I love you too Hunter...more than words can say. You be careful out there but win one for me."

Hunter nodded, "I promise."

We kissed and held each other for another minutes before he let me go and picked up his bags. I watched him go then went back in the apartment. It was going to be so lonely around here without him.

I went to the living room and started watching a movie. I was starting to doze off when the doorbell rang. I sat up and went to the door. I opened it and was shocked to find Jon standing there.

"Jon? Hi..."

"Mac, hey. Is Michelle around?" he asked.

Ok, this was golden. On the one hand I could use this chance to pull off my plan from before and trap him...Madison had left her camera so it was the perfect time. On the other hand I could be nice and let him go...after all he'd been nicer lately. But how long would that last and did I want to risk it? Nope. I had to get something on Jon so he'd leave me alone.

"No, she's not here...but feel free to hang anyway. I could use the company." I said.

"Um, ok. I guess I can stay for a little while." He said.

I smiled, "OK great...wait here just a second."

"...ok."

I close the door then went in and hid the camera and started it recording, focused on the sofa. After that was done I went back to the door.

"Ok, sorry...had something to take care of...now, come in." I said.

"I just wanted to see Michelle and drop this off." He said handing me a CD case.

"I'll give it to her when she gets home...which won't be for awhile." I said as I set the CD down on a table.

"They left you here alone?" Jon asked.

I nodded, "I am 16. I can take care of myself. Have a seat."

"Ok..." Jon sat on the sofa and I walked over to him and straddled his lap. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Picking up where we left off before. You want me don't you?" I asked as I kissed him. He wrapped his arms around me and kissed me back at first. Then he pushed me away.

"I can't Mac. I'm sorry...just stop."

"What? Why? What's wrong?" I asked.

"It isn't you I want. I'm sorry. I was using you to fill the void Michelle left and that's not fair to anyone. Besides, it's upset Michelle if she knew about this." He said.

"You still love her don't you?"

He nodded, "I do. And I'll always love Michelle...I screwed up really bad though and...I know she's with your cousin now but should that ever not work out I want her back. Doing crap like this isn't gonna help me prove myself to her."

"She doesn't need to know."

"I'm sorry Mac. I can't. Just give Mich that CD." He said as he got up.

I nodded, "Alright. I will."

"Thanks." Jon said as he left.

I locked the door behind him and was massively confused. That wasn't like he Jon I knew at all. I went and opened the CD case. Inside was a burned CD and a note. I opened the note:

"You don't have to remember but never forget."

It was in Jon's handwriting. What did it mean? I put the CD in the player and pressed play. I knew when I heard the first note on the disk what this was. The first make up song Jon ever wrote for me. I sat and listen. I got a bit teary eyed. By the third song I knew what this disk was. A mix CD of songs Jon had written for and/or about me over the years. It was like a musical scrapbook. I sat and listened to each song and as I did I remembered back to the time in my life when that song had been written...what it'd been written for. I cried some, I laughed a little...it was a nice trip down memory lane. By the end of the CD (17 songs later) I knew what Jon's note meant. He'd given up trying to get me back but he didn't want me to forget what we once shared. I could understand...I could even respect that. Maybe he had changed...maybe this change would stick.

After the emotion of the moment had settled some I decided to go and pick up some dinner. I ran to Target and bought myself a copy of 'Brokeback Mountain', which had just hit DVD, then I went to Jason's Deli and picked up a barbeque sandwich. I went home and put in the movie and watched it while I ate. After the movie I popped in season 3, disk 1 of 'Queer as Folk'. Yes, Hunter and I had seen the whole series (seasons 1-5) but some shows were so good that it didn't hurt to watch then twice...or thrice...or more.

Anyway, after that I went to bed...alone...it sucked.

The next morning I woke up and got myself to school.

I went to my locker and got my books.

"Hey Mac." Xander said walking up.

"Hey Xan. How are you?" I asked.

"Fine. How are you?"

"Alright I guess. Hunter left yesterday."

"Oh yeah, that's right. Are you ok hanging out alone?"

I nodded, "It's not preferable, but I'm dealing."

"Well, if you ever get lonely just tell me. I'll come hang out and we can do homework or watch TV or whatever."

"Thanks. I might take you up on that. It'd be nice to have someone around. I'm not used to being alone anymore."

"Then why don't I come over after work and we can have dinner?"

I nodded, "Sounds great. I might hang around Rock Porum after practice anyway."

"Awesome. We should get to class."

I nodded.

Xander put his arm around me and we walked to class. It was boring, as normal.

After class, as we were leaving, we got our test and homework back from the last chapter.

"What did you get?" Xander asked as we walked out of the classroom into the hall.

"I'm scared to look." I said.

"I'm sure it's fine."

"You're right." I looked at my papers, "Oh my god!"

"What? What is it?"

"I made 100s on the test and homework!" I cried.

"Congratulations. I knew you could do it Mac." Xander said.

"Thanks to you." I said as I jumped into his arms and hugged him.

"You did the work. I just helped." He said as he hugged me back, lifting me off the ground in the process.

"Someone finally found a boyfriend." LeeLee teased as she passed.

I glared, "We're friends LeeLee...of course I wouldn't expect you to understand that concept, being as you don't have any."

LeeLee sneered and walked away.

“This calls for celebration. I’m treating us to dinner tonight.” I said.

“You’re the one that deserves a treat. Let me buy you dinner.” Xander said.

“No way! You helped me get this grade. It’s the least I can do.”

“I didn’t do anything. You did all the work.”

“Maybe, but you pushed me. I needed that. Now, no arguing with me.”

Xander laughed, “Yes ma’am.”

“Good...now, I have cheer practice. I’ll see you later.”

“Ok. Have fun.” Xander said as he kissed my cheek.

I ran to the gym.

“About time you showed up.” Courtney said.

“She was busy with her boyfriend.” LeeLee said.

I rolled my eyes.

“As I was saying, this is a retro dance. Watch me first then I’ll break it down.” Courtney said. She turned on a Venom song (Brett’s band). Since when was Venom retro?! Talk about making me feel old. And the dance Courtney was doing...very lame. I was at the back of the gym so I started doing a little dance of my own...I’d learned a thing or two on Sunset...dancing to this music in a fun and seductive way was...well let’s say I’d become somewhat of an expert when I was a kid. It was fun to take myself back in time and dance to that music again.

When the song ended I noticed the squad staring at me.

“What the hell was that?” Courtney asked.

“Oh...just a little something that...my cousin taught me.” I said.

“Hunter?”

“No, no...Michelle.”

“Oh, right...she dated the guy in that band didn’t she?”

“No, she never dated Brett...they were friends...close friends.”

“I like that dance she did.” Crissy said.

“Me too...but it’ll never get past the censors...AKA our coach. Maybe if we clean it up a bit.” Courtney said.

“We can do that.” I said.

“Wait a second, just because he cousin is a celebrity we suddenly take orders from her about our dances?” LeeLee asked.

“No, it’s not because of her cousin. It’s because her dance is good. We wanted retro and what better retro than a dance from someone who was actually there back then.”

I forced a smile, way to make me feel young again.

After cheer practice I went to band rehearsal.

“Hey Miss Popular.” Aaron said.

“What?” I asked.

“Haven’t you heard the rumor?” Joey asked.

“No...what rumor?”

“You and Xander Bly...” Aaron said.

“It’s all over school.” Tyler added.

“Me and Xander?!” I cried.

“Yeah...is it true?” Aaron asked.

“I’m not even gonna dignify that with a response. Can we just practice?” I asked.

“Fine, fine.”

After band rehearsal I went to Rock Porum. I walked in and Chip was looking at the Fire Heart map...the half we had anyway. Vida and Xander were working. I stood off to the side working on my jumps for cheerleading. Vida, Chip, and Xan were evidently having a competition about who could sell more. They were discussing it when LeeLee walked in.

“Can somebody help me here?” LeeLee asked.

“LeeLee, can I interest you in something?” Xander asked.

“Nice zit, Rudolph” LeeLee laughed as she looked at Xander’s nose.

“Zit...whoa!” Xander cried as he looked in the mirror.

“Xander the Great...big pimple!” Vida teased.

“Oh, it totally ruins my perfect profile.” Xander said, very distraught.

“Oh Xan, it’s hardly even noticeable.” I said.

“This zit is like having an extra nose.”

“It is not!”

“That’s it! Maybe the scroll to the Fire Heart is two halves of the same face...minus the zit of course.” Chip said.

Vida shushed him because LeeLee was looking at us.

“Chip, no talking about you know what in public.” I hissed.

“SUCCESS!” Toby cried from his office as he came out with a puzzle, “I finished this entire crypto-magnetic puzzle in just under 40 minutes. I should work for the CIA...the FBI...or better still, the Power Rangers!”

Vida, Chip, and Xander all got scared looks on their faces. I just started laughing.

“What did I say?” Toby asked.

“Nothing.” Vida said.

“Not a thing.” I echoed.

“Yeah, it’s a great idea.” Chip said.

“You should...” Vida started.

“...give them a call.” Chip finished.

I laughed harder, “Yeah, call the Power Rangers.”

“That’s a great idea...give them a call.” Toby said as he went back into his office.

The three Rangers let out sighs of relief.

“You guys freak way too easy.” I said, “Now, let’s get to Root Core and see what we can figure out about...you know what.”

We called Nick and Maddie then we went to Root Core. Chip explained his idea about the map being a mirror of itself and how he came upon it. Meanwhile Xander was obsessing in the mirror over the zit. I stood next to Xander and tried to build him up.

“Xan, you look fine.” I said.

“I do not.” Xander said.

“You do too. One little imperfection doesn’t make you any less of a person.”

“It’s working!” Claire cried as her dead flowers came back to life, “I finally did something right!”

“YAY CLAIRE!” I cheered as I did a jump and toe touch.

“What did you do?” Xander asked.

“It’s a potion I concocted to make sad, dull looking flowers become perfectly gorgeous.” Claire explained.

“It’s a perfection potion.” Xander said.

“Right. Let’s go. The Fire Heart is waiting. We’ll have to split up to cover the most territory.” Nick said.

“I don’t like the idea of splitting up.” I said as we headed out.

“Come on Xander.” Vida said.

I noticed Xander wasn’t behind us, “Come on Xan, hurry up.”

“Yeah, coming.” He said.

We split up. Xander went with Vida, Chip went with Maddie, and Nick went with me.

“I don’t like this at all.” I said.

“That’s why I’m leader.” Nick said.

“You’re so arrogant.”

“No more so than your boyfriend.”

“Huh?”

“Xander.”

“Xander isn’t my boyfriend...and that’s none of your business anyway!”

We walked quietly for awhile.

“Briarwood fight, fight...Briarwood win tonight...” I mumbled as I jumped around.

“This isn’t cheer practice. Stop it.”

“Fine.”

We continued quiet for awhile.

"Its like I'm walking on another thin line/Where the fools keep on thinking I'm blind/I'm waiting for the day" I sang. It was from a song I was working on.

"Stop singing. You're annoying me."

"You're no fun."

"You're not exactly a barrel of laughs either."

I glared as we heard an explosion.

Maddie and Chip heard the explosion too because we all ran for Xan and Vida.

"Hey! We heard an explosion." Nick said as Xan and Vida put a chest down.

Maddie took a scroll off the chest. It was a riddle but what it basically told us was that we had to figure out the puzzle to open the chest and get the Fire Heart before the hour counter counted down to zero. If the counter got to zero the Fire Heart would be no more. Before we could react to that we were blasted. The bad guys wanted the Fire Heart too.

We Morphed and fought the henchmen. It was fun to actually fight...although we didn't fight many unmorphed battles and I had yet to figure out why. Anyway, we got rid of the army and got the Fire Heart back to Root Core. We were trying to figure out the puzzle (we'd wasted 20 minutes fighting and getting it back). That's when Nick noticed leaves in Xander's hair.

"You've still got leaves stuck in you hair from the battle." Nick said as he tried to pull them out.

Xander cried out in pain.

I looked at him, "Oh no..."

"Whoa..." Nick echoed.

"It's nothing." Xander said, the paused then showed us his arms, "I'm just having a little issue." His arms were turning into branches...yes...wooden branches.

Everyone laughed but Xander and I.

"This is funny to you?" Xander asked.

"No, this isn't funny...this could be very serious guys." I said.

"Oh come on Xander...you always laugh when Claire turns herself into funny stuff." Vida said.

"I'm sure it's just a side effect of your organic power. It'll go away...knock on wood." Maddie said with a chuckle.

"MADDIE!" I cried.

"Guys, guys, come on, enough. Leaf Xander alone." Nick said.

"NICK!" I cried.

"Guys, can we focus on something more important, like opening the chest?" Xander asked.

"Good point. We have work to do." I said.

"We're running out of time." Xander added.

We looked at the chest again.

"Hey, I got it." Chip said.

"What, you solved the puzzle?" Maddie asked.

"No, but I think I know who can." Chip said.

"Who?"

"Toby."

"Oh no...no, no...we're not taking the Fire Heart to a civilian." I said.

"Why not?"

"Too risky Chip!" I cried.

"I think it's a great idea." Nick said.

"You would."

"I'm pulling rank. Mac, Vida, and Chip, take the chest to Toby."

I glared.

We walked into Rock Porum.

"Hey, Toby...got something for ya...the hardest puzzle in the world...if you're up for it." Chip said.

"Hardest puzzle in the world huh?" Toby asked.

"Next to impossible. Can you beat the clock?"

"I can solve it in less than an hour." Toby said.

“Good because you have less than an hour.” I said.

Toby took the chest into his office.

I sighed, “I can’t believe we just gave Toby the Fire Heart...this is so not a good idea.”

“This better work.” Vida said.

“Yeah, it better.”

“Don’t worry. As soon as he figures it out we’ll create a diversion and slip away with the chest before he can open it.”

Chip said.

“You better be right.” I said.

“It’s simple.”

“Famous last words.” Vida said as a trench coat disguised Xander walked in. Vida and I walked over to him.

“Still blossoming I see.” Vida said.

“Vida, stop it.” I said.

“It’s getting worse. Look.” Xander said as he opened the top of his coat a bit. His chest was growing moss.

“Ohh, some girls like a mossy chest.” Vida teased.

“V, this is serious. I can’t be seen like this. What happens if it doesn’t go away?”

“It will...in the fall!”

“Vida, this really is serious.” I said.

“Look, you didn’t do anything to cause it so I’m sure it’ll fix itself.” Vida said.

“I did to something. I sprayed myself with Claire’s perfection potion hoping to fix my nose.” Xander said.

“Xander! Damn it...how many times do I have to lecture you guys about magic for personal gain?” I asked.

Xander ran to a reflective surface. He saw his face turn to wood.

“Now look at me.” Xander said as he ran from the store.

“Xander, wait!” I cried as I ran after him.

Xander used a tree portal to get back in the forest. He got stuck because of all the wood friction or something. Anyway, I pushed him through then went through myself. We immediately stumbled on Phineas. This startled both Xander and Phineas and they both screamed. I jumped back because their screaming startled me.

“Phineas! You shouldn’t sneak up on people.” Xander said.

“I wasn’t sneaking. I didn’t see you there because...well I don’t know if you noticed this or not...you look like a tree.”

Phineas said

“Thanks for the newsflash. I can’t be seen in town like this. I look horrible.” Xander said.

“Actually, if you ask me, green is your color. Just watch out for the termites.”

Xander jumped.

“Gotcha!”

I laughed.

Xander looked at him.

“Sorry...well look, you came to the right place. I know all about what it’s like to not fit in anywhere.” Phineas said,

“Hey, tell ya what. I have an idea. How about you come stay with me? It’ll be great! I mean, you know, it’s not much, but it’s home.”

“Guess I don’t have anywhere else to go.” Xander sighed.

Xander and I followed Phineas to his camp home.

“So, first a Power Ranger, now a tree...you’re really branching out.” Phineas laughed.

I laughed too.

“Mac!” Xander cried.

“Hey, at least his are actually funny.” I said.

“I’m sorry. Well, hey, you can sit here pining away at your past life...you get it? Pining? Cause you’re a tree?” Phineas laughed.

“Phineas, it’s not funny if you have to explain it.” I laughed.

Xander look spaced.

“I’ll go get some dinner.” Phineas said as he took off.

“Xan, you’ve gotta get over this.” I said.

“Look at me Mac...I’m a tree.” Xander said.

“Yeah, you are...but you’re also Xander Bly.”

“Not Xander the Great anymore...”

“I think you’re still pretty great.”

“Sure...of course I do.”

“Really?”

“Yeah.”

“But...look at what I’ve become.”

“You’re still the same Xander inside...and for what it’s worth, you’re still the hottest guy at Briarwood High.” I said as I kissed his cheek.

Vida showed up around this time and reinforced what I said. She also said Claire was working on a antidote. We finally talked Xander into going to see what Claire had but when he tried to get up he was rooted to the ground.

“Oh no...” I said.

“You’re taking root.” Vida said.

Vida and I were trying to free Xander from the ground when Claire ran up. She had the antidote. Vida used her shape shifting power to turn into a rain cloud and rain the potion on him. I used my wind power to make sure the potion spread over him. In no time Xander was Xander again.

“Xander!” I cried as I ran into his arms and hugged him.

“Thank you, I could not have gone through this without you.” Xander said as his phone chimed, “New spell code.” He said as Nick called for help.

“Let’s do it.” I said.

Vida, Xan, and I Morphed and ran to the battle. There was a group of henchmen as well as a monster that was headed for the Fire Heart.

“Oh no, Toby...he can’t defend himself if he’s attacked.” I said.

“I got him.” Xander said.

“I’m with you.”

Xander and I went after the monster while the others held off the army. Xan and I worked together but the monster was too strong. We were getting out asses kicked.

“Use the spell code.” I said.

“Right.” Xander said. He put in the spell code and his gloves turned into boxing gloves. “Sweet!”

“Awesome!” I cried, “In this corner we have Xander the Great! And in that corner we have...toast.”

I watched Xander fight and win.

“GO XANDER!” I cheered as I did a toe touch.

Xander smiled, “Thanks.”

The others finished the army and we rushed back to Rock Porum just in time to see Toby finish the puzzle. I noticed Nick’s shirt.

“Nice shirt.” I said.

“Really?” he asked.

“Yeah, Hunter has one just like it.” I said as Chip grabbed the chest and we took off. Xander left him with a riddle to confuse him while we left. We got the chest back to Root Core and opened it. There was an egg inside.

“An egg? The Fire Heart is an egg?” Chip asked.

“We went through all this for an egg?! This isn’t a raptor rider is it?” I asked.

“No, this is no ordinary egg. This is the last dragon egg.” Udonna said.

“Wow...impressive...ok, let’s put it away some place safe. I have to run.” I said as I realized the time.

I rushed to a TV studio. I had promotion to do. I hid before I went in.

“In this time and in this place, let me see my truest face.” I became me again then went inside.

“Michelle, welcome.” The producer said.

“Thanks. I’m so glad to do this.” I said.

I stood in front of the camera and waited for my cue.

“Hi, I’m Michelle Morris and you’re watching a special Palisades High Marathon. Thank you for joining us. Tonight we relive my lost youth with 10 classic episodes of Palisades High. You won’t want to miss it. We kick it off with an

episode called 'The Friendship Business'. This episode proves that friends, and especially family, should never go into business together. But hey, I stuck with my brother...in the end anyway...why don't you just check it out for yourself?"

I finished that and did several more episode openers. It was so much fun to be involved with the show again. I loved it. After I finished I left the studio and hid again.

"In this time and in this place, let me see my other face." I was Mac again.

I headed home. When I got there Xander was sitting on the step in front of my door.

"Hey, what are you doing here?" I asked.

"I just wanted to thank you again for sticking by me." He said.

"No worries."

"I'm serious. It means a lot to me." He stood up and hugged me.

"Better watch it. We'll stir up more rumors."

"Rumors?"

I laughed, "Yeah, someone started a rumor that we're dating."

"Really?"

"Yeah...come in." I said as I let us in the apartment.

"Thanks. So there's really rumors about us?"

I nodded.

"You know, we could play it up."

"We could...but why?"

"Simple...counter future rumors. Make people think we're dating and people might leave you alone."

I nodded, "I hadn't thought of that. Great idea! But...wait...this is really nice of you Xan, but I'll only agree if you make me a promise."

"OK."

"If you find someone you wanna date for real you 'break up' with me."

Xander nodded, "Deal."

I hugged him, "You have yourself a pretend girlfriend...now I'm starved. You wanna get dinner?"

"Sure...let's go."

Xander and I left and surprisingly I didn't feel alone...it was a pretty great feeling.

PRT 261- "The Threat of a Kiss"

"And coming around the last turn Bradley and Bradley are neck and neck....and Hunter Bradley wins! Blake Bradley takes a close second...what a race." The announcer said.

I gave my bike to the team mechanic and went back to the pit area.

"Nice race bro." Blake said high fiving me.

"Thanks bro. You did great too." I said as I grabbed a towel and wiped my head.

"Thanks. Next race is mine."

"We'll see."

"Yeah. You coming out with us tonight?"

"Where you going?"

"TGI Fridays."

I nodded, "Sure, sounds fun."

I went to my hotel and showered. I changed into jeans and a black shirt with a crimson emblem then I headed out to meet up with the others. We got to the restaurant and ate dinner then we started drinking. All of the 250 riders were there and a couple of the 125s. There were also the typical moto bunnies. Some that travels around as roadies with us and others that were locals. I was on my second beer when this tall girl with shoulder length black hair walked over to me. She was wearing a mini skirt, high spiked heels, and a halter top.

"Nice race out there." She said as she sat next to me.

I nodded, "Thanks."

"You Bradleys really have talent."

"We've been riding awhile."

"Yeah, it shows. What are your plans for the rest of the night?"

I took a sip of my beer, "Just hang out here awhile then go back to my room and catch some sleep."

"I can think of better things to do in a bed."

"I'm sure you can."

"I bet you have natural talent there too."

"So I'm told."

"I'd like to find out first hand. Mind if I join you?"

I looked at her. She was beautiful, but I didn't want her. I couldn't do it to Michelle...besides that, I didn't want anyone other than Michelle. "Sorry, can't. Girlfriend."

"Yeah, yeah...Michelle...you honestly think she's not cheating on you with Brett or Jon or someone else?"

"I know she isn't."

"How can you say that? I've heard her reputation."

"Yeah, and she was a kid when that reputation formed. I trust Michelle and she trusts me. I'm not about to break that trust. Sorry."

"Your loss." She said as she walked away.

I sighed, Michelle was right, Moto Bunnies were relentless...I had a feeling this was far from over.

Michelle/Mackenzie

I was in the dining room working on some homework when there was a knock on the door. I went to answer it. It was Jon.

"Oh, Jon, hey." I said.

"Mac, hi...is Michelle here?"

"No."

"Any idea when she'll be back? This is very important and I need to tell her in person."

"I don't know. What's going on?"

"It's about Casey, our friend."

Case had been missing for almost two months. If there was news...was it good or bad? "What's up with Case? Did

something get found?" I asked.

"Yeah, but it's gruesome."

"Damn it Jon, just tell me. Is she ok?"

Jon looked at me, "Why do you care?"

"She's my friend you idiot! She's always been there for me and I want to be there for her now!" that's when it hit me I was Mac. I'd forgotten in the sudden rush of emotion, "I mean...Michelle's friend and I don't know when she'll be back and..."

"Michelle? I can't believe I'm about to ask this. Are you Michelle?"

"What? Of course not. What could even give you that idea?"

"The look in your eye when you got worried about Casey."

"It's a crazy idea. Of course I'm not Michelle. I'm Mac." I said as I started to back up.

Jon looked at me, "I'm not sure I believe you. You have all those powers..."

"Powers? What powers? Michelle has powers?"

"Yes and you know it."

"I don't know what you're talking about. Now, what about Case?"

"Well, you remember your rape?"

"Yeah." I said without thinking about it.

"Then you're Michelle."

"I...damn..." I sighed, "Fine, you win. In this time and in this place, let me see my truest face." I became me again.

"DAMN IT! Michelle! You tricked me! You tried to seduce me! Why?!"

"I was recording it. I was gonna try to get enough dirt on you so you'd leave Hunter and I alone."

"I can't even believe you'd try to do something like that...you..."

"Enough! Be mad later...tell me about Casey now. What happened? Is she alive?"

"Yes. She's alive. She's in the hospital. It's not a pleasant story...some horrible stuff happened. You may wanna sit down."

This didn't sound good. I sat on the sofa.

"OK, go."

"Evidently there's been this guy named Jordan that's been stalking Casey on and off since the Sunset days. She didn't take note of it, and if she did she didn't take it seriously. Anyway, Jordan managed to break into the apartment and spike her drink with something similar to a date rape drug. When she passed out he took off with her. He locked her up, shaved every hair on her body, beat her, and raped her everyday he had her." Jon started to explain.

I gasped, "On my god...Casey...no..."

"She's very thin as she mostly lived on water. She's in the hospital and will probably be there for awhile. The doctors don't know if she'll make it for sure or not."

"How was she found?"

"Pure luck. She happened to hear a search party and make her presence known. Jordan was arrested and Casey was taken to the hospital."

I started to cry, "My god...Case..."

"And this all could have been avoided if you'd use your powers to save your friend instead of pretending to be Hunter's cousin."

I glared, "You don't understand so don't pretend you do."

"I understand just fine."

"No, you don't. You think I enjoy masquerading as Mackenzie? I fucking hate it. I don't have a choice."

"Leave the damn super heroine gig and you'd be done."

"It's not that simple. This is who I fucking am!"

"Yeah, some heroine you are. Couldn't even save Casey."

"Fuck you Jon."

"I've been fucked over by you enough times, thanks."

"Get out of here."

"Fine. I'm gone."

Jon left and I sat on the sofa and cried. He was right to an extent. I should have been able to do more for Casey...but I couldn't. I went to my room and cried myself to sleep.

The next day I went to school and met up with Xander.
“Hey sweetie.” I said.
“Hey yourself.” He replied.
“Cover up.” LeeLee coughed as she passed.
“Shut up LeeLee.” I said behind her.
“You thinks he’s the one behind all the rumors?” Xander asked.
“Wouldn’t surprise me.” I said.

After school that day we were all at Root Core for training.
“What is going on with you two?” Nick asked Xan and I.
“We’re dating.” I said.
Vida looked at us, “For real?”
“As for as the outside world is concerned? Yes.”
“It’s to cut the rumors down about Mac.” Xander said.
“Well, it’s not working.” Chip said.
“What?” I asked.
“It’s all over school that it’s a cover up because Mac is really a lesbian.”
“LeeLee...that witch! She’s doing this.”
“Well, what did you think would happen? You two don’t act like a real couple. You don’t kiss or anything.” Maddie said.
“She’s right.” Xander said.
“Ok, so we kiss...but ONLY in public, where there’s classmates around.” I said.
“Ok. Agreed.”
“Fake relationship...fake public affection...what’s next? Fake sex? This is crazy you guys.” Nick said.
“It will help Mac. It’ll keep people off her back...hopefully.” Xander said.
“You’re just jealous cause I didn’t pick you.” I said.
“I wouldn’t want you.” Nick said.
“You know you would. You love me. I’m hot and loveable.”
“Hot? I’ll give you that one. Loveable? That’s laughable.”
I glared.
“It’s ok. I love you Mac.” Xander said putting his arm around me.
“Thanks Xan.”

Hunter

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We’d had an off day so Blake and I spent the day in my room watching movies. That night we went to the hotel bar with the other 250 riders and drank. The moto bunnies were back. Chelsea, one of the traveling bunnies, walked over to me. She had on tight pants, a belly showing shirt, and some high heels.  
“Hunter, you realize you’re the only rider who hasn’t invited me to his room?” she asked.  
“Not the only one. I know Blake hasn’t invited you.”  
“OK, fine...you’re the only one I want that hasn’t invited me.”  
“And I won’t either. Chels, you know I’m committed to Michelle.”  
“She doesn’t have to know.”  
“No, she would have to know and I’m not doing that her.”  
“Oh come on baby, give me five minutes to suck your cock. You’ll have fun. I promise.”  
Yes, groupies and/or moto bunnies were ALWAYS that forward. This wasn’t new. I looked at her, “No. Forget it.”  
“How can you turn down every girl that tries to fuck you?”  
“Easy. I know who I have waiting for me at home.”  
“Yeah. A used groupie that has been driven more times than a rental car.”  
“Fuck you. You don’t know Mich so don’t pretend you do.”  
“I know enough. She’s a groupie legend.”  
“And her legend has been embellished.”

“Not by much.”

“By enough. Why am I even discussing this with you? Michelle is my wife, end of story.”

“She’s your girlfriend.”

“Wife. Now drop it. I’m not sleeping with you Chelsea.”

“Maybe not tonight, but you will. Before the season is over, you will.”

“Don’t bet on it.”

She walked away and I sighed.

“Girl problems?” Blake asked as he walked over with another beer.

“Yeah. The moto groupies won’t let up.”

“I know. It’s rough.”

“How do you always resist?”

“How do you know I do?”

“I know you wouldn’t cheat on Tori.”

Blake laughed, “You’re right, I wouldn’t. And that’s how I reject them every time. I think about the look on Tori’s face if I cheated on her and she found out.”

“Yeah, the thought of Michelle has been keeping me strong.”

“Then never forget that. It’s only gonna get harder Hunter...just never forget, you love Michelle. No one night fuck is worth losing that.”

I nodded, “You’re right.”

Michelle/Mackenzie

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It was gonna be a stressful day. I had to go to school then cut out before last period, change back into Michelle, and rush to a TV studio for an interview. This was something booked before all this Mac mess happened so I didn’t feel right canceling.

I got to school and met up with Xander. LeeLee was at her locker, not far from us.

“We should kiss now.” I said.

Xander nodded and leaned in.

I was about to kiss him and he pulled back and kissed my cheek instead.

“What was that?” I asked.

“I can’t do this Mac. I don’t want our first kiss to be in public like this.”

“It has to be.”

“No. I’m sorry.”

I sighed, “We’ll discuss this later.”

I took off at the last period and changed into Michelle and rushed to the studio. Just to give you an idea of what I go through, here’s a transcript of the interview. (Not as interesting as the infamous TRL interview, I grant you...but still).

Lance (Host): Welcome back to Top 20. I’m pleased to be joined by one of country’s most talked about female stars, Ms. Michelle Morris. Hi.

Me: Hi.

Lance: It’s good to see you.

Me: Nice to see you too.

Lance: Yeah, it’s been awhile. Welcome to the studio.

Me: Thank you. It has been awhile. I know.

Lance: You’ve been on the road haven’t you?

Me: I have. I’ve been touring, I’ve been making a record for Europe, this year I have two albums and...maybe two tours if we can get out there. I’m working on an album for the States too.

Lance: Right. You’re two artists.

Me: (Smiling) I’m two different people.

Lance: With two paychecks I hope.

Me: (Laughing) I hope so.

Lance: That's how that works.

Me: No, it's great. I actually grew up listening to everything and I've really kinda done it all over the last decade over in Europe and the rest of the world I'm pretty much a different artist. They know me from 'How Do I Live' on. So, it's more like I'm a pop/rock artist. It's a totally different record, it comes out June 5th. I'm excited.

Lance: June 5th huh?

Me: Yes.

Lance: Ok, well it's interesting here, because here, in the States, we see you, Michelle Morris, and you've really come full circle in your music and everybody loves 'This Woman', here especially. But it's not that you let go of that other stuff, it just, you found a place for it.

Me: Yes. I've compartmentalized, basically. No it's just Europe really has, they've embraced me as more of a pop artist, they love all of my country music. They're the kind of fans that will dig back into your catalog and listen to everything you've ever done, which is very cool. So, when I'm on tour we do more pop stuff but we also throw a few country songs in there.

Lance: Right. They like adding extra beats.

Me: They do. It's all dance mixes.

Lance: Hi-hat cymbals, a lot of keyboards...

Me: It is. It's a totally different world.

Lance: Here, we're a little bit more lazy. Just like to slide petal steel.

Me: Exactly. It's a little bit simpler here.

Lance: Now, let's talk about Palisades High. You did some promotion for them and somehow a rumor started that the show was coming back.

Me: Yeah, yeah. I did promotion because I loved being part of that show and I really wanted to be part of it again. I found out there was a network doing a two week flashback type thing and I jumped at the chance to be part of it, I did. I did it free of charge just because I wanted to be part of it. They turned around and started that rumor because they have a weird sense of humor and thought it was funny. I think it's lame and stupid and I'm actually very upset about it.

Lance: So the show isn't coming back?

Me: No, no. It's not.

Lance: Not even a reunion?

Me: Honestly, I'd love to do a reunion, but no. The rest of the cast isn't into the idea right now.

Lance: Your brother, Zack, has a new show, right?

Me: Yes, it's amazing. He plays a political aid. His character's purpose is to help guide the president's image but he's very much about winning...very underhanded at times...lacks morals. It's very weird to see Zachary play a character like that but he's very good at it. He's an amazing actor.

Lance: Any chance of you going back into acting?

Me: I'm so busy right now with everything but if the right script came along I would.

Lance: You did some acting in your last two videos.

Me: Yes, very different acting in both. In 'Probably Wouldn't Be This Way' it was very emotional. I drew from very deep inside myself and went back to a very dark place to film that. "Something's Gotta Give" was a lot of fun and it was just about letting go and enjoying myself.

Lance: And you looked great in both of them. I don't really know how to say this because...I've seen your husband... wouldn't want him after me, but you're part of a show coming up on CMT, the 20 sexiest Southern Women.

Me: Oh yeah? I didn't know that.

Lance: Yeah. You're on the list. It's coming up around Memorial Day. Look for it. And I'm on the show, I'm talking about you.

Me: Aww, how nice.

Lance: You know, you're attractive, there, I said it. I'm married, she's married, I was just pointing it out.

Me: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Lance: I hope your husband doesn't come after me.

Me: Hey, you know what, he's totally fine with it. He kinda has to share me with the world a lot of the time. He has to be very confident and very secure, which he is.

Lance: Speaking of Hunter, he's on the road himself now?

Me: Yes. He's riding with Factory Blue, the moto team. He just started but he's showing a lot of promise. I'm so proud of him.

Lance: So it's your turn to share him with the world.

Me: Yeah, yeah. I'm secure too though. I know what the road is like so I have those fears just because I've been there, but I trust him. I know he'd never cheat on me or anything.

Lance: A lot of trust.

Me: Oh, yeah. A LOT of trust. A lot of love. It's the only way to make it work.

Lance: He inspired most of the songs on 'This Woman'.

Me: Right

Lance: Does the same hold true for your European album?

Me: Of course. Yes. Hunter is my inspiration...has been since the day I met him. He is everything to me.

Lance: I'm sure you've also seen your ex-husband has been on the countdown here.

Me: Yes, yes. I have. I'm happy for him. It's a great song.

Lance: No competition?

Me: (Laughing) Of course! Jon and I have always been competitive. That will never change.

Lance: Well rest easy, this week Jon's fallen off the countdown and your video is up to number 7.

Me: Really? That's great!

Lance: Want to introduce it?

Me: Yes! Thanks. This is my latest video, 'Something's Gotta Give', coming in at number 7 this week.

After the interview I went backstage and saw Jon.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"Making sure I get to talk to my ex-wife, not her cousin-in-law."

"Jon..." I hissed.

"You want me to be quiet? Come talk to me in private, now."

I nodded and followed him. We went into a private room and closed and locked the door.

"Talk." I said.

"I want to know why the hell you tried to trap me."

"I explained that."

"Was I really that horrible to you Mich?"

"YES! Jon, you stalked me, you tried to ruin me and Hunter, and that's just since the divorce. Don't tell me you don't remember all the times you beat me and raped me."

"I never raped you."

"Spousal rape is still rape."

"You know I never meant to hurt you."

"Yeah, I just bring it out in you."

"Yeah, but I do love you."

"I know you do Jon. I've always known that. But that's how you and I are different from Hunter and I. We bring out the worst in each other, Hunter and I bring out the best."

"It really hurts that you'd try to pull something like this."

"I'm sorry for that but you did your share of hurting me."

"You're right. And Casey doesn't need to hear about us fight now anyway. OK, let's call it even and start over? Friends?"

I nodded, "OK. We can try to be friends. Friends."

"OK, I'll see you later."

"Yeah. You think you can cover with Case for me?"

"Yeah, sure."

"Thanks. Bye." I said as I hugged him then left the room. Talk about dodging a bullet there.

Hunter

~~~~~

I was in the lobby of the hotel waiting for Blake to go get some food when this guy passed me. He stopped.

"Hey, you're Hunter Bradley...the motocross racer..." he said.

I nodded, "Yes, I am."



“I’m Eric Daniels. I’m a big fan.”

“Nice to meet you.”

That’s when Mike, one of the other riders, walked up, “Hey, it’s the Moto Fag.”

“You’re such a homophobic Mikey.” Eric said.

“No, I just don’t like you showing up every season to get laid. No one wants you.”

“That’s what you think.”

“Come on Hunter, stay away from him. He thinks he’s a Moto Bunny.”

“Thanks for the heads up.” I said.

“No worries. See ya.” Mike walked away.

“Fucking homophobic. You know he secretly wants me.” Eric said.

I laughed, “Yeah, he seemed really interested.”

“Oh, he will...what about you? You interested?”

I looked him over. He was so fucking hot. I did want him...but was this any different than being with a girl? Did it count as cheating? And what if the other guys found out? But god...he was hot, “Yeah, I’m interested.”

He smiled, “You want to take this to your room?”

I nodded.

We went to my room and I closed and locked the door then I pushed him up against the wall and kissed him. He kissed me back as he slipped his hands under my shirt.

“You’re so fucking hot. I had no idea you were gay.” Eric said as he started to kiss my neck.

“I’m not. I’m bi...but no one but my friends and family know so this stays between us.”

“Got it. Does Michelle know?”

“Yes.”

“That’s so hot.” He said as he kissed down my chest. He pulled me to the bed. We continued to make out and he kissed down my body and slipped my jeans off then he took his jeans and briefs off. The kissing was really heating up. It was getting so fucking intense. We were both panting when Eric turned me on my stomach and started to pull my boxer briefs are. When he did this something in me snapped back to reality. I pulled back.

“Wait, wait...stop.” I said.

“What’s wrong?”

“I can’t do this.”

“What?”

“I’m sorry. I can’t do this to Michelle. Fucking you is still cheating on her. I’m sorry.”

“I don’t understand, I thought you wanted this.”

“I do. Believe me. I do...but I can’t do anything that would hurt Michelle. I’m really sorry Eric.”

“No, but you will be.”

“What does that mean?”

“You’ll see.” Eric said as he got dressed and stormed out of the room.

This couldn’t be good. What had I done? What if he went public with this? I was screwed. I should tell Michelle before anyone else did. But what if he was just fucking with me and wasn’t gonna say anything? Michelle didn’t need to know about this. Fuck.

I decided I needed to talk to Michelle...but if I did I’d tell her everything and I wasn’t sure I should. I decided to go to her website instead. I logged on to her fan club site and noticed that she posted the first single of her Euro album. I clicked the link and listened to it.

*“I remember every touch*

*Every flower*

*Every word you ever said*

*I remember how we looked at each other*

*The very first time we met*

*I’ll never forget*

*I remember every smile*

*Every letter*

*Every kiss you gave to me  
How we'd talk and you'd hold me for hours  
Until I'd fall fast asleep  
You said you'd always be there  
Should I need your arms around me  
But now that I've fallen to my knees  
I don't think you give a damn about me*

*And it feels like  
I'm running out of time  
And it feels like  
I'm the last thing on your mind  
I can touch your skin  
I can hear you breathing  
Baby will you tell me what's wrong  
Cause it feels like you're already gone*

*Did you leave in the middle of the night  
And forget to say goodbye  
Did you feel it was time to go  
But you didn't want to see me cry  
It's harder and harder for me to believe that you still love me  
So get on with it baby  
If you're gonna leave  
It's not worth saving*

*And it feels like  
I'm running out of time  
And it feels like  
I'm the last thing on your mind  
I can touch your skin  
I can hear you breathing  
Baby will you tell me what's wrong  
Cause it feels like you're already gone*

*My heart is telling me it's too late  
To beg you to stay  
You wouldn't hear me anyway*

*And it feels like  
I'm running out of time  
And it feels like  
I'm the last thing on your mind  
I can touch your skin  
I can hear you breathing  
Baby will you tell me what's wrong  
Cause it feels like you're already gone"*

I was in tears by the end of the song. I had been reading her blog as I listened to the song.

*"A bit about the song...I love it...it is more or a pop/dance track of course. I wrote it about Hunter of course. It was written back in 2003 right before Hunter and I officially broke up. I would have used it on 'This Woman' but I liked it more as a dance/pop song. I think it'll make a great dance remix. Anyway, I wrote it at a time Hunter and I knew we were gonna be breaking up, it was before the official break up, about a month or two before, but we knew it was*

coming. I'll post the lyrics here very soon. I promise."

I remembered back to that time. I had been pushing her away because I knew I was gonna lose her. Then I got her back...I couldn't lose her again because of a stupid mistake with a moto bun...moto hare. What was I gonna do?

Michelle/Mackenzie

~~~~~  
After school I had band rehearsal.

"So it's true...you and Xander Bly?" Aaron asked.

"Yeah, it's true." I said.

"It's not a cover up?" Tyler asked.

"NO! It's not a cover up."

"Just asking."

"Xander treats you better than Kevin, right?" Aaron asked.

"Yes, of course. Xander is amazing. He's very good to me." I said.

"Good. If he isn't then I'll kick his ass."

I laughed, "I'd like to see you try that one. Now can we get to work? I have a new song."

"OK, let's do it then."

I handed them the music and they started to play as I sang.

"You and me, all alone

It's too late to say we didn't know

We shouldn't be, all alone

One of us might lose control

All these feelings we've been hiding

Deep down, ya they must start to show

Not here, not now

Watching my frustrations grow

I know what I feel and you feel it too

I dream of the first kiss and who'll make the first move

Who's gonna put their heart on the line

It could be me

It could be you, tonight

Show me, who you are

Stop me before I go too far

Cause it hurts, to hold back

So hold me or I might crack

I'm gasoline, you're the match

I'm not sure if we could handle that

It might explode, could be a mess

I say we take the chance

I know what I feel and you feel it too

I dream of the first kiss and who'll make the first move

Who's gonna put their heart on the line

It could be me

It could be you, tonight

I'm all mixed up, confused

I don't know what to do

Cause I want to, I'd love to

*If I knew you'd want me to
If your getting any closer then I'm gonna have to scream*

*I know what I feel and you feel it too
I dream of the first kiss and who'll make the first move
Who's gonna put their heart on the line
It could be me
It could be you*

*I know what I feel and you feel it too
I dream of the first kiss and who make the first move
Who's gonna put their heart on the line
It could be me
It could be you, tonight”*

“Great job guys!” I said.
“You wrote that about Bly didn’t you?” Aaron asked.
I nodded.
“Great. We’re about to get a flood of love songs.”
I laughed.

After rehearsal I went to Rock Porum.
“Xander, we need to talk.” I said.
“I’m busy Mac.” He said.
“Stop avoiding me! We need to talk.”
“Later.”
“Do I have to use magic on you?”
He looked at me.
“You know I will.”
“Fine, fine.” Xander walked to Toby’s office, which was empty.
“Thank you.” I said as I walked in behind him and used my wind power to gently swing the door shut. I closed the blinds so we had total privacy.
“No magic in public.” Xan said.
“Even a trainer can break the rules some times. Now what is up with you? What has you so freaked about the kiss?”
“What do you think Mac? A kiss is a personal thing. Even a pretend one. I don’t want our first kiss to be in the halls of school. I think it’s be better if we had a story to tell anyway. Make it more real.”
I nodded, “OK, you’re right.”
“I have to work though. Let’s discuss it after? I’ll meet you at your place?”
“Alright.”

Later that night Xander came over. We ate dinner and discussed school then Xander turned the radio on. “You’re Beautiful” by James Blunt came on.
“Dance with me.” Xander said holding out his hand for mine.
“What?”
“Dance with me. Come on. It’s a dance.”
I looked at him funny but nodded, “OK”
Xander pulled me into his arms and held me tightly as we danced. I closed my eyes and tried to look at this from Mac’s point of view. This was very romantic. And being in his arms felt so good. He had a strong embrace...made Mac...I mean me feel safe. It was so nice. As the song ended I opened my eyes and looked up into his. She started to lean in. I did the same and closed my eyes as we kissed for the first time. The kiss went on and became a lot deeper than I planned. When the kiss finally broke I looked at him.
“That what you had in mind?”
“Not exactly...it was better.”
“You know this is just pretend, right? I love Hunter.”

Xander nodded, “Oh, I know. I know.”

“OK...good...” I said.

“And now we have a song too. That makes this a lot more real.”

“True, very true.” I said. Although what I didn’t say was that I was worried about how real this would become.

PRT 262- "Mac Attack"

"Michelle, it's JessLyn, are you there? Pick up. It's important Mich. We have to discuss European promotion. You single appears to be doing well over there. We have to jump on this while we can. Are you there? Pick up. You're not answering your cell phone either. Ok, fine. Call me when you get this. I'm starting to worry. Bye."

"Mac? It's Xan, I was wondering if you wanted to grab a bite to eat or something when I get off work. I'll be off at 5. Call me before then."

"Mich, it's Mina. Where are you? What the hell is going on? I'm really worried about you. Call me."

"Mac, it's Aaron. You've missed the last two rehearsals. Is everything ok? Call me."

"Hey Mich, this is Rocky, in case you couldn't tell. Mina called and said she's really worried about you. What's going on with you? I know this Mac thing has you all confused but you know you can talk to me anytime. I'm here. Call me if you need to talk. Love you."

"Macelle, hey, it's Nick, what is the deal? Xan is driving us nuts here. He's worried. For that matter so is Udonna. You missed training yesterday and Claire is in danger. We could really use your help. You can't bail on us like that. We're all at the store today. Drop by or at least call. OK, well, I hope everything is ok. Bye."

Yes, I heard every single message. I was home when each one was left. I'd been laying on the sofa for two days now and had only moved a handful of times since then...answering my phone was not something I felt I needed to move to do. What brought this on you ask? Let me take you back two days

I was in art class.

"Jordi broke up with me." Amanda, one of my squad mates, cried as she walked in.

"Oh god, you poor thing." Courtney said as she hugged her.

"I loved him so much."

"I know it sucks now, but it was just a high school thing. You'll find someone else." I said.

"Mac! That's mean! Mandy loved Jordi a lot. It's not the kind of thing you just 'get over'." Courtney said.

"Oh please, high school is just full of superficial, self-absorbed teens. They aren't capable of looking out for anyone but themselves, unless forced by extenuating circumstances. Hunter and I...Hunter and Michelle both got over their high school loves. Sara and Rocky will always be important to them, sure, but they are VERY happy with each other. You'll find someone else too Mandy." I said.

"You're so cold Mac. In case you forgot you're a teenager too and probably more self-absorbed than any of us. You always lecture us, you act like you're above us or something. Just because your cousins are famous doesn't make you better, smarter, or wiser. You're probably worse than us. You're just plain out of touch."

I didn't say a word. Courtney's words really cut me.

Which brings me to now. I was out of touch with the teenagers. I was one just 10 years ago...how did I get so jaded? There had to be some way to bring me back to that teenage innocence...

...of course...

...MAGIC!!!

I got up and lit some candles. I was gonna cast a spell that would make me remember my lost youth. Maybe if something sparked a memory then I could better pretend to be a teenager. Once the candles were lit I recited the spell.

"Being of Magic hear my call, take me back, let me recall, bring to life my teenage years, so I may find my inner Mac here."

I felt something really funny wash over me, then I blacked out.

When I woke up, I looked around. Something wasn't right. The phone was ringing though so I went over and picked it up.

"Hello?" I asked.

"Hi, is Michelle around?"

"Um, no. Who's calling please?"

"This is JessLyn, her manager. Can you have her call me?"

"Yeah, sure. I don't know when she'll be back though."

"Ok, thanks. Who is this?"

"Mackenzie."

"Oh, right, Mac. Thank you Mac, bye."

I hung up and was about to head out to Rock Porum when the phone rang again.

"Good god, what does a girl have to do to get out of here?" I mumbled as I picked up the phone, "Hello?"

"Mich? Hey baby." Hunter said.

"Mich? Um, no. Mac."

"Oh, is someone around?"

"No."

"Oh? Mich? What's going on?"

"I told you Hunter, I'm not Mich. She's not here and she didn't tell me where she went."

"What are you talking about?"

"I told you, she's not here. It's a simple concept, seriously. I'll have her call you. Love you, mean it, bye."

I hung up and headed off to Rock Porum.

"Well, look who it is." Nick said bitterly.

"Dude, chill." I said.

"Are you ok? You look different." Xander said.

"I'm fine babe. No worries here." I said as I wrapped my arms around Xander and kissed him.

"What was that?"

"That was me kissing my boyfriend."

"I don't know what's gotten into you but we have problems." Nick said.

"Such as?"

"Protecting Claire."

"Why would I want to protect that whiny klutz?"

"Mackenzie! I thought you liked Claire!" Madison said.

"She's useless. Anyway, I can think of better things to do." I said as I kissed Xander's neck.

Xander let out a soft moan.

"Kenz! Stop it! Claire is in danger. The Gatekeeper is the only thing standing in between The Underworld and Briarwood...and Claire is the Gatekeeper." Vida said.

"Then we're sunk anyway." I said as I ran my fingers through Xander's hair.

"What is wrong with you Macelle?" Nick asked as he grabbed my arm harshly and pulled me away from Xander.

"Hey! Hands off the merchandise." I said as I pulled away.

"What in the hell is going on?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Michelle, this isn't a joke, we could really use you about now." He said in a whisper.

I looked at him like he'd lost it, "Why does everyone keep calling me Michelle? I know I look up to her but I'm not her...nor do I really wanna be...now, Xan, can you take a break?"

Nick looked worried...so did the others actually.

"Mac, what's going on?" Maddie asked.

"Nothing! I want some time with my boyfriend, is that too much to ask?" I said.

"I promise, we'll spend time together after this Gatekeeper thing is handled. Alright?" Xander asked.

I nodded, "Fine...you better make good on that. So let's handle this...tell me...Claire, Gatekeeper?"

"Yeah, inherited power. Evidently she's Udonna's niece." Chip said.

"I still can't believe it. Claire has legendary powers strong enough to lock up evil?" Madison said.

“Or unlock.” Nick added.

“Guys, guys...” Toby started as he walked in, “You’re never gonna believe what happened to me today. I actually met...”

Just then our phones beeped, “Sorry boss, I gotta take this, eh.” Xander said as he took out the phone, “Oh no, it’s Necrolai, she’s shown up in the city plaza.”

“Let’s go.” Nick said as we ran out.

We ran to battle and battled Necrolei...actually we got attacked really hard and got our butts royally kicked. That is of course until Claire ran up and transformed into something called The Gatekeeper. Claire actually kicked butt. She was amazing. We helped out and sent Necrolai packing.

After Necrolai was gone Claire told us that Koragg captured Udonna. About that time Nick got a telepathic message from him. Evidently Koragg wanted to fight Claire alone or he’d kill Udonna.

Xander and I were sitting outside Root Core, against a big tree.

“This is so lame.” I mumbled.

“What is?” Xander asked.

“Spending the day doing this. I can think of better things to do.” I said.

“You can? Mac, what did you do to yourself? Did you cast a spell or something?”

“What? No. I just want to be with my boyfriend. Is that so bad?”

“Except we’re not really together...remember?”

“What? Xan, if you wanna break up, just tell me. I’m sure there’s a lot of guys at Briarwood High who would love to be with me. Maybe Kevin is still interested.”

“Mackenzie Bradley, don’t even joke that way...you know I want you.”

“Then prove it.” I said as I leaned in and kissed him.

He returned the kiss and it got deeper. I pushed him back against the tree and straddled his legs as we continued to kiss. He wrapped his arms around my waist as I started to grind my hips against him. He let out a soft moan that was muffled in the kiss.

“Xander, make love to me.” I whispered.

“Here?”

“Yes, here.”

“I don’t have any protection...”

“You don’t carry something with you?”

“I do, but it’s in my wallet which is in my civilian clothes.”

“Fuck...well just pull out before you...you know...it’ll be safer that way.”

“Ok.”

I untied the cape on his uniform and was about to start undressing him when Maddie came out and cleared her throat.

“Excuse me...world in danger here?”

“Can’t it wait?” I asked.

“Mac!”

“Ok, fine, fine. We’ll pick this up later Xan, promise.” I said as I kissed him once more before we went back into Root Core.

“Where’s Claire?” I asked.

“She went to accept Koragg’s challenge.” Chip said.

“If you were here you would have known that.” Nick said.

I glared and leaned into Xander as he put an arm around me.

“Let’s watch the battle.” Vida said.

“We shouldn’t have let Claire go alone.” Maddie said.

“You saw how she sent Necrolai running.” Vida said.

“Yeah. But Koragg’s a whole other story.” Nick said as we watched the battle in a crystal ball. Claire was doing very well...impressively so, until Koragg unleashed his full power and cornered her. We had no choice. We had to help. We attacked Koragg and saved Claire but then Necrolai came out of nowhere and grabbed Claire, taking control of her powers. She opened the gates to the Underworld. You could say we were in pretty deep shit.

A giant rock monster jumped from the gates and attacked us hard. Koragg used this change to grab Claire and take off with her. Nick tried to stop him but it was no use. Claire and Udonna were gone and we had to deal with a giant gargoyle. We used the Zords, in a cockpit mode, to take out the gargoyle...or try anyway. We failed and our Megazord got thrown into the gate, which cracked it and started to release Morticon...the leader of the Underworld.

When he got free he attacked us and we had no choice but to fight him, still in the Megazord.

"I'm scared...Xander, I'm scared." I said.

"We can do this Mac...stay strong. I'm with you." Xander said.

I nodded and tried to focus on the fight.

It wasn't going so well. We used various formations, trying to take out Moricon. It was no use. We got knocked out of the Zord and de-morphed as we hit the ground. None of us knew what to do.

"He's stronger than last time." Chip said.

"He's got more dark magic." Madison said.

"We don't have that kind of power." Xander said as the city started to get black.

"What's that?" Nick asked.

"Now what?" Vida echoed.

"I don't like the look of that." Chip said as Morticon went on a rampage.

"Is this really how it's gonna end?" Maddie asked.

"It's too soon for it to end." I said.

"NO! This is not how it ends." Nick said, "Udonna said we were the protectors of the city. And that's what we're gonna do."

"Magical Source, Mystic Force!"

We morphed and went back to battle. I went with Nick on his bike towards the gates to save Udonna and Claire. We got attacked by foot soldiers and had to take care of them first. We got in and attacked Koragg then he transported us to another battle field. I didn't want to fight. I didn't want any of this. I used my new levitation power to avoid most of the attacks while Nick actually fought. Finally Koragg got me knocked down hard and I couldn't get myself up and Nick was pinned against a rock. Nick managed to escape and watching that gave me the strength to pull myself up and help him fight. I combined my wind with his fire and we took care of Koragg and saved Claire. She was weak, but she was alive. She told us to combine our power with hers and gain control of Castratos.

"We could really use Michelle's power here." Claire said.

"I don't know where Michelle is." I said.

"Mac, what happened? Did Michelle cast a spell?" Nick asked.

"How should I know?!"

"Mackenzie, listen, we need Michelle's power..."

"I don't know anything about it!" I screamed as my neck started to glow purple. A small Amethyst wand on a black leather band appeared around my neck.

"That looks like Michelle's Amethyst necklace." Claire said.

"Yeah, except more in style than her plain necklace." Nick said.

"That must mean Mac can wield the power too."

"Can I?" I asked.

"You have to try." Nick said.

"Ok, let's do it."

We combined power and took Castratos and Nick combined with him. I stayed with Claire. She used her power to lower the gate, but then she passed out and vanished.

"Clarie!" I cried.

I headed back to town just in time to join the others in a Megazord fight. We ended up with an odd, but strong energy that helped us fight. Somehow we froze Morticon's weapon. We figured out pretty quick that somehow the White Ranger's power was behind us. We finished the fight by destroying Morticon.

We returned to the woods and found Claire. She was weak, but ok.

"Now that Claire is taken care of...Udonna, what's wrong with Mac?" Nick asked.

"Nothing, she's fine. Come on Mac." Xander said as he grabbed my hand.

“Stop right there Bly. Something is wrong. I know you like having her this way but we need our trainer back. We really could have used her today.” Vida said.

“Maybe I can reverse whatever she did?” Claire asked.

“We don’t know what she did.” Maddie said.

“Let me try anyway.”

“No, just leave her. It’ll wear off in time.” Xander said.

“Claire, I think you can do it, but we need to do some research. You guys, keep an eye on Mac until we’re ready.”

Udonna said.

Maddie nodded.

“I’ll watch her. Come on Mac.” Xander said as he grabbed my hand and ran off.

We got back to the apartment and I looked around.

“Michelle? You home?” I called.

Nothing.

“She must still be out. That means we’re alone.”

Xander smiled.

“Want to go to my room?”

“More than you know.”

“Then what are we waiting for?” I asked as I led him to the other room.

We fell back on the bed and started to kiss. I pulled his shirt over his head.

“How much do you want me?” I whispered.

“I want you bad. So bad.” Xander said in that accent...it was such a turn on.

“Oh god...I want you too Xan.” I took my shirt off and he let his hands roam around my chest. It felt so good. I started to grind my hips against him. He moaned as he reached for the top button of my jeans.

“What in the hell?!” Mina asked as she appeared in the doorway.

I jumped, “Mina! What the hell?!”

“Michelle!”

“Michelle isn’t here, damn it! Go away!”

“Mac? You are Mich.”

“She isn’t right now. She’s Mac. Something happened.” Xander said.

“What are you talking about?” I asked.

“Nothing baby. Mina, can you go?”

“No! Get dressed right now, both of you!”

“Mina!” I cried.

“Now! Before I call Hunter.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Mina took us back to Root Core.

“Fix this, now.” Mina said.

“We’re trying. Chances are Michelle casted a spell with English wording, not magical.” Claire said.

“I think I have something. Claire, try this.” Udonna said.

“What was done, now undo. Return to us, the inner...”

“Stop...please don’t.” Xander said.

“Xander, we have to do this. We need Michelle back.” Maddie said.

“I need Mackenzie.”

“I know, but Mac isn’t real.”

“I most certainly am!” I cried.

“Claire, hurry up.”

“What was done, now undo...” Claire started again.

“No.” Xander said.

“Xander...” Maddie warned.

“Mackenzie, I love you.” He said as he kissed me passionately.

“I love you too Xan.” I said as I hugged him tightly.

“Now Claire.” Maddie said.

“What was done, now undo. Return to us, the inner truth.” Claire said.
Everything went black.

Next thing I knew I was waking up in Root Core.

“What happened?” I asked.

“You tell us.” Nick said.

I sat and thought for a second, “Oh shit...the spell backfired.”

“What spell did you cast?” Mina asked.

“One that was supposed to remind me what it was like to be a teenager...”

“And instead it made you become Mac.”

“Yeah, evidently. I’m really sorry guys.”

“It’s ok, we’re just glad you’re back.” Maddie said.

I looked at Xander, “Are you ok?”

“Fine. I gotta go.” He said as he left.

“I never meant to hurt him.”

“I know...it’s just the way it happened.” Maddie said.

“I should go.” I said.

I got back to my apartment and called Hunter. I explained everything to him.

“So you literally turned yourself into Mackenzie?” he asked.

“Yeah...yeah.”

“Damn...you gotta watch that magic.”

“No kidding.”

“I’m glad you’re ok though.”

“So am I. How are things there?”

“Fine.”

“Staying clear of moto bunnies?”

There was a pause followed by a, “Yeah.”

“That didn’t sound reassuring. Did something happen? You promised you’d be honest with me.”

“Yeah...ok...I didn’t sleep with anyone...I almost did...but I didn’t.”

“Almost? What does that mean?”

“It means...almost.”

“As in you undressed? You kissed? What?”

“Yes, yes.”

“Oh shit...a moto bunny...”

“Moto hare actually.”

“Huh?”

“A man, not a woman.”

“A man? Fuck...”

“Michelle, it was the thought of you that stopped me. I love you. Please don’t be mad.”

“Don’t be mad? Why would I be mad? Me? Mad? About my boyfriend cheating on me? Of course not. Why would I be mad?”

“Mich...”

“I have a call on the other line. We’ll talk about this later.”

I clicked over to the other line,

“Hello?”

“Mac? Is Michelle there?” JessLyn asked.

“Yeah, hang on.”

I took a breath and altered my voice to sound more like myself, “Hello?”

“Mich? Are you ok?”

“Fine. What’s up?”

“Your single has gone to number one in the UK!”

“What? After only one week?!”

“Yup!”

“Oh my god! Yes!”

“You’re a hit over there. Your album is the most anticipated of the year! We have got to get you doing promotion over there fast.”

“Ok...let me check some things out and I’ll get back to you.”

“OK...make it quick.”

This was amazing. My single was number one after only a week! That was unheard off! My US single was still rising... it hadn’t hit the top yet after several weeks. In Europe it took one week!

And yet somehow my happiness was dampered by the fact I knew my boyfriend had cheated on me. How could I leave the country to make my success continue? The Rangers needed me and I couldn’t even trust my own boyfriend.

PRT 263- "Strong Part 1"

Well, I messed up. Go figure. Me. Michelle Morris. I messed up royally. My spell had backfired and I'd ended up hurting Xander and almost costing the Rangers a major battle against the Underworld. I think it was safe to say that this was one of my worst screw up lately.

On top of all that I needed to find a way to promote my new album in Europe. I had a number one song over there... after only one week. This wasn't the kind of thing to get taken lightly. Of course the American [tabloids](#) were printing falsities again. To counter this I'd done a magazine interview the day before. It had been a lot of fun to sit down and get the chance to set the story straight...especially where my past and relationship with Hunter were concerned.

Read the article here:

[Page 1](#)

[Page 2](#)

[Page 3](#)

[Page 4](#)

[Page 5](#)

[Page 6](#)

[Page 7](#)

[Page 8](#)

Anyway, after the crap I'd caused I decided to take a few days and go to Europe with Mina. We could promote the album and I could put some space between Xander and I...both very important things.

I headed to Root Core to let Udonna and Claire know what was going on.

"Mackenzie...Michelle, do you really feel this is necessary?" Udonna asked.

"Yeah, actually, I do. I need to do this...for my career and for my sanity. You know you can reach me if you really need me and I'll make sure I get back via magic or ninja streak." I replied.

"Alright, if you're sure."

"I am."

"You know the Ranger look up to you Mac." Claire said.

"They'll get by without me. Trust me."

"Alright. Good luck Michelle. I hope your promotional endeavors go as you want them to."

I nodded, "Thank you."

After that I headed out to Rock Porum to fill the others in on what was going on. They didn't like the idea.

"Mac!" Maddie cried.

"You can't just take off like that. We need you here. You're our trainer." Vida echoed.

"We don't need her anymore. She's dead weight. She's been causing nothing but trouble. We don't need her." Nick said.

"Nick!" Maddie cried.

"He's right. I have been causing trouble and I'm sorry. I'm gonna go handle the Europe stuff for a few days and get my head together. I'll be back and I'll have my priorities in order." I said.

"If you feel you have to...we'll get by. Just take care of yourself Mac." Chip said.

"Thanks Chip."

"Anytime."

"Xander? Are you ok?"

"Fine." Xander said as he turned and walked into Toby's office.

I sighed, "I never meant to hurt him."

"Well you did." Nick said.

"He'll be ok. Xander is just sensitive. Under that self-assured exterior is someone that lacks self confidence. He'll come out of this though." Maddie said.

Vida nodded, "Yeah, he will."

"OK, well I guess I should go meet up with Mi...na..." my last word was broken because I noticed some reporters walk into the store.

"Mackenzie, how do you feel about your cousin being gay?" one asked.

I looked at her like she was nuts, "What?"

"You don't know?" another asked.

"A man connected to Factory Blue has come out and said that he had a romantic encounter with Hunter. Blake and Michelle can't be reached for comment, what do you think about your cousin?"

"Hunter isn't gay...and he's with Michelle, he wouldn't cheat on her."

"There's proof. The man that came out has an audio tape of the encounter. He slept with another mad."

I felt like I'd been punched in the stomach.

"Mac, are you ok?" Maddie asked as she touched my shoulder.

I pulled away, "I'm fine. I have to go..."

"What do you think of all this Mackenzie? Is Michelle pregnant? Is that why Hunter cheated on her?" a reporter asked.

"No comment!" I cried as I ran out of the store.

I ran all the way home. When I got inside I slammed the door.

"In this time and in this place, let me see my truest face."

I needed to be me again. I couldn't deal with all of this as Mackenzie. I went and packed up some clothes for Europe. I was just about to head out to meet Mina at the airport when the phone rang. I picked it up.

"Hello?"

"Mich, hi."

"Hunter..."

"We need to talk. The tabloids..."

"I know all about the tabloids. They cornered Mac at Rock Porum."

"Damn it...I can explain."

"No need. You promised you'd stay away from Moto Bunnies, but we never discussed Moto Hares. How were you to know? Now if you'll excuse me I have to catch a plane to Europe."

"Europe?"

"Yes. I'm sure there's some groupies that would love to fuck me. See ya."

"Mich..."

"Goodbye."

"Mich...Michelle..."

"I bet I could get any chick I wanted."

"I didn't fuck him, the tabloids blew it out of proportion."

"Ok, I'm all ears. What happened?"

"We went back to my room and made out and fooled around."

"Did clothes come off?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"All of his...most of mine."

"Boxers?"

"No, I had my boxer briefs on."

"Anything else?"

"No."

"So you did everything but fuck him...got it. I'll keep that in mind in Europe. Now I have to go."

"Michelle, don't. I love you."

"I love you too Hunter, you know that, but I can't discuss this now. I just can't." I hung up and grabbed my bag.

By the time I got to the airport and onto the private jet Mina knew all about what the tabloids were saying. Adam was with her.

"I'm really sorry Mich." Mina said.

"Yeah, so am I." I said.

“You know Hunter loves you though.” Adam said.

“Yeah, and you know what it’s like to be cheated on.”

Mina glared at me.

“You’re right, I do, but I forgave her and I thank God everyday I was able to. I love her so much.” Adam said.

Mina smiled and hugged him, “I’m glad you forgave me too.”

I sighed, “There’s just so much going on. I feel like everything is such a mess...all because of Mackenzie...all because of the Power of Purple.”

“You know that’s your destiny Mich...it always has been. You can’t escape the Power of Purple. You tried, remember?” Adam said.

I sighed, “I know. Tommy and I both are Rangers for life...we’ll never really escape...and I hate it.”

For the whole flight I pretty much kept to myself. I didn’t really know how to handle everything. When we finally landed in Germany we had a car waiting for us. We got in and headed for the hotel. We got to the hotel and got in the elevator. When we got to our floor we saw Jon and Rich waiting to get on.

“Jon?” I asked.

“Mich? Oh wow...hi.” He said.

“What’s going on? What are you doing here?”

“Touring. We have a show here tonight. What about you?”

“Promotion...Euro album and all.”

“Oh, right. I guess we’re staying on the same floor?”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

“We were just headed to sound check...would you like to get something to eat after I’m done? Do you have time?”

“Yeah, sure. I’d actually like that. I don’t start promotion until tomorrow morning.”

I noticed Mina glaring at Jon and me.

“Ok, well what room are you in?” Jon asked.

“Suite 1404.” I said.

“Ah, I’m in 1401. That’s great. Give me about an hour and a half or so.”

“Alright, awesome. See you then.”

Jon and Rich left and Mina, Adam and I went to our rooms. (Mina and Adam were in 1403...there were 4 suites totally on that floor.)

“Michelle, what are you doing?” Mina asked as I unlocked the door to my room.

“Having lunch with an old friend. Is that a crime?” I asked.

“No, but getting together with an ex is wrong...especially when you’re fighting with your husband.”

“It’s just lunch. I’m not gonna fuck him.”

“After what he did?”

“He’s a good guy Mina...just relax. Everything will be fine.”

Mina sighed and went into her room with Adam.

I went in my room and laid down. I needed to relax. I got to relax for all of 10 minutes before JessLyn called.

“Mich, hun, you know your single is doing great...” she started.

“But...I hear a but coming...” I sighed.

“There’s another song off the album that tested better in Germany. Tomorrow night I want you to meet up with a director. We’re going to shoot a new video for a German release single.”

“WHAT?! For what song?”

“For ‘Strong’.”

I sighed, “I’m too tired to argue Jess. You know how I feel I’m sure. But fine.”

“It’ll be alright. We’ll have three singles topping the charts worldwide.”

“You mean *I* will have three singles.”

“Of course, of course. I’ll see you tomorrow morning, now get some rest. You’ll have a busy day tomorrow.”

“I was planning on it.”

I was finally able to lay back and relax. I ended up falling asleep. I was still asleep when Jon came and knocked on my door. I got up and stumbled to the door, groggily.

“Mich, you re...hey are you ok?” Jon asked.

“I’m just tired. I was sleeping.” I said as I rubbing my eyes with one hand and held myself up with the edge of the door with the other.

“We don’t have to go out. Why don’t we hang out here and order room service?” he asked.

I nodded, “That’s fine. Come in.”

Jon nodded and came inside. I closed the door and started to walk back to the bed but I stumbled. Jon caught me.

“You really don’t look good. You look exhausted.” He said as he helped me back to the bed.

“Yeah, I’m pretty tired.” I said as I laid back in bed.

“Why don’t you sleep a bit more then we’ll worry about food.”

“I can’t believe I’m sleeping at all.”

“Everything ok?”

“Nothing is ok. Mac is making a mess of my life, Hunter cheated on me and the tabloids picked up on it, JessLyn has control of my career again...everything is so out of sorts.”

“Oh god...Mich...I’m so sorry.” He took off his shoes and got in bed behind me and pulled me back into his arms in a spooning position. “Hey, you wanna come to the show tonight? Might take your mind off things.”

“I’d love that.” I said as I settled back into his arms. It felt really good to be held by him again. I felt myself drift off to sleep as I felt so safe and cared for.

I woke up several hours later, still in Jon’s arms. It was so familiar...being with Jon in another country on tour and him caring for me...we’d done this so many times before and it felt very safe.

“Hey beautiful, feel better?” he asked.

I turned so I was facing him. I looked into his beautiful blue eyes, “Yeah, actually I do. Let me clean up a bit and we’ll grab some dinner before the show.” I said.

“Sounds great.”

I went and freshened up then Jon and I went to a restaurant. There was nothing like authentic German food. I got some bratwurst and sauerkraut with some potatoes. It was SO good. I knew there was a chance the German paparazzi would see us and right now I didn’t care. I was enjoying myself and I hadn’t done that in awhile. I even had a beer with dinner, something I didn’t normally do. It was nice to relax a bit. It was nice to be able to catch up with Jon.

“I hear the single is doing very well already.” He said.

I nodded, “Number 1 in just a week. I’m very excited.”

“You should be. That’s amazing. I’m very proud of you Michi. You’ve come so far as an artist.”

“Thanks. I’m proud of you too...after all these years you still put out some of the best rock music in the world. You have such a natural talent.”

“Thanks.”

“And I assume you still put on one of the most ass kicking live shows around...”

“You better believe it.”

“I can’t wait to see you play live again.”

“It will be great to have you there.”

And so after we ate we went to the arena where the concert was. I hung backstage with Denise, Rich’s new girlfriend, while the guys got ready for the show.

“Are you and Jon back together?” she asked.

“No, just friends. I’m in Germany for some promotion for my own album and I figured I’d come see one of Jon’s shows. It’s been awhile.” I explained.

“Ah, that’s cool. I know you mean a lot to him.”

“Yeah, I know. So you and Rich...it’s all over the tabloids. I suppose I should thank you for taking the spotlight off Jon and I.”

“From what I understand your boyfriend just put the spotlight back on you. My agent told me about it today.”

“Yeah, well that will blow over. Hunter will handle it.”

“Is it true?”

“That he’s gay? No. That he was with a guy behind my back? Yeah.”

“And he’s not gay?”

“No, he’s bi. It’s not news to me though. I’ve known pretty much since the beginning of our relationship. I’ve known since he’s known anyway.”

“Wow...that’s crazy.”

“Just a bit. So what about you? Hooking up with your best friend’s soon-to-be ex-husband...”

“I don’t really wanna talk about it.”

“Suit yourself. I don’t really care. Heath and Rich are both my friends. I’m not about taking sides here. I do know I wouldn’t hook up with Rich so soon after his break up...he’s not even divorced yet, but to each their own. Whatever makes y’all happy.”

“Hmmpf.”

I rolled my eyes as Jon and the guys came out.

“Michi! Hey you, nice to have you back here again!” David said as he hugged me.

“You know what they say, once you’re in the circle, you’re in for life. You knew you couldn’t get rid of me forever.” I said.

“Always knew you were a lifer.” Rich teased.

“Ok guys, show time. Let’s get out there and show Mich that we can still kick some ass!” Jon said.

“Woo! Let’s do this!” Rich and the guys echoed.

PRT 264- "Strong Part 2"

I stood in the wing of the stage and watched the show like I used to. It was so much fun. Towards the middle of the show I noticed Jon motion to Rich...that normally meant he was straying from the set list and wanted to mix it up. "It's really great to be back here in Germany and to be honest it's been a pretty amazing day for me. There's one person that's made it really special for me and I'd like to dedicate this next song to her. You might know this one from the last album, it's called 'All About Lovin' You'."

As the song started I couldn't help but start to cry. This was the song he wrote for me when we were married. It was so sweet and passionate. By the end of the song I was a total ball bag. Then the music kept up but started to transition. "Now I'm hoping a very special guest will come out on stage with me...Germany, please welcome Michelle Morris." Jon said.

I looked up in shock as Jon motioned for me to come out. I did and as I headed out I was handed a mic. The crowd was going absolutely wild. This was good promotion for my album.

"Michelle's new single '...And It Feels Like' has gone to number one in Europe in just a week. Congratulations Mich." Jon said as the crowd continued to scream.

"Thank you everyone. Thank you so much for your support. I also would like to announce that German is getting its own single and video. Look for 'Strong' to be released to local radio very soon." I said. The crowd was just going nuts by now.

"Michelle, I would be honored if you'd do a couple of things for me." Jon said.

"What did you have in mind?" I asked.

"First of all, sing a song with me and second of all sing your new single for everyone in the audience."

"I would love that. Let's do it."

The band went into 'Always'. It was a song Jon had written for me years and years ago and the first one he every wrote that was so much from his soul. It was hard to sing it with him, but I did. After that song I took center stage and Jon grabbed a guitar and backed off.

"You guys know the German single?" I asked.

Jon nodded. I didn't know how they knew it but all that mattered is they did.

"Great. OK. This song is gonna be released to German radio next week but you're gonna hear it here first. It's a song that is very personal for me. It's not about love or any of that stuff I normally write about. This one is purely about finding inner strength and discovering who you are. I'm very proud of this song and I hope you all love it as much as I do. It's called 'Strong'." The music started and I started to sing:

*A lot of my life's been stolen
I walked in every shade of black
And I never thought I would get me back
It's funny how life can change you
And make you who you are today
I wonder if God set it up that way
For me to be...*

*Strong
Even when it hurts
The heat it's gonna burn
Gotta let it go
Strong
Strong
Make a big mistake and never run away*

*There's nothing like this feeling
To be free and unafraid
Who ever thought I could be this way
Learning everyday*

*Strong
Even when it hurts
The heat it's gonna burn
Gotta let it go
Strong
Strong
Make a big mistake and never run away*

*I wanna push away the boundaries
I wanna live outside the lines
I wanna stare at the sun and not care if I go blind
Whatever comes
Whatever breaks
I'll stand up straight*

*Strong
Even when it hurts
The heat it's gonna burn
Gotta let it go
Strong
Strong
Make a big mistake and never run away
Never run away, no
Strong*

After the song ended I thanked the crowd then turned to leave the stage but Jon was right next to me. He pulled me into his arms and held me for a second then he kissed me softly on the cheek. I kissed his cheek in return then went back to my place in the wing.

After the show I went with Jon and the guys to an after party at a German club. German techno was some of the best, surpassed only by Japanese techno, and so the club was hopping and we had a VIP section just for us. Jon wasn't big into techno but I was getting sick of sitting and trying to hold down conversations in a loud atmosphere.

"Jon, dance with me." I said.

"I don't feel like it." He replied.

"Oh come on. I've had 5 beers in the last 2 hours. I'm majorly buzzing. If I don't dance some of this off you're gonna have to carry me out of here cause I'll sit and drink myself drunk."

"I can think of worse things."

"You're bad. Come on!"

"Fine, fine, you win. You always win."

I smiled, "I know."

As we hit the dance floor a remix of one of my songs came on.

"I wanted to dance to German techno, not this crap." I said.

"I like it better myself."

I smiled, "Thanks."

We danced to my song then the German techno came back on and I was happy. We ended up dancing for a good hour at least before we went and sat back down. After Jon finally got sick of dancing we went and drank some more.

"You know, I'm sick of this techno crap. There has got to be a strip club around here." Jon said.

"I saw one not far from here when we were on our way to dinner." I said.

"Awesome, lead the way."

We left the dance club and went to a German strip club. Some of the music still had a techno feel to it, which made me happy, but there was a bit more variety, which made Jon happy. We watched the strippers for awhile, which was always

fun, then I noticed Jon go up to the DJ and say something. He came and sat back down. I looked at him and he just smirked. A few minutes later a remix of 'Tic Toc' came on as this beautiful blonde stripper took the stage. (For those who forgot, 'Tic Toc' is a song from my 'Twisted Angel' album that is about the...rise of a sexual experience.) Watching this beautiful woman dance naked to a song I wrote about sexual energy was such a damn turn on. I was already somewhat drunk by the point and I was beyond turned on and so I did what any woman would do in my situation. I walked up to the stage. The rules at these strip clubs were different than in America. Here, you could touch the strippers. And I did. And next thing I knew she was helping me on the stage and I was dancing with her. I took off my shirt and left my purple lacy bra on as I grinded against her. It was so hot. We kissed and I let my hands explore her body. I was loving every moment of this. She started to kiss my neck and blow gently on my ear as I softly moaned. I continued to grind against her in time to the music. When the song ended they went into a techno song. It also had a sexual beat, I actually think I recognized it from 'Queer as Folk' but it was hard to tell because they used so much different music on that show. Anyway, we continued our dance. It continued to get hotter as she let her hands roam around my body. She even cupped my covered breasts in her hands as she kissed the exposed area of skin above my bra line. It felt so good.

After that song ended I paid her a lot for that dance and gave her an extra 100 (in US dollars) to take me to a back room for a private dance. Jon asked if he could come watch, I told him he could. We went to a back room and she started to give me a really hot lap dance. Since we had privacy I let her take my bra off when she tried to. We messed around a lot. She asked, in a heavy German accent, if I wanted to have sex with her. Evidently prostitution is legal in Germany and has been for a couple of years now. I considered this before deciding against it.

"No thanks Love, not in this for a fuck, just feeling good." I said.

"Your call." She said.

We continued what we were doing for awhile longer, she did manage to get me out of my jeans and so now she was naked and I was left wearing only panties. After a while I paid her then got dressed and Jon and I headed back for the hotel. Most of the other guys had gone back by this point.

Jon walked me to my room...he actually kinda helped me get there because I wasn't walking entirely straight.

"I had a great time tonight. It was really fun hanging out again." Jon said.

I nodded, "Yeah, it was. You...wanna come inside?"

"You sure?"

"Yeah, I'm sure."

Jon came in and I started to take off my clothes.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Changing into my pajamas...oh come on, it's nothing you haven't seen before."

"Yeah, I know..."

"You can stay here if you want." I said.

"Are you..."

"Shut up and stop questioning me." I said as I walked over to him and pushed him against a wall. I kissed him.

"Whoa...what was that?"

"What do you think?"

"You're drunk."

"I'm horny."

"Mich, we can't..."

"We can't make out? I never said I wanted to fuck you."

"Mich..."

"If you don't want to you know where the door is."

"I didn't say that."

"Well then..."

Jon nodded, "OK."

We started to kiss. I took his shirt off and we fell back on the bed. We continued to make out until I started getting sleepy. I eventually fell asleep in his arms.

Sleep was short lived however. A couple of hours after I fell asleep JessLyn was banging on my door. I had promotions and a video shoot for 'Strong'. I was also slightly hung over, I quickly discovered.

“Oh shit.” I grumbled as I reached for my shirt (I woke up in only my shorts) and walked for the door. When I had a shirt on I opened it.

“Come on Michi Girl, let’s do this. Lots of work to do an...whoa...um, hi Jon...” JessLyn said.

I sighed.

“Hi Jess.” Jon said as he sat up.

“Ok...wasn’t expecting this...but it’s your business...just shower up and hurry downstairs. I have a car waiting for you.” Jess said.

I nodded, “Got it.”

Jon headed back to his room then I showered and dressed. I went to a meeting about the video with Jess so I understood what was gonna happen that night. It was a concept video and was mostly me singing the song while wearing a black dress...just being emotional and such. I could pull that off. After the meeting I went to three different TV show interviews...most of which asked the same damn questions.

“How does this album differ from your America release?”

(It has a totally different sound and different songs, except one.)

“Is Hunter gay? Did he cheat on you?”

(Those are personal questions for Hunter to answer, not me. You’d have to ask him.)

“Are you and Hunter breaking up?”

(No, no. Hunter and I will be fine. (OK, so the truth was I didn’t know...don’t tell me you wouldn’t have lied to the press in that situation.))

“Why two different singles?”

(We felt ‘Strong’ was more suited for the German audience.)

“Do you enjoy pop or country more?”

(Both are a part of who I am and I love the fact I get to do both.)

You get the idea.

After the interviews I got a short break to eat before I started radio interviews...which again, asked pretty much the same questions. Mina was with me for the radio interviews though. She’d been doing magazine promotion for her solo album while I did the TV stuff. After that I was taken to the video shoot. I went to wardrobe and had my make up and hair done then I put on the dress and went to the set. We shot the video in 5 hours...that was a pretty good record for me.

After the shoot it was really late and I was really tired so I headed back for the hotel. Mina was walking through the lobby as I was coming in.

“Oh, well if it isn’t Little Ms. Wild Child.”

I looked at her, “What?”

“Did you miss the headline on the tabloids today?”

“What?”

She held up a paper, “‘The Return of the Twisted Angel’? What the hell?”

“Picture of you and a stripper...on a stage! What the hell were you thinking?”

“Fuck...I didn’t know anyone was taking pictures.”

“Well, they were...and you know these will get back to the American press. Way to go.”

“It’s free press.”

“You’re the one that wanted things to quiet down.”

“Well Hunter fucked that up already, didn’t he? Now if you’ll excuse me I need sleep.”

“Michelle, you’re being an idiot. This is the shit that happens when you spend time with Jon...every time you’re with him for any length of time shit like this happens...you get bad press.”

“Excuse me for having fun.”

“This is more than fun...you’re risking everything you’ve worked for.”

“I’ll be fine.”

“You think so? Will you be fine when Jon fucks up your life just like he’s always done before.”

“Jon and I worked through that shit. We’re friends now. Deal with it.”

“For such a smart, strong woman you can certainly be an idiot sometimes.”

“Leave me alone.”

The next day I had one more press event, in which I was asked questions about the pictures. Lucky for me this event happened to be a press conference.

“OK, listen, and listen good. I’m only gonna make one statement about those pictures. First of all, I am a woman, not a child, it is perfectly legal for me to have some fun from time to time. Second of all, I was just having fun. I’m going through a lot of pressure, work and personal, and I felt the need to cut loose. There is no harm in that. I wasn’t taking drugs, I wasn’t out killing anyone, I wasn’t harming anyone in any way. I just had some fun with a stripper. Last time I checked that was perfectly legal.”

“Was this done to get revenge on Hunter?” one of the reporters called.

“No, it wasn’t. It was done for fun. I didn’t go out and fu...sleep with anyone. I didn’t cheat on him...I was having some fun.”

“Are you and Jon getting back together? He was with you at the club.”

“Yeah, and he is a dear friend...but that’s it...just a friend...now if you will excuse me this is over. I don’t feel the need to justify my actions to the world anymore.”

I got in the car and we headed for the airport. We had a stop in London before we went home. JessLyn went with us this time and the whole flight to London she was pissed.

“Michelle, you know I love a little controversy here and there...it helps the album sell but this is a bit much, even for you. You have to be nicer to the people asking the questions.”

“The hell I do. It’s my fucking life. I’ll live it as I see fit.” I said.

“You’re going out of control again Mich.” Mina said.

“Fuck off.”

The rest of the flight was quiet.

In London we did more TV, radio, and print press and I performed “...And It Feels Like” on Top of The Pops, which is a REALLY big deal in England. It was a lot of fun, but I still had to defend myself and it was pissing me off. I did my best to be nice but I was glad when we finished the press and headed back for the States. I could go back into hiding in Briarwood for a few weeks, until the album was released.

When I got home I walked in and saw Hunter sitting on the sofa.

“We need to talk.”

I stared at him, expressionless, “There’s nothing to talk about.”

“Yes there is. You’re a fucking hypocrite.”

“Oh am I now?”

“You cheated on me after all but breaking up with me for the same thing.”

“I didn’t fuck anyone.”

“Neither did I. I did the exact same thing you did, only not on stage.”

“I didn’t cheat on you.”

“If you wanna say that then I didn’t cheat on you.”

“I’m not in the mood for this.” I said as I held up my hands and used my wind power to blow him against the wall. I turned and went into the room and closed the door. He followed.

“Michelle, what in the hell is your problem?” he asked.

“Gah! What part of that wind storm didn’t you get?” I asked as I held my hands up again. I used my wind power to push him out of the room and slam the door. I went to fall back on the bed but instead I fell into mid-air and levitated over the bed.

“Oh...whoa...my mystic powers must be developing. I can levitate now...this is weird.” I sighed and tried to bring myself down to the bed. I couldn’t so I floated across the room and locked the door. I finally got myself down and got in bed. I had serious jet lag.

When I woke up Hunter was sitting on the bed next to me. He'd picked the lock. He'd also tied my hands above my head.

"No wind, no lightning. We're gonna talk." He said

I glared, "Untie me Hunter Bradley."

"Not a chance. Now listen, I'm sorry about what I did, I know I made a mistake and I know I hurt you. I'm really sorry about that, but what's done is done. I can't undo it. I can only move forward and, all things considered, I'd like it if we could move forward together. Seriously think about all of this...do you really want to walk away?"

"No."

"OK then...can you try to forgive me if I forgive you?"

I glared, "You don't get it. I'm not mad that you messed around with him. I'm mad you hid it from me. I'm mad I found out from the press. You promised you'd be honest."

Hunter nodded, "Alright, you're right. I should have been honest. I'm sorry. I promise that will never happen again."

"If it does I'm doing more than blowing you out of a room."

"I know. So you can try to forgive me?"

"Yeah, I'll try."

"OK then." He untied me.

As soon as he did I blasted him with mild lightning.

"What the hell?!"

"That's for tying me up."

"Fine, sorry....can I have a hug now?"

I nodded, "Sure. But if you ever do anything like that again I'm gonna fry your ass so hard..."

"Got it."

"Good...now, come here."

Hunter held me and it felt good to be in his arms, but in the back of my mind I couldn't help but wonder if maybe there was something else he wasn't telling me...and for some reason I couldn't explain I wondered why I felt so guilty...and what I had to feel guilty about.

PRT 265- “Whatever We Wanna”

Hunter had taken a few days off and I hadn't told the Mystic Rangers that I was back in town. We used this time to bond and reconnect. After all that had happened the past couple of weeks we needed the time.

On the last morning before Hunter had to leave again I got a package from JessLyn. I opened it and found a CD and a letter.

“Mich,

The album is done, great job. Release is a go for tomorrow. I'm proud of this album, I think it will do well...it's obvious how much heart you put into it. I'll let you know how sales go. Enjoy your success.

Jess”

I looked at the CD. This was it. The euro album...um...I mean, “Whatever We Wanna” was done. All my hard work paid off.

“HUNTER!” I called.

“What is it?” he asked as he walked in, wearing only jeans, no shirt.

I smiled, “The album is here...want to take a listen with me?”

He nodded, “Of course.”

He sat on the sofa and I put the CD in the stereo and sat with him.

“This isn't gonna make me cry like the last one is it?” he asked.

I laughed, “I don't know. This one is a lot more personal but not in the romantic sense. It's more about me and my personal journey.”

“You gonna explain each song to me again?”

I nodded and pressed play. The CD started.

“Satisfied”

I smiled as the upbeat guitars started.

“I think this is pretty self explanatory.” I said.

“Not really...” Hunter replied.

“OK, well, it's kinda a reply to a question I get asked a lot.”

“Which is?”

““You've done TV, movies, and music...what else is there for you to do?””

“And your reply?”

“No matter what I achieve I want more. I'll never be satisfied.”

“That bridge sounds like you want a break.”

I nodded, “Well, yeah...kinda like an addition to work I guess. I'll never be satisfied. I'd like to slow down but I can't. Ya know?”

“Ohh...yeah...got that. I love the beat...very you.”

I nodded as the song ended and the next one started.

“...And it Feels Like”

“You heard this one.” I said.

Hunter nodded, “Yeah...and you explained on your blog what it was about too.”

“Yeah. About us. That time in 2003 right before we broke up.”

“You really felt I was pulling away?”

“I think to a certain extent we both were. We both knew we were running out of time together and so it's only natural to pull away.”

“I never meant to make you feel like I didn't care.”

“I know...I guess I felt replaced by Cam before I was even gone. When that happened I felt like I lost you before I lost you.”

Hunter nodded, "You know I do love you though."

"I know that now, yeah."

"Good."

"I love you too Hunter." I said as I cuddled closer to him.

He held me tightly, "We're gonna be ok."

"Yeah, we'll be ok." I said as the next song started.

"For the First Time"

As this song started I couldn't help but smile. I waited for Hunter to listen long enough to get the idea of the song.

"It's about us...about...our love." Hunter said as he held me even tighter.

I nodded, "Told you there were some songs about us."

"It's like...you couldn't believe the love you felt?" he asked.

"Yeah...about feeling a love I've never known before. A love that consumed me for the first time. You brought that kind of love into my life Hunter. You are my life."

"You are gonna make me cry Mich...you know I hate that."

"You claim to. You know you love it." I said as I turned my head and kissed him.

"I love you." He said as the kiss broke, "And I feel the same way."

I smiled and rested my head on his bare chest as the song changed.

"Save Myself"

I loved this song. It was very catchy.

"You're really feeling trapped by the fame aren't you?" Hunter asked after hearing the beginning of the song.

I sighed, "Yeah, I am. What was it you called it? A fish bowl existence? I wouldn't trade my career for the world, I love what I do, but sometimes I really feel trapped."

"You don't feel you really have to save yourself do you?"

I shook my head, "No...because you saved me."

"A Little More Time"

Hunter looked at me, "This doesn't sound like your style."

"Kira helped me write it."

"Ohhh, yeah, now that you mention it, it does sound like Kira's style."

"Yeah, I love the sound though."

"It is good. I like it too...another song about feeling trapped by fame."

I nodded, "Yeah...but also appreciating what I have."

"Appreciating a love..."

I nodded, "Yeah. And this isn't so much about feeling trapped as it is crumbling to the fame...needing some time to myself. Time away from the spotlight...and not just that either...time away from training...from Rangering...although that's the hidden underline meaning of course."

"Of course."

"I guess I feel like the world depends on me...literally...it's a lot to handle sometimes."

"Understandable. Although I didn't know you felt this way."

I nodded as the song ended.

"Rumour 'Bout a Revolution"

Hunter looked at me, "I think I already know what this one is about."

"Yeah?"

"Paparazzi...tabloids?"

"Bingo. I'm so sick of those damn tabloids."

"Yeah, I know the feeling."

"I know and I'm sorry for that."

"This song really sounds angry."

"Not angry...frustrated. Just being frustrated...wanting the rumors and gossip to stop."

"It's very soulful. Almost sounds like a gospel song."

"If only..."

“I know, I know. It’s nice though. I like it. It expresses how I feel about the press too.”
I nodded.

“Destructive”

I took a deep breath. This one was probably one of the most personal songs I’d ever written and I had a feeling it was gonna shock Hunter.

Hunter looked at me, “Michelle...self abuse? Destructive? Bitch the world out?”

I nodded.

“OK...this is about being sick of everything...fame, Rangering...all of it...right?”

I nodded and held back tears...it was so personal and sharing it with Hunter was more emotional than I thought.

“God Mich, I had no idea you felt this way.”

“I don’t wish for my LA life anymore. I really don’t...but god...to get out and let loose and not give a fuck about anything...not have to answer to anyone...sometimes I hate that I’ve become so practical and image conscious. Even more than that sometimes I hate that it’s my destiny to protect the world from evil...sometimes I wish I were evil.”

“You’ve been evil.”

“Yeah...and I lost my morals and everything for awhile...it was great...sometimes I miss it.”

Hunter was speechless as the next song started.

“Strong”

Finally Hunter spoke again, “Another song about all the hard times fame and Rangering brought you...”

“Not just that...my whole life. Jon, LA, everything. It’s about how all that made me who I am. It’s about liking who I’ve become...how everything has brought me full circle and made me stronger.”

“But in an earlier song you mentioned you’re not as strong as you’d like.”

“That was more saying I’m not invincible and I do get weak. This one is saying that sometimes I feel like I have got to be strong no matter what happens to me.”

“You’re right, this album is personal...I had no idea you had all this emotion inside of you.”

“It’s there, trust me. It’s there.”

“Obviously...have you considered seeing a shrink?”

“My writing is my therapy.”

“Some of these lyrics scare me Mich...especially that last song.”

I nodded, “I know, but it’s how I feel sometimes.”

“Whatever We Wanna”

“Finally, something upbeat...hey...this sounds like a rock song.” Hunter said.

I smiled, “Hey, I might have country roots and be a euro pop singer but I am still a rock chick.”

“This sounds like an 80s rock song...like something The Bangles would have done.”

I nodded, “Kinda the point. I missed doing rock songs.”

“Sounds like something Mac would do.”

“That’s how I finally tapped into Mac’s style. I can do stuff other than country. I had to remember I could, because I had for this album.”

“I like this song. I don’t get the meaning.”

I smiled, “Basically, just about us nothing give a fuck about what anyone says and doing what we want. It’s pretty simple actually. It’s about letting go and just having fun...having adventure. Doing whatever we wanna.”

“Ohhhhhhh, ok...yeah...hey I like that line about skinny dippy...we should try that.”

“We have...remember.”

“Ok...sometime again soon...you’re right, we need more adventure...adventure for us that are just fun, not life threatening.”

I smiled, “Yes we do!”

“Everybody’s Someone”

“Who’s the guy singing?” Hunter asked.

“Brian McFadden...he’s from that UK boyband, Westlife. He’s gone solo now.”

“Didn’t you do a duet with that other boyband member?”

“Yeah, Ronon Keating. He was in Boyzone.”

“You like UK boybands?”

“Nah, Jess does...although I did used to be a Westlife fan and Brian is a good singer.”

“This is just an inspirational song.”

I nodded, “Yeah...I see a lot of people between Rangering and touring. I see a lot of people who feel worthless and they aren’t. They need to know that...then I heard Jon’s song ‘Welcome to Wherever You Are’ and I knew he was on to something but that I could word it better, so I did...although looking at it now I think maybe he did word it better after all.”

Hunter laughed, “I don’t know, this is a nice song.”

“Yeah, it’s pretty good.”

“Headphones”

Hunter looked at me, “And what, prattle, is this? This is a dance track.”

“Yeah, and it’s not about us so get that out of your head...this is about...”

“Don’t tell me...” he paused and listened, “Please tell me it’s not about Xander.”

I laughed, “No! It’s not even about real people. It’s about characters.”

Hunter paused again, “Ohhhhh! You’ve been watching too much ‘Queer as Folk’ haven’t you?”

I smiled and looked innocent.

“Brian and Justin...this about them.”

“Yup...written from Justin’s point of view to Brian.”

“I totally get that now. Nicely done...that is very Justin and Brian. And I could just hear it playing at Club Babylon.”

“That was the plan. God I love this song.” I said as it ended.

“Long Night”

Hunter listened for awhile, “About us?”

“Sorta. About my wanting to escape the stress of life with you and just be with you. Life is so hectic and sometimes I wish I could just be with you...be in your arms.”

Hunter nodded, “Am I really all you want?”

“You know that. If we could run away from the world I would go with you in a heartbeat. I’m so sick of so much of the shit in my life.”

Hunter pulled me closer again. I liked when he did that.

“This Life”

“This is about you...wait...this is about us? I’m confused.” Hunter said.

“It’s about us, yeah...about me and us. About the crap in my life and how it’s getting better and in spite of everything I have to so everything is worth it. Kinda like I wouldn’t change anything in this life because I have you because of it all. And you keep me pushing on...fighting for another day. I need you...I wouldn’t be here without you.”

“You really depend on me...”

“You are my life Hunter. You’re everything to me.”

“Wow...I’m so sorry I hurt you Mich...I never meant to.”

“It’s in the past. All in the past. We’re gone move on now.”

Hunter nodded.

“Break Me Down”

“Wow, long album.” Hunter said.

“One more after this...15 songs.”

“I’m impressed.”

I smiled.

“Hey...this is about me. Right?”

I nodded, “Yeah. About giving myself up to you because I trust you so much. About wanting you to just consume me. About wanting to risk everything to be with you and just throwing caution to the wind. I wrote this right after we got together...back when I was getting ready to leave Jon and be with you. Something about you...I trusted you so much. I needed you and I was willing to risk anything for you.”

“I guess it was a pretty big risk being together back then.”

“Yeah, it was, in more ways than one, but I felt it was worth it...and I was right. I have something better than I ever

dreamed.”

Hunter kissed me, “I got something pretty great too.”

“Some People”

“Hey, I know this song...it’s different...but...this is a pop version of ‘Some People’.”

“Yeah, I liked it a lot so I reworked it for this album. ‘This Woman’ wasn’t released in Europe so I figured it wouldn’t hurt to put this on this album too.”

“Well I know what this song is about. It’s about us in comparison to a lot of other couples...or non-couples that we know.”

I nodded, “And I still feel we’re the luckiest two people in the world.”

“Me too. I think I like this version better.”

“It’s barely different.”

“It’s different enough. I like it.”

“I’m glad you approve.”

Hunter smiled and then kissed me passionately. I kissed him back. We continued to kiss until the end of the song.

“So that’s the eu...that’s ‘Whatever We Wanna’. What do you think?” I asked.

“Well...you’re right...it was very personal for you. I learned things about you I wasn’t really aware of. I’m sorry you feel so trapped by your life.” Hunter said.

“It is what it is. I’m glad I have an outlet to get my frustration out.”

“You weren’t serious when you said you missed being evil sometimes...”

“Actually, I was.”

“Oh...Mich, maybe you should consider taking some time away from Rangering.”

“I’m fine. I just get tired. I’ve been a Ranger for...well I was a Ranger for five years then I got a break that wasn’t much of a break since I still got called on pretty much once a year for a mission, now this is my fifth year training teams...I’ve been a Ranger for 14 years in some way or another. It gets old after awhile.”

“I’m so sorry Mich.”

“It’s not your fault...I have you and that’s really the important thing.”

“The lyrics of ‘Destructive’ really scared me.”

“I know, and I’m sorry for that. I’m not sorry I wrote it though. I’ve never written a more honest and personal song and I love it.”

“No, it is a great song, one of your best, but it’s still scary.”

“I know. But those are the emotions I have in me...let’s forget about it though...I can think of better ways to spend your last day here...let me remind you what you’re leaving behind here so you don’t get anymore bright ideas about Moto Bunnies...or Hares.” I said as I led him to the bedroom.

PRT 266- "A Cat's Life"

Hunter had left a day before but I still wasn't ready to be Mac again...in all honesty I didn't really wanna change back.

That was before Xander came by the apartment because he got word from an unknown source that I was back. I let him in when he knocked.

"We need Mac back." He said.

"You mean you want Mac back for selfish reasons."

"I miss her."

"Xan, you are aware I'm Mac."

"No, Mac is different from you."

"Only in appearance."

"But I care about Mac. I think I might even love her."

"Xander, listen to me...Mac isn't real."

"She is to me."

"She's a character I created...what have I done...I never should have gotten you involved in this."

"I miss her...and anyway, we could use Mac's help."

"Well Mac is gone. She isn't coming back."

"She has to."

"No, she doesn't."

"Yes, she does. You're the one bitching about wanting to get away...well Mac gives you a way."

"Mac is more of a pain than she's worth! She's not an escape!"

"We need her."

I glared, "We'll see...please leave Xander."

"Fine."

I went to Rock Porum and found Toby.

"Michelle, wow...it's good to see you. What brings you here? Is Mac with you?" he asked.

"No, but you wanted me to sing here? Well you have your wish. I want to sing...now."

Toby smiled, "Really? Oh yes! Go right ahead."

I went to the stage, started up the music, and sang:

*"If I could smoke a cigarette right now I would
Rip out of my skin
Commit the sins, oh I could
If I could break a heart and throw it away for just one night
My conscience wouldn't care if I just went ahead and wrecked my life*

*I wanna be destructive
Trash everything in sight
Be the devil that is game
Abuse myself all night
I wanna bitch the world out
Let out an aching scream
Don't want anybody wanting anything from me*

*I'm sick of being perfect
With a perfect little smile
If I could find the danger
Be a stranger to myself for awhile
Wanna come unraveled
Have it out with my soul*

*Tired of all the voices telling me which way to go
I wish you'd silence your opinion
That's the last thing that I wanna know*

*I wanna be destructive
Trash everything in sight
Be the devil that is game
Abuse myself all night
I wanna bitch the world out
Let out an aching scream
Don't want anybody wanting anything from me*

*I feel bitter, insane
I don't wanna feel no pain
I'm really sick of thinking
I just wanna be destructive*

*I wanna be destructive
Trash everything in sight
Be the devil that is game
Abuse myself all night
I wanna bitch the world out
Let out an aching scream
Don't want anybody wanting anything from me"*

By the time I got off stage all five Rangers were by the stage waiting for me.
"That's scary...that's not you Michelle. That's not even Mac." Maddie said.
"You didn't mean all of that." Xander said.
"Actually I did." I said.
"I liked the song." Vida said.
"Thanks V." I said.
"Michelle, we really need Mackenzie back." Chip said.
"She's not coming back."
"We need her."
"No, we don't." Nick said.
"See, listen to your leader." I said.
"We need her Michelle...you can't bail on us now. Please." Maddie said.
"No."

I went home, feeling better about having walked away. That's about the time my phone rang.
"Hello?" I asked.
"So I've seen Michelle Morris all over the papers and TV but I haven't seen any reports of the Purple Ranger in action." Tommy said.
I sighed, "Because the Purple Ranger is done."
"Michelle...you can't do that. You can't bail on the team."
"I don't need this Tom."
"Rangering is who you are."
"Udonna called didn't she?"
"Yeah."
I sighed, "Damn that witch."
"Michelle, the fate of the world has always rested with us. I don't you hate it. There's times I hate the Power too but it's who we are. You can't escape that. You have to keep fighting...you have to keep fighting for the sake of everyone."
I hated when he appealed to my sense of good. "Fine. You win. I'll go back."
"Good girl. I love you."

“Back at ya. Bye.” I hung up and sighed, “Fine. In this time and in this place, let me see my other face.”

I went to Root Core. Turns out everyone was still waiting for that damn dragon egg to hatch. No one was impressed to see me.

“So, long are you back this time?” Nick asked.

“Until the Underworld is taken care of.” I grumbled.

“Glad to see you too.” Vida chimed in as they went back to discussing the dragon.

I was about to sit down when there was a knock on the...outside of Root Core. Nick and Vida went to check it out.

“It’s only Phineas.” Nick called back to the rest of us.

So as it turned out Phineas had a horrible toothache and Vida decided it would be a good thing to take him to the dentist...outside the forest...as in our world...

“This is a bad, bad idea.” I protested as we walked Phineas, disguised in a hat, sunglasses, and trench coat, through the streets of Briarwood.

“No one asked you Macelle.” Nick snapped.

Phineas was such a fish out of water in the city. He almost walked out in front of a car. Xander saved him and got a big hug for his efforts. Also turns out Phineas had never seen a car before and wanted to taste one to see if they were eatable. It was about this time LeeLee came running up calling for the Power Rangers to take care of a monster.

“Hey, LeeLee, LeeLee, we don’t know where the Power Rangers are. Why don’t you look on the other side of town and we’ll look around here.” Nick said.

“You can never find those costume freaks when you need them.” LeeLee huffed.

“Who’s she calling a costumed freak?” Vida demanded after she was gone.

I sighed, “Sometimes I really wish that girl was part of the Underworld so I’d have an excuse to take her out.”

“Sounds like there’s trouble at the beach cave.” Chip said, “I wonder why the crystal ball didn’t pick it up?”

“Um hi, remember me? Yeah, the one with the tooth.” Phineas said.

“Right, someone should stay behind and take him to the dentist.” Maddie said, “Any volunteers.”

No one volunteered.

“No, don’t all jump at once.” Phineas said, “I’m sure I’ll be fine.”

“Aww.” Maddie said.

“Come on, one of us has to stay.” Xander said.

“Hey guys.” Toby said as he walked up.

“Then again, maybe not.” Xander added.

“Oh no...Xan.” I said.

“Mac, you’re back. Everyone’s missed you.” Toby said.

“Yeah, I’m back all right.”

“Toby, would you do us a favor?” Xander asked.

“Um, what is it?” Toby asked.

“Um...Uncle Phineas here needs to go to the dentist but none of us can take him...big school project...have to help catch Mac up and all. Would you mind taking him?” Xander asked.

“Please Toby? I really need their help.” I said.

“Oh, alright, sure.” Toby said.

“You’re the best.”

We rushed off to the beach, Morphing on the way. We noticed some Hideaks, which were Underworld foot soldiers. We fought them and headed into the cave. Inside Maddie got freaked by a baby frog and knocked us over. When getting up we noticed a lamp...well Nick did. Nick picked it up and there was an Earthquake. When it stopped Necrolei was there to get a mummy. She got it and left. We didn’t know what she wanted with a mummy but we knew we had to get the lamp to Root Core.

We got back and looked at the lamp. It had a Mystic Force symbol on it. Nick started to dust off the lamp and when he rubbed it...you guessed it...a genie came out. Not just any genie though...a cat genie. Stop laughing, I’m being serious.

“I’m the great genie, Jenji. I grant you one wish.” He said.

“Genie?” Xander asked.

“Got a problem with that?”

“Well, no, no.”

“Good. I hate violence. Now here’s the rules. You’re the master. I’m the genie. You get one wish, can’t hurt anyone with it...blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.”

“A real, live genie. Always wanted one of those” Chip said.

“Hmm...genies can’t be trusted. I’ve watched Charmed.” I said.

“One wish. Don’t take all day.” Jenji said, “Got a lot of other things to do, like sit in a cave for another 19 years.”

“Are you blaming us?” Vida asked.

“Oh, so now it’s blame the big cat.”

“So one wish, right?” Xander asked.

“Airplanes, balloons, cash, DVDs...not pirated...”

“Oh dear lord...genies are on the bandwagon now...” I groaned.

“...elephants, ferns, gold, igloos, houses, jades, kites, limes, moats, necklaces, opals, polo ponies, quills...who put the steps?...roast beef, six silver saddles, Texas, underwear, vases, whales, xylophones, yaks, and zippers. A to Z, anything you heart desires.”

“I know...with just one wish...I wish for 10 wishes for each of us.” Chip said.

“Granted...like nobody’s ever asked for that before.”

“I wish for 100 diamonds.” Xander said.

“You haven’t washed you hands lately have you?”

“Nothing happened!”

“Of course not, you only had one wish. Carrot Top wished for 10 wishes for each of you. I granted that, thereby and henceforth nullifying any further wishes. Hey, it’s in the genie contract. Did I not show that to you?” Jenji asked as Claire walked in.

“Told you Genies can’t be trusted.” I grumbled.

“Oh, is that a dragon’s egg, cause I’m hungry.”

“Yes it is.” Claire said.

“Can someone day omelette?”

“Does, you know who know that you brought home a stray cat?”

“Don’t worry. I don’t think we’re gonna keep it.” Nick said.

“It’s about to hatch, better keep it warm. Someone sit on it. It’s uncomfortable but it’s the only way.” Jenji said.

“Oh boy.” Claire said as she climbed on the egg and sat on it. She found out she would have to sit on the egg until it hatched and then the crystal ball notified us of an attack.

“Have fun, play safe, I’ll be gone when you get back.” Jenji said.

“Uh, uh...no way. You owe us wishes.” Nick said.

“What about the contract?”

“Back in the lamp, you’re coming with us.”

“Fine, but you should know that when it comes to fighting...” Nick forced Jenji in the lamp before he could finish, “...I’m just a kitten.” He finished as he popped his head out of the lamp. Jenji tried to get out of coming with us but we finally Morphed and got to town. Turns out Necrolai turned that mummy into a wizard and he was trying to take over the city...what’s new?

Anyway, this wizard tried to convince us to use magic for our own desires. Nick turned him down. I froze at the thought.

“Purple Wizard, you could rid yourself of your duelality problem with a simple spell...you could have it all...all you desire.”

“Mac, you can’t be thinking about it.” Xander said.

“I...I’m so sick of all of this. This could be my out...is evil really so evil?” I asked.

“Mac, no.”

Everyone got blasted but me.

“Join me.” The evil wizard asked.

Nick tried to use the genie but the genie retreated. Each Ranger used their elemental attacks on the wizard. All of them backfired.

“So what’s it gonna be Purple one?”

I looked at the Rangers then the Wizard.

“Eat wind.” I said as I sent a wind storm his way. I got blasted by my own wind.

“Ok, not good.” I said as Xander helped me up.

“Glad you’re still with us.” Xander said as the wizard grew to a size that was like a million times bigger than the Megazord. We tried to take it down, but we were like a mosquito to the giant wizard. I thought it was over when Jenji made himself grow to the size of the Wizard and helped us. We didn’t take out the wizard but we made him retreat.

After the battle Xan, Maddie, and I went to go get ‘Uncle Phineas’. He was on the stage rocking out hard core.

“What have we done?” Maddie asked.

“Tried to warn you.” I said.

Xander laughed, “Let’s get him home.”

After Phineas was back in the woods we went to Root Core. After he saved us, the Rangers decided they wanted to keep the cat around. They asked Udonna, who finally got back, and she agreed. Evidently Jenji was an old friend of her’s. We all went back inside when Claire called for help. The egg was hatching. We watched the shell break and a baby dragon was revealed. It cooed and called Claire ‘Mamma’.

“Oh god, it’s adorable!” I ran up and hugged the baby dragon.

“Mac? Are you ok?” Xander asked.

“Yeah...just...I don’t know.”

“You want me to take you home?”

I nodded.

Xander got me back to the apartment.

“I’m really sorry about everything.” I said.

“I know you are.” He said as the phone rang.

“Excuse me.” I went to the phone, “Hello?”

“Hey, it’s me.” Mina said.

“What’s up?”

“I thought you’d wanna know fall schedules got released today. My show got picked up, Lita’s is gone, but you knew that...worse than that, Zack’s was canceled.”

“Oh god...no...not again.”

“I’m really sorry.”

“Thanks for calling Mina. I should call my brother.”

“Alright.”

I hung up and dialed Zachary’s number. I got his voicemail. I hung up and turned back to Xander.

“I think maybe you should end things with Mac.” I said.

“Not a chance. I just lost touch with reality. I won’t again though. We need to keep this up for your sake.”

I sighed, “You’re right.”

“Come here.” Xander pulled me into his arms, “It’ll be ok Mac.”

“I just really want this to all be over.”

“I know...I know. Just relax.” He held me for awhile. A while later the phone rang. I went to answer it.

“Hello?” I asked.

“Michelle?” Zachary asked.

“Hey! I was trying to call you.”

“Oh, ok. It can wait. I’m at the hospital and...”

“What?! Is everything ok?”

“Yes! Kelly had the baby!”

“Oh my god!”

“She’s here. My daughter is here.”

“What’s her name?”

“Ava.”

“Ava Morris...I love it. Congratulation!”

“Thank you. I love you sis but I should go...oh and don’t worry about me. I’ll find another show. I have my wife and two kids...it’s all I need.”

I smiled. I didn't need to worry. My brother was fine. "I love you too...give Kel and the kids my love." I hung up and went and sat next to Xander on the sofa.

"Were you really thinking about going to the dark side?" Xander asked.

I nodded, "Yeah. I was."

"Why? Are you really that miserable?"

"I...no...yes...I don't know...I know that I feel trapped by the power...the idea of using it instead of it using me...it was appealing. It's not like I've never been evil before."

"What?"

"It was always a spell but..."

"This isn't a spell Mac..."

"No, it isn't. Something is happening to me and I don't know what. I don't know how to stop it."

PRT 267- "The Truth About the Sun"

We were at Root Core doing training exercises. First up was a trust exercise. Madison had to fall forward, while blindfolded, and trust her teammates to catch her. Nick and Xander did. Next she had to fall back. No one caught her that time because Claire had walked by with Fireheart and we all followed the look at the cute little guy. We were all googly over Fireheart until we were notified of some dark energy in the forest. We went to check it out. We got attacked and fought the creature. We were gonna Morph and take him out until Udonna walked up and stopped us. She said he was an old friend. The creature took a human form...a very attractive human form. Evidently his name was Calindor and he was one of Udonna's friends. We all introduced ourselves.

"Hey, I'm Mackenzie...I'm not really a teenager though...it's magic. I'm actually much older." I said with a flirty smile.

"Yeah, and you're married." Xander said sourly.

"Whatever. You must see Root Core Calindor. Explain to us about what you've been up to. This way." I said as I took Calindor's arm.

We got to Root Core and found out the city was under attack.

"We'll be back Calindor. Make yourself at home." I said smiling.

We Morphed and went to action.

We took on this creepy monster that was just attacking everything in sight. I helped some civilians to safety while the Rangers attacked. I went to help them when we noticed some civilians that were hanging off a bridge. We had to save them! Maddie and I fought our way passed the monster and saved the people while the Rangers continued to fight. The alien took off about that time. We caught up to it and attacked with everything we had, but the alien retreated.

We noticed he painted something on the ground, but we weren't sure what it meant and the Rangers were late for work so we went to Rock Porum. The band was there and wanted to do an impromptu set. They were more than a little mad over me disappearing. I agreed if we could do a song I'd written. I went onstage and sang:

*I'm getting up now
The sun is burning my eyes and I ache
I'm living on a freeway, running low on heart and good mistakes
I'm taking it to living, just living all the lives I have to live
I'm playing off this feeling knowing that it's time to be forgiven*

*If I could only come around
I'm looking in the back
Just stop and turn around
I need to get this off my back
Am I outta my mind, for faking what's inside of me?*

*It's like I'm walking on another thin line
Where the fools keep on thinking I'm blind
I'm waiting for the day*

*I'm wide awake now its getting dark and I can't see my way
I'm living through the game now, by watching every word that I might say*

*And now I've gotta come around
I'm falling through the cracks
And stop and turn around
Can't get this off my back
Am I outta my mind, for faking what's inside of me?*

*It's like I'm walking on another thin line
Where the fools keep on thinking I'm blind
I'm waiting for the day
No, no, no I'm in the middle of a crime
Taking left what's mine
As I fade away
With everything I am*

*With everything I am
With all I have to stand
I'm not gonna fade, oh no!
Dragon tears and cover songs
When I've done nothing wrong
I just don't belong*

*It's like I'm walking on another thin line
Where the fools keep on thinking I'm blind
I'm waiting for the day
I'm in the middle of a crime
Taking left what's mine
As I fade away*

After the set I went and joined the Rangers.

“That was great!” Xander said hugging me.

“Thanks babe.” I said as I kissed him softly.

“Guys, we have to take care of that circus clown. Any ideas on what he’s up to?” Nick said.

“That symbol on the ground, I know I’ve seen it somewhere before. It must have something to do with a dark seal.” Maddie said as a frog jumped on her shoulder. If you’ll recall Maddie is terrified of frogs. We all looked at her, some wide-eyed, some holding back laughter. “What?”

“Seems your prince has arrived.” Xander said peeking over her shoulder.

Maddie saw the frog and screamed.

“Still don’t like frogs sis?” Vida asked.

“Not since you put one down my dress when we were kids, no.”

“That was a long time ago.”

Everyone was jumping around trying to get the frog. I stood back and laughed. It was too funny. They kept chasing the frog until we heard screaming. We left the frog and went to check things out.

We figured out the symbols would created a dark seal that would destroy humans. We had to stop him. We Morphed and attacked. Maddie got his bad and de-morphed. She was about get attacked when the frog jumped on the monster. “Whoa...the frog saved you...are you ok Maddie?” I asked as I ran to her. I checked on Maddie while the other’s fought.

“You saved me you ugly little thing. I could kiss you.” Maddie said.

“Go ahead. Maybe he’s a prince.” I said.

Maddie kissed the frog and it started to glow...then it became a human.

“Whoa...a real life frog prince...” I said as I stared in amazement at the attractive creature that stood before us. The man Morphed into a Ranger...the Solaris Knight to be exact...he was powered by the Power of the Sun.

“No way...the Solaris Knight is real? I thought he was Sol System folklore...” I said in amazement. Even more amazing, Jenji was part of the Solaris Knight’s arsenal. He took out the monster.

“You’re real...you’re really real...” I said.

“Not now, Udonna is in trouble.” He said.

“Let’s go guys.” We rushed to Root Core.

Turns out Calindor was evil and trying to take the Xenotome. The Solaris Knight, who’s real name was Daggeron, tried

to fight him, but he retreated.

So as it turned out Daggeron was really the old friend and Calindor had been over taken with dark magic.

After the drama was over the Rangers left. I wanted to talk to Daggeron though.

"I'm not really a teenager you know." I said, "It's magic."

"Oh?" Daggeron asked.

"I'm really Princess Michelle of Saturn."

Daggeron froze, "Princess Michelle?"

I nodded, "In this time and in this place, let me see my truest face."

"Princess Michelle...it is you."

"You do know me?"

"I do."

"From long ago? You're the guardian of the Sun. I really thought your legend was Sol System folklore...a myth."

"I'm anything but a myth."

"I can see that now...it is truly an honor."

"I could say the same Princess. There was a time I watched over you and all your fellow Princesses. It is nice to meet you in person."

"You watched over us?"

"Yes. I did, for a time."

"I had no idea our worlds connected so closely Udonna."

"The magical forest is probably closer to your world than anywhere else on this planet." Udonna said.

"I had no idea."

"You had to find out on your own."

"Princess..." Daggeron started.

"Please, call me Mac...it's easier...in this time and in this place, let me see my other face." I said.

"Got it. Mac, would you mind if I did some training of the Rangers?"

"Not at all! Please do! It would help me out a great deal. I've been needing to lighten my load."

"Thank you Mackenzie."

"No, thank you. To show you how grateful I am, would you like to come over for dinner tonight? Please?"

Daggeron nodded, "I'd be honored to be your dinner guest."

"Awesome! Let's go!"

"See you soon Udonna."

Udonna nodded.

I took Daggeron over to the apartment and order in some food from my favorite shop. They delivered it. We were about to sit and eat when there was a knock.

"Excuse me Daggeron." I said as I went to the door. It was Xander.

"Um, did you forget our date?" Xander asked.

"Oh...damn...skating rink..."

"The cheer squad is gonna be there and you wanted to show up."

"Right...right...we can go another time. I'm getting to know Daggeron."

"A date?"

"No, no...just dinner with a new friend."

"Fine."

"You want to come by later? Maybe we can hang out?"

"Sure, whatever."

"Xander, don't be mad." I said.

"Me? Mad? Of course not."

"Xander..."

"I'll see you later Mac."

I sighed and went to sit back down and eat.

"Everything ok? Young Xander seemed upset." Daggeron said.

“Yeah, well that’s my fault. I started a fake relationship with him to help keep up appearances for Mac and it’s become a little too real to him.” I said.

“Oh...yes, faking matters of the heart can be tricky business.”

“No kidding. So tell me more about you.”

“In time Princess, in time.”

“Speaking of which...” I said the spell to become Michelle again, “I’m sure you’d rather have dinner with the Princess and not a teenager.”

Daggeron laughed, “It’s only your outside appearance. Inside you are the same remarkable woman.”

I smiled, “That’s so sweet of you, considering you don’t really know me.”

“I know you’re a great princess and you’ve been keeping the universe safe. That takes a remarkable person.”

“Yeah, well this remarkable person has been leaning to the dark side.”

“Oh Princess, do not get involved in dark magic.”

“It’s so tempting.”

“I know it is...but you must remember what the fight is for...you can’t give that up.”

“Sometimes I just...”

“...feel like dark magic would just be so much easier? I know. I’ve felt the same.”

“Is evil really so evil?”

“Look at what they do to innocent people.”

“Yeah...but I would never hurt someone.”

“Could you live with not saving one?”

“I...I suppose not.”

“You are not evil princess...”

“Something is happening to me though.”

“Perhaps you’re overwhelmed.”

“Maybe so.”

“I don’t think you’re evil by nature though.”

“I don’t know...”

“You wouldn’t have done good for so long for so many people if you weren’t good.”

“You have a point.”

“You’ll work through this. Just give it time. Whatever you do resist the dark magic.”

“I’m trying.”

After dinner I showed Daggeron out and changed back to Mac. After I did I felt myself get weak. I had to stop going back and forth so much. I was draining myself. I decided to get some rest. I was dozing off on the sofa when there was a knock at the door. I went to get it. Xander was at the door.

“Oh, hey, you’re back.” I said.

“Is Daggeron gone?” he asked.

I nodded, “Come in.”

“Are you ok?”

“Fine...just weak.”

“Magical overuse?”

“Yeah.”

“You should rest...come on.” Xander said as he led me to my room.

“Thanks.” I said as I sat on the bed. Xander sat next to me.

“You gonna be alright?”

“I guess so.”

Xander and I looked at each other for awhile...then he leaned in and kissed me. I kissed him back for a second before pushing him away.

“Xander no.”

“Mac, please.”

“You need to separate fact and fiction Xan...Mac isn’t real.”

“If you want this to look real we need to act like a real couple.”

“In front of people we do.”

“That’s not enough. It has to be real to us.”

“OK, come on Xander, let’s go somewhere...anywhere.”

“I thought you were weak.”

“I’ll be fine. We have to get out of here.”

We went to the skating rink to see who was still there. Courtney, LeeLee and a couple other girls were still around. Xander and I walked in hanging all over each other.

“Well look what we have here...Briarwood’s most talked about couple.” Courtney said.

I smiled and kissed Xander.

“They are so faking it.” LeeLee said.

“You’re just jealous because I wouldn’t go out with you.” Xander said.

“As I recall I turned you down.”

“And as I recall Nick turned you down.” I added.

LeeLee scoffed.

I put on my skates and so did Xan. We went out on the rink and skated together. He was a pretty good skater. We skated as we held hands then Xander put his arm around my waist and we skated in sync.

“You’re really good.” I said.

“So are you.” He said.

I smiled as we skated.

“We should let them catch us making out...maybe that’ll get LeeLee off your back, if she thinks she walked in on a private moment.”

I nodded.

After we finished skating we went outside and Xander pushed me up against the wall of the building. We started to kiss intensely. It got really heated, especially when Xander put his hand over my shirt and started feeling me up with one hand while keeping the other against the wall to keep me pinned. I let him get away with this because he didn’t try going under my shirt. We were still going at this when Courtney and LeeLee walked out.

“Oh god, get a room.” LeeLee said.

Xander stopped kissing me and looked over, “Oh...hi LeeLee.”

Courtney laughed, “Still think she’s faking it?”

LeeLee scoffed again and stomped off.

“Mission accomplished.” I whispered after they were gone.

Xander smiled and took my hand and we headed back to the apartment.

“I had fun tonight.” Xander said as we got to my door.

“I bet you did.” I said.

“Seriously. You’re really fun to spend time with.”

“Thanks. I had fun too.”

“You want to go catch a movie this weekend?”

“I’d like that, thanks.”

“OK...see you at school.”

“Alright. Goodnight Xander.” I said as I kissed him goodnight.

I went inside and got in bed. I was really tired now...but it was a good tired. For the first time in awhile going evil wasn’t even a thought...although I still knew something was happening to me. I just didn’t know what.

PRT 268- “Who Am I Fooling?”

I was sitting in class listening to my history teacher lecture.

“Now, it’s widely thought that slavery was the reason for the civil war. This is a misconception however. Slavery was only a small part of it all.”

I was bored, I put my head down and started to daydream.

“Ms. Bradley, am I interrupting your nap?”

I sat up, “No sir, you’re fine. Go ahead.”

“Would you like to go visit the principal today?”

“Not really.”

“Keep it up and you’ll have a one way ticket to detention.”

“Can I get a two way ticket? I’d like to come back eventually.”

“Mac, stop.” Maddie hissed. She was sitting behind me.

“What are you doing?” Xander whispered, he was sitting to the side of me.

“Mr. Bly, would you like to join your girlfriend?”

“No sir.” Xander said.

“Are you gonna bitch me out all day or try to teach us something?” I asked.

“That’s it, principal’s office now.”

I sighed, “Fine...see ya.”

I went to the principal’s office and got detention.

At lunch that day I met up with the others.

“I hear you got detention Macelle.” Nick said.

I rolled my eyes, “Good news travels fast.”

“What’s up with you today?” Xander asked.

“I guess I’m sick of the bullshit. I just got back from Europe...Eur-ope. I’m an adult with a career. I’m past the bull of listening to teacher who think they know it all but actually know shit.”

“You better watch it if you don’t want to get kicked out of school.” Maddie said.

“Yeah, that would be bad.” Chip said.

“Whatever. I sick of pretending to be the perfect teen. I’m sick of the crap.” I said as I got up and headed to my locker. Just my luck, LeeLee walked past with some of the other cheerleaders.

“Look what we have here. The hiding lesbian.” LeeLee said.

“Back off LeeLee, I’m not in the mood.” I said.

“Aww...poor baby.”

“Hey, leave her alone.” Aaron said as he walked up.

“Oh, hey Aaron...you busy tonight?”

“For you? Always.”

LeeLee glared and walked away.

“Thanks.” I said.

“No problem. You’re like a little sister to me.” Aaron said.

I forced a smile, “Yeah, ‘little’ sister.”

As I walked through the halls that day I felt more out of place than normal. I just felt like everyone could see through me...through the spell...although I knew they couldn’t. I ended up skipping computer class and I hid behind the school and wrote a new song. Who was I fooling anyway?

After school we headed to Root Core for training. With Daggeron around my training duties became lighter. He had some training exercises he wanted to use. I was happy to let him. I stood back and watched as the Rangers took on their first exercise...capturing a flying broom. All the Rangers succeeded in this task, except Xander.

“Didn’t you practice for this assignment?” Daggeron asked.

“He had a date last night.” Nick said.

I blushed, lucky for me I had a helmet on, “Sorry.”

“The others found time to practice. You have to work harder.” Daggeron said, “Training is over for now.”

We left the training site and de-morphed.

“I expected better from you.” Daggeron told Xander.

Xander scoffed.

“He’s right you know.” I said.

“Don’t start Mac.”

Next training course was an obstacle course. We had to each collect flags using our elemental powers.

“Why does he think he get to come in here and tell us what to do? He just showed up out of nowhere.” Xander said.

“So?” Maddie asked, “Udonna wants him to train us.”

“It’s not just me, Chip and Mac don’t like him either.”

“What are you talking about I think he’s great!” Chip said.

“Me too! Daggeron is a God send. It give me a break from training you guys.” I said.

“You’re just mad because he embarrassed you. Get over yourself.” Vida said.

“No lie. Drop the ego and get to work. You can do this Xander, you have it in you. I just know it.”

We each did the course...then it was Xander’s turn. He created a vine to get his flag. He was about to go for it when Daggeron stopped him.

“Are you sure this vine is strong enough to hold any member of your team?” Daggeron asked.

“Uh, sure...I mean...I guess so.” Xander said.

I knew this was about to lead to trouble.

Daggeron tried to swing on the vine to get the flag...but the vine broke and Daggeron landed in a puddle.

“Daggeron!” I cried as we all ran to his side.

“Oops.” Xander said.

“Your lack of practice could place your teammates in danger.” Daggeron said.

“We’re just training.” Xander said.

“Well next time it could be the real thing. Without practice your magic will grow weak.”

“And besides, we fight the Underworld at least weekly, if not more, you have got to be ready Xander. No more fooling around.” I said.

“You are to stay here and grow this acorn into a tree.”

“No worries.” Xander said as he reached for his wand.

“Without your wand.” Daggeron said taking it from him, “You have all the strength you need inside of you.”

“That could take all night, and I have a hot date.” Xander said.

I looked at him, “Not anymore you don’t. Get that tree growing or you won’t have a date for a very long time.”

“Mac, no...you’re the real trainer here, pull rank.”

“I’m not going to pull rank on Daggeron...forget it. Dating the trainer doesn’t give you special privlages over the rest of the team. I’ll see you after you make the tree grow. Have a great night. Maddie, wanna catch a movie? I have an extra ticket.”

“Sure!” Maddie said.

“Night Xander.” I said as I kissed his cheek and took off with Maddie.

Maddie and I got to the theater and found our seats.

“I feel bad for Xander.” Maddie said.

“Why? He did this to himself. If he focused more on training and less on dating he wouldn’t have this problem.” I said.

“True...he cares about you a lot Mac.”

I sighed, “I know...more than he should.”

The next day at Rock Porum I walked in and saw Xander crashed out in a chair, snoring.

“Xander’s learned a new spell code, sonic disruption.” Chip said.

“Time for a little payback.” Vida said.

“Guys, come on. Xander had a rough night.” I said.

Vida smirked and dropped a crate of records on the ground.

Xander jumped up.

“Are you ok?” Chip asked.

“Yeah, I’ve just been up all night. Guys, you have to agree, Daggeron’s got to go. And I know what it is. He’s singled me out cause of my good looks. He’s probably just jealous cause he can’t get a date of his own.” Xander said.

“I’d date him...if he asked.” I said.

“He’s overbearing, he’s petty, he’s standing right behind me. Isn’t he?” Xander asked.

Xander and I turned around and saw Daggeron.

“You’re all coming with me on a very special assignment. We’re going on a field trip.” Daggeron said.

“YAY! Fun!” I said.

Daggeron called on a magical train and we all got in.

Everyone was excited except Xander.

“I wonder where we’re going.” Maddie said.

“I’m sure wherever it is, it’s terrible.” Xander said.

“Oh Xan, chill out. Have some fun.” I said.

We went through a magical portal and ended up in this strange land, in strange costumes. Mine was a strapless crimson dress. It looked like something Xena would have worn. Daggeron explained we had to find a ticket if we wanted to ever get home, he took our Morphers.

“I have to stay too?” I asked.

“You’re a Princess Mackenzie, it is the Ranger’s job to protect you. Find the ticket and protect the princess and you all will be fine.” Daggeron said, then he left.

We headed off. Xander took the lead and complained the whole way. Next thing we knew Xander and I were the only ones left.

“Oh no...what happened to everyone?” I asked.

“I don’t know...” Xander said as we heard a roar and Xander ran.

“HEY! Don’t leave me, protect the princess!” I cried running after him. We heard the others scream and we went towards the sound. The others were tied up in a big cave with a giant when we found them. Xander and I hid while we tried to think of a plan. Xander finally had an idea and grabbed my hand and ran off.

“We can’t just leave them.” I said.

“We’re no.” Xander said as he focuses on making a fruit tree grow. He did it and took the fruit to the giant. He ate it happily. He agreed to let the Rangers go for more fruit so Xander created more trees. The Rangers were released and the giant gave us the ticket. He had it all along!

“Awesome work Xander! I knew you could do it!” I said as I kissed him.

We took the train home and found Daggeron in the middle of a fight. We Morphed and helped him finish it, with the help of a new spell code Xander got that gave him massive muscles.

“Ohh...can he keep those when he de-morphs?” I asked as I felt the muscles.

We did our part then Daggeron finished the job in his Zord.

Later that day I went with Xander to the woods to practice. Daggeron walked up. They talked things out and Xander learned to accept Daggeron...and even found a respect for him. I was really proud of Xander.

While Xander finished training Daggeron and I stood off to the side talking.

“Prin...Mackenzie, were you serious when you said you’d date me if I asked?” Daggeron asked.

I smiled, “Yeah, Mackenzie would...Michelle would too if she were single...but Mackenzie might be too young for you.”

“Mackenzie is dating Xander, is she not?”

“Mackenzie can do whatever she wants.”

“Well, I think I’d rather take Michelle out. If she’s ever single, let me know.” Daggeron said as he kissed my cheek.

I smiled, “You can count on that.”

After training Xander and I headed for the apartment to study. With all the magical training we’d fallen behind on school work. After that we went to Rock Porum to hang out. We were cuddling on a chair when I suddenly felt dizzy.

“Mac, what’s wrong? You’re pale.” Xander said.

"I don't know...something is wrong." I said.
"Maddie, Nick!" Xander called.
"Mac...what's wrong?" Maddie asked.
"I don't know." I said.
"You're Amethyst is glowing...is that bad?"
I nodded, "Normally."
"We should get her to Root Core." Nick said.
"No, no, I'm fine." I said.
"Yes...come on." Xander helped me up but I was having trouble standing.
"Oh...whoa..."
"Yeah, you're going to Root Core." Xander picked me up and carried me to Root Core.

"Udonna, Daggeron, something is wrong. Her Amethyst is glowing." Xander explained.
"Mackenzie...Xander, put her down on that table." Udonna said.
"Princess, are you ok? How are you feeling?" Daggeron asked.
"Weak." I said.
"What does the glowing Amethyst mean?" Xander asked.
"I don't know. Any number of things...most of them aren't good." Daggeron said.
"Do something."
"I don't know what to do." Udonna said.
"It's really hot in here." I said as the room started getting fuzzy. I felt myself fading out.
"No...Mac, stay awake. Stay with us." Xander said as he held my hand.
"I can put a protection spell on her for now. After that the best thing to do is to take her home and let her rest." Udonna said.
"Alright."

I vaguely remember Xander putting me in bed and putting a fan close to me, then I was out.

The next morning I wasn't feeling much better, but I wasn't dizzy. I had a gig so I had to show up. Besides, I wanted to sing that song I'd just written.

*My skin doesn't fit
My words seem so hollow
I feel like a fraud
And that's a bitter pill to swallow*

*Sometimes it hits me right between the eyes
Everyone can see through my disguise*

*Who am I fooling
I'm just a smiling face
In a make-believe world
Who am I fooling
I'm just a wannabe
So easy to replace
Pretending I'm a perfect girl*

*All alone in the mirror
All alone on the shelf
I'm trying to hold on
To a little piece of myself*

*Doesn't anybody realize
Even I don't buy my own disguise*

*Who am I fooling
I'm just a smiling face
In a make-believe world
Who am I fooling
I'm just a wannabe
So easy to replace
Pretending I'm a perfect girl*

*There's a part of me that's fighting back
There's a part of me that knows
When I'm pouring out my heart
I'm still putting on a show*

*Who am I fooling
In a make-believe world
Who am I fooling
So easy to replace
Pretending I'm a perfect girl
Who am I fooling
I'm just a smiling face
In a make-believe world
Who am I fooling
I'm just a wannabe
So easy to replace
Pretending I'm a perfect girl
Who am I fooling
I'm just a smiling face
In a make-believe world
Who am I fooling
I'm just a wannabe
So easy to replace
Pretending I'm a perfect girl
Pretending I'm a perfect girl*

After the set I met up with Xander.

“Any better?” he asked.

“Not really.” I said.

“Very telling song Mac.” Maddie said.

“Yeah...you really feel that way?” Nick asked.

“Everyday since Mac was born.” I said.

Xander held me.

“I think I need to...whoa...” I stumbled back.

“You’re Amethyst is glowing again...” Xander said.

“Damn...this isn’t good. Something is seriously wrong.”

“You wanna go home?”

“Yeah.”

Xander took me home and got me in bed. He stayed with me until I fell asleep.

As I slept I was restless. I felt like I was being torn apart. I felt like I was being split in half...I’d felt for weeks that something was gonna happen to me...this was it...I didn’t know what it was but I knew there was no stopping it now.

PRT 269- “Mac’s Back”

As I slept I was restless. I felt like I was being torn apart. I felt like I was being split in half...I’d felt for weeks that something was gonna happen to me...this was it...I didn’t know what it was but I knew there was no stopping it now.

The next morning I woke up and felt very odd. I sat up and tried to get my bearings. I rubbed my eyes and looked around. I noticed a girl laying next to me. It took me a second to realize who she was...it was...MACKENZIE!

“Whoa...shit...what happened?” I asked myself aloud.

Mackenzie started to wake up, “Ugh...what happened...what are you doing in my room Mich?”

“Um...what are you even doing here? Who are you?”

“Did you bump your head? I live here. I’m Hunter’s cousin. Duh.”

“Right...right...but...you’re not real.”

“What are you smoking and why aren’t you sharing? Of course I’m real.”

“Of course...yeah...I see that...um, I’m gonna go make breakfast.” I said as I got up and went in the kitchen.

“Ok Mich get it together. You created Mac...but somehow she’s alive...on her own...but she’s a part of me. I’ve been sick...the Amethyst was glowing...and...SHIT!” that’s when it hit me. I’d felt so torn that, just as it had before, the Amethyst split me. This time, instead of splitting my good and evil sides it split my mature and immature sides, thus creating my Mac side. This could be interesting.

Mac didn’t seem to be aware she was a part of me. She seemed to exist all on her own, at least in her mind. I didn’t know what the effect would be if she realized that she wasn’t really real so for now I had to treat her as real...as if she was a real person and Hunter’s cousin at that.

“Mac, get dressed. We need to go to Root Core.” I said. I suddenly felt an overwhelming sense of duty. It had to be from the split.

“Ugh, I don’t wanna go!” Mac cried.

“I don’t care. Get ready.”

“Fine, fine.”

After Mac was ready we ate. As we ate I noticed she had on an Amethyst...it was the one that came to me when I was Mac. It was an Amethyst on a black leather strap. I still was wearing my own though, on it’s traditional silver chain. The Amethyst had split itself too...that was good and bad. Good because that mean Mac could control the Purple Ranger powers and bad because the Amethyst wasn’t supposed to be split.

After breakfast Mac and I went to Root Core. We went inside and Udonna was there with Daggeron.

“Hi Mac, hey Mich...MAC AND MICH?!” Claire cried.

“Geez, calm down Claire.” Mac said.

“How is this possible?”

“I can explain...um...Mac, I’m sure there’s a training exercise you can be doing.” I said looking at Daggeron.

“Oh, yes...Mackenzie, go into the woods and practice your levitation. I’ll be along in a minute to help you.” Daggeron said.

Mackenzie sighed, “Fine.”

When Mac was gone I looked at the three confused mystics.

“I’ve been split. It was the Amethyst. I was feeling torn so the Amethyst split me. This has happened before, but last time it split my good and evil sides, this time it split my mature and immature sides, leaving Mac.” I said.

“Oh...wow...ok...” Claire said.

“This is not good news.” Udonna said.

“Well, it kinda is. I could use two of me to handle everything. This was I can leave Mac here and still go to Nashville for Music Fest.” I said.

“We have to find a way to reunite you though.” Daggeron said.

"I don't see how."

"How did you do it before?"

"I fought myself and forced myself back together. I can't fight Mac."

"No, this isn't about good and evil."

"The only way is for Michelle to lose her dualality I suspect." Udonna said.

I nodded, "Me too."

"So we're stuck with this for now. We should inform the Rangers."

Daggeron nodded, "A wise choice."

We called the Rangers in and I explained things. Mac was still in the woods. I wanted them to know about Mac before they saw us together.

"So Mac exists outside you now?" Maddie asked.

"Yeah. For now." I said.

Xander looked taken aback.

"This doesn't change things Xander. She still isn't real...she's still a part of me. She just doesn't know that."

"What does she remember? She obviously doesn't remember having been created from you." Maddie said.

I nodded, "I imagine she probably has created her own memories to self sustain."

"Does she know she's a Ranger?" Nick asked.

"She appears to. She knows about her elemental powers and she knew about Root Core. She also remembered Udonna, Claire, and Daggeron."

"So she is still powerful?" Chip asked.

"Eh, I doubt she's as powerful as I am. If I had to guess she lacks my lightning power...I would also venture to guess I lack wind power now." I said as I tried to levitate, "Yeah, I can't do it."

"So she's gonna train us?" Nick asked.

"Most certainly not. She doesn't have the experience to train. Daggeron will have to take over as your sole trainer. Is that ok Daggeron?" I asked.

He nodded, "Of course. I'll gladly train the Rangers in your absence."

"Ok. I'm gonna call Tommy, my brother, and see if he'll come stay with Mac while I'm in Nashville. Maddie, can you try to keep Mac out of trouble? She lacks a mature function and I'm not sure what sort of trouble that could lead to..."

Maddie nodded, "Of course."

I took a breath as Mac walked in.

"I'm bored with practi...ohhhh, Xander!" Mackenzie ran to Xander and jumped in his arms and kissed him. He kissed her back and held her.

"Ugh, stop that." I said.

"Just because you miss Hunter, don't punish me." Mac said as she rested her head on Xander's chest.

I sighed, "Lots of trouble..."

"We'll keep an eye on Mackenzie. Go do what you need to do Michelle." Daggeron said.

I nodded, "Ok. Mac, make sure you're home in an hour. Maddie, Xander, make sure she's there?"

Xander nodded, "Sure."

"Ok."

I went home and called Tommy. He answered on the third ring.

"Hello?" he asked.

"Tommy...my favorite brother...how are you?" I asked.

"Mich...what do you want?"

"Well...you know that split thing my Amethyst does?"

"Yes..."

"It did it again."

"What?!"

"Yeah...except this time it split my mature and immature sides...it made Mackenzie real."

"WHAT?!?!"

"I know...this could be a good thing though. I needed two of me anyway. And I need to go to Nashville for Music Fest. Would you mind coming to stay with Mac while I'm gone?"

"Are you serious?"

“Please?”

“I have work.”

“So explain the situation to Principle Mercer and I’m sure she’ll give you the time off.”

“Elsa is only so understanding...”

“Please...just consider it your next power mission.”

“Fine. I’ll see what I can do.”

“Say you’ll come.”

“Fine, fine. I’ll make sure I’m there.”

“Ok, love you, see you tonight.”

Tommy sighed, “Love you too.”

I hung up and started to wonder how Mac was doing on her own.

Mackenzie

~~~~~

After Michelle left I got Xander to sneak off with me. We went into the woods and hid under a big tree.

“I thought she’s never leave us alone.” I said as I cuddled up next to him.

“I can’t believe we finally get to be alone...really.” Xander said.

I smiled, “God, I love your accent. It’s so sexy.”

“You’re sexy.”

“You’re sexier.”

“You are.”

“No, you are.”

We stared at each other for a second before I leaned in and kissed him. He pulled me over so that I was straddling him. I held my hands up against the tree to balance myself then I wrapped my arms around his neck as we continued to kiss. He started to run his hands up my shirt. I lifted my arms so he could get it off. We continued kissing as I ran my fingers through his hair.

“I want you so much Xander.” I whispered between kisses.

“Have you ever...before?”

“That doesn’t matter.” I said.

“Have you?”

I stopped kissing him and got off him.

“What’s wrong Mac?”

I took a deep breath, “I’ve never really consented before, no.”

“You were forced?” Xander asked.

“I was molested.”

“By who?”

“I don’t wanna talk about it.” I said as I turned away.

“Mac, talk to me...come here.” Xander said pulling my hand so I was facing him.

I took a deep breath, “Hunter...Hunter did it.”

“What? Hunter molested you?”

“Yeah...he convinced me to have sex with him...he said it was ok since we’re not blood related...he’s adopted and all.”

“Did you tell anyone?”

“No...not until now. I think Michelle might know, but I don’t know...and you can’t tell anyone, ever.”

“Ok, I promise.”

“But that only counts physically. I want you to be my first...my real first time.”

Xander nodded, “Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

“I want that too...it’ll be special though...you’ll see.”

“Have you ever...you know?”

Xander nodded, “Yeah, a few times...but no one I cared about like this. I love you Mackenzie.”

I smiled, “I love you too Xander.”

Michelle

~~~~~

I was sitting at the apartment waiting for Tommy. He got there in record time...an hour and a half. He was there before Mackenzie, which worried me. I let Tommy in and showed him around the apartment.

"This is a nice place." He said.

"Thanks." I said.

"It's very...ordinary."

"That surprises you?"

"Not really."

"Ok, focus here. You have got to take care of Mac."

"Hey, calm down sis. It'll be ok."

I sighed, "I can't help it. When Mac got separated from me I was left with an overwhelming sense of duty."

"That isn't good. You'll lack balance."

"No kidding...but I was unbalanced anyway. The real scary part is that Mac is the Ranger and she didn't get any of the responsibility."

"Oh boy...I have my work cut out for me."

"Yeah, you do."

"Where is Mac?"

"Good question. She should be here by now. Let me call Hunter and fill him in so he doesn't get a shock later on and then if she isn't back we'll go look for her."

Tommy nodded.

I went to the other room and called Hunter. When he picked up I explained the split to him.

"Oh my god...tell me you're joking Mich." Hunter said.

"I wish I were."

"Mich...wow...I don't know what to say."

"Say you can take a day off and meet me in Nashville for the fan club stuff."

"Alright. I'll make sure I'm there. I want to see you anyway."

"Thanks. I love you."

"I love you too. Who's staying with Mac?"

"Tommy."

"Alright. See you soon."

"OK...bye."

I hung up just as Mackenzie and Xander walked in with Madsion right behind them. My guess was that Madison had to force them to come.

"Ok, Mackenzie, I have to go to Nashville for a few days for Music Fest and some fan club stuff. I need you to stay here with Tommy. Be good and listen to him...most of all make sure you go to school and to training. Daggeron will tell Tommy if you skip out." I said.

"Yes Mommy." Mac said as she rolled her eyes.

"Oh god...I'm serious Mac."

"Yeah, yeah."

I sighed, "I'm going to finish packing."

After I was packed I hugged Tommy and Mac goodbye then I headed to the airport. I was really concerned about leaving Mac but I didn't have a choice. I had other duties.

Mackenzie

~~~~~

I was really glad when Michelle was gone. She was REALLY boring sometimes.

"OK, so Tommy, can I go out with Xander tonight?" I asked.

"I don't think that's a good idea. Why don't you and Xander hang around here?" Tommy replied.

"Ugh...can we go in my room?"

"With the door open, sure."



“Fine. Is that ok Xander?”

Xander nodded, “Sure, as long as I’m with you I’m fine.”

I smiled, “OK.”

“Are you hungry?” Tommy asked.

“Yeah actually.” I said.

“I’ll order some pizza. Is that ok?”

“Sure. We’ll just be in my room.”

Xander and I went in my room and sat on the bed.

“What do you wanna do?” I asked.

“I can think of some stuff but I don’t think Tommy would approve.” Xander said.

I smiled, “We have plenty of time for all that soon. In the meantime…”

“We could always work on homework.”

“Ugh…”

“I know, but it’s due tomorrow.”

“I don’t want to.”

“Come on Mac, we really need to get this assignment done.”

“Fine, fine. Whatever.” I said as I grabbed my book and opened it.”

Michelle

~~~~~

I got to Nashville and checked into my hotel. JessLyn was already there to fill me in on my schedule.

“OK, so you have a booth at the fair and then you’re also performing. You also have the fan club party tomorrow night...oh and while I have you here we need to discuss a new single. Time for a new US one…”

I nodded, “Any suggestions?”

“Well, ‘Some People’ is on both the US and UK albums so I think that would be a great choice. We could get the UK version released to US pop radio and the country version to country radio...it could be a big hit.”

I nodded, “OK.”

“Really? You don’t care? I thought you wanted ‘You Take Me Home’.”

“Yeah, but you’re the boss. You know what’s best for my career.”

JessLyn smiled, “Yes I do. Ok. ‘Some People’ it is.”

“Great. Make sure I have a printed schedule in the morning and I’ll make sure I’m on time for everything.”

“Ok, perfect. You have the rest of the evening off then. Feel free to explore Nashville. Have some fun.”

“Thanks JessLyn.”

She nodded and left me.

I headed out into Nashville to find a place to eat. I found my favorite barbeque place and while I was there I saw my friend Keith and his finance Nicole (you know you’ve read about them in the tabloids.)

“Hey guys!” I waved.

“Hey! Michelle!” Keith said as he walked over. I so loved his Australian accent.

“How are you? Congratulations.”

“Thank you. Have you met Nicole?”

“We’ve met very briefly at various award shows. It’s nice to see you again Nicole.” I said.

“Likewise. I’m glad you could make it to the Music Fest. Keith has been on and on about how amazing your concerts are. I can’t wait to see you perform live.” Nicole said.

I smiled, “Thanks. You both are welcome to come to the fan club party tomorrow.”

“Oh, that’d be great!”

“Great!”

“And you will come to our wedding of course…”

“When is it?”

“End of the month in Australia.”

“You have to come...and bring Hunter of course.” Keith added.

“I’d love to if I can. I love any excuse to get to my house in Australia. I do have to think of Hunter’s cousin though. Can

Mackenzie come?" I asked.

"Sure, the more the merrier. Mackenzie can bring a date too. Should we mark you down for four?"

"Oh, I'm sure Xander would love to go back to Australia. Mackenzie's boyfriend is from Australia."

"Oh, that'd be great! We'll expect the four of you then. I can't wait to meet Hunter. I've heard so many great things about him." Nicole said.

I smiled, "He's amazing. He'll be along tomorrow morning."

"Would you like to join us for dinner?" Keith asked.

"Oh, I don't want to impose."

"You won't be...I'd love to catch up with you, please?"

I nodded, "Alright, sure."

There were few people in the business I considered genuine friends that I could count on, no matter what, Keith was one of the handful...it was really nice to see him so happy and I was so glad to get the chance to catch up with him.

Mackenzie

~~~~~

After Xander and I did homework we ate dinner then went in the living room and watched a movie with Tommy. Tommy sat in a chair so Xander and I could cuddle on the sofa. It was nice, all things considered. After the movie Xander needed to head home.

"I'll see you at school?" Xander asked.

I nodded, "OK. See you then. I love you."

"I love you too Mac. Sleep well Love."

"You too." I kissed him goodbye and watched him go.

After he left I went in and Tommy pointed to the sofa for me to sit.

"What?" I asked as I sat.

"Michelle is worried you aren't taking your Ranger duties seriously enough. You do realize the fate of the world lies in the hands of the Power Rangers, right?" Tommy asked.

I sighed, "Blah, blah...I know. Maybe I'm sick of the world relying on us. I just wanna have fun with my boyfriend."

"It's not that simple. I'm sorry Mac, but you are the Purple Ranger and as such you have a duty to protect the world against evil...specifically the Underworld."

"Whatever."

"Not whatever Mac. You have to taking it all more seriously. I want you to meet with Daggeron tomorrow bright and early, before school."

"No way! Do you have any idea how early I'd have to wake up?!"

"Yeah, I do. You'd better get to sleep if you're gonna be up by 5 AM."

"Oh god...this SUCKS!" I cried as I stomped to my room. I got in bed and sighed. There had to be a way out of this Ranger thing. I just had to find it.

## PRT 270- "Life Force"

"Mackenzie, why aren't you in class?" Daggeron asked. I was in the woods practicing my magic.  
"Because school is BORING. Magic is cool. Besides, I couldn't get Xander to skip class with me." I said.  
"School is mandatory in the outside world though. You must go back to class."  
"No, I mustn't."  
Daggeron sighed, "Mackenzie, do not be difficult."  
"But I hate school."  
"We all must do things we don't want to sometimes."  
"What are you gonna do if I don't go? Turn me into a frog?"  
"That can be arranged."  
"Ugh...fine, fine. I'm going."

I got back to school and went to class. Even being in class was more appealing than being a tree frog. I walked into class and sat next to Maddie.  
"Well there you are." She said.  
"Yeah, not my choice Daggeron threatened to turn me into a frog if I didn't come to class." I said.  
Maddie held back a laugh, "That'd be funny."  
I stuck my tongue out at her.

## Michelle

~~~~~  
I was sitting at my booth signing autographs for fans. That was the best part of fan fair...meeting fans. Fans of all ages came to meet me and it was so amazing to know my music touched all these people.
"Michelle, I'm so honored to meet you. I've been following your career since 'Palisades High'. I love your music." The one girl said. She looked to be a few years older than me.
"Thanks, it's nice to meet you too...um..."
"Oh, I'm Adrienne."
"Nice to meet you Adrienne. Are you part of the fan club?" I asked.
"Oh, yes, of course."
"Are you going to the fan club party tonight?"
"Absolutely. Is Hunter around?"
"He'll be here in a bit. He'll be with me tonight."
"Awesome! I can't wait to meet him too. He's the reason I started watching motocross. I love watching him ride."
I smiled, "He'll be glad to know he had an impact."
"You two are such a great couple. I don't care what the tabloids say, I hope you two make it work."
"Thank you."
"I guess I should go...it's so nice to meet you."
"You too Adrienne." I said.
The day pretty much continued like that.

Right after lunch I looked up and saw Hunter walking towards me. I smiled and waited for him to get to the booth.
"Hey you!" I cried as I stood up and hugged him.
"Hey Mich." He said as he kissed me.
"I'm so glad to see you. I need you so much right now." I whispered as he held me.
"It'll be ok. We'll fix all of this." He whispered back.
"Ok. You want to stay here with me or check out the rest of the festival?"
"Um, it's up to you."
"It's your call. As long as you're with me at the party tonight I don't care what you do."
Hunter nodded, "Ok, I'm gonna go check out some of the other booths. I'll catch up with you."
"OK. I love you."
"I love you too."

We kissed and he left. I got back to work.

Mackenzie

~~~~~

After school I went to band rehearsal. Aaron and the guys were already there.

“OK, I have a new song. It’s really gonna rock it.” I said.

“Alright...let’s hear it.” Aaron said.

*“Sick of the line that's fading me*

*I never know what to believe*

*In a world that's crushing me*

*You're the only one I see*

*I don't change my mind for anybody.*

*I won't waste my time on just anybody.*

*I won't share my life...*

*With anyone but you*

*It's such a long way...*

*With anyone but you*

*I couldn't follow...*

*With anyone but you*

*Never anyone but you*

*They put my poster on the wall,*

*They watch you wait for me to fall,*

*They think they made me who I am.*

*Oh they don't know me at all.*

*I don't change my mind for anybody.*

*I won't waste my time on just anybody.*

*I won't share my life...*

*With anyone but you*

*It's such a long way...*

*With anyone but you*

*I couldn't follow...*

*With anyone but you*

*Never anyone but you*

*They built you up so high*

*So you can hardly see the stars beneath your feet*

*I'm falling through the cloud*

*Then it'll be the next to catch me*

*Ah, ah, ah*

*With anyone but you*

*It's such a long way..*

*With anyone but you*

*I couldn't follow...*

*With anyone but you*

*Never anyone but*

*Never anyone but*

*With anyone but you*

*It's such a long way..*

*With anyone but you*

*And I couldn't follow...  
With anyone but you  
Never anyone but you”*

“I love that!” Tyler said.

“It’s another one about Bly isn’t it?” Aaron asked.

I nodded, “I wrote it last night.”

“Are you gonna grow out of writing love songs any time soon?”

“Man, I’m in love...it is what it is.” I said smiling as my Mystic Phone beeped.

“What’s that?”

“Just my cell phone. I have to take this, just a minute.” I went outside.

“What?!” I snapped.

“We need you at Root Core.” Nick said.

“That’s no fun. Forget it.”

“Mackenzie!”

“No!”

There was a pause and Maddie got on the phone.

“Xander is here. He wants you here.” She said.

“Xander? Oh...ok. On my way.” I hung up and went inside, “Sorry guys. I have to bail. That was Tommy. I need to get home.”

“No fair bailing! We have a gig tomorrow.” Aaron said.

“Oh, chill. You have to work on the new song anyway. I’ll be ready for the gig. Count on it.” I said as I grabbed my bag and ran out.

I got to Root Core.

“There’s an attack in the park. You have to go and help the civilians.” Udonna said.

“Let’s go Rangers!” Daggeron said as we Morphed and took off.

We got to the park and found this monster that was taking people’s life force. Daggeron told us to get the civilians to safety.

“Hey, come on, this way...” I guided people away from the attack. I guess while I did this Chip was trying to save a little girl and her dad but he couldn’t. Anyway, so the icky creatures finally retreated and we went to check on Chip, who’d been attacked. Chip was blaming himself for the people that had their life forces taken.

We decided to get back to Root Core and figure out our next move.

“Bore me to tears...can’t we do something fun?” I asked.

“Later Mac, I have to work on this now.” Xander said as he scanned the city for dark magic.

“Bleh...boooooorrrrring.” I sighed. I looked over and saw Jenji feeding Fire Heart. I was about to walk over when Nick stumbled back in pain. He was getting another message from Koragg. Evidently Koragg wanted to fight Daggeron.

So Daggeron left to fight Koragg in the Twilight Dimension as Xander picked up on some dark magic we had to check out. We went to battle...mostly I tried to stay out of the way. I would hate to break a nail on such a boring task.

“Ick! Gross!” I cried as the spider monster spun a web. We had to cross a rope of web to get to the spider. Everyone but me fell off, Xander saved Maddie and Vida by swinging down on the broken web and using his muscle spell code. Nick saved himself. I tried to levitate across but got knocked down. Chip finally made it across and fought the spider. He got the spider down and we fought it. The monster grew and we used the Megazord to stop it. We knocked the energy ball with the life forces in it away and left the Zord to retrieve it. We were attacked. The icky creature grabbed my Amethyst and I felt myself getting drained. I fell to the ground.

“Oh god...I’m so weak.” I said.

“Mac! No!” Xander cried as he ran to my side.

“That creature took her life force...we have to get her back to Root Core.” Maddie said.

I blacked out.

Michelle

~~~~~

I was in the middle of signing autographs when I felt myself get weak. Something was wrong. I noticed my Amethyst glowing. This was bad.

“Um, excuse me everyone. I’ll be back in a few minutes. I just need a quick break to recharge.” I took off for the hotel. When I got back to my room I picked up my cell phone and called Tommy.

“Hello?” he asked.

“What is going on there? What happened to Mackenzie?” I asked.

“Oh, it’s affecting you too?”

“Evidently. What happened?”

“Her life force was drained.”

“The Amethyst?”

“Yes.”

“Damn it...that irresponsible child! How could she let this happen?”

“Calm down. It wasn’t her fault. I guess your life force must be split in half too though. She’s surviving my drawing energy from your Amethyst.”

“That would explain the glowing. You guys have to do something.”

“We’re working on it. I’m at Root Core now.”

I sighed, “Ok. I’m going to stay here. I guess there’s not much I can do.”

“No, there isn’t...keep a low profile there. Music Fest is crawling with photographers.”

“Fine. Hurry though. I have things to take care of here.”

“I’ll try. Love you.”

“You too, bye.”

Mackenzie

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I started to wake up. I don’t know how long I was out but Tommy and Udonna were standing next to me.

“What happened?” I asked.

“Mackenzie, you’re awake...your life force wait drained. You’re ok now though.” Udonna said.

“I feel like I’ve been through a blender.” I said.

“The Rangers need your help in the Megazord. You up for it?” Tommy asked.

I nodded, “Yes. That icky creep is gonna pay for trying to take my life force.”

I Morphed and joined the others in the Megazord.

“Mac! You’re alright!” Xander said.

“I’m fine. Now let’s teach this monster not to mess with the Power of Purple!” I cried.

We used our power sword thing to finish off the monster.

“YES! Score one for the Rangers!” I cheered.

After the battle was taken care of Xander insisted on taking me to dinner. Tommy reluctantly agreed.

“I was so scared I would lose you.” Xander said as we waited for our food.

“Thank you for saving me.” I said.

“It was a team effort...but I’d give my life for yours. You have to know that.”

“I do. I love you Xander.”

“I love you too Mac. I’m so glad we finally get to be together.”

“Yeah...with Michelle out of town is so much easier.”

Xander smiled, “Yeah, it is.”

After dinner Xander asked me to go back to his house with him. His parents were gone until morning.

“Where did they go?” I asked as we went inside.

“They went to Blue Bay Harbor for a business dinner. They’ll be back tomorrow afternoon.” Xander explained as he

guided me to his room.

“Nice room.” I said.

“Thanks. Make yourself at home.”

I smiled and sat on the bed.

Xander sat next to me and started to kiss me. We kissed for quite awhile before he started to slide his hands up under my shirt. I moaned as he cupped his hands over my bra. He started to kiss my neck. I lifted my arms and he took my shirt off. I grabbed the edges of his shirt and lifted it over his head. He pulled me so that I was straddling his lap. I kissed him passionately as he pulled me closer. He grabbed the band of my shirt and slid it off of me. I lifted my hips so he could get it off. I started to grind my hips against him. Xander moaned and turned so I was thrown back on the bed. He took off his jeans and boxers then slid my panties down my legs.

“You are so beautiful.” Xander said as he held himself over me.

“So are you.” I said, smiling at him.

“Are you sure you want to do this?”

I nodded.

“OK.”

“You’re sure too right?” I asked.

Xander nodded, “I’ve never been surer of anything in my life.”

“I’m ready then.”

Xander kissed me as brushed my hair gently with his hand. He slowly brought himself into me and started to pump his hips. It felt amazing to finally be with Xander like this.

After we finished Xander held me.

“Wow...” I whispered.

“Yeah...that was great.” He said as he held me tighter.

“Amazing.” I agreed as I closed my eyes. I was so happy.

Michelle

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Evidently the Rangers fixed things because I felt better. I returned to my booth until it was time to get ready for the party. I met up with Hunter in the room and we got dressed.

When we reported to the party everyone started to gather around us. Our fans came up and talked to us like they were our friends and knew everything about us. It was kinda cool. Hunter kept his arm around me protectively until it was time for me to go on stage. I sang some songs from the new album as well as some hits and even a couple I planned on for the upcoming US album. I loved to give sneak previews when I could. My favorite though was one off the new album.

“This is one off the European album. I’m sure some of you have heard it but for those who haven’t I hope you like it. Hunter, I love you.”

“Up and down the stairs

In and out the door

Walked every inch of the floor

You think you know a place

But there locked in an empty room

Out of the dark comes you

I feel, I feel, I feel

A flood of light fall on my face

I see, I see, I see

For the first time

I hurt, I hurt, I hurt

So good inside

*I swear I could die
I love, I love, I love
For the first time*

*What is this fallin'
No - dancin' down my cheek
Why is it hard for me to speak
You think you know a heart
And then it suddenly starts to pound
It literally knocks you down*

*I feel, I feel, I feel
A flood of light fall on my face
I see, I see, I see
For the first time
For the first time
I hurt, I hurt, I hurt
So good inside
I swear I could die
I love, I love, I love
For the first time
Yeah, for the first time*

*I feel, I feel, I feel
A flood of light
I see, I see, I see
For the first time
I hurt, I hurt, I hurt
So good inside
I swear I could die
I love, I love, I love
For the first time*

*For the first time, for the first time
I hurt, I hurt, I hurt
So good inside I swear I could die
I love, I love, I love
For the first time
Oh, for the first time
For the first time, for the first time”*

After the concert Hunter and I continue to make our rounds. We eventually met up with Keith and Nicole. They formally invited him to the wedding. Neither of us were about to turn down a chance to go to Australia and so we gave our formal RSVP to them.

I was excited about Australia. I just hoped no responsibility came up. I would hate to miss the wedding because I couldn't shake my sense of duty.

PRT 271- "Birds of a Feather"

"This is so cool!" Xander said for the zillionth time as he looked around the private jet. I smiled, "It is pretty awesome. I can't believe Michelle and Hunter are taking us to the wedding." "I can't believe I get to go home...much as I love the States I miss Australia." "Even better than that, we get to meet a gazillion celebrities! How much longer is this flight?" Xander laughed, "About ten more hours Love" "Ugh...we're never gonna get there." I groaned, then I smirked, "I can think of a way to pass the time." "Oh?" "Feel like joining the mile high club? This is a big cushy private jet with a bedroom..." Xander smiled, "I like the way you think Kenz." We were headed to the bedroom when the flight attendant came to check on us. "Sorry Miss Bradley, Ms. Morris has instructed that the bedroom is off limits." She said. I sighed, "Damn her!" "It's ok...why don't we recline the chairs and get some sleep?" Xander asked. "Fine, I guess." I groaned.

Michelle

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I'd been going a million miles an hour all week. It was driving Hunter nuts. We'd finally made it to our house in Sydney because I could work from there. Hunter was trying to enjoy the time off and I was refusing to take time off. Finally, as I was walking through the living room to get the charger for my phone Hunter grabbed my arm. "Stop right there." He said. "Hunter, let go, I have work to do." I said trying to pull away. "No, you have to take a breather. Spend some time with me. We love this beach house, can we at least try to enjoy being here?" "There is so much work to do." "And it will still be there after you rest." "But..." "No, no buts. Sit." "I have to call Jess back." "Jess can wait." He said pulling me into his lap and kissing my neck. "Hunter...I have duties." "You have a duty as my wife." He made a point, I did. I decided to go along with this. It was very mechanical. I went through the motions of pleasing him but the whole time I kept thinking about everything else I had to do.

When we finished Hunter tried to hold me. "It was like you're a robot. Mich, you gotta stop this." He said. I pulled away and got dressed, "I have a lot to do. Gotta get back to work. Love you babe."

When it was time to get Mac and Xander from the airport we had to fight press. Although, in all fairness, for once they weren't after us. They wanted details on the wedding. We gave a bunch of 'no comments' allowed some pictures to be taken of the four of us (partly because no pictures of Mac and I existed and this would kill any rumors that might have started otherwise), then we hopped in the car and went back to the beach house.

"That was crazy." Xander said. "Welcome to my life." I said. "How was the flight?" Hunter asked. "LONG!" Mackenzie said.

We pulled in our driveway and showed the kids to their own rooms. While they settled in Hunter pulled me into our room.

“That is weird.” He said.

“Ohhh, yeah, that’s the first time you’ve seen Mac...are you gonna be ok with it?” I asked.

Hunter nodded, “I think so.”

“I’M HUNGRY!” Mac called from the living room.

I laughed and went back in there with Hunter. Mac and Xander were sitting on the sofa.

“This is a beautiful place Michelle.” Xander said.

“Thank you Xander.” I said.

“You both have something to wear for the wedding?” Hunter asked.

“Yeah, I think so.” Xander said.

“Ok. Well, let’s go get some dinner.”

“We should let Xander pick the place. I’m sure there’s some place here he misses.” Mac said.

I nodded, “That’s a great idea Mac.”

After dinner we went back to the house and watched TV. It was very weird hanging out with Mackenzie, knowing she was still me. Words can’t describe the oddness of it all. It was even weirder watching Xander and Mac cuddle.

“Mich, don’t forget, we have an interview coming up in a couple of days.” Hunter said as I cuddled with him.

“Of course. I wouldn’t forget something like that.” I said.

“What sort of interview?” Mac asked.

“Celebrity In-depth wants to do an interview with us about the rapes. We figured it might help someone else deal with their own experience if we were open about ours.”

“Oh.” Mac said softly.

“Are you ok?”

She nodded.

“It’s ok.” Xander said hugging her.

I raised an eyebrow.

“I’m kinda tired.” Mac said.

“Come on, let’s get you to bed.” Xander said.

“Hey, hey...you two stay in your own rooms.” I said.

“Yes ma’am.” Mac said.

A few minutes later Hunter and I went to our room and got in bed. Hunter rolled over and kissed me.

“Not tonight. We need to sleep.” I said.

“I really hate you being so dutiful.” He said.

“Yeah, well I can’t help it.”

“We have got to reunite you and Mac.”

“We don’t know what the result will be. I could lose me. Mac could end up dominating.”

“We have to do something. You are so dutiful that you’re incapable of doing what you want to do. You gave JessLyn final say in your next single. That’s not you. And Mac...she has zero sense of duty. She just cares about doing what she wants and that could be very dangerous.”

“I know. We’ll figure something out. Don’t worry so much.” I said as I kissed him goodnight.

The next morning we got dressed and waited for a call to tell us where to go. The wedding was being kept quiet from the press. After we got the call we headed to the church. The ceremony wasn’t that long but it was beautiful.

After the ceremony we went to the reception. Xander and Mac danced together a lot, and then they also danced with a lot of the celebrity guests. Hunter and I did the mingling thing. It was the proper thing to do. Hunter finally pulled me out to the dance floor and made me dance with him.

“This is a wedding, we’re supposed to have fun.” He said as he pulled me close.

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. It’s ok. I love you Michelle.”

“I love you too Hunter. I’m sorry you never got a wedding like this.”

“Don’t be. We’re married. That’s all I care about.”

After the wedding we went back to the house and all crashed. It’d been a long day.

Mackenzie

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The wedding was a blast! So many superstars! Xander and I had never had so much fun! The next day we had to catch a plane but we had part of the day to sight see so Xander took me around to his favorite places in Sydney. It was so great seeing him excited about being back in Australia.

That afternoon we got on the plane and headed home. It was a LONG flight but I was glad when we got home. Tommy was waiting for us at the airport.

“Did you guys have a nice trip?” he asked.

“Sure did!” I said.

“It was great going home. I loved sharing that with Mac.” Xander said.

“I loved being there with you too.” I said as I kissed him.

“Come on you two, let’s go get some food and then get Xander home.” Tommy said.

“Yes sir.”

The next morning Xander came over and we headed to Root Core. We had training again. BORING! Daggeron was such a bore. I tried to ignore him and he got angrier and angrier with me...then he finally just gave up. Anyway, after training we were tired so we sat around.

We were sitting around Root Core listening to Jenji go on about his Super Cat Attack or something. I don’t know really. I was sitting on the floor and resting my head against Xander leg and I couldn’t really be bothered to listen. I was just dozing off when Claire came in and told just Fire Heart just roared for the first time. I had to see this! It wasn’t everyday you got to see a baby dragon develop! We all ran over to see Fire Heart. We all fawned over Fire Heart for awhile but then Nick noticed the time.

“Uh, guys? We’re supposed to be at work in 15 minutes.” Nick said.

“Oh no, you’re right.” Maddie said.

“And you have a band meeting don’t you?” Vida asked me.

“Oh bleh. That’s right. Aaron wanted to meet today. I don’t wanna go.” I said.

“You have to.”

“Says who?”

“Mac, you’re the frontwoman. You HAVE to be there.”

“Bleh-blah.”

“Come on, come with us. You do the meeting thing and then after I get off work I’ll take you to dinner or something.” Xander said.

“And we can be alone after?”

“Of course.”

“Alright.” I smiled and kissed him and we headed to Rock Porum.

We got to Rock Porum and Xander used his keys to get us in. Aaron and the band were waiting outside the store.

“Hey guys.” I said.

“Well there you are.” Aaron said.

“Yeah, sorry. We lost track of time.”

We went in and the others got to work and we headed to the sofa.

We had just sit down to start the meeting when Toby ran in ranting about a big bat thing that had a blue bird with it. It had to be Necrolai.

“Mac?” Xander asked.

“Yeah, yeah. Guys, you should go hide with Toby.” I said.

“What about you guys?” Aaron asked.

“We’re gonna go get help. You guys stay with Toby. Don’t worry about Mac, I’ll protect her.” Xander said.

“Ok, be careful.” Aaron said as he and the guys went with Toby.

We ran out of Rock Porum to check out what the deal was. We found Necrolai and it turned out she had a magic wand...again...turned out she had a magic wand. And not just that! It was purple. Again. It was PURPLE! She blasted us with it's magic.

"Um...that's bad...very bad." I said as I got up.

"How does she have Purple magic?" Xander asked.

"When I tapped into the power of the Amethyst I grabbed hold of it." Necrolai said.

"That means...my powers..." I started.

"Are severely weakened? You're right."

"Let's Ranger Up." Nick said.

I nodded.

"Magical Source, Mystic Force!"

I noticed a definite weakness in my powers as I went with Maddie and V to help with the big blue bird.

"This so isn't good, like, at all." I said. And everytime Necrolai used her magic it weakened my powers. Maddie finally got her to retreat and we headed back to Root Core.

Back at Root Core Udonna informed us that Fire Heart was missing. Daggeron noticed Jenji sneaking around and asked him what he'd done. He explained he'd taken Fire Heart out into the forest, for our own safety. Maddie, Nick, and Chip went with him into the woods to find him. Xander, V, and I stayed behind.

"I'm so bored. Can't we go shopping or something?" I asked.

"Mackenzie, there is more to life than your precious little world of shopping, gossip, and Xander." Daggeron scolded.

"Well, DUH! You forgot music."

"Daggeron is right Mac, you really should take this all more seriously." V said.

"Oh pooh."

"What would you do if something happened to Xander that you could have prevented by taking your role as a Ranger seriously?" Daggeron asked.

"I...nothing will happen to Xander."

"It could. The Underworld is very dangerous. How would you feel?"

"I'd kill myself."

"Stop being dramatic and start taking responsibility."

I rolled my eyes, "Whatever."

Maddie and CO came back and told us there was no sign of Fire Heart. Daggeron noticed Jenji had gone missing and to top it off Necrolai was attacking again. Maddie sent us out to battle while she headed out to find Jenji.

We Morphed and went to battle. We got our asses kicked, but we went to battle.

"This is so not fun." I grumbled. It was about this time Chip and Xander got turned into feathers. "XANDER NO!" I cried as I ran over to the pile of green feathers. "Daggeron was right...I should have given it my all...I need to take this more seriously." As I went to fight Nick and Vida were turned to feathers too. "HEY! Big bird! You're gonna pay for that!" I cried as I faced off with the bird.

I was about to attack as Maddie showed up and Jenji attacked. "Be careful. This bird is fierce." I said as we went to help Jenji. We ended up getting hit hard and de-morphing. It beat being turned to feathers. Jenji was fighting but disappearing at a fast rate...then he was gone, just as the Solaris Knight showed up. He saved Jenji and put him back in the lamp. Maddie and I morphed and went back to battle. Maddie used Jenji to finish off the bird and save everyone, including the Rangers. I thought it was over but Necrolai used her purple magic to make the bird grow. That drained me and I de-morphed. The other Rangers went in the Zords and handled the bird.

We went back to Root Core and I sat down on the steps.

"Mackenzie, what's wrong?" Daggeron asked as he sat next to me.

"You were right. I almost lost Xander out there because I was worried about being bored instead of fighting." I said. Daggeron nodded, "Yeah, but you didn't lose him. He's ok. You have a chance to turn things around. Mackenzie, I realize you're 16 and nothing is more important to you than fun but life can't be fun all the time. That isn't how it works. You need to learn to handle responsibility. I can help you, but you have to want to learn."

"I do. I don't want anything to happen to Xander. I'm sorry about blowing off training earlier."

"Ok, good. Then let's get to work."

I nodded.

Michelle

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After the interview Hunter had to head back out to race and I had a European tour to take care of. A lot of shows in just a few days. I met up with Mina at the hotel in London, where the tour was starting.

“So, how are you holding up?” she asked.

“I’m fine.” I said.

“JessLyn said you let her pick the next single. That isn’t fine.”

“I know...there’s nothing I can do though. Where’s the other girls?”

“Out. Exploring I think.”

“We need to have a band meeting. We have a lot to discuss.”

“Michelle, it’s our first day here. It can wait until tomorrow.”

“We have a lot of work to do.” I said.

Mina grabbed my shoulders, “Girl, chill. This isn’t you. Man...your split really affected you. Come on, let’s go have some fun.”

“There isn’t time for that.”

Mina sighed, “At least go settle in your room.”

“I guess I could go and make some calls. I have some things to take care of for Starlight Records.”

“Fine, fine. Go work. I’ll tell the girls to meet up with you when they get back.”

“Thanks Mina. Later.”

I went to the room and got directly to work.

Mackenzie

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After training I met up with Xander at Rock Porum. He was just getting off work.

“Hey babe!” I said as I ran to him and hugged him.

“Hey yourself.” He said as he kissed me and held me.

“I am so sorry.”

“For what?”

“For not fighting harder for you. I should have taken things more seriously.”

“It’s ok. It’s all ok. We have other problems...like Necrolai having a link to your powers.”

I sighed, “Yeah, that’s bad.”

“It’s very bad. But it’s ok. We’ll figure out a way to stop her. Somehow.”

PRT 272- "Dark Wish"

We were at Rock Porium and Vida was mixing some music at the turn table. I was dancing around the store as Maddie worked. I was getting into the music when Toby walked in covered in streamer. He was getting frustrated with decorations. Rock Porium's one year anniversary was coming up and we were holding a party. Vida and Maddie told Toby not to worry, they would handle everything. I pretty quickly figured out they meant through the use of magic. Magic for simplicity...I could get behind that!

A few minutes later we were called to battle. We met up with the guys and Morphed. We came across this really weird demon thing.

"Oh blee-bleh. I don't feel like doing this today." I said.

"Then let's get it over with." Nick said as we got to work...and proceeded to get our asses kicked...badly...very badly...when Xander tried to take him on he got blasted.

"XANDER!" I cried.

The demon thing grew and Daggeron tried to send us after him.

"I'll help Xander and meet up with you."

"You guys go, I'm coming with you Daggeron." I said.

He just nodded because he knew there was no stopping me.

We found Xander.

"Babe, are you ok?" I asked.

Xander nodded as Daggeron helped him up, "I think so."

"Then let's get back to work. Xander, you know what to do. Mackenzie, you're with me." Daggeron said.

I nodded and we went large to fight the demon thingie. Xander tried to take him on again and this time he got him...he retreated anyway.

We went back to Root Core and we were pissed.

"I don't get it, we've got this powerful genie and we never get to use him." Vida said.

"It would make things a lot easier." Maddie said.

"No kidding. What good is a genie if we can't wish the Underworld away?" I asked.

"Well?" Nick asked.

"Jenji's not the answer. Rest up Chip, we'll need you. The rest of you, follow me." Daggeron commanded.

"Ugh." I groaned.

"Come on." Nick said.

We Morphed and went into the woods and encountered another large demon thingie. We had another Zord battle and got our asses handed to us. We asked for Jenji's help again but Daggeron refused. Chip showed up just in time to save our butts but quickly ended up in his own trouble. Daggeron was trying to get us to keep fighting...then Necrolai showed up with her Purple Magic.

"Oh shit...not again!" I cried as I felt my own magic drain.

"Let's put our magic together!" Daggron said, "Fire as one!"

We did and got rid of the demon thing which caused Necrolai to retreat, Chip was hurt again. Again we were pissed about not getting to use Jenji.

Michelle

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"Thank you London! We love you! Goodnight!" I called as I wrapped up our last London show. We had a couple more shows in Europe and then we'd get to head home. I had a new music video to shoot, Mina had her solo album to promote, and Serena and Raye had their duo album to promote. We were all going to be very busy for awhile.

We got back to the hotel and I picked up the phone to call Hunter. He was back in the States with the team again.

"Hello?" he answered. He sounded exhausted.

“Hey my love.” I said.  
“Baby, how was your show?”  
“It was fine.”  
“You still fighting your undying urge to be dutiful?”  
“No, I can’t, there’s too much to do.”  
“Michelle, you have got to make yourself stop. You need to...pull yourself together.”  
“We’ve discussed this, it’s risky. I came out on top last time, we don’t know that I will this time.”  
“You can’t keep this up.”  
“Hun, I love you so much, but I need you to trust me. I will figure this out.”  
“Fine, I’ll give you a little more time.”  
“Thank you. Now, you still planning on being in Nashville this weekend for the video shoot?”  
“Of course. I wouldn’t miss it.”  
“Awesome. I can’t imagine doing this shoot with anyone but you.”  
“I’m glad your sense of duty hasn’t affected your emotions.”  
I laughed, “Of course it hasn’t. I love you every bit as much as I always have. That will never change.”  
“I love you too.”  
“I need to get some sleep now. I have a lot to do tomorrow.”  
“Alright, I have to get to practice anyway.”  
“Have fun...and be safe.”  
“I love you.”  
“I love you too Hunter. See you this weekend.”  
I hung up and got in bed. Hunter was right. I needed to do something fast. I couldn’t keep this up.

Mackenzie

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We got back to Rock Porium and found a note from Toby. He wanted us to get ready for the party. We decided to use magic to hurry and get it done so we could get home and sleep. We were all so EXHAUSTED.

After we finished Xander walked me home.
“Thanks.” I said when we got to my door.
“No worries. I’m glad to do it.” He said as he yawned.
“You should get yourself home and sleep.”
“Yeah, you’re right. Goodnight Beautiful.”
I smiled and kissed him, “Goodnight.”

I went inside and Tommy was waiting up for me.
“Hi Dad.” I said sarcastically.
“You’re late.”
“The Underworld isn’t really concerned with curfews.”
“Alright, get some sleep.”
“Yes sir.” I said as I went in my room and went to sleep.

The next day I met up with the others at Rock Porium for the party. My band was there and ready to go.
“Let’s do this guys.” I said as we got on stage and started our set. Everyone danced to the music and halfway through the set wanted Toby to make a speech. He jumped up on stage and I took a step back to give him access to the mic. He started his speech and partway through our Morphers beeped. The others took off and I handed Aaron my guitar.
“Um...bathroom.” I whispered as I snuck off stage and slipped out the back. I met up with the others.

We Morphed and caught up with a dog-faced creature. It was creepy to the max. Worse than that, another creature called 50 Below showed up. They were uber strong. We couldn’t take them. They kept reflecting our attacks back at us. It was crazy. We all wanted to use Jenji and FINALLY Daggeron agreed...this turned out to be a mistake because the dog-faced thing took Jenji from us and attacked Daggeron. OK, so maybe we should have listened to Daggeron.

We got back to Root Core and explained this to Udonna. She was PISSED. The Underworld having Jenji was very dangerous because they could wish for anything. We needed to get back to Rock Porium though...besides, there was nothing else we could do right now.

We went through the tree portal and were about to go inside when the sky started to get really dark.

“What’s happening?” I asked.

“Feel that?” Maddie asked.

“Felt it alright, right to the bone.” Vida replied.

“What’s that?” Chip asked.

“What’s happening to me?” I asked as I started to become translucent.

“Mac! No!” Xander cried.

“Xander, help me!” I cried as I faded away.

Michelle

~~~~~

I was in the forest planning my next move when I saw a group of kids. Did the Dark Forces send them? I couldn’t take any chances. I sprung on them.

“What do you want?” I demanded as I held my staff out in an attack position.

“Whoa!” a guy with an accident cried.

“Michelle?” A long haired girl asked.

“Black leather pants, matching halter top, boots, and a ponytail...love the warrior princess look.” Another girl said.

“What is going on here?” a guy asked. I assumed him to be the leader here.

“What do you want? Who are you?” I demanded again.

“Chill out...something is going on here, this isn’t our world.”

“What?”

“It’s the only explanation. We’re supposed to be Power Rangers.”

“Power Rangers? There haven’t been any Power Rangers since the last Ninja Storm team.”

“What? The long haired girl asked.

“You really are from another world...or you’re lying. When the Underworld attacked no new Rangers came forth. I tried to find the Mystic Rangers but, never did. I gathered veterans to help but not all of them still had power and by the time I got us organized it was too late. They were too strong.” I explained.

“What about Hunter? You and Hunter are strong together.”

“He was killed in battle. So was Tommy, Jason, Kim, Tori, Kira, Blake, Andros, and so many of the others.”

“Did anyone survive?”

“A few. We’ve formed the Alliance. We’re rebelling against the Dark Forces...we’ll never give up. I can never give up. They took away my love and for that I will never stop trying to get revenge.”

“Oh god...”

“This is bad.” The accented one said as Koragg jumped out.

“I’ve been looking for you.” He said. The strangers stepped back and prepared to fight.

“What are you doing?” I asked Koragg.

“We need to talk.” He said ignoring me and looking at the strangers.

“We don’t talk to the likes of you.” The leader said as he picked up Koragg’s sword. His friends stopped him from attacking Koragg, which was good because I would have hated to have to have stopped him myself.

The long haired girl handed Koragg his sword back.

“Thank you.” I said.

“Koragg is your friend?” the accented guy asked.

“No. He’s a partner. Now listen to him. He knows things...a lot of things. What’s up Koragg?”

Koragg looked at the strangers, “The world you knew has changed. Tell me what you know.”

“All we know is that our world changed soon after Solaris Knight lost his genie to that bulldog and the yetty.” The short haired girl said.

“Of course, your knight lost his genie and Imperious made him grant a wish that the Power Rangers never existed.”

Koragg said.

“OK, how about the bulldog...and the yetty?” the accented one asked.



“Fido and 50 Below, the work for Imperious and they are as much my enemy as they are yours.”

“Excuse me? Am I missing something? You and that mummy have been trying to turn us into vapor for months and now you’re saying you don’t like the new guys because they got rid of us?” the light skinned one asked.

“Not because they did, but how they did it. And how they tried to get rid of me and most of all how they are planning to overthrow the master.”

“So, you want Darkness to rule the world, but not if they don’t do it nicely?” the leader asked.

“Without honor victory is meaningless. It is the one thing in this world that no one can take from you. I would battle them myself but my magical powers have also been taken away. But I can help you get your powers back and fight Fido and 50 Below.”

“And you guys took his sword away from me.”

“Think about this, what choice do we really have? We know the outcome of things this was. At least with Koragg’s way we might still have a fighting chance.” The accented one asked.

“So, back up, Koragg, you’re saying these guys are legit?” I asked.

He nodded.

“So, you can get them their powers back? Maybe even reverse the wish that changed their world?”

“Maybe.”

“And if you can then none of this would have happened?”

“Right.”

“Which mean I would still have Hunter?”

“In theory.”

“Then what are we waiting for? This is my last hope.”

We traveled to Koragg’s dragon, Fire Heart. We needed the dragon to get to a dimension where a magic tribunal was. I went with them to help. If I had any shot at getting Hunter back...even a glimmer of hope, I wanted to make sure these strangers (Nick, Vida, Madison, Xander, and Chip as it turned out) didn’t fuck it up.

On the journey we were attacked by Necrolai but managed to escape and finally make it to the other dimension. When we got there Fire Heart vanished and we were left in a desert.

“Come on, this is our only shot. Move. Now.” I commanded.

As we walked I stayed quiet.

“What’s with the dark and brooding thing?” Madison asked.

“Yeah, it’s not really you.” Vida said.

“You’re right. I’m not me anymore...not since Hunter...died. When he was killed a part of me died. I refuse to ever get close to anyone like that again.” I explained.

“You’d rather be a lone warrior?” Nick asked.

“I’m not totally alone. I have the alliance.”

“The alliance?”

“The survivors. There was only a few of us, but we’ll continue to fight to our own death.”

“You’re so...dark. The Michelle we know is happy and full of life.” Madison said.

“I told you, a part of me died with Hunter. Now stop yapping and keep walking.”

We continued the journey and were attacked on our way. We had to fight a bunch of ghost warriors to get to the tribunal. My staff was ready and I got to work. Between my staff and ninja lightning power I fought off as many of the warriors as I could. The other did their best too, considering they were decent fighters, at best, and had no internal powers or magic. It was a long battle, but not the longest I’d faced...besides, the hope of getting Hunter back was enough to keep me well motivated.

After the battle we received a key and continued on our way. We kept going until we found two doors. We opened the first one and saw a wonderful world...it was a happy colorful world...their world. The catch was they wouldn’t get their magic back. The other door led us to a crazy ass portal. We went through it to find out where it led.

We ended up coming out the other side in a pond. We got out of the pond and came face to face with the tribunal. Nick explained the situation. They refused us at first, but then agreed to listen a little closer. They decided to discuss it among

themselves but still denied the request.

“NO! You can’t do that!” I cried as we were sent back to Briarwood, “NO!”

“I can’t believe it’s over.” Xander said as we were herded up. I started to fight back. I was in a bit over my head. Thankfully Conner showed up just in time and we finished the fight. “Thanks Conner.” I said as I kissed him. We’d banded together since the death of Hunter and Conner’s brother, Eric. What we had wasn’t love, but it kept us each from falling apart.

“Anytime Michelle.” he said as we heard another fight, “What’s that?”

“No one. Just a bunch of failures.”

“We should still help them.”

“Fine, fine.”

We went to fight with them. We were cornered, but suddenly color took over the world.

“What’s going on?” I asked as the five strangers got their powers back. They Morphed. I joined them in the fight... somewhere in there I started to feel very strange. It was like I was changing...my life was changing...Conner disappeared and a blonde girl appeared...the world was turning back to normal! I remembered now! Hunter was alive!

“What the? Oh...guys! Magical Source, Mystic Force!” Mackenzie called as she joined us in the fight. We all gave it 110% and managed to take out the evil.

We all returned to Root Core and celebrated our victory. We also explained our adventure to Daggeron and the others.

“Going to the tribunal of magic took a lot of guts and I can’t believe Koragg helped you.” Daggeron said.

“I just wanted to say I’m sorry. This whole mess happened because of me.” Jenji said.

“It’s not your fault Jenji, you had to grant the wish.” Madison said.

“The danger isn’t over yet Rangers. Two of the barbarian beasts still...” Udonna was interrupted by a loud shaking.

“You had to say it.” Vida said.

“Um, ok, well, now that Mac is here you don’t need me. I’m off to find Hunter. I need to just make sure he’s ok.” I said.

“Speaking of which, why did I vanish anyway? Nick didn’t.” Mac said.

“Not now Mac, you need to go fight.” I said.

“Fine, later.”

“Later.” I said as I watched them take off. “It’s been fun...well not so much, but it’s time for me to go make sure the wish really reversed everything. Including the loss of my Love. Bye.” I ran off and ninja streaked away.

Mackenzie

~~~~~

We Morphed and went to go fight the creepy things. We were fighting with all we had but we got our butts kicked. We really should have trained harder. We thought all hope was lost when we suddenly gained this new power...it was a legendary power that gave us amazing strength. With our new powers we totally kicked butt. We even got a new Zord set to take down the large size beasts down.

After the battle we had a talk with Koragg. He basically told us our fight with him was far from over. I guess his alliance with the others wasn’t a lasting one. I was still confused about it all but we really had to haul it back to Rock Porium.

We got back and brought a cake. Toby was about to make a wish...none of us ever wanted to hear that word again.

“Um, how about we finish our set instead?” I asked, “Let’s hit it guys.” I went back onstage and cued the band to play.

Late at night hear the song spinning in my head

Heaven knows I can't sleep it off

I'm thinkin 'bout all my stuff missing my own bed

And all my friends but it's too late to call

Hanging out all day at the Holiday Inn

Waitin's such a drag until the band kicks in

I don't know where the next road goes but I feel the wheels rolling down below me

*Take my sweet time
getting it back again
What matters most will carry me
Through the night to where I wanna be baby
Take my sweet time
But I'll be home again
In my own sweet time*

*Calling out every night and it feels so good
How it works is a mystery
But I believe in my heart I'm doing what I should
With all these lost souls following
Waiting all day until let's begin
I love how it feels when the band kicks in*

*I don't know where the next road goes but I feel the wheels rolling down below me
Take my sweet time
Getting it back again
What matters most will carry me
Through the night to where I wanna be baby
Take my sweet time
But I'll be home again
In my own sweet time yeah*

*Maybe when this is over I'll understand
What I've got right here in my hands yeah
Maybe I
I'll ooh yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah*

*I don't know where the next road goes but I feel the wheels rolling down below me
Take my sweet time
I'm getting it back again
What matters most will carry me
Through the night to where I wanna be baby
Take my sweet time
I'll be home again*

*In my own sweet Time yeah yeah...
In my own sweet time yeah yeah
In my own sweet time yeah*

Michelle

~~~~~

I got to Kansas City. It was where Hunter currently was. I went to the hotel he was at and to the room number he gave me. I always knew the hotel and room number just in case of an emergency. Anyway, I went to the room and knocked. "Just a sec!" I heard him call. He was ok. I was relieved. I needed to hold him now. He finally answered the door and I jumped into his arms. "Mich? Baby? What's wrong?" he asked as he wrapped his arms around me. "Just hold me." I said as I felt tears slide down my cheek. "OK...OK...baby, I'm right here. It's ok." He whispered as he held me tighter. We stayed like that for awhile before I finally moved. "Are you ok?" Hunter asked. I nodded. "Ok, come in." he guided me in.

I followed him inside and we sat on the bed.

“Now, you gonna fill me in here?” he asked as he put his arm around me.

“I just needed to see you were ok.” I said.

“Why wouldn’t I be?”

“The dark wish...the Rangers lost Jenji and...” I explained the whole thing.

“Oh...wow...Mich...it’s ok Baby, I’m fine, I’m right here.” He pulled me into his arms again and I rested there. It felt so good to be held.

“I love you...more than anything.” I whispered.

“I love you too.”

“I want to stay here tonight. I’ll ninja streak back to Europe in the morning. I want to sleep in your arms.”

“Alright, fine. But we have to be careful. You can’t be seen here today and in Europe tomorrow. The press will start asking questions.”

I nodded, “Let’s stay here. I think I’m ready to have some fun.” I smiled.

Hunter smiled at me, “Really?”

“Yeah. Really.” I said as I kissed him and slid my hands up his shirt. I didn’t care about the split or anything else anymore. It didn’t matter if I was one person or two, all that matters is I didn’t waste a moment of my time with Hunter...and that I made the most of every second...which I intended on doing.

## PRT 273- "Super Dream"

Everyone except Xander and I were at Rock Porium painting the building for Toby. Xander was 'sick' and I needed to take care of him...special TLC only I could provide.

"What do you suggest Dr. Mackenzie?" Xander asked with a smirk.

"Well, it's hard to tell with symptoms like that. I think I am going to have to do a very thorough examination to find out for sure." I smirked back as I started taking his clothes off.

"Well, do what you must to heal me."

"I'll do what I can I said as I started kissing down his body."

"Oh god...this is so much better than painting that building."

"And I love how you came up with that 'cold' excuse to get us out of it." I whispered as I went down on him.

"Yeah?"

"It was genius."

"God, you're so good at that." Xander moaned.

"I try." I whispered as our phones beeped.

"Oh god...what bad timing!" Xander picked up the phone, "Yeah?"

"Sorry to call you when you're sick Xander, but the Rangers need your help. Is Mackenzie with you?" Udonna asked.

"Yes."

"OK, both of you, go, now."

"Alright, on it." Xander said hanging up. He got dressed and we headed out.

## Michelle

~~~~~  
I was sitting in my hotel in Nashville reading a Supergirl comic book. It was the issue where she meets Nightwing and has an uber crush on him and even kisses him. Anyway, it was my attempt at trying to unwind. Dusty suggested it. "It's something that will make you be still and take your mind off all the dutiful crap," he had said. And he was right. I was enjoying the comic.

"Batman is so mean to Supergirl." I said.

"Really?" Hunter asked. He was with me because we were shooting a music video that night.

"Yeah. He doesn't trust her one bit...but something about it is so erotic. I can so see them together."

"Bet Superman wouldn't like it."

"Not at all...that makes it even hotter...so forbidden..."

Hunter laughed, "You're so turned on by the forbidden..."

I nodded, "I know. I'm a freak."

"Yeah, but you're my freak." Hunter said as he kissed me.

"I love you."

"I love you too...now get some sleep. The whole point of getting here today was to sleep since we'll be filming all night."

Mackenzie

~~~~~  
We got there just in time to save the Rangers' butts. Koragg grew and we went after him with the Zords. We were doing fine until Imperious put a virus in our Zords. We thought it was all over...the Koragg saved us...once again he didn't wanna beat us without honor. After he saved us he retreated.

We all went back to Rock Porium but Xander and I sat back and watched the other paint. Xander was still 'sick' and someone had to stay with him. We sat and looked at paint samples.

We were woken up by the sound of the phones. Daggeron needed help. We all rushed off to battle. We got there as Imperious was about to finish off Daggeron. Nick and Daggeron went after him. The rest of us took Koragg.

Unsuccessfully I might add...so we went into legend mode. It really evened up the score. We beat up on Koragg and he eventually retreated.

Michelle

~~~~~

It was cold and dark. I couldn't move. Something was wrong. I was underwater but I was so weak I couldn't swim to the surface. I felt myself blacking out when I was suddenly grabbed. I could feel myself being pulled towards the surface, but I couldn't see by whom. The closer I got to the surface the stronger I felt. As my head broke the surface I took in a deep breath. I turned and looked at my savior...Batman?

"Are you ok?" he asked.

I nodded, "Yeah...thanks."

"Your cousin is worried. We should get you back to him." He said helping me onto a boat.

"Why did you save me?" I asked as we got close to shore.

"Because Tommy would kill me if I let you die." Batman replied.

"Why didn't he come save me?"

"Well that's a dumb question. There's Kryptonite in that water, which is why you couldn't swim Michelle."

I nodded, "Right. Sorry."

We got back to shore and Tommy...um...Superman was waiting for me.

"Michelle, are you alright?" he asked as he hugged me.

I nodded, "Just fine."

"Thanks Hunter. I owe you one."

"You're right. You do. You can pay me later." Batman said as he walked away.

"Let's get you home." Tommy said as he picked me up.

"I can fly too ya know."

"You should save your strength. When Trent finds out he didn't succeed in killing you he's gonna execute another plan."

"You're right." I agreed as Tommy flew off with me in his arms.

We got back to our apartment and changed into civilian clothes. This is how the outside world sees me. I'm Kara Zor-El AKA Supergirl, otherwise known as mild mannered college student Michelle Morris. I'm in my junior year of college at Reefsides University. I live with my cousin Kal-El AKA Superman or reporter Tommy Oliver. We each have very busy lives, not least of which is consumed by keeping the evil Trent Mercer at bay. There's other evil out there, specifically Catwoman, but that's really more Batman's thing.

Speaking of Batman, I was actually shocked he saved me. Batman is really lonely millionaire Hunter Bradley. Hunter has never trusted me...thus he doesn't like me. Then again Hunter doesn't appear to like too much of anyway. He doesn't really even like Tommy. Hunter isn't much of a hero anyway. He fights with his own law. He doesn't fight for truth and justice. He does stop the bad guys, but he...he just isn't always ethical about it. The about people Hunter really seems to like are his sidekicks Conner McKnight AKA Robin and Kira Ford AKA Batgirl, and his butler/tech support Cameron.

If the world was left to Tommy, Hunter, and I I'm not entirely sure how that would work out. Lucky for the world we have other superheroes on our side.

First and foremost there's Wonder Woman AKA Kimberly Hart. She's very strong. She doesn't have the same kind of super powers I do, but she has her own powers. Then there's The Flash, otherwise known as Jason Scott. Finally there's Catwoman. Yeah, I know I said she was a villain...and she is...somewhat...yet oddly she does help Batman sometimes. I'm not entirely sure who Catwoman is, but I have a sneaking suspicion that Katherine Hillard either knows or is Catwoman herself. I can't prove that though.

Anyway, I changed into normal clothes and Tommy and I headed out. He had an office party to attend and he didn't

trust me to leave me alone. He thought I'd go after Trent alone. I can't say he was wrong. The thought had crossed my mind.

We arrived at the Reefside Chronicle and went inside. I noticed Tommy tense as he saw her...Cassidy Cornell. Cassidy was a fellow reporter and Tommy had loved her since he met her. Unfortunately Cassidy loved Superman...and of course she could never know they were one and the same. Also at the party was Devin Del Valle, the top photographer as The Chronicle. I did my cousinly duty and mingled for awhile, but soon as I noticed Tommy was distracted I slipped out. I needed to handle Trent before he got a hold of some more Kryptonite.

"Going somewhere?" a voice said as I headed down the street.

I looked behind me and saw Hunter, "You scared me."

"Not going to find Trent Mercer are you?"

"So what if I am? Who's gonna stop me? You?"

"You should wait for Tommy."

"You should mind your own business and stop spying on me. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have an evil genius to go take down." I said as I ran off, stripping my civilian clothes as I went. My uniform was always under my clothes. I raised my arm and flew away.

I arrived at Trent's mansion. It was where he spent a good deal of his time, when he wasn't working at Mercer Industries. I flew over the gate and into an open window. I found myself in Trent's office, facing the man himself.

"Supergirl, I see you survived my little present." Trent said.

"Nice try Trent, but you can't get rid of me that easily."

"No, I suppose not. It's only a matter of time. Although, you are quite pretty...it would be a shame to have to kill such a beautiful and powerful girl." He said as he got up and walked over to me. As he got close I felt myself get weak again. This had been a bad idea. "You should join me. Together we can rule the world." Trent finished as he leaned in and kissed my neck.

"I'd never join with someone like you Trent...never."

"Fine. Have it your way."

I felt something being plunged into my back. I knew right away it had to be Kryptonite.

"Did you really think you stood a chance against me? My Kryptonite supply is endless. And now I get to sit here and watch my victory. Thanks for coming." Trent sat back at his desk and watched as I continued to suffer. I felt the life draining out of me. I thought it was all over when the door swung open.

Mackenzie

~~~~~

Back at Rock Porium, the others finished the painting. We thought it was horrible. Xander and I lectured them about how bad it was. Well, Toby loved it and Xander took credit for it...I decided to jump in and take some of the credit too. This led to Xan and I getting paint dumped on us by the others.

"Guys!" I cried.

"Not cool!" Xander cried as the paint dripped off us.

"Yeah? Neither is taking credit when neither of you did shit." Nick said.

I glared, "Fuck you."

"Mac..." Xander said.

"No. I'm sick of these guys...they treat us both like crap." I said as I took off.

I got back to the apartment, Xander was right behind me.

"Slow down." He said.

"I'm sorry Xander, I don't like those guys."

"Those guys' are our friends."

"They have a funny way of showing it."

"Yeah, I know...come on, there is a benefit to this paint thing."

"Oh?"

"We both need a shower..."

I smiled, "Well, washing each other off could be fun."

"Come on...Tommy isn't home yet, is he?"

"Nope. Not until tonight. He needed to take a day trip to Reefside."

"Then let's take advantage of it." Xander said leading me in. We carefully went inside and got in the shower.

Michelle

~~~~~  
"Trent, you've just made a very big mistake."

"Batman, you're too late. Supergirl is dying as we speak."

"We'll just see about that."

"Batman, help..." I gasped.

"Hang on Kara." Hunter said as he went towards Trent and grabbed him.

"Now, now Batman, don't be hasty here." Trent said as Hunter pinned him against the wall.

"Where is your supply of Kryptonite?"

"Do you honestly think I'd tell you?"

"If you want to live."

"You wouldn't kill me."

"You're right, I wouldn't. I'd just make you wish for death."

"Hey, you started the party without me." Conner said walking in, as Robin of course.

"Glad to see you Robin. Get Kara to the Bat Cave."

"You got it Batman." Conner said as he walked over to me and picked me up.

"Where is the Kryptonite?" Hunter demanded again.

"Fine, fine...I'll tell you...it's in a lead case buried by the lake. There is a clear area that has been dug up." Trent said.

"It's all there?"

"Yes, all of it. I swear."

"You'd better be telling the truth. Robin, go, now. I'll get rid of the Kryptonite." Hunter said.

Conner nodded and took me to the Bat Cave.

"Are you ok?" he asked.

"No...the..." I gasped for breath as he put me down on a table, "the...Kryptonite...it's stuck in my back."

Conner saw what I meant, "This is gonna hurt but I have to get it out. Hang on."

I shut my eyes tight as he grabbed on to the Kryptonite shard and pulled it out of my back. I cried out in pain. Conner got a lead tube and put the bloody shard inside. Lead was able to conceal the shard and protected me from it.

"Thanks." I said weakly.

"You feel better?" Conner asked.

"Some. I'm still weak though...did you get it all?"

"I think so."

"Is everything ok down here?" Kira asked walking in.

"Kar...Michelle is weak. She feels like there might be some small shards of Kryptonite in her wound." Conner explained.

"Well, let's take a look." Kira said as she examined my stab wound, "She's right. There's small fragments."

"We have to get them out."

"I know. Hang on. I'll clean out the wound."

"Hurry." I gasped.

Kira started to clean the wound. By the time she finished I was feeling better but I was still very weak. I'd been in contact with Kryptonite for too long and it would take awhile for me to be at 100% again.

"How is she?" Hunter asked as he walked in.

"She'll live, but she's weak." Conner said.

"Did you find the Kryptonite?" I asked.

Hunter nodded, "Yes, but there wasn't much there. Trent lied. There has to be more."

"We'll get it later." Kira said.

"You're right. For now we should get Michelle into the manor. She needs to rest." Hunter said as he picked me up and

took me inside Bradley Manor. “Kira, do you have some clothes you can help her change into?” Kira nodded, “Sure. I’ll be right back.”

After Kira helped me change into some clean civilian clothes I laid in the bed, resting. I was starting to doze off when Hunter walked in.

“You feeling any better?”

“Some. Thanks.” I said softly.

“I called Tommy. He’s on his way.”

“Oh, great.” I grumbled, “Thanks for saving me...again.”

“Stay out of trouble and I won’t have to save you.”

“Why did you save me?”

“I’m a hero.”

“No you aren’t. You’re a rich, stuck up, playboy who happens to have the intelligence to train and create weapons. You’re a vigilante if anything, but you’re no hero. You don’t even like me that much.”

“I explained this before, I couldn’t let you die. Tommy would kill me.”

“That’s it?”

“Do you want there to be more?”

“I...” I didn’t know what to say. There was something about Hunter...about Batman...I couldn’t explain it.

“What are you trying to ask?” Hunter asked as he moved closer to me.

“I don’t know...I just...”

Before I could finish the sentence Hunter had kissed me. I wrapped my arms around him and returned the kiss. He pulled me close to him and the kiss deepened. I’d never been kissed like this before. I wanted more. I wanted Hunter. I slid man hands up his shirt to show him I wanted to go further. He broke the kiss long enough to get his shirt off and then he pushed me back on the bed. I was about to take my shirt off when the door opened.

“Kira said you wer...what the hell?” Tommy asked.

Hunter got off me and sat up, “Oh, hey Tommy.”

“Something I missed here?”

“Um...” I blushed.

“We’ll talk about it later. How are you feeling?”

“Better. I’m still weak.”

“You will be for a few hours. Let’s get you home.”

“She can stay here. I’ll take care of her.” Hunter said.

“I bet you will. Alright, come on Michelle. We’re going home.” Tommy said as he picked me up.”

I sighed, “I’ll see you later Hunter.”

“You bet.” He said.

Tommy flew me towards home.

“What was that?” he asked as we flew.

“What did it look like?” I asked.

“It looked like you were about to sleep with Batman.”

“I was about to sleep with Hunter.”

“Remember what happened last time you dated a fellow hero?”

He was right. I’d dated The Flash (Jason Scott) and Aquaman (Rocky DeSantos) at the same time...it had turned out really badly when they found out. Rocky had ended up leaving the alliance and no one had seen him for awhile. Jason just broke up with me but we’d managed to become friends again.

“I’m not going to date Hunter. We were just having fun. Besides, you know Hunter Bradley...he doesn’t have girlfriends, he has conquests.” I said.

“I want you to stay away from him Michelle.”

“You’re kidding me, right?”

“No.”

“This from the man who’s dating Wonder Woman?”

“Kim and I aren’t dating.”

“Yeah, right.”

“You know it’s Cassidy I want.”

“Cassidy doesn’t want you, she wants Superman. Marah wanted you and you left her. Kim is all you have left on the romantic front. She wants Tommy and Superman.” I said. Marah was a girl Tommy had known in high school. In college they dated but he left her when he took on the identity of Superman.

“This isn’t about me. This is about you. And you are to stay away from Batman.”

“I’ll do what I want.”

“Michelle.”

“I can’t believe you’d tell me what to do.”

“It’s for your own good.”

“I’m not gonna listen to you.”

“Yes, you will.”

“Tommy! Let me go!” I cried as I started to wiggle.

“I’m gonna drop you, stop that.”

“LET ME GO!” I cried as I pushed away from him. I started to fall. I tried to fly but I was still weak. “Damn it!” I cried as I fell. I finally managed to make myself fly just before I hit the ground. I flew off. Tommy flew after me.

“Get back here!” Tommy cried.

“Go away!” I cried.

“You need to rest.”

“I will. Away from you. Go away!”

“No, you’re too vulnerable to attacks without your full powers. You can barely even fly.”

I sighed, “Fine. You’re right.”

“Good. Come on.” Tommy said flying beside me and putting his arm around me.

I spent the rest of the day resting. The next day I was working on a research paper while Tommy was putting together a story for the newspaper. The phone rang and I picked it up.

“Hello?” I asked.

“Michelle? It’s Hunter.”

“Oh...hi.”

“How are you feeling?”

“Better...my old self again. Thanks.”

“I’d like to see you.”

“Um...”

“Let me guess, your boy scout cousin forbid you from being alone with me.”

“Yeah, more or less.”

“I’m not surprised. Do you want to see me?”

“Yeah, I do.”

“Can you sneak out?”

“Maybe.”

“Do you think you can come to the manor?”

“Yeah, when?”

“Now.”

“Alright. I’ll be there. Bye.”

“Bye.”

I hung up.

“Who was that?” Tommy asked.

“Kira. She wants to go shopping. I told her I’d meet her at the mall.” I said.

“What about your research paper?”

“It’ll get done.”

“Alright, have fun.”

“Thanks. See ya cuz.”

I headed over to Bradley Manor. When I got there Hunter was waiting for me.

“I’m glad you could make it.” He said.

“Me too. Why did you want to see me?” I asked.

“Thought we could pick up where we left off yesterday.”

“That’s it?”

“Um...yeah.”

“Why? You could have gotten any girl over here.”

“She wouldn’t have been you. I want you.”

“Why?”

“Because you’re beautiful and...I’ve never felt the way I felt yesterday when we kissed.”

“You felt that too?”

“Yeah, I did. And I want to feel it again.”

“So do I.”

“Come on.” Hunter said as he took my hand and led me to his room...it was more of a suite really.

When we got up there he pushed me against the wall and kissed me. I returned the kiss and he slid my shirt over my head. I helped him with his shirt and then I took my jeans off. He picked me up and carried me to bed. He sat me down on the bed then took his pants off. I took my bra and panties off and then reached forward to help Hunter with his boxer-briefs.

“You sure about this?” Hunter asked.

I nodded, “Yeah. Are you sure? Sleeping with me might...be tricky. Sometimes I don’t realize how strong I am.”

“I want you.”

“OK. I’ll try to be gentle.” I said as Hunter pushed me back on the bed and held himself over me. I felt him bring himself into my body and start to pump his hips. It was amazing. I’d never felt anything like it before. I held on to him and grinded my hips to meet his pace.

“Loosen your grip.” He said softly.

I had to work to control my strength sometimes. I loosened up some but it was harder to do as things got more and more intense.

After we finished Hunter held me.

“Wow...” I gasped.

Hunter laughed, “That was pretty great.”

“I didn’t hurt you did I?”

“I’ll have a couple of bruises, but that’s ok. It was worth it.”

“I’m glad you enjoyed yourself.”

“I did. I’ve never felt that way with anyone before.”

“I bet you say that to all the girls.”

“I’m serious. I mean it. Something about you Michelle...”

“What are you saying? You want more than a one...day stand?”

“I do.”

“Tommy isn’t going to like it.”

“Tommy doesn’t control your life.”

“You’re right. But I’d rather not deal with him. He specifically said he doesn’t want us dating. That is what you’re asking for, right?”

“Yeah, I guess it is.”

“Ok...what about if we just keep it secret for awhile?”

“As in sneak around?”

“Yeah. You do that enough as Batman...you shouldn’t have a problem doing that with me for awhile.”

“Alright. You win.”

I smiled and kissed him, “Good.”

We spent the next week seeking each other every chance we could. Tommy never had a clue. In between school and seeing Hunter we’d had a few battles to take care of. Trent obviously was planning something big, but we didn’t know what and Tommy and I couldn’t get close to him. He had started wearing a Kryptonite amulet. Batman had sent Batgirl in to get close to him. Trent had a strange fondness for Kira and he had no idea Kira was Batgirl. So far she’d not really uncovered much, but she did know he had a plan and it involved taking out Tommy and I and taking over the world. Not exactly news but it was something. We had to get that amulet from him so we could fight him...and so far Kira hadn’t

been able to get it. There was only one person I knew with the skills to get the amulet away from him and I knew Kira wouldn't like it.

Catwoman was a cat-burglar but she also was a vigilante, not unlike Batman. In fact it'd been rumored among the alliance that Batman had dated Catwoman and actually knew her identity, although he'd never admit to it. Batgirl hated Catwoman more than anyone I knew and they were arch enemies.

"No way. You can't seriously ask that feline criminal for help!" Kira cried when I presented the idea.

"I don't see another way to get that amulet." I said.

"Even if we did ask her for help...not that I'm saying we would...but if we did...how do we find her? She's a cat and we never find her unless she wants to be found." Conner said.

"We bait her. I have a plan...and I think we should." I said.

"No way." Kira said.

"I think Michelle is right. This is the only way." Hunter said.

"You're only taking her side because she's your girlfriend." Kira said.

"Huh?" I asked.

"Catwoman. Everyone knows you're dating her Hunter."

"I am not." Hunter said.

"Well you're seeing someone."

"It's not your business who I'm seeing, if anyone. I assure you it isn't Catwoman and even if it were that wouldn't influence my decision. I agree with Michelle. Catwoman is the only person we know capable of getting the amulet from Trent."

"Fine, but if she backstabs us..."

"If she backstabs us I'll handle her." I said.

"Fine. Do what you have to."

I nodded and changed into my Supergirl uniform and headed out. I flew to the top of the Reefside Chronicle building.

"Here kitty, kitty, kitty! I know you can hear me! I have a proposition for you that could land you in all the catnip you want!" I called.

"You called?" Catwoman asked.

"Well there you are. How would you like to save the world today?"

"What's in it for me?"

"The chance to swindle Trent Mercer."

"You have my attention."

"Trent has an amulet that we have to have. If you get that amulet we'll turn the other way if you were to manage to capture some of Trent's fortune."

"Well...that is an interesting prospect. I get to pull off a robbery and none of you caped pests will come after me?"

"None of us. As long as Batman gets that amulet."

"Alright. Deal."

"Good."

After I finished dealing with Catwoman I went back to Bradley Manor and met up with Hunter. He was taking me to the mall. Hunter had spent a lot of money on me since we got together. I wasn't entirely comfortable with it but he said he liked doing it so I let him, with some limitations.

Anyway, we got to the mall and walked around. Hunter put his arm around me and I leaned in close to him as we walked. We were like this for awhile, just walking through the mall. I was so comfortable with him. Suddenly I saw Tommy walking towards us. He saw us too and he didn't look happy.

"Michelle, what are you doing?" he asked.

"Shopping..." I said.

"I told you I didn't want you dating him!"

"I'm a grown woman. I can do whatever I want!"

"And what's wrong with her dating me anyway?" Hunter asked.

"No offence Hunter, but you've hurt half the women from here to Mariner Bay using them." Tommy said.

“This is different. I love Michelle.”

“You do?” I asked softly.

“I forbid this.” Tommy said.

“You can’t forbid me!” I cried.

“As long as you live under my roof...”

“Fine. I won’t live under your roof. I’ll move in to Bradley Manor. Right Hunter?”

“Sure. You’re always welcome.” Hunter said.

“There, now you have no say. Come on Hunter.”

“Michelle...” Tommy said.

I ignored him and walked away with Hunter.

Hunter and I left the mall and went to the apartment so I could get my things. After that we went to Bradley Manor. I went to a guest room but Hunter insisted I stay in his room with him. We knew that meant we’d have to come out about our relationship to Kira and Conner. Hunter agreed and we went and told them. They handled it better than Tommy did.

“That makes sense. You two have been together a lot lately.” Conner said.

“I can’t believe I couldn’t put two and two together.” Kira said.

“Well you’ve been busy. Speaking of which, did you get any more information out of Trent?” I asked.

“Yes actually. Trent is planning to kill the whole alliance starting with you and Tommy. From there he’s going to rig the upcoming election so he becomes President. From there he’ll use the power to take over the world.”

“President Mercer? Now there’s a scary thought. We have to stop him.”

“We need that amulet so you and Tommy can capture him.” Conner said.

“Catwoman is working on that as we speak. We should inform Kim and Jason about this. We’ll need everyone’s help here.” I said.

“Good plan. I’m on it. Kira, you should get back to Trent.” Conner said.

“Right. You call Kim and Jason.” Kira said.

Conner nodded and he and Kira took off.

When we were alone I looked at Hunter.

“I know I’m Supergirl and everything...I’m scared though.”

Hunter pulled me into his arms, “Don’t be. We’ll figure out how to stop Trent. Don’t worry.”

“He’s got all that Kryptonite.”

“I’m not gonna let anything happen to you. I promise.”

I nodded and kissed him, “Did you really mean it when you told me you loved me?”

Hunter nodded, “Yeah, I do love you.”

I smiled, “I love you too...I should go check in with Catwoman.”

“I’m coming with you. If she has the amulet I’ll need to take it from her and put it in the lead box. “

“Alright.” I said. We changed into our uniforms and took off.

We went back to the rooftop and called for Catwoman.

“Well, it’s about time. Oh, hello Batman.” She said as she arrived.

“Do you have the amulet Catwoman?” he asked.

“Of course I do. I am the best you know. Here you go.” She said throwing the amulet at him. He put it in the box.

“Nice work. Have fun with your heist.” I said.

“Already pulled it off. Trent is about to have quite a shock.” Catwoman said with a smirk.

“I didn’t need to know about it.” I sighed.

“Now that I have that taken care of...Batman, how’s about taking a girl out to celebrate?” she asked as she walked up to Hunter and slid her finger across his chest.

“Sorry Catwoman, not interested.” He said.

“Since when?”

“Since I’m seeing someone else.”

“Who?”

“Doesn’t matter. All that matters is that I’m not interested in you.”

“We’ll see about that.” Catwoman said as she kissed him.

I felt my blood start to boil and I unintentionally fired fire beams from my eyes at Catwoman.

“What’s your problem?” Catwoman asked.

“Sorry...slipped up.” I said.

“Wait...Supergirl is your new girlfriend isn’t she?”

“That’s not your business.” Hunter said.

“She is...well, well...alright we’ll see how long this lasts. I will have you again Batman...just you wait. Supergirl...you’re a cute girl but in the end a woman will win.” Catwoman said as she took off.

“We’ll see about that.” I said under my breath.

“Don’t worry about her. We did have something once but that’s over now.” Hunter said.

“You really did date her...so you know who she is?”

“Yes.”

“Who is she?”

“I can’t tell you that. I wouldn’t want her telling anyone who I am.”

I nodded, “OK. I understand. Let’s get back to the Bat Cave.”

I put my arm around Hunter and flew off with him.

We got back to Bradley Manor and went to the bedroom. I sat on the bed quietly.

“What’s wrong?” Hunter asked.

“I’m not sure we can win.” I said.

“We’ll beat Trent. I promised you that.”

“Not Trent. I’m not sure *we* can win...you and I. Can this relationship possibly work?”

“Of course it can. We’ll make it work.”

“You honestly think so? So much is against us.”

“We’ll beat it. I love you Michelle. We’re going to make it.”

“I’ve never seen you be so...positive about anything.”

“I’ve never felt so positive about anything. You bring that out in me Michelle.”

I smiled, “I love you so much.”

Hunter sat next to me and took his cowl off. He kissed me softly. We started to undress just as there was a knock on the door.

“What?” Hunter called.

“Kim and Jason are here sir.” Cameron called.

“Thank you Cameron. I’ll be right there.”

“Great timing.” I mumbled.

“It’s ok. Come on. We have work to do.” Hunter said as he put his cowl back on.

We got to the Bat Cave and Wonder Woman and the Flash were waiting.

“Um, where’s Batgirl and Robin?” I asked.

“Good question.” Batman said.

“I’ll go look for them.” I said as I headed back into the house. I went to Kira’s room. She wasn’t there. I went to Conner’s room and he was in there...with Kira...making out. I couldn’t help but snicker, “Um, guys...we’re having a meeting.”

Kira jumped, “Oh, right...sorry.”

“It’s ok. Come on.” I laughed.

We walked back to the Bat Cave. Superman was there by the time we got back.

“Ok, everyone is here. Do we have a plan?” I asked.

“We have to be careful. We don’t know how much more Kryptonite Trent has.” Superman said.

“He’s right. But he’s got guards now with other weapons. We’ll need to be careful too.” Batgirl said.

“Oh, that’s just great.” Robin said.

“How do we plan when we don’t even know what Trent can do?” Flash asked.

“We don’t plan. We go in and give it everything we’ve got. It’s all we can do.” Wonder Woman said.

“I think she’s right.” I said.

“Ok, then what are we sitting around here for? Let’s do it.” Batman said.

We all headed for Trent’s office. We knew he’d be there, planning. We were right but so was Batgirl. He had a whole

army of protectors. We fought through the army and I managed to get to Trent. I was just about to apprehend him when he grabbed me and pulled out another shard of Kryptonite.

"Not again." I said as I felt the weakness come back.

"Stop right now or Supergirl dies...this time for real." Trent said.

"No!" Batman cried.

"Don't do it Trent!" Superman cried as he took a step back. I knew he was feeling the effects of the Kryptonite too.

"You will all leave now and not return or I will kill her." Trent said.

I felt a tear slip down my cheek as I looked at Batman.

"Let her go! Now!" Batman cried.

"Not a chance." Trent sneered, "Well, it appears the Caped Crusader has a weakness. Could it be? Does he love the Girl of Steel?"

"Let her go." Batman demanded.

"I'll take that as a yes. This is certainly interesting. What would you do to save your precious Supergirl?"

"What do you want?"

"I want you to help me rig the election. I know you have the capability. Do it and I'll spare Supergirl."

"Don't do it Batman!" I cried.

"Shut up!" Trent said as he pressed the shard to my skin.

"I'm sorry Kara. I can't let you die."

"There has to be another way. You can't do it Batman." Robin said.

"Robin, some things in life are more important than doing the proverbial 'right thing'. This is one of them. I can't let Kara die."

"Kal-El! Stop him, don't let him do it!" I cried.

"I said shut up." Trent said as he started to press the shard into my skin.

"If you hurt her the deal is off." Batman said.

"Fine."

"How do I know you won't kill her when you win the election?"

"You don't, but if you don't help me I will kill her right now."

"Let him kill me Batman. Don't let him win or I'll never forgive you." I said.

"I'm not letting you die Kara." Batman said as Trent suddenly slumped forward.

He'd been shot in the back.

Batman ran over to me and pulled me into his arms. We looked up in the direction of the shot. Catwoman was standing in the window.

"Catwoman...what did you do?" Batgirl asked.

"Don't worry. I just stunned him. He'll be fine. I know how you do-gooders feel about killing. I just want a fair fight with the Girl of Steel. Hard to have that if she's dead." Catwoman said.

"Thanks." I said.

"Hey, I mean it...the Girl may be winning now but in the end the Woman will prevail. See ya round." Catwoman said, then she was gone.

"Did I miss something?" Batgirl asked.

"I think we both did." Robin said.

"Don't worry about that. Superman, get Trent to the police station. They can charge him with conspiracy and attempted murder. Flash, get Kara back to the Bat Cave. Wonder Woman, Robin, and Batgirl, help me search the place for any and all Kryptonite. We have got to get rid of it." Batman said.

The next day I was feeling much better and it was really nice to wake up in Hunter's arms.

"How are you feeling?" Hunter asked when he saw I was awake.

"A lot better. Thank you." I said.

He kissed me, "You scared me."

"Would you really have helped Trent to save me?"

"I'd do anything to save you."

"I love you...but the fate of the world is more important than me."

"Nothing is more important than you."

After we got up and dressed we went down for breakfast. We were just about done when Cameron walked in.

“Sir, Mr. Oliver is here to see you.” He said.

“Oh? Send him in.” Hunter said.

“Yes sir.”

A few seconds later Tommy walked in.

“What do you want?” I asked

“To apologize. You’re right. You’re an adult and if you and Hunter are in love then it’s not my place to try to stop you.” Tommy said.

“So you’re ok with Hunter and I dating?”

“No, I’m not. But I’m not going to try to tell you what to do either.”

I nodded, “Thank you.”

“And Hunter, if you hurt her you will be sorry.”

Hunter nodded, “I understand. Thanks man.”

“What changed your mind?” I asked.

“I saw how he was willing to do anything to save you. I may not have agreed but it was clear he really loves you. I’ve never seen him react to anyone like that before.”

I smiled, “Thanks Tommy. I love you.” I stood up and hugged him.

“I love you too Michelle.”

Later that day Hunter and I were cuddling in the sun room.

“Do I have anything to worry about with Catwoman?” I asked.

Hunter shook his head, “Nothing at all. In fact...I have a question for you.”

“Oh?”

Hunter stood up and got down on one knee, “Kara Zor-El, will you marry me?” he pulled out a beautiful diamond ring.

“Oh my god...YES!” I cried as I hugged him.

I knew as Hunter held me that everything would be different. I finally found my own superman...his mantle was the bat and I knew that nothing...not even that cat could split us up.

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“Michelle, wake up.” Hunter said shaking me.

“What? Hunter? Oh god...what a dream.” I said.

“What?”

“Never mind, is it time for the shoot?”

“Yes.”

“Let’s go.”

We got ready and then went to the amusement park. All we had to do for this video is walk around the park as if we were on a date and be all sweet and cuddly. It was very romantic. After that I had to film some performance scenes. It was the most fun video I’d ever made...getting paid to cuddle with Hunter sure helped. Some people are just lucky I guess.

PRT 274- "Surprise, Surprise"

We were at training...and what a training session it was. Daggeron had tied his wrist to Nick's and they were sparring. The rest of us and Udonna were sitting to the side and watching.

"Why doesn't he use his laser lamp?" Xander asked.

"In bound battle training only swords can be used and no magic. Daggeron is very skilled in this technique." Udonna explained.

"Because I was taught by the best. And now Nick is going to be beat...I mean taught by the best." Daggeron said.

"I see humility doesn't set in as one reaches middle age." Nick said.

"Ohhhhhh..." Vida and I said.

"Middle age?" Daggeron asked as the spar continued.

"Nick's got this one wrapped up." Vida said.

"Don't count on it." I said.

"Yeah, it's not over yet." Xander agreed.

In the end Nick actually won. Amazing, but true. Anyway, we were all talking after the spar and stupid Chip had to mention someone Leinbow...evidently Udonna lost husband. Daggeron and Udonna finally filled us in.

As it turns out Udonna had a husband named Leinbow and they had a son named Bowen...but Leinbow was lost in battle...he sacrificed himself to save the world. To save Bowen Udonna send him with Daggeron. Phineas sent him to the human world to keep him safe.

The story was very touching and gave everyone a new motivation to continue fighting. Everyone was charged when Nick suddenly got another message from Koragg, via telepathy. Koragg wanted to fight us and for Daggeron to fight with Imperious. We Morphed and went to battle. Koragg was after our legend power. We went to legend mode and went to fight. We were actually doing very well against Koragg...until a new challenger showed up. Koragg said something about Imperious casting a forbidden spell. This was bad...this creature was too strong...our legend power didn't even dent him. While we were trying to recover Koragg cast a spell that sent us to the Underworld.

Michelle

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I'd been very busy with work and hadn't really had time to relax. I had my own things to promote not to mention I was very active in the process of promoting Mina's solo album, which had just come out that week. Beyond that Serena and Raye's duo, The Wreakers, was turning out to be huge. It started out as an experiment. No one ever expected the duo to become as popular as it had. Not that I was complaining. Album sales meant money and money meant Starlight Records was doing well.

I got to a club where Mina was doing a set and talked to the club owner. Everything was ready. I went backstage and told Mina everything was set.

"Thanks. I'm so excited to get to perform again. I mean, I love playing right hand chick to you but...it's different with my music." She said.

I nodded, "I know. You've done this album all by yourself this time around. No help from me other than with the label. This music is your baby. Go out there and kick some ass."

Mina smiled, "Thanks Mich, for everything."

"Anytime."

She went onstage while I watched from backstage.

"Hey there everyone! Thanks for coming out. It's so amazing to get to see my fans again and play my music for you. As you know my new album, 'Bleeding Heart Graffiti', has just hit stores and I couldn't be prouder of it. This is the first single off the album, request it on radio now if you like it, it's called 'Kiss Me Till it Bleeds'.

*"Destructive, exciting and I can't let go  
Inciting a riot on my radio*

*I'm going, I'm gone, even though I know it's wrong  
He's a Saturday night and Sunday morning rolled into one  
With a dirty smile that could shame the sun*

*I'm gonna hang myself on someone else, use just enough rope  
I know he's bad news but I can't say no  
If bitter is sweet then he's just what I need  
So kiss me till it bleeds*

*I'm stupid, a sucker, he's a loaded gun  
A lover, a leaver, just a hit and run  
When our worlds collide breathe deep and hold on tight  
Cause he's so rock and roll, I'm a tortured soul with him in my bones  
And he leaves me shattered like a rolling stone*

*I'm gonna hang myself on someone else, use just enough rope  
I know he's bad news but I can't say no  
If bitter is sweet then he's just what I need  
So kiss me till it bleeds*

*So what do you do now  
You know he's gonna take you down  
But you're addicted to the sound  
So you'll hang around*

*I'm going, I'm gone even though I know it's wrong  
He's a Saturday night and Sunday morning rolled into one  
With a dirty smile that could shame the sun*

*I'm gonna hang myself on someone else, use just enough rope  
I know he's bad news but I can't say no  
If bitter is sweet then he's just what I need  
So kiss me till it bleeds*

*I'm gonna hang myself on someone else, use just enough rope  
I know he's bad news but I can't say no  
If bitter is sweet then he's just what I need  
So kiss me till it bleeds*

*Just kiss me till it bleeds"*

I really loved that song. Mina had written it towards the end of her relationship with Brett. I remember when she first played it for me. I knew it was a great song and so I wasn't surprised she had picked it for her first single for the new album...what did surprise me is that Jess let her pick it...then again Mina wasn't as much of a cash cow for Jess without me to front her. It sucked in the sense Jess didn't take Mina as seriously...but it was good in the sense she had more creative freedom. I used to...but I had to fight for it. Now...I just did what Jess told me too because I couldn't help it. My sense of duty was just too strong. It was really annoying. I was starting to develop a will again...all that did though was allow me to realize what I wanted. I didn't have a strong enough will to fight against duty...it sucked.

Mackenzie

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When we got there we had several surprises. First of all, we were back in civilian form. An army was waiting for us to capture us. Another surprise was LeeLee was there!

“Wow, it’s really nice to see you guys.” LeeLee said.

“LeeLee? They got you too?” Vida asked.

“Don’t worry, we’ll get you out of this disgusting place.” Xander said.

“Thank you. I hate it here. It’s always dark and dim. Not to mention getting turned into an insect at everyone’s slightest whim.” LeeLee said.

“Complaining again daughter?” Necrolai asked.

“Daughter?” Chip asked.

“Can we keep them here Mom? Can we, huh? They have things that zombies down here will never have. Like, souls.” LeeLee said.

“Of course my dear. Once their power is gone you can keep them as your pets for all eternity.” Necrolai replied.

“Sweet.”

“Ugh...I should have known you were evil...this explains SOOOOO much.” I said glaring at LeeLee as I tried to pull away from my captor, to no avail.

We ended up getting caught in this energy force field. It was draining us and very painful. Evidently the master...the one that Leinbow gave his life to fight...wanted our legend power and he...it was draining us...well...until Udonna showed up to save us. We thought we were gonna be ok...until the master captured Udonna.

“NO!!!” we cried.

We couldn’t save her and we knew it...but as, yet another surprise, Koragg saved her...and changed forms...he became human...

“Leinbow?” Udonna asked.

“Ok...whoa...” I said.

Leinbow got us out of the Underworld and explained how he’d become Koragg. Nick didn’t trust him in the least. Udonna on the other hand...she was just glad to have her love back. Leinbow was really remorseful and really wanted our forgiveness. We were thinking it over when Udonna fell. It turned out she used forbidden magic and lost her magic. Leinbow used his magic to send Udonna back to Root Core as we were being attacked. We Morphed and Leinbow changed into some battle form. We got our asses kicked and Necrolai took Leinbow. We were in major trouble when Daggeron showed up with a unicorn. He explained she could travel to any dimension and she could combine with our Megazord...she was my Zord! I finally had a Zord...granted a back up, but she was so pretty! We took the unicorn to the park...Nick and I were riding her when Nick decided to go into Megazord form. I piloted the Unicorn part of the Zord and Nick had his....it was too amazing to finally be able to really participate in a Zord fight. The others joined us shortly after but got their tails kicked. Nick and I kept fighting until...Koragg showed up...the Underworld had turned Leinbow back. Nick was determined to take everyone out...the creepy dude we were fighting and Koragg. And we did take out the creepy dude...Koragg...not so much. Koragg kinda took us out and we lost our Zord formation. Nick and I landed on the ground with a thump...but we were still Morphed, luckily. Koragg followed and Nick went to battle him. “Nick stop!” I cried as the others ran up in civilian form. We watched as the battle raged on. It was too weird. It was almost like Koragg was trying to train Nick...he wouldn’t destroy him either. We all figured that it was because there was a part of him that was still Leinbow and thus good. We continued to watch the fight/odd training session not knowing what to do. It looked like Koragg was finally gonna finish Nick off when Udonna showed up.

“Leinbow stop! Don’t do it! This is Bowen...your child...our child...” Udonna said.

Michelle

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After Mina’s set I went to my hotel and started packing. I was finally gonna get to go home. I knew Tommy would be glad to have me back. Watching Mac was no easy task for him. I needed to start thinking of ways to reunite myself anyway. I just hoped business didn’t get in the way.

Before I headed out I had a couple of other things to do. For one I was going to watch Hunter race. It was the last race before he had a short break. He’d get to come home with me for a few days, which was great. I put on my moto shirt and headed to the track.

On top of being a supportive wife I was also there to perform. I sang the national anthem before the race then went to

the pit and gave Hunter a good luck kiss. I watched as he Blake fought to take the lead. They both were so good. In the end Blake ended up winning. I went back to the pit again after the race.

“Nice riding, congrats Blake.” I said.

“Thanks Mich.” He said.

“You did amazing too babe, you’ll get him next time.”

“Of course I will.” Hunter said as he started to kiss me then stopped.

“What?” I asked.

“I’m all muddy and sweaty.”

“So? We’ll take a shower before we head out.” I said as I wrapped my arms around him and kissed him.

“Mmm...ok...sounds good.”

I smiled.

Mackenzie

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OK, so recap here...Koragg is Leinbow but turned back to Koragg and tried to kill Nick but Udonna somehow found out that Nick was really Bowen, her long lost son. This meant that Nick...um...Bowen was Koragg...um...Leinbow and Udonna’s son. Got that? OK, good.

The realization of this was enough to rid Leinbow of Koragg again and he resumed human form. Nick was totally tripped out...and who can blame him...he didn’t have time to get very freaked though because we were attacked but before we could fight Leinbow cast a spell to keep us from moving and he went to fight himself...he vanished back into the Underworld and was gone...again. We knew when Leinbow won because we got our legend powers back.

We got Udonna back to Root Core and left Nick there to sort things out. The rest of us took off.

Xander and I headed to the apartment. We walked in and Michelle and Hunter were cuddled on the sofa.

“Oh...hi...you’re back.” I said.

“Yeah, we’re back.” Michelle said, “Hi Xander.”

“Hi.” Xander said.

“Um, I’m going to my room.” I said. I didn’t wanna be around Hunter.

“What’s wrong?” Michelle asked.

“Nothing.”

“Bullshit, I can read you. Your eyes don’t lie. What’s wrong?”

“How long is Hunter gonna be here?”

“A few days. Why? You don’t like Hunter? He’s your cousin.”

“I know...that’s the problem.” I said softly. I couldn’t hide this anymore. It hurt so much.

“What? What’s the problem?” Michelle asked.

I took a deep breath, “He raped me.”

Hunter looked at me wide-eyed.

“He what?” Michelle asked.

“He raped me.” I repeated. Xander put his arm around me.

“Mac, go to your room. I need to talk to Hunter.”

“OK.”

Xander and I went to my room and sat down.

“Are you ok?” he asked me.

I nodded and wiped my eyes, “I think so.”

Michelle

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I sat next to Hunter, who looked like he was about to have a breakdown.

“I never raped her.” He said.

I nodded, "I know. I was thinking about it and she does remember events from when I was Mackenzie...but she also created memories to survive. We slept together a couple a times when I was Mac. She probably remembers that but her memory added a twist to make it make sense. She knows the pain of rape because part of her remembers the emotional impact of being raped since I was raped and she is me. You're her cousin so would you have slept with her? She must have been forced, you know?"

"OK, that makes sense, but if she tell anyone else..."

"I know...this could be bad. I'm gonna try to convince her it a dream. I might be able to use the Amethyst to clear that memory from her."

"Alright, do what you have to do, but be careful."

"I will."

I went to the room, "Xander can I speak with you a second?"

"Sure...I'll be right back." He told Mac.

We stepped into the hall.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Has Mac told anyone else about this?" I asked.

"Just me."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"She trusted me."

"Xander, she's not real! That rape never happened! It's a changed memory from when I was Mac and I slept with Hunter!"

"Oh..."

I sighed, "Xander, you have got to remember that Mackenzie doesn't really exist."

"She does for me."

"You're in love with a concept."

"She's real enough."

"I'm not dealing with this now. Just go. I need some time alone with Mac."

"Fine." Xander left.

I went inside the room.

"Mac?"

"Yeah?"

I sighed, "I'm sorry..." I held up my Amethyst and focused the energy on her mind. I'd never really done this before but since Mac was me it should work. When I finished I looked at Mac, "Are you ok?"

"Yeah. I think so. What happened?"

"Nothing. Get some rest."

She nodded.

I left the room and sighed. Mac was alright...if only Hunter's emotional scars were that easy to fix.

## PRT 275- "Comic World"

Chip, Maddie, Xan, and I were at Rock Porium and Maddie was looking a little down.

"What's up Maddie? You've been quiet all day." Xander said

"Nothing. I...I just...I guess I'm a little sad that's all. I mean, I know I'm a Power Ranger but come on, you guys are the ones that really...you know...lit it up. I don't feel like I did my share."

"Maddie, that's ridiculous. You're as much a part of the team as anyone." Xander said.

"Yeah." Chip agreed.

"Thanks, but...uh...let's get real here. Nick did the Catestros thing. Xander, you get all the spell codes. Chip, you saved Vida." Maddie said.

"Yeah." Chip said smiling.

"Mac, you have your Amethyst. And Vida kicks butt. And I..." she trailed off.

"What about Jenji? You helped Jenji." Chip said.

"I was a friend, not a superhero. Oh, actually, I did do something special. I got turned into a stone statue and everyone had to come and save me. Awesome." Maddie said making a face as she walked away.

"Well, that went well. I think we really cheered her up." Chip said high fiving Xander.

"Yeah." Xander said as they got up and walked over to Vida. Toby walked up and was complaining about his employees always running off. Xander and Vida scrambled for an answer but threw it to Chip who said:

"It's simple boss. We're the Power Rangers and we have to go fight the bad guys."

Vida, Xander, and I stood perfectly still and waited for Toby's reaction before we killed Chip.

Toby didn't buy it, of course, but he did walk away. We looked at Chip with a death stare.

"The truth is always the hardest to believe." Chip said with a smile as we were called to Root Core. We got Maddie and met up with Nick there. Udonna had called a secret meeting...so secret even Daggeron didn't know what it was about. We waited.

Udonna finally came in and told us each what we meant to her...it sounded like she was dying or something. We were confused. Turned out she was leaving to find Leinbow. She refused to let us go with her. Before we could stop her, she was gone.

We didn't have much time to think about it because the others had to get back to work. I hung around while they worked. About an hour later Aaron and the others walked in. They were bored. Toby said we could play a set.

"Awesome! Let's hit it guys!" I cried as we took the stage and started to play.

*If I don't cry, Do you think I don't feel?  
If I look away, it doesn't mean I don't see,  
And just because I want someone when I'm alone,  
Doesn't mean I'm helpless,  
That I can't stand on my own.*

*How far can we go before we break?  
How long can I wait?*

*How strong do you think I am?  
How much can I take of this?  
Am I a rock, or a rose, or a fist?  
Or the breath at the end of a kiss?  
How deep do you want to go, because I'll go there if I can,  
You make it harder than it has to be,  
How strong how strong, how strong do you think I am?*

*It's so hard to tell,  
What's in your heart,  
What you keep to yourself,*

*Is tearing me apart,  
And should I be afraid,  
To dream about you?  
And if you feel the same,  
Watch you going to do?*

*How far can we go before we break?  
How long can I wait?*

*How strong do you think I am?  
How much can I take of this?  
Am I a rock, or a rose, or a fist?  
Or the breath at the end of a kiss?  
How deep do you want to go, because I'll go there if I can,  
You make it harder than it has to be,  
How strong how strong, how strong do you think I am?*

*If I move in any closer,  
If you let go and give yourself away,  
and if we let this happen to us,  
Everything will change.*

*How strong do you think I am?  
How much can I take of this?  
Am I a rock, or a rose, or a fist?  
Or the breath at the end of a kiss?  
How deep do you want to go, because I'll go there if I can,  
You make it harder than it has to be,  
How strong how strong, how strong,  
How strong do you think I am?  
How much can I take of this?  
Am I a rock, or a rose, or a fist?  
Or the breath at the end of a kiss?  
How deep do you want to go, because I'll go there if I can,  
You make it harder than it has to be,  
How strong how strong, how strong,  
How strong, how strong, do you think I am?*

After the set I went back to sitting around. The store was really busy so Xan didn't have a lot of time to talk. It was ok. I liked just watching him.

Michelle

~~~~~

Hunter and I were sitting on the sofa. I was working on some budgets for Mina's tour and Hunter was channel surfing. He hit CMT just as my new video was coming on.

"Oh, hey, stop." I said.

"Oh...wow, 'Some People'...it's done already?" he asked.

"Yeah, it was a pretty simple edit I understand so they hurried it to the video stations."

We watched it together. It was perfect. It so captured our love and...well by the end of the video Hunter was holding me while I cried. "I love you so much." I whispered as it ended.

"I love you too Mich."

"That was a really nicely done video."

"Yeah, it was. I like it too...although it's still odd watching myself on TV."

“I know. But you look amazing.”

“To you.”

I smiled and kissed him. We cuddled for awhile longer before I got back to work.

“Any idea when Mac is getting home?” Hunter finally asked.

“Nope. I’m sure she’s fine though.” I said.

Mackenzie

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Our Morphers registered some dark energy and we took off to check it out. Nothing looked out of the ordinary...then the sky got REALLY dark and something started to rise up. It was bad. Daggeron came up behind us.

“In all my years of magic I’ve never seen anything like this.” He said.

“I don’t wanna hear that.” Xander said

A whole army stepped forward...10 beings from the Underworld. We Morphed and went to legend mode. We formed the Megazord and went to battle. Our attacks were useless and in no time we were de-morphed. The beings said they wanted something called ‘The Light’ and then they vanished.

I went home to check on things there.

“Are you guys ok?” I asked.

“Yeah, why?” Michelle asked.

“Big attack. 10 really creepy things from the Underworld.”

“Is everyone alright?”

“So far.”

“This sounds bad...should I call for ninja back up?” Hunter asked.

“No. I don’t think so. This is a magical thing. The ninjas would just be in danger.”

“She’s right. The Rangers need to handle this.” Michelle agreed.

My Morpher beeped just then, “Crap...Daggeron needs help.”

“Go...but be careful.”

“Of course.”

I met up with the others and we ran to battle to help Daggeron. Our magic was no good against this one either. His attacks sure did a number on us though. He eventually got bored and took off. We returned to Root Core.

Maddie was blaming herself. Vida blamed her too and we eventually started bickering among ourselves until Daggeron lectured us. By the end of his lecture it was time to go back to battle. We did all we could to take him out but he was REALLY powerful. Maddie was determined to do something to help us. She used her tidal wave to attack the lava creature. He went large and while the others went into the Zord I saw Necrolai watching.

“You guys take him, I have a score to settle.” I said as I headed after Necrolai. “Yo, Vamp girl...I have a bone to pick with you.”

“You...Purple Ranger...” she said.

“Yes. Me. Let’s do this.”

“You got it.”

“You’re pestered me for the last time Necrolai.” I said as I attacked with my staff.

“I think you have that a little backwards. You’re the pest that’s getting defeated here.”

“Not a chance.”

We battled for a while before she got really annoyed.

“You’ve been a pest for the last time. Goodbye Purple Ranger.” She said as she cast a spell and everything went black.

Michelle

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“I hope that Mac is ok out there.” I said.

“So do I. If I lose her I lose you.” Hunter said.

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that.”

“Yeah, let’s hope...” I started as everything went black.

Mackenzie

~~~~~

When I woke up I was on the floor in a house I didn’t recognize.

“Kara! Are you ok?” a man asked as he ran to my side and helped me up.

I looked at him, “Where am I?”

“At home. Kara? Did you hit your head?”

“Who’s Kara?”

“Oh no...you are. You’re Kara Kent, I’m Clark Kent, your cousin.”

“Kara Kent? But that’s...a comic...the last thing I remember I was fighting Necrolai and she cast a spell and...oh...no...” it all started to make sense. I’d been magically teleported to an alternate reality...and if I was here then...Kara Kent was in my world!

Kara

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I slowly woke up to the sound of several voices. I looked up.

“Where am I?” I asked.

“In the park. Necrolai got you I think. Are you ok?” a boy in green asked me.

“Who are you?”

“What? It’s me...Xander Bly...your boyfriend.”

“Xander Bly? The Green Mystic Ranger?”

“Shhhh, not so loud Mac.”

“Mac?”

“Yes, you’re Mackenzie Bradley...”

“But...you’re a comic character.”

“What?”

“Mac, what’s going on?” Madison asked. She was my favorite one in the comic...aside from Mac.

“I’m not Mac. My name is Kara Kent. I don’t know how I got here but this isn’t my world. Last thing I remember I was going to the kitchen to get something to drink and I blacked out.”

“We should get her back to Root Core.”

We got to Root Core and went inside. “Wow...this is too awesome.” I said in awe. As we got in we saw this girl that was passed out and a man with her. “Michelle and Hunter? The comic world’s Romeo and Juliet...amazing...”

“What happened to Michelle?” Xander asked.

“I’m not sure.” Hunter said.

“Mac, are you ok?” Daggeron asked.

“She claims she isn’t Mac.” Xander said.

“What?”

“I’m Kara Kent. I don’t know how I got here...” I said.

“Mac was fighting Necrolai and now she thinks she’s Kara Kent.” Xander explained.

“She might very well be...Necrolai must have cast a spell. That would explain Michelle passing out.” Daggeron said.

“How?” Madison asked.

“Simple. Mac is half of Michelle. If half of her went to another dimension she can’t sustain in this dimension. The only way to wake Michelle up is to switch Mac and Kara back.”

“And how do we do that?”

“I’m not sure yet.”

I sighed, “Great...I’m stuck here.”

Mackenzie

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I decided it was best to play along in this world while I tried to figure things out.

“Are you sure you’re ok?” Clark asked me.

I nodded, “Yeah, I’m fine. I was just dazed.”

“Everything ok?” another man asked walking in.

“Just fine Bruce. I think Kara slipped.” Clark said.

Oh, so this man was Bruce Wayne...wow...he was WAY hot.

“Are you ok Kara?” Bruce asked.

I smiled a flirty smile, “Just fine Bruce. Thanks.”

“Kara, you think you’re up to checking out a disturbance with us?” Clark asked.

“Sure.”

We each got in costume and headed out. Batman used his Bat Glider and Superman and I flew. Yup, becoming Kara had given me her super powers. It was AWESOME! We got to a deserted warehouse and started to investigate. I was about to use my x-ray vision to examine something when I was suddenly stabbed in the back. I cried out in pain.

“Supergirl!” Superman cried.

“Stay back, it’s Kryptonite.” I said weakly.

“That’s right...and there’s more where this came from.” Poison Ivy said. She was my attacker.

“Ivy...leave her alone.” Batman said as he approached her.

“No, no Batsy, not until Ivy is done with Superbrat there.” Harley Quinn said as she stepped out and blocked Batman’s path.

“Get out of my way Harley.” Batman demanded.

“Don’t think so.”

“I do think so.” Another voice said as Ivy was kicked from behind.

“Nightwing...” Harley said.

“Didn’t think I’d miss the fun did you? Now back off.” Nightwing said.

“Get Supergirl out of here. I got things covered here.” Batman said.

“Sure you do...I sent for some back up. Flash and Wonder Woman should be here soon.” Nightwing said as he pulled the Kryptonite out of my back and put it in a lead case in his belt, “Come on Supergirl, let’s go.”

Nightwing got me home and I carefully got out of my costume and into bed. I was so weak.

“You gonna be ok?” Nightwing asked.

I nodded, “Thanks Nightwing...Dick.”

“Don’t mention it.”

“Would you mind...staying with me? Just for a little while?”

“I guess I could...ok...”

“You could get out of costume and lay with me if you wanted. I’m sure you’re tired.”

“I...I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Why? Don’t trust yourself with me?”

“Well, now that you mention it...”

“That’s what I was hoping you’d say...come on...” I carefully sat up and kissed him.

“You should be resting.” He said as he backed away.

“Now’s your chance...I’m pretty strong normally, right now I’m just a normal girl...take advantage.”

“Kara...”

“Dick...”

“We shouldn’t do this.”

“Yes, we should.” I said as I kissed him again. This time he gave in.

OK so I was fucking Dick Grayson and I had uber cool super powers...I could really learn to love it here.

## PRT 276- "Shades of Green"

I woke up slightly dazed. I reached over and felt someone next to me. I opened one eye and was surprised to see...Dick Grayson?!? Oh...right...I was in some trippy comic universe. It wasn't just a dream...I was still Kara Kent.

Honestly, I didn't mind. Aside from Xander I didn't have a whole lot to go back to anyway. I would be pretty damn content to just stay here.

I watched Dick sleep for awhile before he woke up.

"Morning." I said softly.

"Kara...morning...how are you feeling?" he asked as he rubbed his eyes.

I nodded, "Not bad, still not at 100%, but much better than yesterday. I still want to know where Ivy and Harley got ahold of Kryptonite."

"That's a very good question. I should actually get to the Batcave and see if Batman has come up with an answer to that yet. You want to come?"

"You bet I do! I want to find out what the deal is before I get attacked again!"

"OK, let's get dressed then."

"We should get out before Clark catches you here anyway. He can be a wee bit over protective."

"Thanks for the warning." he paused, "Kara...about last night..."

"It was one night, I know."

"Ok, good. Just as long as we're clear."

"Crystal."

Dick nodded and got dressed.

Kara

~~~~~

"You really think you can pull this off?" Hunter asked me.

I nodded, "I've ready every 'Power Rangers' comic ever. I know Michelle's life as well as anyone."

"You know her fictional life...and right now you're Mac anyway."

"I know, I know. I can handle it. The hardest part of all of this is adjusting to being a normal human."

"I really hope you're right Kara. We've been through so much. You can't blow it for us now."

"Don't worry Hunter, I won't. Now if you'll excuse me, I told the others I'd meet them at Rock Porium" I said as I grabbed my backpack and headed out.

Mac

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After we were dressed we slipped out the window and headed towards Gotham. We arrived at the Batcave and Dick took me in.

"Dick, Kara, what are you two doing here?" Bruce asked.

"Kara wanted answers about last night." Dick explained.

"How did Ivy and Harley get Kryptonite?" I asked.

"That's a good question that we're still working on." Tim said (AKA Robin).

"What we did figure out was that Kara was definitely the target. They never went near Clark, even though they could have." Bruce said.

"Why target Kara and not Clark?" Dick asked.

"They want her gone...why, aside from the obvious, I'm not sure yet."

"Oh, this is just great. Gotham's high profile bad girls want me dead. Perfect." I said.

"They won't kill you Kara." Dick said.

"Oh? you can promise that?"

"Yes. I promise I won't let anything happen to you. Trust me."

I sighed, "That's sweet Dick, but you can't stop them."

"Watch me."

"Dick, you can't protect Kara single handedly." Bruce said.

"Sure I can. I can protect her as effectively as you can."

"You plan on staying with her 24/7?" Tim asked.

"If need be." Dick replied.

"That's not practical." Bruce said.

"I don't care. I'm not letting anything happen to Kara."

"None of us are. She's staying here."

"Excuse me? No I'm not. I'm not gonna stop living because of Ivy and Harley." I said.

"She shouldn't have to. I can protect her." Dick said.

Bruce sighed, "I'm not going to win. Fine. But if anything happens I expect you to call for back up Dick. Don't wait, call right away."

"Fine. Let's go Kara."

Kara

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I got to the music store and found the others.

"Hey guys!" I said.

"Hey Mac." Xander said as he kissed me. This wasn't all that bad. Hot boyfriend with an accent. Mac had good taste.

"What's going on?"

"Nick just got employee of the month." Maddie said.

"Oh! Congratulations!" I said hugging him.

"Thanks Mac." Nick said as he looked up at Lee Lee, who was moving a box. We all walked over to her.

"Hi" LeeLee said as he put the box down.

"Can the 'hi's, why'd you decide to work here?" Vida asked.

"Are you going after Toby?" Maddie asked.

"No." Lee Lee said.

"Maybe she's trying to infiltrate the team." Chip said.

"No, I'm not."

"Really now? Maybe that's too much? Are you just a spy?" I asked.

"I just wanna be like everyone else." Lee Lee said, "I want to be your friend. Is that so hard to believe?"

"Yes!" we all said in unison as our phones beeped.

"Probably your mom now." Nick said.

"Lee Lee, if you wanna be like everyone else, do some work. Help that customer." Vida said.

Everyone else added their own order to Lee Lee as we took off.

Mac

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Dick took me and left the Batcave. We got on his motorcycle and rode off.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"To my apartment. You'll be safer there. I don't think Ivy would think to look for you there." He said.

I nodded and held on to him.

We got to his apartment and he let me in.

"Make yourself at home." Dick said as he locked the door behind us.

"Thanks." I said as I walked in. I sat down on the sofa and looked at him, "Why are you doing so much to protect me?"

"I'm not gonna let Ivy kill you."

"It's more than that. You're really concerned. You're going out of your way to keep me safe. Why?"

"Because I care about you ok?"

I blushed, "You do?"

"Yes. But it can't go any further so drop it."

"Why can't it go any further?"

“Do I have to go into all the reasons? You’re too young for me, we both lead dangerous lives, we’re from different worlds, do I really have to go on?”

“Yes. Because I’m mentally older than you, our dangerous lives means we understand each other, and last time I checked the only other Kryptonian on Earth was Clark and since I’m not into incest a Earthling will have to do.” I said as I remembered Kara’s history from the comics.

Dick looked at me.

“What?” I asked.

“Nothing. There’s just something different about you. I just can’t figure out what.”

“Stop thinking so damn much and kiss me.” I said as I stood up and wrapped my arms around him.

“Kara, we can’t.”

“I’ve shot down all your reasons. Got anymore? We know you want to. If you can honestly tell me you don’t want this I’ll back off.”

Dick sighed, “I can’t do that.”

“Then what are you waiting for.”

“Clark is going to kill me.” He sighed as he leaned in and kissed me.

Kara

~~~~~

Turns out there was a monster named Occulous, the hunter. All he wanted was Nick. Of course we weren’t gonna just give our team mate up. Occulous decided we were gonna play a game. He was gonna demolecurize us one by one. If he didn’t have us all by sundown then Nick won...otherwise Nick had to surrender. Nick accepted his game then he vanished, then he started shooting at us from various directions. He truly was the hunter and we were the prey! As it turned out Nick was shot in the leg. We were trying to help him walk when we got shot at again. This time Xander got shot and was demolecurlousized!

“Xander!” Nick cried.

“Xander, no!” I echoed.

We had to keep running because we were still being hunted. We used a spell to vanish. We went to the forest but didn’t wanna risk going back to the base. We thought we had cover in the trees but then those started to demolecuerize. The hunter was right on our tails.

“We’re in trouble!” Vida cried.

“Damn, I wish I had super speed and heat vision right about now.” I mumbled.

“Us too.” Chip said.

At that moment Vida got shot and was demolecuourized.

“Sis!” Maddie cried.

Chip and I grabbed Nick and Maddie and headed to find cover.

Nick finally told us to stop and that he’d surrender. We were trying to talk him out of that when the hunter found us and shot Maddie. She was gone.

“This is so not good.” I said.

We went in the forest and de-morphed.

Chip was trying to come up with a game plan when Nick said again he was gonna surrender.

Chip was trying to talk him out of it when we were both zapped. It was all up to Nick now.

Mac

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As the days passed Dick and I got closer...and something else happened as well. I started to forget my life in Briarwood. I started to forget I was Mackenzie and I started to believe I was Kara Kent and since there was no one around that knew any different I just got into the swing of life.

Things had been quiet for a few days and I’d already missed a few days of school. Dick took me back to Metropolis, where I was attending Metropolis University. I changed clothes, put on my brunette wig, and went to school. When I got to campus I heard a voice calling me.

“Kara!”

I turned, “Lucy!” I cried. Lucy Lane was Lois’s sister (therefore my cousin-in-law) and my best friend.

“Where have you been?” Lucy asked.

“Dealing with...super problems.” I said. Lucy knew about my dual identity.

“Oh?”

“Some of the Gotham baddies got some Kryptonite and they are targeting me.” I whispered.

“Oh no...does Clark know?”

“Of course he does. Not much he can do to help me though.”

“I guess that’s true. So where have you been?”

“In Gotham.”

“With Mr. Wayne?”

“No. Dick.”

“Dick Grayson?”

“Yeah.”

Lucy raised her eyebrow, “Kara...I know that look, is there something you aren’t telling me?”

I blushed, “You mean that Dick is my boyfriend?”

“Are you serious?! Oh my god! That’s awesome! Congratulations! He’s so hot. I guess he knows about...who you are?”

I nodded, “Of course.”

“If he’s protecting you I guess he would huh? So is he...super?”

“Luce, even if he were, and I’m not saying he is, you know I couldn’t tell you.”

“I guess not everyone you hang with is super. I mean, Clark is friends with Bruce Wayne and there’s no way someone like Mr. Wayne could ever be a hero.”

I laughed, “Besides, you are my best friend and last I checked you weren’t super anything...except maybe a super friend.”

“Aww...you’re sweet.”

I smiled, “Let’s get to class.”

After class I went home. I heard someone in the kitchen and I went in to check it out. It was just Lois.

“Oh...man...Lois, you scared me.”

“Oh, I’m sorry Kara.”

“What are you even doing home?”

“Slow news day so Perry told me to take the rest of the day off.”

“Where’s Clark?”

“At the Watchtower. Diana called. Something was going on that the Justice League needed to take care off.”

“And no one called me?!” I asked.

“You’re not exactly part of the League.”

I frowned, “Only because they won’t ask me to join. They still think I’m too young and inexperienced.”

“You are, compared to most of the League.”

“I have more experience than Diana!”

“You’re...”

“...younger? I know, I know. Wally isn’t that much older than me.”

“No, Wally doesn’t *act* that much older than you.”

I sighed, “Whatever. I’m going on patrol.”

“Are you sure that’s a good idea?”

“Ivy and Harley haven’t been seen in days. I think I’m safe. I’ll see you at dinner.”

I changed into my Supergirl costume and flew off. I knew I didn’t really need to patrol but flying helped me clear my head.

I was soaring over Metropolis when I heard a call.

“*HELP!!! SOMEONE HELP!!!*”

“This sounds like a job for Supergirl...” I said to myself as I headed in the direction of the call.

I followed the call to an ally. There was a girl cornered by a shadowy figure.

“Hey! Leave her alone!” I called.

“Supergirl! Help!” the girl called.

I walked towards the pair. As I got closer I suddenly start to feel weak. When the shadowy figure turned around I saw it was Ivy.

“Told you she’d fall for it Har.” Ivy said as she walked towards me with the Kryptonite in hand.

“This was too easy.” Harley said. I recognized the voice now. She wasn’t wearing her jester costume and make-up so I hadn’t recognized her.

“I gotta get out of here.” I groaned as I tried to fly, but I couldn’t.

“Not a chance. You’re not going anywhere Superbrat.” Ivy said.

“Help!” I cried as I fell to the ground.

“No help for you. We have it on good authority that your super cousin and his band of do-gooders, including the big bat, are all off on Justice League business.”

She was right. I was screwed.

“You forgot about the non-Leaguers.” Dick said as he jumped off a building overhead. He was Nightwing and looked ready to kill.

“Uh-oh...what now Red?” Harley said.

“You think I’m afraid of Nightwing?” Ivy asked.

“You’d be smart to be. You see, I made Supergirl a promise that I wouldn’t let you hurt her and I plan on keeping that promise.” Nightwing said as he jumped at Ivy, trying to take the Kryptonite.

“No way bird boy. This is mine.” Ivy said.

“Yeah, we stole it fair and square.” Harley echoed.

Ivy glared.

“Stole? From who?” Dick asked.

“That information is need to know and you don’t.” Ivy said.

“I will find out so you may as well make it easy on all of us.”

“I don’t think so.” Ivy threw down a vile that released a green smoke. By the time the smoke resided she was long gone.

“Damn it!” Dick cried, then he remembered me, “Kara, are you ok?”

“I’m weak, but I’ll be ok.” I said.

Dick picked me up and carried me home.

Kara

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I’m not sure exactly how much time passed but next thing I knew we all five reappeared in the forest, de-morphed. Nick came running up. He was so happy to see us. He’d saved us all.

After we were sure we were all ok we headed back to the music shop. Lee Lee was hard at work and she looked like shit. It was obvious she’d been working her ass off.

“So, what do you think?” she asked. The store looked amazing. It was spotless.

“It’s, uh, clean.” Nick said.

“It seems that in your absence Lee Lee has earned the right to the rockployee of the month award. Congratulations. I think we can all learn from her commitment to excellence.” Toby said.

We were all surprised, to say the least.

“Looks like I’m here to stay.” Lee Lee said.

We all looked at each other. This couldn’t be good.

Mac

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When we got home he took me in through my bedroom window and put me on my bed.

“I don’t like these close calls. This is the second time I’ve almost lost you.” Dick said as I changed from my costume into civilian clothes.

“I know, but I can’t live in a bubble.” I said as I sat on my bed.

“I know that. We have to figure out where Ivy is getting this Kryptonite from and stop her.”

I nodded.

“But for now you rest. I’m going to go gather some information.”

“No, you’re not.” I said.

Dick looked at me.

“Stay here.”

Dick shook his head, “No. I’ll be back to check on you in a couple of hours. I have to see what I can figure out here first.”

I sighed, “Fine.”

I rolled over in bed and fell asleep. I was startled awake by my window slamming. I sat up and saw Ivy, Harley, and Catwoman. Ivy had her shard of Kryptonite.

“So mild-mannered college student Kara Kent is really Supergirl. I wonder if your reporter cousin knows about this...”

Ivy said.

“Oh wait...he’s Superman isn’t he?” Harley asked.

“H...how did you find me?” I asked.

“Your boyfriend led us right to you. Nightwing isn’t at good as he thinks he is. We had Catwoman tail him.” Ivy said.

“Catwoman? I thought you hated Ivy.”

“Money talks...too bad you’ll never mature enough to learn that lesson.” Catwoman said.

“And this time there’s no Nightwing around to save you...just us girls.” Ivy said.

I screamed, “HELP!!!!”

Lois came running in, “Kara, what’s...oh no...”

“Call Clark! Hurry!” I cried.

“Don’t think so.” Ivy jumped at Lois.

“Run!!!” I cried.

Lois had handled plenty of these situations. She dodged Ivy’s attack and took off running.

“No matter. She’ll never get help in time.” Ivy said as she sat next to me on my bed. I tried backing up but it didn’t work. I felt her plunge the Kryptonite shard into my shoulder. I cried out in pain. “YES! Now, behold ladies, the death of Supergirl!”



## PRT 277- "Two Become One"

I was at the store hanging with the Rangers and the guys in Mac's...err...my band. Aaron had lined up some gigs and we were going over set lists. I didn't know the songs they were talking about. Mac's music wasn't exactly in the comics. I was trying really hard to pretend I knew what was going on but I kept spacing. Living in comic land was great, but I wanted to go home. I missed Clark and Lois and Bruce and...everyone. There had to be some way to get me home.

I was snapped from my thoughts by Aaron.

"Um, Mac, Earth to Mackenzie, are you with us?" he asked.

I nodded, "Sorry guys, I spaced."

"So, what do you think we should open the set wi..." Aaron was cut off as we heard Nick and Vida yelling behind us. I guess Vida was very unhappy about Nick playing DJ. I was starting to see why Mac didn't like Vida very much. She was very hot headed and stubborn. Anyway, Toby made them go outside to handle their argument and the band meeting continued.

"So yeah, anyway, opening song...any suggestions?" Aaron asked.

"I...uh...I need to go to the bathroom. Be right back." I said as I headed for the restroom. Oh my way I grabbed Maddie.

"What's wrong?" she asked as we got in the restroom.

"This is a nightmare. Aaron wants my help in making a set list. I don't know any of Mac's songs."

"Oh...that is a problem. Ok. Crash course, I'll give you three titles, work from there."

"Alright, great, go."

"Alright, 'Let Me Fall', 'Another Thin Line', and 'How Strong Do You Think I Am?'. Got it?"

"Got it." I said, "Thanks, you're the best."

"You'll be fine. You're doing great...and don't worry Kara, we'll find a way to get you home soon."

I sighed, "I hope so."

Just then the phones went off. Daggon needed us, Nick and Vida were in trouble.

"Guess the band meeting will have to wait." Maddie said.

"Saved by the bell. Let's roll." I said as we took off with the others to go help.

Mac

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I woke up slowly, I didn't know exactly where I was. It looked like a lab of sorts. I looked around.

"Ah, Supergirl. You're awake." Lex said as he walked in. The last thing I remember was pushing past Ivy and Catwoman. I switched into my Supergirl uniform and tried to fly away...it didn't work and I blacked out. Now here I was.

"Lex...what do you want with me?" I asked.

"What do you think? But I'll be damned if I let those costume wearing freaks get the glory of doing away with the Last Daughter of Krypton. That victory will be mine...after I get what I need from you, of course."

"What do you need from me?"

"Only your better half." Lex said as he pulled out some Black Kryptonite.

"What the..." I tried to figure out what that would do to me. Then I remembered, Black Kryptonite separated the good and bad sides of a Kryptonian.

"Once I have my own Supergirl I won't need you."

"Did you forget the last time you tried this Lex. She turned on you."

"I was ill prepared. I won't make that mistake again." He said as he came at me with the Kryptonite.

Nothing happened.

"What the...why isn't it working?" Lex asked.

"Good question." I mumbled as I heard a loud crash.

Kara

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Turns out Nick and Vida were facing a toad monster, no lie. It was super ugly and shot out acid spit. The monster grew right away. The Rangers got the Zords and were about to fight when the toad vanished because he said he had a 'selection ceremony' to get to. Why did that not sound good?

We headed back to Root Core and tried to figure out what was going on. Nick and Vida said they were hit with something that frog spit. Vida insisted there were no side affects. Nick insisted she was wrong...and the fighting continued. Maddie tried to talk them down, to no avail. Right about then is when a new monster showed up...she was already large. Luckily Daggeron was ready for her in his Zord...she was kicking his ass though, so we headed out. We got to the scene of the battle and tried to Morph. I say tried because Nick and Vida couldn't...the rest of us were fine. Guess Nick was right about the frog juice having side effects. We didn't have time to deal with it right then so the four of us that could morph went to battle. We were getting our asses handed to us. That's about the time Nick and Vida cast a spell to help us. That pissed off the monster and she downsized to attack them. Daggeron went to help protect them. We joined up with them....just in time to see Jenji turn to stone from a snake bite. The monster wanted us to go to her dimension. We all headed there, except Nick and Maddie, who were left behind.

"Another crazy dimension" Maddie said when we got there.

"Yeah, it's the Serpentina Arena." Chip said.

"Keep your wits about you. Let's split into two groups and find Serpentina." Daggeron said, "Chip, you're with me. Madison and Kara, you're with Xander. Be careful. Sepentina is very cunning."

"I don't like this place at all." Xander said as we searched the woods for Serpentina.

"Me either. Slimy things creep me out." Maddie agreed.

"I third that." I said.

Right about then a shit load of snakes fell on us. I think there must have been about 100 of them. Maddie screamed and grabbed on to Xander. Just then a giant snake came and swallowed us whole...pretty sure that was Sepentina. Let me tell ya, being in the pit of a snake's stomach is no fun at all.

Mac

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"What now?" Lex asked aloud.

"It's over Lex. Let my cousin go." Clark demanded as he and Bruce came in...as Superman and Batman of course. Nightwing was right behind them.

"Kal-El! Stay back, he has Black Kryptonite!" I cried.

"Not for long." Bruce said as he jumped at Lex and got it from him. He put it in a lead container he kept on his utility belt.

"Supergirl, are you alright?" Nightwing asked as he came and untied me.

"I'm fine Nightwing. Thanks." I said as he held me close.

"Give it up Lex, it's over." Superman said.

"No, it's not. Not by a long shot." Lex said as he hit a button that opened a trap door and made his escape.

We got back to the Bat Cave so Bruce could look me over.

"Is she alright?" Clark asked.

"Yeah, she's fine...but I still would like to know why that Black Kryptonite had no affect on her." Bruce said.

"Shouldn't we be grateful for that?" Dick asked.

"Yeah, of course...but we need to know why."

"He's right. I'd like to know why as well." I said.

Bruce ran several more scans on me before looking at me.

"Find something?" I asked.

"No."

"Then what's wrong?"

"Kara, I think you know exactly why that Black Kryptonite didn't work on you...now tell us the truth."

Kara

~~~~~  
Somehow, on the outside, Nick and Vida got their powers back and managed to save us. Thank god. I was sick of swimming in stomach acid. Reminded me of the time the Crimson and Navy Thunder Rangers got stuck in the pit of the stomach of Isaac. Wait...that was Hunter and his brother. I'd have to ask him about that.

Anyway, we were finally freed from the belly of the beast. Serpentina grew and the Rangers used the Zords to finish her. When they did it freed Jenji...and that was that.

After the battle I went back to Root Core.  
"Daggeron, we have got to find a way to get me home. We don't know how long Michelle can survive this...and we don't know what damage Mac and I are doing to each other's worlds. We have all this magic at our disposal...surely there must be a way." I said.  
"I'm working on it Kara, there are so many dimensions though...we can't risk sending you to the wrong one or it will make things infinitely worse." Daggeron said.  
"We have to do something. I need Michelle back. We have to act fast." Hunter said walking in.  
"We're working on it Hunter...but we have to be careful."  
"Do something magical fast or I'll find some other way to get Michelle back."  
"Like what?"  
"Cam, Hayley, Billy, I don't know, we have many genius in the Ranger Family. I'll find one."  
"I'm working on it Hunter, truly, I am."

Mac

~~~~~  
"I don't know what you're talking about Bruce." I said.
"You've been acting odd for weeks now...I knew something was off but I couldn't figure out what...now I know I was right. I just still don't know what it is." Bruce said.
"Lay off Bruce. She's injured. She doesn't know any more than you do." Dick said.
"That's fine...then you won't mind a lie detector test."
"You know those things are unreliable...you of all people should know better."
"Not this one." Bruce said as Diana...Wonder Woman came in with Cassie, Wonder Girl.
"Cassie." I said.
"Hey Kara...Diana told me something was up with you so I figured I'd come see what it was." Cassie said.
"Wish I knew." I said.
"So, will you agree to having us use Diana's lasso on you?" Bruce asked.
"This is crazy Bruce...you should have asked me before you set this up!" Clark asked.
"Clark's right, this is crazy!" Dick agreed.
"Guys, it's fine. I have nothing to hide...and if I am then I'm unaware of it...besides, I've felt weird lately. I'd like to know what's going on. Let's do it Diana." I said.
"Alright, let's do it." Diana said.
Diana roped me with the lasso.
"OK, Kara, do you know why the Black Kryptonite didn't work on you?" Bruce asked.
"Yes." I said.
"Why?"
"Because I'm not Kara. My name is Mackenzie Bradley and I was sent here from another world. Kara is probably in my world."
"Ok, but the Green Kryptonite worked on you anyway."
"Yes, but I'm already split from someone in my world...I can't be split again. This is also why I've been forgetting who I really am and I've become Kara. I have no real personality of my own, it's the creation of a power amethyst which is in my home world."
"How do we get Kara back and you home?"
"I don't know."
"Release her."
I fell to the ground...that's when what I'd said come to me. I wasn't real...even in my own world...I was part of

Michelle...literally. I started to cry.

"Oh wow...I wasn't expecting that." Dick said.

"Ok, so you're not Kara...we have to find some way to get them switched back Bruce." Clark said.

"Kara...Mackenzie...are you ok?" Cassie asked as she knelt by me.

"I just found out I don't really exist...no, I'm not alright."

"You're a part of someone. You do exist."

"No, I don't...just please, hurry and get me back."

Kara

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"So, any ideas yet?" I asked.

"We have to hurry...this Amethyst is the only thing keeping Michelle alive right now." Hunter said.

"It was Necrolei's magic that did this. I need a counter spell." Daggeron said.

"I think I've come up with something." Maddie said as she walked in.

"Really?"

"Yeah, I was working on it...I think this might work."

Daggeron looked it over and nodded. "I think it just might. Nice work Madison."

"Ok, let's do this." Hunter said.

Daggeron nodded and picked up his wand, "Uthra Norqua Ozarro Basilichi Infredo Uthe Zazare"

Next thing I knew I blacked out.

When I woke up I was in the Bat Cave

"Clark? Bruce? Cassie? Oh my god! I'm home!" I cried before I realized how weak I was, "What did Mackenzie do to me?"

"Your body has had a lot of Kryptonite contact lately. You'll be fine. I'm just glad you're home." Clark said as he hugged me.

"It was a trip, let me tell ya." I said as I noticed the look on Dick's face, "You ok?"

"Can we talk alone Kara?" he asked.

"Sure." I said as I got up and walked upstairs with him, "What's up?"

"I didn't know it wasn't you...none of us did. We...I mean...Mackenzie and I..."

"What? Started dating or something?"

Dick nodded.

"Oh...wow...she got me a boyfriend."

"But it wasn't you."

I nodded, "Dick, I've always liked you. I was just too scared to make the first move."

"You?"

"Supergirl in power, not in emotion."

Dick laughed, "I like you too Kara...always have."

"Then let's say Mac did us a favor and give it a try?"

Dick nodded, "I'd like that a lot."

I smiled as he kissed me.

It was good to be home.

Mac

~~~~~

When I woke up I was in Root Core.

"Mac!" Xander cried as he pulled me into his arms.

"Xan...oh god..." I started to cry.

"What's wrong? You're home."

"I know...I know the truth. I'm not real. I'm a creation of Michelle's Amethyst...I'm part of her."

"You're real to me."

“No...I’m not real Xander.”

“Ok, so Mac is back. Why is Michelle still out of it?” Hunter asked as Michelle moved, “Michelle? Mich? Baby?”

“Hunter? What happened?” Michelle asked.

“Long story. The important thing is you’re ok.”

“And I know the truth. I’m a part of you Michelle...and I’m ready to go back.” I said.

“No...Mac, no...I just got you back.” Xander said.

“Xan, I’m not real...it’s over.”

“No...please, let me have just a couple more hours with you.”

“I need to regain my strength before I can mess with the Amethyst anyway. You two go and enjoy a couple of hours together. I’ll stay here and rest up.” Michelle said.

Xander and I nodded. He grabbed my hand and we took off.

We got to my apartment. We knew we’d be alone there.

“I can’t believe you’re doing this.” Xander said.

“Baby, Xander, I was never real to start with...and you knew it.” I said.

“I knew you were real to me. I love you Mac.”

“You love the idea of me. You can’t love me.”

“Sure I can...I do...let me show you.” Xander kissed me softly.

I kissed him back. We started to take each other clothes off and he laid on top of me. We brought himself into me and we made love one last time.

When we were finished he held me in his arms for the longest time, I loved our skin touching. Finally it was time to go back.

All the Rangers were gathered at Root Core.

“Alright, I’m ready. Let’s do this Michelle.” I said.

“Goodbye Mackenzie.” Maddie said hugging me.

“We’ll miss you.” Chip said.

“I’m a part of Michelle you guys...this isn’t goodbye. I’ll always be with you.” I said as I hugged everyone. “I’m sorry for any trouble I caused Hunter.”

“It’s ok. You didn’t know.”

Finally Xander pulled me into his arms, “I don’t care what you say. You’re real to me...and I love you.”

I started to cry, “I love you too Xander.”

We kissed one more time then I walked over to Michelle.

“Ready?” she asked

“Yes.”

We both put our hands on the Amethyst and focused really hard. I felt myself being pulled into a power source and then...

Michelle

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I slowly woke up and looked around.

“Hunter?” I asked.

“Michelle! You’re you again!” Hunter said as he hugged me tightly.

“Is Mac gone?”

“Yeah, she is.” Xander said softly.

“I thought so. I feel whole again...oh my god. I hope I never split like that again.”

Xander ran out of Root Core.

“It’s good to see you back to being you.” Maddie said.

“I know you guys liked Mac...but I’ll still be her...until the underworld is gone anyway.” I said.

The Rangers nodded.

“I’m worried about Xander though.” Maddie said.

“He’ll be ok. He’s strong.”

“Mich? Baby? Can we go home?”

I nodded, “PLEASE!”

Hunter and I walked into our apartment and sat down.

“God that was a trip...seems like it took forever.”

Hunter nodded, “I know what you mean.”

“But I’m back and we’re here.”

“Yes. God I missed you.” He said as he kissed me, “I just wish I didn’t have to get back on the road tomorrow.”

“So don’t go.”

“I have to. I have races.”

“Don’t I come first?”

“Of course...but I need to do this. I thought you’d understand.”

“Of course...of course. I understand.” I said as I stood up and went to the bedroom.

After all I’d been through...we’d been through...how could he do this now?! Whatever...I needed rest. I was so weak it wasn’t even funny. I’d be mad tomorrow.

## PRT 278- "Beyond Chaos"

It was 4 AM and I couldn't sleep. I was still weak from all the crap I'd been through. Even worse? I was alone. Hunter had left the night before to go race. I was still pissed he went after I asked him not to.

I got up and tried to watch some TV to settle my mind. I was too restless. I couldn't relax. I decided I couldn't be alone and the Rangers were just kids. They couldn't be there for me. They'd be ok for awhile with a Purple Ranger. I needed to think about me.

I packed an overnight bag and hopped in the Jeep. I drove to Reefside and went out to Tommy's. I got there just as Tommy was getting ready to go to work.

"Hey bro." I said.

"Michelle! Hey!" he hugged me, "What are you doing here?"

"I needed to get away for a day. Mind if I crash here tonight?"

"Of course not. Um, if I'd know you were coming I would have got someone to sub for me at work."

"It's ok..."

"Oh, you know what? Conner and Eric are in town visiting their mom. You should give them a call."

"Yeah, I could do that. See you tonight."

"Ok. Love you."

"Love you too Tom."

I went inside and settled into my old room. For some reason I really liked it there. I felt safe. I got a couple of hours of sleep and then my phone rang. I picked it up.

"Hello?"

"Hey Shellfish. Dr. O said you're in town. Wanna go get a bite to eat?"

"Oh hey Conehead. Sure. Wanna meet at Cyberspace?"

"Sure, meet you there in 30...bye."

I got up and got ready and then I headed out. I got to Cyberspace and when I went in Conner was on the sofa playing with little Savannah. I froze and watched. If he only knew...he was so good with her. Had I made a mistake? Maybe he would have made a good father.

No, I couldn't think about that now. I had too much to deal with.

"Hey Conehead." I said.

"Shell, hey." He stood up and hugged me then he picked up Savannah, "Say hello."

"Aww, hey baby Savannah."

"Here...you can hold her. Hayley won't mind."

"No it's...ok" Conner had already handed her to me.

"Well hi baby." I said as I looked down at my daughter. She did look like me...but I could see some of Conner in her as well. Oddly enough being with my daughter is exactly what I needed.

"Oh, hey Michelle." Hayley said as she walked up.

"Hi Hay. Savannah is getting prettier everyday." I said.

"Yeah, she is. She's an amazing baby. I'm so glad I have her."

"Yeah, so am I."

I looked down at Savannah again.

"You know, I have a lot to do today and her daycare is closed for the day...maybe you two could watch her for me?"

I nodded, "Sure."

"Yeah, we can play house...could be fun." Conner said laughing.

My eyes opened wide, "Um, yeah, sure."

Hayley giggled, "Have fun."

"Can we get some lunch first? The normal please." I said.

"Of course."

After we ate Hayley got us Savannah's car seat and stroller and we headed out.

"So where do we take a baby to?" I asked.

"A walk in the park?" Conner suggested.

"Ok, sure."

We got to the park and put Sav in her stroller. I pushed her and Conner walked beside us.

"It's a nice day." Conner said.

I nodded.

"So you gonna tell me what's wrong or do I have to guess?"

I sighed, "Nothing."

"Bullshit Shell. I know you, you hate it but I do. I know something is wrong...now spill."

"Fine. I just...I feel like I screwed up again."

"How so?"

"I created Mackenzie to save everyone...in the end all I did was hurt them...especially Xander. They all started to care about her...especially Xander...he loves her."

"But she wasn't real...Michelle, you did what you had to do to keep their world a secret. It was way more in-depth than any thing you've done previously. It wasn't a cave or an Academy you were hiding...it was the whole magical world. That was a lot of pressure."

"Yeah...but...I hurt everyone. I always do."

"They all knew she wasn't real. It's not your fault they started caring about her."

"It wasn't just them...I turned Hunter's life upside down again."

"He knew that came with the territory of being with you."

"Maybe...but I think that's why he picked racing over me." I said as I started crying.

"What?"

"He has a race today. I asked him to skip it...to stay with me. He didn't. He went anyway. We'd always promised that we'd put each other before our careers...but he didn't."

"Oh Shell...don't cry." Conner said as we stopped walking. He pulled me into his arms.

"What was I thinking Conner? Why would Tommy let me train anymore? I always screw up."

"You do not. You always win. Sure, sometimes some of your plans go a little haywire, but you never set out to cause problems."

"No, it just happens."

"Shell..."

"I know you're trying to help Conner, but you're not. Look what I did when I was supposed to be your trainer." I said as I looked at Savannah, I didn't mean to. Luckily he didn't catch on.

"We slept together, so what? You were single, I was single..."

"You were 17 and my trainee!"

"So what! We both consented...and I was almost 18."

"Almost..."

"Michelle, we slept together because we needed each other. I needed you as much as you needed me."

"But..."

"No...if you're asking me to tell you that you were wrong or that we made a mistake I won't. I enjoyed what we did. It was fun and I think it helped us both through a rough time."

"Yeah...you were what I needed at the time."

"See."

I nodded, "Ok."

Savannah started to cry.

"I think someone needs a diaper." Conner said as he made a face at the smell.

I laughed, "Wanna change her?"

"No, no...you go right ahead."

"Alright, there's a restroom on the other side of the park. We'll go over there and I'll change her."

We got to the restroom and I took Savannah in and changed her diaper. As I did I couldn't help but wonder what it would have been like to actually be her mom. She was such a beautiful baby and really well behaved. She was gonna grow up to be a beautiful girl...then again look at her parents...did she have a choice?



After Sav was in a clean diaper I took her back to her stroller, which Conner was standing by outside the restrooms. "All clean?" Conner asked. "All clean." I said. "Good. She's way cuter when she doesn't smell." I laughed, "How do you always manage to cheer me up Conehead?" "I know you." "Yeah...better than anyone...kinda creepy." "You're just very predictable." I laughed again, "You are the only person in the world I know that would describe me that way." Conner gave this some thought, "Yeah, you're probably right." "You know, I think Sav needs a nap." "Alright...let's go back to Dr. O's. I'd offer my house but Eric is there playing video games. He's not exactly a quiet gamer." "Yeah, Tom's is fine."

We got back to the house and went inside. Conner and I went in my room and put Sav on the bed. "I'm gonna lay with her so she doesn't roll off the bed." I said as I laid on one side of Sav. Conner laid on the other side. "Sure, I'll take the other." "Um..." "What? I could use a nap too." "Ok..." As Sav and Conner fell asleep I looked over at them. I couldn't believe I was taking a nap in the same bed as my daughter and her father. This was insane! How did this happen again? Oh yeah, I got emotional, ran away, and here I was. Great.

I watched Conner and Sav sleep for awhile. There really was a resemblance in them. I questioned again if I'd done the right thing...it was too late to go back now though. I finally fell asleep myself.

Hunter

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"OK guys, great practice. Go rest up and we'll kick some ass tonight." Roger said as we finished our morning practice.

I went to load up my bike and was turning to go to the hotel when Blake walked up. "Hey man, are you ok?" he asked. "Fine." I said. "You're doing the brooding thing again...you're not fine. Bro, I know you too well to buy that. What happened? I thought Michelle was ok." "She is." "Then what's wrong?" "She asked me not to come to the race and I did anyway." "Um didn't you guys make a promise that if either of you asked the other to not go on the road you wouldn't?" "Yeah." "Ok, and you did anyway." "Yeah." "And she's pissed?" "Pretty much." "Hunter, why did you do it? If she asked you not to come that means she needs you." "Because Blake, I couldn't be around her ok?!" I said as I stormed off.

I went back to the hotel and took a shower. I stood there for awhile and let the warm water hit my skin. As it did I thought about Michelle. She did need me...I just couldn't be there for her. We'd been through so much...but...damn it I did still love her, but...this was all too much.

After I got out of the shower I got dressed and started watching TV. A few minutes later there was a knock on the door. It was Blake of course. I let him in.

“What?” I asked.

“Bro, you don’t think this talk is over, do you?”

“Actually, I do.”

“No, no. You love Michelle and she needs you. You’ve always been there for her. What’s going on with you guys?

What changed?”

“Nothing...it’s no big deal.”

“Bullshit.”

“Why won’t you let this go?”

“Because I’m worried about you.”

“OK FINE! You wanna know so bad? I can’t be around her! She’s, once again, managed to cause nothing but massive chaos in our lives! She couldn’t just be a Ranger, oh no, she had to take on a whole magical identity to protect the fucking magical world!”

“You know she had to do that...she was trying to do the right thing.”

“For who Blake? The Rangers? Yeah, they came first again.”

“You’re the one who pushed her to do that.”

“I know, that was my mistake. I just want a normal life with my girlfriend...is that too much to ask?!”

“You’re a motocross riding ninja and she’s a celebrity Ranger...there is no normal for you...not conventionally speaking.”

“I just want my girlfriend...instead I got a fake cousin.”

“You know the Mac thing is just until the underworld is defeated.”

“And then what? What’s next? It’s always something. This will never be over Blake...not really.”

“You knew that when you got back together with her.”

“I know...”

“So are you gonna break up with her?”

“I do love her...god...I don’t know what to do...I really don’t.”

Michelle

~~~~~

I woke up before Conner and Sav did. I watched Savannah sleep. She was so beautiful...to think I’d carried her inside me for those months...I’d help create this life...how could I have given her up? What kind of person was I? I was her mother! What if Mom had given me up? Ok, she did give Tommy up...but considering Dad...he wanted Mom to give Tommy up. I didn’t even give Conner a chance to decide. He still didn’t know he had a daughter. How could I have done this? And was it really too late to fix it? I could tell Conner now...but what if he wanted her? He had a chance to go play for the US soccer team...and Hayley...she loved Savannah. If Conner took her away from Hayley. And Hunter...god if he knew what I’d done he’d really never forgive me. I knew we were having problems now but I could still fix it. If I told him the truth it would be over. It would ruin everyone’s life if I told the truth.

No, I just had to keep this to myself...that was the way it had to stay. Conner could just be ‘Uncle’ Conner to her. That would have to be enough.

With that decided I dozed back off for awhile.

While I slept I dreamt.

*I was in the kitchen cooking dinner when I heard something.*

*“Savannah, I told you not to play ball in the house.” I called.*

*“Sorry Mommy.” A 10 year old Savannah said.*

*“It’s ok. Just take it outside...actually go upstairs and clean up. Dinner will be ready soon.”*

*“When will Daddy be home?”*

*“Soon. Now go wash up.”*

*"Yes Mommy."*

*A few minutes later I heard the front door open. A few moments later Conner walked in the kitchen.*

*"Hey babe, oh wow, that smells great." He said as he kissed me.*

*"Thanks. How was your day?"*

*"Oh, it was fine. Where's my baby girl?"*

*"Right here Daddy!" Savannah cried as she ran in and jumped into Conner's arms.*

*"Hey Princess."*

*"Guess what?"*

*"What?"*

*"I made the city soccer team!"*

*"Oh wow, that's amazing! I'm so proud of you."*

*"She couldn't wait to tell you." I said smiling.*

*"Is dinner ready?" Savannah asked.*

*"Sure is...go sit down. I'll bring it out."*

*We all sat down and had a family dinner.*

Next thing I knew I heard crying. I jolted awake and Conner was standing up walking Savannah around and feeding her.

"Sorry, I was trying to keep her quiet." Conner said.

"It's alright. Don't worry about it." I said groggily.

"You have a nice nap?"

"Yeah...yeah..." I said as I tried to push that dream from my mind.

"You ok?"

"Yeah, I'm fine."

"She won't be quiet."

"Here give her to me." I said as I took Savannah from him. "Shh, it's ok baby." I rocked her gently and started to sing to her. She started to settle down.

"Wow, you're great with her."

"Thanks."

"You ever think about having one of your own?"

I almost dropped Savannah, but I didn't. "Um...no...not anytime soon."

"You'd make a good mom."

"Thanks...I disagree...but thanks."

"You sell yourself short Shell."

"Maybe...but you have to admit...I do screw up a lot. How bad would I screw up a kid?"

"Shell!"

"I would and you know it! I can't even keep my boyfriend!"

"You haven't lost Hunter, you're just fighting."

"Maybe...I hope I haven't lost him. I love him so much." I started to cry again.

"Shell, you guys fight all the time. This is just another fight...it will pass...it will." Conner said as he pulled me into his arms, careful to not squish Sav. We had a group hug going...it was nice...but so very weird.

Hunter

~~~~~

When it was time for the race I was trying to clear my mind but I kept thinking of Michelle. I had to focus on the race though. I had to win. That's why I was here. To win.

As the race started I made myself focus on the track...I used all my frustration to push forward...and sure enough, I won. I kicked ass. But it wasn't nearly as satisfying as winning normally was. I didn't have Michelle to share it with me.

I went back to my room and picked up the phone to call her before I even took a shower. There was no answer at the apartment though. I tried her cell. No answer. Fuck. She'd run away again. She needed me and I bailed on her.

What had I done now?

Michelle

~~~~~

Conner stayed with me until Tommy got home and then he took Savannah back to Hayley. Before he left he hugged me told me again that I'd be ok.

"So are you alright?" Tommy asked when we were alone.  
"Yeah. I will be. Can we just hang out and watch some movies?"  
"Of course."

And we did. We just watched movies and hung out until bed time.

The next morning I headed back to Briarwood. When I got there I went directly to Root Core to check in with the Rangers.

"So, did I miss anything?" I asked.  
"Oh not really." Vida said.  
"Just Daggeron taking lessons from me." Nick said.  
"Yeah, and us fighting another terror with the Snow Prince." Chip said.  
"Nothing major." Vida added.  
"Um...Snow Prince?" I asked.  
"Long story. I'll tell you later." Maddie said.  
"Right...ok. Well I can see you guys handled it...I'm gonna go home and chill. Call me if you need me."

I got back to the apartment and Hunter was sitting on the sofa waiting for me.

"Where were you?" he asked.  
"What does it matter? You weren't here." I said.  
"You ran away again."  
"I went to see my brother."  
"Did you? Or did you go to see Conner?"  
"What?"  
"I called Dustin to see if you were with him. He said he hadn't seen you but he'd talked to Eric and Eric told him you were out with Conner."  
"Tommy was working. Conner was keeping me company."  
"I love how you always run to someone else."  
"I tried to run to you! You bailed on me!" I cried.  
"I couldn't take anymore chaos! I needed a break!"  
"I needed you! We promised we'd put each other first!"  
"I didn't put racing first! I put myself first! I needed to get away..."  
"Go on, finish that sentence...you needed to get away from me!"  
"Michelle..."

"No...you want to get away, go! Just go!" I screamed.  
"Fine! Maybe if you weren't so chaotic and dramatic I could stand to be around you!" Hunter yelled as he stormed out of the apartment.

I fell to the ground and sobbed. I was losing him. I knew it. I was losing the love of my life. I had to find someway to fix this...if it wasn't too late to save us.

## PRT 279- “White is Back”

I was at the music store with the guys, as Mac of course. They were working and I was being Miss Mopey. What can I say? Fighting with Hunter put me in a shitty mood. Anyway, this was about the time when Toby came running in.

“Top of the morning Toby.” Xander said.

“Oh and what a fine morning it is.” Toby replied, “The sun is shining, the birds are chirping, and I feel like a new man.”

“OK, ok, where’s all this new found energy coming from?”

“Well a few weeks back I was blading home from work eating a jelly donut when I began to huff and puff. I couldn’t even jump the curb, so I decided that it was time to turn over a new leaf. Diet and exercise are the new name of the game.”

“That’s great Toby. Good for you.” Vida said.

“You know, I feel great. My body is a machine.” Toby said as he vanished into his office.

We all chuckled a little as Nick came up. He’d been in the back.

“What’s up with Toby?” Nick said.

“He’s a machine.” Chip said as we laughed.

“OK, brilliant idea alert!” Lee Lee said as she ran up, “We can start an exercise club. I’ll organize everything. We can come in early three times a week, and do yoga...and on the weekends we can play soccer...”

“Lee Lee, just stop trying. You don’t belong here. We don’t trust you and we never will.” Nick said, “You can’t change who you are.”

“Well, I can change who I’m gonna be.” Lee Lee said as she ran off.

We all gathered around a section of records.

“Don’t you think you were a little hard on LeeLee?” Maddie asked.

“Ugh, here we go.” Nick said.

“Look, I’m not a big fan of hers, especially after we found out who she is...but I hate to see anyone crushed.” Xander said.

“You think I was too harsh Chip?” Nick asked.

“I’ve seen tigers with less teeth.” Chip replied.

“And we all know I can’t stand her...but she really does seem to be trying.” I said.

“Guys, just because she looks cute and harmless, doesn’t mean she is. She’s evil! Her mom is the vampire that almost got Vida. They took Udonna’s powers? Hello?! We can’t trust her.” Nick said.

“Yeah, look, I see your point” Vida said.

“Yeah, she does come from a long lineage of blood suckers.” Chip said as our morphers beeped.

“That’s probably Lee Lee’s guy now.” Nick said.

“Guys, Udonna’s been captured. There’s a terror attacking the city!” Daggeron said.

“What did I tell you? Come on!” Nick commanded as we took off.

We went to battle in the city and sure enough a giant terror. He was a giant frog and evidently wanted to drop some poisonous frogs on the city. We got the Zords and went to battle. This was the creepy, icky frog that had Udonna. We got him downsized and went to face him on the ground. We fought until the frog zapped us into another dimension.

“Where are we?” Chip asked.

“Let me guess...a strange dimension.” Nick said.

“Have I mentioned I’m SO over the alternate dimension thing?” I asked.

The frog showed up then and wanted to play a game. We had until his clock ran out to defeat his soldiers. We won and got back to our dimension. Evidently the frog wanted to send us up against “more formidable opponents”. Turns out those opponents were clones.

“OK, so how many times are we gonna have to do the clone thing? I’m sick of this repeat.” I said as I went up against, yet another, Purple Ranger clone. We each faced our clones until the Red clone turned Vida, Nick, and Xander into dice. The rest of us continued to fight. Maddie took on the Pink and Blue clones and managed to blast them with a huge tidal wave. Chip took out the male clones and I took out my own clone.

“Ok, we played your game, now take us to Udonna!” Maddie demanded.

“As you wish.” The frog said as he zapped us again.

We ended up in the underworld. Maddie demanded the others back and we got them. The frog showed us Udonna. She was in a cage looking thing and looked to be in a coma sort of state. The frog of course wouldn't give her back. We called on our Zord to fight him, as he was giant sized again. We fought briefly before the frog picked up Udonna and took her to another dimension...we tried to follow him through the portal he opened, but it was closing. We tried to push our way through and finally did. On the other side was the frog...with Udonna of course.

We fought really hard, but it wasn't enough...we couldn't get Udonna back. The frog zapped us again and we fell to the ground and de-morphed...we tried to morph again, but couldn't...the frog had stolen our powers!

"How many times is this gonna happen? I'm getting sick of it." I said.

The Rangers decided to go seek out LeeLee and force her to help us. I couldn't care less. I had something bigger to worry about.

I went back to the apartment and picked up the phone to call Hunter. He was out on the road again. He picked up his phone.

"Hello?" he answered.

"It's me. I think we really need to talk." I said.

"I think so too."

"Hunter, I don't want things to end this way...we have to find a way to work this out. I love you so much."

"I love you too Mich, I'm not sure we can though."

"Don't you want to try?"

"Of course! Michelle, you're my world. I want to be with you for the rest of our lives."

"That's a long time if you can't stand me."

"I'm just so tired of..."

"...me being a Ranger? You knew this came with me."

"I know. I didn't realize it would be so hard. Every year gets harder. It's one thing to be called off to battle...it's something else entirely to change who you are to protect the magical world."

"Yeah...and it's really hard to work things out when you keep putting racing before me."

"Michelle..."

"No, don't try to justify that. I've NEVER EVER put my career before you. Fate of the world? Yeah, sure...of course. Never my career."

"I know...this isn't about racing..."

"Bullshit, it is and you know it. You couldn't stand the idea of missing a race. It's fuck up your record."

"That's not true. I just needed to get away. I just needed some space!"

"Ok, take your space...I need to know though...will you be back? Is there still an us or is it over?"

"I don't want it to be over."

"Do you think we can work this out?"

"I don't know."

"Do you want to try?"

Hunter sighed, "Of course I do Michelle. I do love you."

"Ok, fine...we're in the middle of a pretty serious battle anyway. Take your space."

"Wait...serious battle? What's going on?"

"Not that you care, but Udonna was captured. You know that feeling I get whenever some massive final attack is coming?"

"Yeah, that coke clammy feeling that makes you pace around a lot?"

"Yeah, that would be the one. I have that feeling again."

"You're right then, you need to focus on battle right now. I want you to be safe out there. When the battle is over and you've saved Udonna and taken care of those terrors and everything...after that we'll talk again and see where we stand. Don't worry about that now." Hunter said.

"You're right. I need to focus here." I said as my morpher beeped at me, "I should go."

"Alright...Michelle..."

"Yeah?"

"I love you...I really do."

"I love you too Hunter. I always will." I said as I hung up.

The Ranger called me back to battle and I went...the plan was to tire out the frog and get our powers back. We jumped and ran and flipped and just totally wore out the frog. And sure enough Nick got our powers back.

"Nice plan." I said.

"Inspired by Toby." Chip said.

"What?!" I asked

"We sorta told him the truth." Maddie said.

I sighed, "Damn it...we'll deal with this later, right now we have an over grown frog to take out."

"I think we're too late..." Xander said as the frog started to drop his poisonous frogs...just then a layer of ice froze them all...we looked toward the source of the ice...it was the White Ranger! Udonna was back! Powers and all!

"Alright, let's do this!" I cried as we ran to Udonna and we morphed. With Udonna's help we took out the overgrown frog. Victory was ours again!

After the battle we all went back to the forest. Nick finally accepted LeeLee after we found out she helped save Udonna.

"Wow...guess people do change." I said as Nick pulled everyone into a group hug. I pulled away after a couple of seconds, "OK, all this mushy love fest stuff is too much for me...I have a life to go salvage...in just a second...what exactly is this about Toby knowing the truth?" I asked.

"It was time...he needed to know." Maddie said.

I sighed, "I never should have left you guys alone."

"He'll keep our secret." Chip said.

"I really hope you're right...I really, really hope you're right. I really can't handle this right now. I'll pray you're right and deal with this later. By the way LeeLee, good work...seriously. And thank you."

Now I know Hunter said not to think about our relationship until after the battle was over...like that was gonna happen. I couldn't think about anything else. I got in my car and drove for the longest time. When I stopped I was in Blue Bay Harbor. Go figure...the place I met Hunter.

I went to Storm Chargers and found Dusty.

"Michi!" he said as he ran up to me and hugged me.

"Dusty." I whispered and I hugged him and started to cry.

"Whoa, what's going on?"

"I'm losing Hunter."

"Hey, Kel, I'm gonna take 30, ok?"

"Oh...Michelle hey...yeah sure, take all the time you need. I got ya covered." Kelly said.

"Thanks!" Dusty said as he walked outside with me. We went for a walk.

"What's going on?" he asked.

"Hunter is so frustrated with my life...I'm losing him Dusty...he can't handle it anymore. He can't even stand to be around me." I said.

"Oh Mich...he loves you."

"I know...but loving me and being able to be with me are two different things...and the longer this goes on the more I start to wonder if I can be with him. He keeps picking racing over me. I'm not sure I can keep living this way."

"Michelle, you love him."

"I know."

"You two have to find a way to work this out...you're meant to be together...like...Romeo and Juliet."

"Um, Dusty...Romeo and Juliet committed suicide."

"Oh...right...ok...um...you know what I mean."

"I know...I know...but what if we really are just star-crossed lovers who can never be together."

"Dramatic much?"

"I'm serious Dusty."

"I know you are, but you're also over analyzing. Hunter probably just needed some time to go off and brood...you know he does that from time to time...and you've been working with this team as Mac for awhile now. Being someone else has to be taking a toll on you too."

"Yeah, it kinda is."

“See...emotions are high right now...and you two have tempers that could start a war anyway. Once you finish with the Mystic Rangers take a step back. I’m sure you and Hunter can work things out.”

“And if we can’t?”

“Then I promise you I’ll be here if you need a shoulder to cry on.”

“I’m gonna take you up on that.”

“I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“Thank you Dusty. You’re the best friend I could ask for.”

“You wanna go see Shane and Tor?”

“Yeah, I should go say hello.”

We went to the Academy. Sensei Watanabe was there with Shane, Tor, Kyle, and Tally.

“Michelle!” Tori cried as she ran up and hugged me.

I smiled, “Hey girl.”

“How are you?”

“Been better.”

“Oh, yeah, Blake told me. I’m sorry.”

“Thanks.”

“It’s good to see you again Michelle.” Sensei said.

“Thank you Sensei. It’s really good to be back here. I always loved it here.”

“You’re always welcome here.”

“Thank you.” I said as Cam walked in with Kapri and Marah.

“Mich!” Kapri and Marah cried.

“Hey guys.” I said.

“Michelle...” Cam said.

“Hi Cam.” I said.

“What are you doing here?”

“Just visiting.”

“Oh...how’s Hunter?”

“Fine. He’s on the road.”

“Yeah, I heard his racing is going well. Must be hard with him being gone so much.”

“Yes Cam, Hunter and I are having problems. I know that’s what you really wanna know...and yes, if you wanna jump in and seduce him now would be a great time to do it. He’d probably leave me in a heartbeat for you if you asked. Have fun with that.” I snapped.

“Michelle!” Dusty said.

“It’s ok Dustin. Michelle, I have no intention of taking Hunter from you. I do care about him but you two belong together.” Cam said.

“Whatever...I shouldn’t have come here. It was good to see you guys again...see you later Dusty.” I said as I started to take off.

I went outside and was about to ninja streak off when Dusty grabbed my arm.

“No way dude. You’re gonna chill and you’re gonna do it now. You have got to calm down.”

“I’m sorry Dusty. I just lost it.”

“Obviously.”

“I just...” I started to cry again, “...I’m not just losing Hunter...I’m losing myself. Why did I ever create Mac in the first place? I can’t do this anymore. I can’t be Mac anymore. I need to be Michelle...I need to figure out who Michelle is again. I need to be myself!” I screamed as I saw a crimson streak head for us.

“So what’s the big emergency Dustin?” Hunter said as he stopped and saw me sobbing, “Michelle...”

“This is.” Dustin said as he handed me over to Hunter, “Michelle, I’ll always be your friend...but you don’t need me you need him...and Hunter...she’s lost...help her find her way back.” He walked away from us.

“Michelle...what’s wrong baby?” Hunter asked as he held me.

“I don’t know who I am anymore. I feel like I’ve lost myself in pretending to be someone else.” I said as I cried, “Worst of all, I’m losing you.”

“Michelle...God, I never meant to hurt you.”

“And I never meant to make you so miserable.”



“I know. You only did what you had to.”

“I’m not sure if we can find our way back here.”

“I don’t know Mich...but we do have to try.”

I nodded, “I know I need you.”

“I love you so much Michelle...no matter what that will never change.”

“Can you please come home with me tonight?”

Hunter paused, “I can’t...”

“Race...of course.”

“I’m already there. I ninja streaked away...I can’t just vanish.”

“Yeah...you should get back. Have fun.” I said as I pulled away from him and ninja streaked back to my car.

I cried the whole way home. I was gonna lose the love of my life...all because I was trying to protect the fucking magic world...which I didn’t even give a shit about to start with. I just wanted things to go back to the way they were. I wanted my boyfriend back...my husband. I wanted that simple life we were starting before I picked up that Mystic Morpher. If I would have followed my gut that day I never would have morphed. I never would have agreed to train this team. I never would have gotten myself into this mess.

It was too late though. I did it and now I was gonna lose everything. I sat on the sofa and cried and cried...what if I had pushed Hunter away and we couldn’t fix this...everytime we tried something made it worse...we always fought. How could we fix it if we couldn’t stop fighting?

Maybe it was just too late...maybe it was time to give up.

Hunter

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I sighed after Michelle left. I ninja streaked back to the hotel I was staying at. Once I was back in my room I sat on the bed and thought about Michelle. I felt a tear slip down my cheek. How could I have let things get so bad? She was right, I knew when I took her back that things would be hard as long as she was a Ranger...and I pushed her into training this team...in a sense this was my fault...but she was right about something else...in pretending to be Mac she’d changed. She didn’t know who she was anymore and I certainly didn’t. I felt like I had lost the woman I loved. The Michelle I loved was gone and I didn’t know if Michelle could find her and become that woman again or if this experience had changed her forever.

Then again I didn’t want to end things with Michelle. I loved her so much. I wanted to fix this as much as she did. I just didn’t know how to do it. How could I fix this? Could I fix this?

I couldn’t believe I kept picking racing instead of here. I guess I thought it had spent some time alone I’d come up with a solution and a way to fix this. So far I’d managed to make things worse and drive a larger wedge between us.

What if it was just too late?

God, if I lost her I didn’t know what I would do. She was what I lived for. She’d been my life since I met her. Even when I was with Cam she was the center of my life...that’s part of the reason Cam and I never worked out...Michelle was always there.

I was disrupted from my thoughts by a knock on the door.

“Go away!” I cried.

There was a second knock.

“Ugh, fine.” I went to the door and opened it...it was Cam.

I froze.

“Hi Hunter...I know things are going well right now. I just came to check on you.”

“You shouldn’t be here...if Michelle knew...”

“She does know...she’s the one who told me you were having problems.”

“What is this? Some sort of test?”

“No...this is me being your friend. I still care about you Hunter.”

“I just wanna be alone.”

“I know you do...and that’s why I’m not going away. Alone is the last thing you need to be.”

I looked at Cam...I really had cared about him...I’d been so horrible to him because of Michelle...I stared at him for the longest time, old feeling and high emotion stirring inside me...next thing I knew I pulled Cam into my arms and kissed him.

Michelle

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After crying for quite awhile I decided I couldn’t do that alone, broody thing anymore. I either needed to pull myself together and figure out a way to fix this or I needed to accept it was over and move on...either way I needed to talk to someone...someone who wasn’t friends with Hunter and would focus on me and how I felt.

I picked up the phone and dialed the first number that came to mind.

“Hello?”

“Hi, Rocky? I really need you right now...”

We'd all gathered at the music store and Toby was trying to sort out all the new information he'd just learned about us.

"So, you guys really are the Power Rangers? Ok, Nick is the Red Ranger." Toby started.

"Right." Nick said.

"And Xander is Green. Madison...Blue. Chip...Yellow. Mac is Purple and Vida is Pink. But Mac isn't really Mac... she's really Michelle Morris in a magical disguise."

"Yes, and that has to stay a secret. PLEASE!" I begged.

Toby nodded, "So Nick is also the son of Udonna, the White Ranger, and Lienbow, a powerful wizard who is also Koragg, the guy who's been trying to trash the city...but he's really a good guy, it's just that nobody knows what happened to him."

"I'm impressed Toby, that's quite..." Madison started but Toby stopped her.

"Uh-uh. I haven't finished. There's also 'The Light'. The power to stop evil from taking over. But the bad guys are looking for the light so that they can destroy him and then destroy the world."

"Exactly..." Chip started.

"Ah...now, Lee Lee's mom is the queen of the vampires who really did carry me off so I guess I can stop seeking professional help now."

"Sorry about that." Lee Lee said.

"And...and...and now the 10 terrors are here trying to call forth the head honcho himself, you know, "The Master of all Evil"...and you know what that means?" Toby continued as we heard screaming, "It means you guys won't be working your regular hours for awhile. Looks like it might be just me and Lee<sup>2</sup> for a bit."

The screaming continued and seconds later Pheneus came in. He'd come to see Lee Lee...evidently she and he were dating now. Who would have ever thought?

"Ok, right, well this is fun but I'm gonna bail. I'm expecting company." I said as I headed out.

I got back to my apartment and used magic to be Michelle again. I really hoped we could defeat the Underworld soon. I needed to get rid of Mac. Anyway, I got back to the apartment and waited. A few minutes later there was a knock on the door. I opened it and saw Rocky. He'd come to see me.

"Rock..." I said as I fell into his arms.

"Michi...you sounded so sad on the phone. You worried me." He said as he held me.

"I know. I'm sorry. I'm just so lost."

"I'm here for you...you know that."

"I know, that's why I called you. I need you."

"You can always count on me. Come on, let's get inside and you can fill me in."

We went inside and sat down in the living room.

"I think I messed things up...he doesn't want to be with me anymore." I cried.

"Then he's a fool. You're the most amazing woman I've ever known. For him to walk away when you obviously need him so much...you deserve better Mich."

"Thanks." I said.

"I mean it. You're amazing."

"So are you Rock."

Hunter

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The kiss I shared with Cam hadn't gone anywhere because I couldn't bring myself to cheat on Michelle...and we were still together. Cam had stayed over however and been there for me. He came to watch one of my practices. Afterwards we were walking around the track.

"You had to know this was gonna happen." Cam said.

"What?"

"You and Michelle...you guys always fought and she always complicated things. I knew what you were getting in to...didn't you?"

I sighed, "Yeah...I thought I could handle it. I didn't realize just how complicated it would get I guess."
"You deserve better...something less complicated...something simple and normal."
"That's all I want."
"But you want it with her and that's never going to happen. She will never be simple and normal. It's not who she is."
"I'm starting to realize that."
"Do you think you guys can make it work now?"
"I'm not sure Cam. I honestly don't know."
"Do you want to?"
"Of course! I love her."
"That may not be enough."
"Cam, I know you'd like to see us break up, but even if we do, that doesn't mean I'll go running back to you."
"I know! I'm not saying that. I just hate seeing you so unhappy Hunter, and you obviously are."
"Yeah...I am."
"Then you have to do something. This can't keep up."
I sighed...he was right.

Michelle

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It felt so safe to be in Rocky's arms. He held me and comforted me while I cried.  
"It's gonna be alright Mich."  
"You think so?" I asked.  
"You're strong. You always pull through."  
"I hope you're right." I said as my morpher beeped, "Ugh...duty calls."  
"Ok, go. I'll be here when you get back."  
I smiled, "Thanks. I feel better knowing that."  
I headed out and met up with the others.

We got to the battle and found this terror...we battled him in the Zords...but this one was different...he didn't seem to wanna hurt anyone. He took off and we chased him down. Vida found him first and evidently found out he really wasn't all that terrible...or evil. When we met back up Vida was protecting the terror from other evil terrors. They wanted him to be the body for the Master. To save him Vida took Daggeron's train and took off. We were trying to figure out our next move when one of the terrors approached us. She said we had the answered we were seeking.

We went to the forest. She said she knew where Vida went and she'd send us if we answered her question. In a show of good faith she sent Xander first. What she wanted to know was how we could win time and time again if the terrors were more powerful than we were. Of course the Rangers answered that it was because we were fighting a selfless battle to protect others. I wasn't sure I agreed with that answer. That wasn't why I fought...not anymore. It had been a long time since that had been the case. I fought out of a sense of duty...because I felt obligated...not because I wanted to protect others. Was I really cut out to be a Ranger anymore?

Anyway, the terror kept her word and sent us to Vida and Xander. We fought the evil terror...and were getting our asses kicked I should add. That's when Leinbow appeared...and morphed into the Wolf Warrior. He totally saved our asses. Wolf Warrior took out the terror...but in the end the remaining terrors did get Matoombo...the terror we had hoped to protect. We'd failed there. "The Master" managed to take over his body.  
"The master's returned." Leinbow said.  
"You will perish as will the Solaris Knight...and then, one by one you will fall as will your world." The Master said.  
"Now this...this is bad." Nick said.  
"Ya don't say..." I said, "...tell me something I didn't know."  
"What now?" Chip asked.  
"Now we wait for the next attack and in the meantime I go back to my company. This is it guys...this is what we've been waiting for. We have to be ready...when The Master attacks that will be it. We're about to face our last battle. It all comes down to this. Ok there's my trainer pep talk. Call me when you need me." I said as I took off.

Hunter

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Cam I ended up going to dinner with Blake that night before he headed back to Blue Bay. After he was gone Blake came in my room to talk.

"If Michelle knew he was here she'd flip." He said.

I sighed, "I know...I know."

"You're pushing her bro...you're gonna lose her."

"I may have already lost her."

"Hunter..."

"Blake, I'm tired of talking about it."

"I just wanna help."

"I know, and I appreciate that...but I'm tired of talking about it."

"Why don't you just call her real quick and at least let her know you're thinking of her."

"That's a good idea. I'll probably get the machine anyway. I could leave her a message." I said as I picked up the phone and dialed. After a couple of rings someone picked up.

"Hello?" a male voice said.

"Um...who's this?"

"Rocky. Who's this?"

"Hunter."

"Oh, hi Hunter. Michelle is out right now. Ranger duty called."

"Right. I figured. What are you doing there?"

"Visiting."

"Michelle invited you?"

"I could tell she was upset."

"Right, and of course you wasted no time in going to get her back."

"Hunter, I'm not out to steal her from you if that's what you mean...although you're doing a good enough job of pushing her away."

"You have no idea what is going on between us."

"I know you pushed her away when she needed you. You're supposed to be her boyfriend...her husband...you shouldn't have turned your back on her. She's been through so much."

"Oh? And have you considered my side? That maybe I've been through a lot too."

"Yeah, ok...never mind the fact you should be there for each other and helping each other. No...you get on the road and run away."

"You're gonna defend her and get on my case for running away? She's the queen of the runaways."

"You pushed her."

"I'm not discussing my relationship problems with you Rocky, just know this...if you try to take advantage of Michelle in this situation there will be hell to pay."

"I don't have to take advantage. You're pushing right back to me pretty damn good all on your own."

"Fuck you." I said as I slammed down the phone.

"I take it Michelle called Rocky for support." Blake said.

"I love how she goes to Conner, Dustin, Rocky...anyone but me." I said.

"Um...not to make things worse...but you kinda pushed her away bro. You left her alone and she needed someone."

"But Rocky? Why Rocky...of all people."

"Someone safe and familiar."

"Stop being so rational. You're pissing me off."

"Sorry."

Michelle

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I got back to the apartment.

"Hey Rock."

“Hey. Hunter called.”

I sighed, “Great. I’m sure he really pissed right now.”

“Yeah...”

I started to cry again.

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s too late to save us.”

“Michelle, you have a battle to focus on. You have got to pull yourself together.”

I sighed, “I know...but I’m not even sure I should be fighting anymore.”

“Why?”

“I don’t fight because I have passion and desire to do good...not anymore. I fight because I have a duty and obligation.”

“So your reasons changed...you still do good.”

“Rocky...I don’t have the heart anymore.”

“Mich, you’re the best Ranger ever.”

“After Tommy...”

“Right up there with Tommy, Jason....that’s it. I can’t think of any others in your league.”

“I’m just so worn out Rocky. This team just took it out of me.”

“It’s because you made your life a secret identity.”

“What if I lost me.”

“Then you get you back. You’re still you. For now you need to focus on finishing off the underworld. After that you work on you. You’ll get you back.”

“You really think so?”

“Michelle Pauline Morris, you’re the strongest woman I know. I know you’ll find yourself again.”

“I just hope I find myself with Hunter when all is said and done.”

“If it’s meant to be, it will be.”

“You sound like Sensei Watanabe.” I said.

“Well, he is a wise ninja.”

I smiled, “How do you always know what to say to give me hope?”

“What can I say? I’s gots mad skillz.” Rocky teased.

I laughed, “Come here you.” I pulled him into a hug.

“What do you say we go get something to eat?”

I nodded, “Alright, sounds good.”

After dinner Rocky got in bed with me and just held me. He didn’t even try to make a move on me...he just held me...which is exactly what I needed...as he held me I had flashbacks of Hunter and I...

*I remembered the first night I slept at Hunter’s...it was completely innocent like this.*

*I had never been to their place before so I wasn’t sure what to expect. They did live alone. To my surprise they had a very nice little apartment.*

*“This is nice...how much does Kelly pay you?” I asked*

*“We have plenty of money. Our parents left us a huge inheritance that Hunter got when he turned 18.” Blake explained.*

*“That’s good. Well you guys have a great place. Slightly messy but nice.” I said.*

*“That’s Hunter’s fault. He’s the messy brother. It drives me nuts.” Blake said.*

*“I’m not messy...Blake is just a neat freak.” Hunter said. I laughed. They reminded me of “The Odd Couple.”*

*“OK so movie time?” I asked.*

*“Sure.” Hunter said. We got set up and watched the DVDs. By the time the last kung fu movie was over I was falling asleep.*

*“Tired?” Hunter asked.*

*“Just a little.” I said.*

*“You wanna just stay here?” Hunter asked.*

*“Yeah you’re welcome to stay.” Blake said.*

*“You guys only have two beds. I wouldn’t wanna put anyone out.” I said.*

*“Ok so I’ll share my bed with you.” Hunter said.*

*"Um..." I hesitated.*

*"Don't worry. I'll be good." Hunter said.*

*"OK...it would be better to just stay." I said.*

*"Alright. Good night guys. I'll see you in the morning." Blake said going to his room.*

*Hunter and I went into his room.*

*"You want a shirt to sleep in?" Hunter asked*

*"Sure...thanks" I said taking a shirt he gave me and going into the bathroom. I changed and came out.*

*"Looks much better on you than it does me." He said getting into bed. I couldn't help but notice he had taken his shirt off. He had on a pair of crimson pajama bottoms, but no shirt. This would be a long night. I got in bed next to him and fell asleep.*

*We had some good times...but being a Ranger did complicate things...I'll never forget how scared I was the time I thought I lost him in the Thunder Zord explosion.*

*...Vexacus grew. We called on our Zords and formed the Thunder Storm Megazord with the help of my cute little Mini Zord. We then called the Mammoth Zord. Vexacus took out that Zord though and put Mini Zord out of commission. The Megazords were separated into the Storm Megazord and the Thunder Megazord. The Thunders went in and there was a huge energy struggle. The power levels were off the charts. "Hunter!!! Eject!!!" I cried as the Thunder Megazord blew up. "OH MY GOD NO!!!" I screamed. I thought for sure he was dead.*

*Worst day of my life...but then that was the nature of being a Ranger...we did lose one Ranger...or SPD did...Landon Tate...I'd never forget him. But every final battle was scary and fierce. Take the DinoThunder battle against Mesogog for example...*

*We arrived at the scene of the battle and faced off with some Triptoids. It was going fine until Zeltrax blasted us. That was bad, it was a pretty direct hit. I didn't need that, not now.*

*"This has gone far enough. Trent, can you handle the Triptoids?" Tommy asked.*

*"Not a problem." Trent said.*

*"You guys call the Zords, I'm gonna get Elsa." Tommy said to the rest of us.*

*"Tommy, be careful!" I cried as he took off.*

*We formed the Megazord and tried to fight Zeltrax's Zord with minimal success. We also figured out Tommy needed help. Kira went to help him so I stayed behind in the Megazord and took her place as a co-pilot. I figured that was safer for me. No direct hits that way. Ethan then called the Triassic Rover and manned that so Conner and I were left to handle the major Megazord. It some help from all the Zords we thought we had Zeltrac beat. No such luck. He regenerated.*

*"You've gotta sacrifice the Zords." Tommy said.*

*"We can't!" Conner cried.*

*"No Dr. Oliver!" Ethan added.*

*"You've got to. It's the only way." Tommy said.*

*"Listen up, last training lesson, Zords come and go. They have with almost every team. They are just Mecha. The most important thing is saving the world and if you have to sacrifice the Zords to do it that's a small price. Training complete, make a decision leader." I said.*

*"Alright." Conner said softly. "Engage auto-destruct."*

*"I'm trying." Ethan cried.*

*"Auto-destruct engaged." I said.*

*"Goodbye old friends." Conner said as we led the Zords into their doom. Just as they started to explode Conner hit eject and we barely made it out. We landed on the ground, slightly charred but alive. "Are you ok?" Conner asked helping me up.*

*"I think so. Thanks." I said.*

*"I hear the others, we should get over there." Ethan said.*

*I nodded. Conner put his arm around me and we headed for the others.*

*"I guess Hunter and I are even now." I mumbled.*

*"That was impressive." Kira said.*

*"But the Zords, they're destroyed." Ethan said.*

*"It was the only way. You guys did what you had to do." Tommy said.*

*"It's true. Nothing else would have stopped him." Trent said.*

*"So that's it then? It can't just be over." Conner said.*

*"Of course it's not over." A voice said. It was Mesogog.*

*"Mesogog...he's alive..." I said.*

*"Why do they always come back for more?" Tommy asked.*

*"It's one of the rules. Haven't you seen 'Scream'? They always come back for one last scare." I said.*

*"Yeah, isn't another rule only virgins survive? Doesn't look good for you Shellfish." I said.*

*"Look who's talking Conehead, if that does me in you're going down with me." I countered.*

*"Not now you guys..." Kira said.*

*"You destroyed my plans of creating a perfect world. However, I was able to absorb enough Dino Gem energy to complete my tranconfiguration." Mesogog said.*

*"I knew giving him the Gems was a bad idea." I mumbled.*

*"Witness the face of your final battle." Mesogog finished as he transformed into an ugly dinosaur.*

*"Ew, gross...gross, gross, gross. We have to fight that? That's worse than Maligore." I said.*

*"You guys ready for one more battle?" Tommy asked.*

*"Oh yeah..." Conner said.*

*"Ready?"*

*"Ready!"*

*"DinoThunder, Power Up!" somehow I think we all knew this would be the last time we said that.*

*"Tyranno Power!"*

*"Tricera Power!"*

*"Ptera Power!"*

*"Bronto Power!"*

*"Brachio Power!"*

*"Drago Power!"*

*"Dino Ranger!"*

*"This is it!" Conner cried.*

*"Let's make it count guys!" I added as we went and fought Mesogog head on. He was tough. He knocked us back, trapped Conner, put up a very good fight that I wasn't sure we'd win. By this time I had taken many direct hits and forgotten all about the baby I was supposed to be protecting. Taking care of Mesogog was top priority. When Conner went Battleized we thought we had him but alas he regenerated himself too! What was it with these creatures? Why did they refuse to die?! But then he did one better...not only did he regenerate but he also replicated.*

*"One was bad enough, how do we fight them all?" Conner asked.*

*"Guys, we have to use all our Powers." Tommy said.*

*"Alright." We all agreed.*

*"Do it Conner." Trent said.*

*"I summon the power of the Gem!" Conner started.*

*"Dino Gems Unite!" we all cried.*

*The power radiated over Mesogog and he was destroyed. It was amazing.*

*Or the final battle with the second Ninja Storm team...*

*"Come on guys, this is it, let's show Vladimeir what being a ninja is really all about." I said.*

*"It's do or die time." Kyle said.*

*"I choose do." Eric said.*

*"Then let's do it." Tally said.*

*We fought Vladimeir with every weapon we had. Blasters, staffs, hammers, and fins...everything. It was no use. He blasted each of us back, de-morphing us in the process.*

*"Give it up Rangers, it's all over. You can't win."*



*“We’ll never give it up.” Kyle said, “We’ll beat you in civilian form...Power of Air! Ninja Cyclone Attack!”*

*“Power of Earth! Ninja Earthquake Attack!”*

*“Power of Water!” Ninja Tidal Wave Attack!”*

*“Power of Thunder! Ninja Thunder Attack!” the three Thunders called.*

*“It’s all over for you Vladimeir. Power of Spirit! Ninja Lightning Attack!”*

*“Ninja Storm!” we all cried.*

*Huge gusts of wind, an earthquake, tidal waves, flash lightning and thunder in various colors, and purple streak lightning all combined together and trapped Vladimeir in a horrible storm.*

*“Doesn’t feel good to have the weather changed does it?” I muttered as Vladimeir cried out. That’s when the power became too much and he imploded. In a blink, he was gone.*

*Yeah...final battles were insane...and I really, really hoped Mystic Force was ready because I had a feeling our next battle with the Master would be our last.*

## PRT 281- "Escaping Destiny"

*I took a deep breath and ninja streaked over to the bridge. I stood up on a pillar and watched until I saw a fight start. That's when I jumped down and ran over to Dusty.*

*"Dusty, don't do this!" I cried grabbing his arm.*

*"I've so had enough of you and your preaching. Goodbye Michelle." Dusty said grabbing me by the neck and slamming me against a wall or pillar or something hard, don't really remember what. Either way his hand was cutting off my air supply and I was choking.*

*"Let her go!" Ethan cried attacking. Dustin dropped me and started fighting Ethan. I caught my breath and was about to try with Tori when my clone showed up.*

*"Miss me?" she asked.*

*"Oh Rochelle, how wonderful to see you." I mumbled.*

*"I knew you'd miss me." She said.*

*We started fighting while the others paired off in their own battles. I used my ninja lightning, she used the bronto stomp...it was a pretty stale mate battle...then everyone went to morph.*

*"Great, I'm out matched." I mumbled.*

*"No! Wait!" a voice called. It was Blake. I turned and saw Blake, Cam...and Hunter!!!*

*"Hunter..." I said in a whisper.*

*"Blake? Wait that's how I know you! You're a Power Ranger!" Kira said.*

*"Good, cause we can use all the help we can get." Ethan said.*

*I tried to speak but couldn't. I felt tears brim around my eyes, I was so happy Hunter was alive. After all these months... all the times I dreamt of him...here he was standing right in front of me...the man of my dreams...*

*"We didn't come to help you guys out. We stick with our own kind." Blake said.*

*"Lothor showed us the error of our ways." Hunter said.*

*My jaw dropped. "Hunter! No!" I cried, this was my worst fear...well aside from Hunter being dead.*

*"Whoever doesn't follow us, we'll destroy." Cam said.*

*"NO!" I screamed. This couldn't be happening.*

*"NO!" I screamed as I jumped awake.*

*"Hey, hey...it was just a dream." Rocky said as he held me.*

*"Oh god..." I said. It was more of a flash back...and knew how it ended...why was I dreaming about Hunter turning evil?*

*We got up and Rocky got ready to go.*

*"Thank you for everything Rocky." I said.*

*"You know I'm always here...if you need anything else, call me." He said as he picked up his bag.*

*"Of course. I will. Right now I need to focus on the Master. It won't be long before he attacks us again."*

*"Good luck Michelle. I know you can do it...just like we did." He said as he kissed my cheek.*

*I nodded, "Thank you."*

*After he was gone I went and sat on the sofa. I had to find the heart to fight again...because right now I didn't have it. I didn't have long to think though before I was called to meet up with the others. There was another battle to be fought. Another terror was attacking.*

*We went to battle against the same terror that helped us find Vida before. Of course we knew she was evil...and she was on the surface world to destroy is, by order of the master, of course. Like we could let that happen. We went up against her and managed to get our asses kicked one by one. Nick even tried his Red Dragon Power-up...didn't work. We tried going after her with words.*

*"You said were only after knowledge, but you're only a puppet of the master." Maddie said.*

*"And you don't even have the courage to make you own decisions." Nick said.*

*"No free will...only obedience...and you wonder why we win." I said.*

*"You're right." She said as she vanished.*

*"Too easy...the Master won't be so easy." I said.*

I had a bad feeling about this. I found a park and went to go focus. I'd never felt more on top of my game than when I was a ninja. I focused on the power of spirit...I used to have the spirit to fight. I looked in myself and tried to find it again. All I found inside myself now was despair...heartache...fear...loss. How would I find it in me to help in battle now? I was trying to figure out my next step when the Rangers called me. They'd gotten word there was trouble in the forest.

We got into the forest and found Udonna and Lienbow helping to clean up. One of the villages in the forest had been attacked. We offered to help but the mystic creatures didn't want our help. The said humans weren't welcome. Soon we found out why. Nick came up and the mystic people ran, calling him the destroyer. We were confused...until he told he us attacked...his eyes glowed an evil purple...then he turned into Koragg and attacked Lienbow!  
"Oh boy...Red Ranger gone bad...not good." I said as Lienbow morphed and fought Nick...Nick used a magic seal and they vanished.

"What do we do?" Maddie asked.

"Nothing we can do right now...they'll be back soon enough...one of them will anyway." I said

"Michelle, don't say that." Udonna said.

"I'm sure, but we have to prepare for our own battle." I said.

They did come back a few minutes later and Nick threw up a barrier so we couldn't help Lienbow. Lienbow appealed to his sense of good and got him to power down and the darkness to leave him. Nick was back. This was good news...we needed to be at full power to take out the Master.

OK, so far nothing had helped me find my way. I still didn't have the heart to fight. I called the only other person I could think of that might understand what I was dealing with.

"Hello?"

"Tommy? Hey..."

"Michelle? What's up? I heard there's been some massive trouble in Briarwood."

"Yeah, and I don't think I can handle it."

"Of course you can."

"I don't have the heart to fight anymore. Being a Ranger has done nothing but ruin my life."

"Michelle...you're doing a lot of good."

"It's not enough Tommy! Not anymore."

"I'm sorry..."

"I can't do this."

"You don't have a choice."

I sighed, "Yeah...that's the problem."

"I know you can do this."

Just then my morpher beeped, "Duty calls," I said as I hung up the phone and checked in with Udonna.

I got a call to go to, the now trashed, Root Core. Udonna introduced me to the Snow Prince and informed me the Mystic Mother was gone.

"Mystic Mother?" I asked.

"Yes, you knew her better as Rita."

"Rita? As in...Repulsa?"

"Yes...she became the empress of good magic."

"Talk about your turn around...wait...she's gone?"

"Destroyed."

"Not possible. We tried many times to take her out. Never worked. She's been trapped or gone into hiding...she's not destroyed."

"It's true." Snow Prince said.

"And you tell me this, why?" I asked.

"You knew her as Rita...perhaps you know something about her we don't...something that could help us harness her power?" Udonna said.

"Um, yeah, no. I tried to take her out many times...she's the reason I'm even a Ranger at all. She staged the first attack that required Zordon to call on Jason, Kim, Billy, Zack, Trini, and I."

“Ok, then Daggeron and I have work to do.” Lienbow said.

Nick came in and begged to go with him. Lienbow refused and he and Daggeron set out.

Seconds later Xander called in, they had trouble in Briarwood.

“It’s go time Nick.” I said.

“Let’s move.” He said as we took off.

We had a giant to fight. We took out the Zords and fought. We gave it all we had but we losing. That’s when Udonna showed up and fought a terror on the ground. We fought until the giant terror knocked us from the Zords. We demorphed as Udonna took a hit that de-morphed her. We were about to be zapped with a fire blast when Jenji jumped in front of us. He took the hit and vanished. In retaliation one of the terrors grabbed Udonna and vanished.

Nick was PISSED at this point. He morphed, used his Red Dragon power up and fought with more heart than I’d ever seen from him. We morphed and joined in the battle. We managed to take out the terrors...but the Master was still out there. And it would take long to find him.

Off in the distance we heard something and went to check it out. The Master appeared and laid out the bodies of Lienbow and Daggeron for us to see. They were dead. This did not look good...even I had to admit that now. The Master grabbed us and showed him a glimpse of the world he wanted to see. It was a barren dead planet. We couldn’t let that happen. We called on the Zord to fight...but when we did that he just ate the magic...literally. He ate all the magic we had...we had to run to cover. We got in a cave and tried to calm down and regroup. That’s when Nick said he was giving up.

“Guys, wake up and smell the darkness, we gave it our best and we failed. We’re not match for that thing. Yes, I’ve given up.” Nick said.

“NO! You ass! I’ve given up my life to protect the world. Magic and non-magic. I’ve ruined my life, my relationship, hurt my career. I will NOT let that be in vein, suck it up and fight. I didn’t train you for nothing!” I cried.

“I’m sorry Mac...Michelle...it’s too late.”

“Don’t you say that. Don’t you say that, not you. You have held us together through all of this. You will not give up! Listen to me! Giving up is not an option for you! We are a team and you are this team’s leader. We go on no matter what.” Maddie said.

Nick thought about this for a second...then we got blasted. The blast caught us off guard and was very painful. The Master was headed for us to finish us.

“Is this really it? Do I go down today?” I said softly as I gasped in pain.

“Not here. Not now! This is not our end.” Nick said standing up.

“You are only one.” The master said.

“And unfortunately for you the wrong one.” Nick said as he called on all remaining good magic. Nick fought him and managed to take out his armor. He told us to take his hand and he forced the Master to take us back to our world. When we got there we demorphed. No more magic. We were about to be blasted when Claire and Snow Prince showed up and saved us. Claire said Mystic Mother made her a sorceress. Snow Prince explained Mystic Mother hadn’t been destroyed, she turned herself into energy. The Master was gonna retreat but Udonna showed up with Itassis (the terror after knowledge) and Necrolai. They had taken out the rest of the underworld. The Master was all that remained. Itassis blasted the master. She warned us that the Master was gone but would be back. We were mourning Daggeron and Lienbow when Lee Lee came up and demanded Necrolai revive them. She did and when she did she used up her magic and...became humanoid.

“Lee Lee’s Mum is hot.” Xander said with a smirk as the Master came back. Our magic was gone. Jenji was back as well and warned us to run. Nick refused. We all agreed to fight...magic or no.

“You are never without magic mystic ones, you just have to know where to find it.” Mystic mother said as she appeared to us.

“Whoa, no shit...it is you Rita.” I said.

“Michelle, you’ve never been one to give up...I know that better than anyone.”

“Dude, this isn’t Zedd...this is ‘The Master’.”

“And that means what? Take him out. Go, Go Power Rangers!”

I smiled and remembered my first team...the first battles...the rush I used to feel when we’d win, “You’re right! I still have Power within me!”

“But never without magic, what did she mean by that?” Maddie asked.

“Maybe she meant us.” Toby said as he came in with civilians.

“Or us.” Phenious said as he came in with forest creatures. Everyone from both worlds came together...the power of the union of worlds was enough to give us our powers back. Luckily for me there were so many people around no one noticed me or the fact I morphed into the Purple Ranger.

Anyway, yeah, we morphed.

“Wolf Warrior!”

“Solaris Knight!”

“White Mystic Ranger!”

“Green Mystic Ranger!”

“Purple Mystic Ranger!”

“Pink Mystic Ranger!”

“Blue Mystic Ranger!”

“Yellow Mystic Ranger!”

“Red Mystic Ranger!”

We called together, united on all the magic there was. We kept feeding the Master...and feeding...and feeding...until he blew up from magic overload. And that was it...Magic was got. When the smoke cleared we were de-morphed. I took cover while the five core Rangers stepped forward and took the praise from the city. It was ok. I didn't need praise. I needed to keep my identity secret...I couldn't imagine what would become of my life if my secret ever got out.

I went back to Root Core and waited for the others.

“So it's over?” Chip asked.

“Yes...and now I have my life to get back to. No more Mac...ever...but before I go...I know I could have been a better trainer this time around...but even still...I'm proud of you. Nick, you became a truly great leader and stepped up to accept your fate. Maddie, you were the heart of the team...a hard role to play. You did do a lot for us. Vida, your courage was amazing...in times of danger, you showed no fear. Chip, you truly have the heart of a Ranger, the like of which I've only seen once before...ironically enough, he too was a Yellow Ranger. Xander...you truly are an amazing Ranger and someday you will make some girl very happy. Daggeron, Udonna, and Lienbow, it has been an honor to work with you...even if I didn't always act like it. I truly am sorry for any trouble or additional heartache I caused the team...and I wish you the very best of luck in all you do in the future.” I said.

“I understand why you did what you did. I'm sorry I made it so hard on you.” Xander said as he hugged me, “I will miss you.”

“I'll miss you too Xan. I would like to add that all I did as Mac was in vein...the outside world knows all about the forest now.”

“Yeah...but that's for the best.” Udonna said.

“And it still kept your secret safe.” Nick said.

“Yeah...and ruined my life. All of that...all of that was in vein.” I said.

“No, it really wasn't. It gave us time to gain acceptance.” Daggeron said.

“Whatever, it's time for me to go. Oh, Maddie, give this note to Aaron and the band?” I asked...it said:

“Guys,

*Sorry I couldn't say goodbye. My parents wanted me to join them in Ireland. It was a very last minute thing. I want to thank you all for your friendship and for being so welcoming. Feel free to use any of the song I wrote in your future shows. As far as I'm concerned they are your songs. Take care.*

*Love you guys!*

*Mac”*

“Sure. Goodbye Michelle.” Maddie said.

“Goodbye...goodbye everyone.” I said as I left Root Core. I headed back to the real world and never looked back.

I got back to the apartment and Hunter was there.

“You're back.” I said.

“I heard on the news about The Master's attack.” He said.

“He’s gone now. We did it.”

“I knew you could.”

“So it’s over. No more magic, no more Mac.” I said.

“Until next time a team calls.”

“You’re the one who pushed me to do it this time.”

“I know, that was my mistake.”

“I don’t need to do it again. I can say no.”

“Michelle, it’s who you are. Besides, our probably may have started with Mackenzie, but they go deeper now.”

“Ok, tell me what to do to fix this and I will.”

“I don’t know how.”

“Hunter, I love you.”

“And I love you, what if that isn’t enough?”

“Love has always been enough.”

“I know. But, Michelle, look at us...we will never be able to live a normal life.”

“We always knew that it would be a struggle.”

“One we can’t win!”

“OK, let me ask you something...I know you love me...but do you like me anymore? It feels like we’re not even friends anymore. We don’t talk, we only fight...if I stop and think about it I don’t even know who you are anymore.”

“Michelle...”

“Answer the question Hunter, do you like me?”

Hunter sighed, “No, I don’t like who you’ve become.”

“And I don’t know who you’ve become. We have no friendship anymore, do we?”

“I don’t think we do.”

“We only have love...maybe you’re right, maybe that isn’t enough.”

“Are you saying you want to end things?”

I started to cry, “God knows I love you...”

“But?”

“...But I don’t think we can save this. You can’t even stand to be around me...so much so that you continue to go on the road to get away from me...and I know you’re not faithful when you’re out there.”

“I have never cheated on you.”

“Except for the two times you have. I know all about that Moto hare, remember? Oh, and Cam...I know he went to see you. I’m not stupid.”

“I didn’t do anything with Cam!”

“Right, except kiss him, right?”

“Ok, fine, you wanna play the morality game? What about you and Conner...or you and Rocky...or you and Xander....do I need to go on?”

“Conner and Rocky are my friends! They were there for me after you bailed on me! And Xander was all for show, you know that!”

“You’re telling me you didn’t touch Conner or Rocky?”

“That’s exactly right. I didn’t touch them...I didn’t even kiss them.”

“Well aren’t you Miss High and Mighty now. Wasn’t too long ago you were in a moral pit.”

“Oh, so you wanna throw my past at me? Go ahead, your past isn’t exactly squeaky clean.”

“You are the last one to judge anyone. Just because you transformed from a slut to a princess doesn’t make you better than me.”

“I can’t believe you said that...fuck you.”

“You have...and everyone else.”

“You of all people...how can you throw that back at me!”

“You’d use my past against me.”

“I don’t know when you became so mean and vindictive...” I sat down and cried, “I don’t know how we got here Hunter. Yeah, it’s too late for us. It’s over. Just get out.”

Hunter looked at me, “You’re right...it is over.”

“Get out.”

“Gladly.”

Hunter stormed out and I sat alone...crying and alone and so unsure about the next chapter of my life. Where did I go from here?

## PRT 282- "Moving Forward"

So my world had been turned upside down...and with the underworld defeated I swore I would never be a Ranger again...it had ruined my life. Living life without Hunter was an adjustment, to say the least. I can't tell you how hard it was on me and how much it hurt to let him go...but life went on...and things were very busy. I moved out of the apartment and back in with Tommy while I planned my next move. I kinda retreated there for awhile and spent a couple of weeks focusing on working on my new album and spending time with Savannah. Hayley was happy to let me baby sit because she had a new boyfriend...and you'll never guess who...come on...guess...no? Ethan! Yeah, Ethan James. We were all shocked too. Evidently Ethan had been spending a lot of time with Hayley in between his classes at Reefside Tech and they'd gotten close so having me baby sit gave them alone time. Who ever would have thought?

Then again it seemed every couple I knew was happy. Marah and Dustin had decided to get married...yeah it was a rushed thing. I asked Dusty how it happened and he explained it to me.

"So I was out with Marah at the beach and she said it was pretty and if she ever got married she wanted to get married at the beach. I asked her if she wanted to be married. She said yeah so I asked if she wanted to marry me and she said yes. We decided it was pointless to wait so we threw together Marah's dream wedding."

Of course I had to promise to be on my best behavior because I was a bride's maid and Hunter was a groom's man. Yeah...way weird. Hunter and I tried to ignore each other at the wedding the best we could but we kept looking at each other.

After the wedding there was a reception at a restaurant. I couldn't take the tension anymore. I walked over to Hunter.

"It was a nice wedding." I said.

"Yeah, it was." He said.

"You look nice."

"So do you."

"Do you miss me?"

"Of course, but we can't make it work Michelle. We discussed this."

"I know. I know."

"Besides, you broke up with me."

"I know that too."

"Hey guys...don't make a scene here, ok?" Tori asked as she walked up.

"Don't worry. I was just leaving anyway." I said.

"Michelle...wait..." Hunter said grabbing my arm.

"What?"

"Can we talk outside?"

"OK."

Hunter and I walked outside.

"What is it?" I asked.

"I just want you to know...even though we can't be together...I do love you and I always will and if you ever need me I'll still be here for you."

I was about to cry, "Hunter, you couldn't even be there for me when we were together." I said softly.

"I know. I screwed up there."

"And I know it wasn't all you. I made my share of mistakes...and I'll always love you too...and I really did want to make it work. I wanted to spend the rest of my life with you."

"I know...I wanted that too."

"I guess it wasn't meant to be." I said.

"You don't believe that, do you?"

"No. But it's done...over. I should go."

"Can I get a goodbye hug this time?"

I nodded, "Goodbye Hunter."

"Goodbye Michelle." He said as he pulled me into his arms. I rested there for several minutes and cried. I was saying



goodbye to the love of my life. I finally pulled away and left.

Not long after that wedding was the wedding of Kira and Trent. Evidently they'd been engaged for almost a year but I'd been too busy to take notice. I wasn't too busy to go to the wedding though. Their wedding was in Reefside at Dr. Mercer's house. It was really a beautiful wedding...unless your name was Conner McKnight.

Poor Conner was still in love with Kira...and Trent had asked Conner to be his best man. Of course no one but me knew about his secret love for Kira...and so when I looked at Conner and saw the pain in his eyes as Kira said 'I do' I felt for the guy.

After the wedding I pulled Conner aside.

"Are you ok?" I asked.

"The woman of my dreams just married Trent Fernandez. Yeah, I'm great." He said.

"I'm so sorry Conner...I really am."

"I know...and for what it's worth I'm sorry about Hunter. I heard what happened."

"Thanks. How long you in town for?" I asked.

"Just a couple of days...I have to get back to training."

"I figured...you wanna get out of here and go hang out?"

"Yeah, between Dr. O and Kim, Ethan and Hayley, and Kira and Trent I'm getting sick of all the couples."

"I second that. Let's bail."

So Conner and I went back to Tommy's and were alone. We went to my room.

"You sure you're ok?" I asked.

"Come here." Conner said as he pulled me into his arms and kissed me.

"Oh god...Conner, we shouldn't..."

"We're both single, I'm legal now and you're not my trainer anymore. There is nothing wrong with this."

I kissed him back. I did need this. He needed this too. "Ok, fine...but we need to be safe."

"That's fine."

"Ok." I said as I helped him get his shirt off. We quickly undressed and I grabbed a condom for him. Once he had it on he pushed me back on the bed and wasted no time. I'd forgotten how amazing Conner was in bed. The boy had skill, I had to give him credit.

After we were finished he held me for awhile. Both of us knew this was a one time thing...not picking up where we left off.

A couple of days after Conner left I got an e-mail from Alyssa announcing she and Cole were getting married...this was fucking wedding central. I e-mailed back my well wishes but I couldn't handle going to another wedding.

At Christmas I went to spend time with my mom. While I was there my cousin Lacey dropped in. She had just broken up with her boyfriend and after hearing about Hunter and I she felt I could understand how she was feeling.

Lacey and I had been best friends when we were little girls but after I became an actress I sorta left her behind and we hadn't talked but since. It was really good to see her again though...and she was right...I did understand how she was feeling. We were outside talking about it.

"I love Joey so much, but all we did was fight. We'd been together since 9<sup>th</sup> grade but it was like...once we got into college he changed...a lot. All he cared about was parties and getting drunk...that's not me Michelle...and he'd get mad I didn't wanna go clubbing with him. I just couldn't do it anymore." Lacey said.

"I understand. I love Hunter too...but he was putting racing before me. He'd go to the track when I really needed him to be with me." I said.

"And sometimes you wanna feel like you come first."

"Exactly."

"So, what are you gonna do now Michelle?"

“I have no idea. You?”

“I don’t know...I was thinking about moving to LA and finding myself.”

“Cool. I know I’m gonna need to go to LA for awhile. I have an album to record.”

“Well, why don’t we just get an apartment together? We can be there for each other for support and stuff.”

I nodded, “Ok, that sounds like a great idea!”

And so we did...a couple of days later Lacey and I went to LA to find an apartment. At the start of January we moved in together.

“I hate moving so much.” I said as we brought in the last of the boxes and started to unpack.

“I hear that. Totally.” Lacey said as she started to set her computer up.

That night, after we’d decided to call it a night on the unpacking, Lacey sat down at her computer and started playing a video game. The graphics were great...it looked pretty interesting...

“What is that?” I asked.

“This? It’s called World of Warcraft, or WoW for short.”

“Oh...how do you play?”

“Well, there’s two different factions...the Horde and the Alliance. On each side there are different races and classes within those races. You create a character and then you do quest to earn experience, or XP. Eventually you level up and can do more and more stuff.” She explained.

“Oh...so what are you doing?” I asked.

“This is Mandalin, my level 57 holy paladin. Right now I’m trying to kill those scorpions and get some venom from them.”

“Oh...cool. Can I play?”

“Sure, let me finish this quest and I’ll let you create a character and you can play with it.”

“Alright.”

When Lace finished the quest I sat at the computer and she got me started. I created a human mage named Michelina and started out in Northshire. I did the early quests and was confused at first but Lace talked me through it and I started to get the hang of it.

“Kick ass! I like this game.” I said as I hit level 11.

“Really?”

“Yeah! You seem surprised.”

“You don’t strike me as a gamer.”

“I’m not...but this is a fun game.”

Lace laughed, “Welcome to WoW...your life is now over.”

“Huh?”

“WoW is addicting...soon it will be all you want to do.”

“I can see that...this is so much fun.”

Of course I didn’t have time to let WoW become my life. I had work to do. I had an album to work on.

The first day I was in the studio I was working my ass off trying to set the tone for the record. I had just finished a take up when Jon walked in.

“Nice work Michelle. You still got it.” He said.

“Oh god...Jon, what do you want?” I asked.

“I have a favor. Can we talk outside?” he asked.

“Fine.”

We went outside.

“So, what do you want?” I asked again.

“Help.”

“With what?”

“Well, as you may have heard, we’re recording a country album.”

“I heard about that...I thought you weren’t crossing over.” I said bitterly.

“Yeah, well...it just sorta came together...I didn’t plan this...that’s not the point.”

“Ok, then what is?”

“I could use your help with producing it.”

“Why? You always produce your music. You know how to produce an album.”

“I do...a rock album. You’re one of the best country artists I know and you are a great producer too. You could really help us.”

“Not a chance.”

“Mich, please...”

“Why should I? After all you’ve done to me...”

“This isn’t personal, I swear it...it’s simply business.”

I sighed, “I’ll think about it.”

“OK, I need to know soon though.”

“I’ll call you tonight with my answer.”

“Thanks. You’re the best.”

“I know. Now I have to get back to work.” I said as I went back in.

“What was that about?” Mina asked.

“Jon wants help with his band’s country album.” I said.

“Are you serious?”

“Yeah.”

“Are you gonna do it?”

“Maybe.”

“You can’t be serious...Michelle...”

“It’s business.”

“Do you really buy that?”

“I...maybe.”

“Come on, you’re smarter than that.”

“It could be fun to work with him again.”

“You’re gonna work on your album and his?”

“Yeah...it’ll keep me busy...and my mind off Hunter.”

“Ah-ha!”

“What?” I asked.

“This isn’t about Jon, this is about Hunter.”

“Everything is about Hunter.” I said rolling my eyes.

“Bad reason to jump into bed with your abusive ex.”

“Recording an album isn’t exactly jumping into bed.”

“Figuratively speaking! I should hope you jump back into bed with him literally!”

“God Mina...”

“I’m just saying...”

“This could be a good career move for me. It would start a buzz that could help our album.”

“Ugh...Michelle...for such a smart woman you can be really dumb sometimes.”

“Hey! I know what I’m doing!”

“Michelle, in all the years I’ve know you I’ve learned one thing...when it comes to Jon you never know what you’re doing.”

After we finished recording that day I went home. Lacey was gaming.

“How was your day?” she asked.

“Eventful. We did some basic track lay out...and I saw Jon.”

“Your ex?”

“Yeah.”

“And?”

“He wants me to help him produce his country album.”

“Really??”

“Yup.”

“You gonna do it?”

“I want to...sorta...I think. Mina said it’s a bad idea.”

“You’ll be busy, that’s for sure.”

“That’s a good thing.”

“You wanna stay busy so you can’t think about Hunter?”

“Well, sorta.”

“Then do it...and as long as you stay cautious it might be nice to have some familiar people around. Just don’t let Jon too close again.”

“Yeah, I think I can handle working with him...I should do it. Thanks Lace.”

“Anytime.”

I went to the phone and picked it up. I dialed Jon’s cell number.

“Hello?”

“Jonny?” I asked.

“Michi?”

“I’ll do it.”

“You will?”

“Yeah. I will. Meet me at the studio tomorrow morning and we’ll talk about the layout of the album and the direction you wanna go.”

“Not a problem. I’ll be there. Thank you so much.”

“Just keep it professional and don’t make me regret this decision.”

“I won’t. I promise...I’ll be on my best behavior.”

“I’m holding you to that.” I said as I hung up.

As I put the phone down and sat on my bed I really, really hoped I hadn’t just made a huge mistake...