

PRT 337- "Windy Road"

I could smell the burnt rubber as I made the last turn. Everything around me was merely a blur as I sped towards the finish line. I felt the adrenaline rush and it was intoxicating. There was nothing in the world like being behind the wheel of a race car, knowing one slip could mean the difference between life and death.

My name is Amara Stratos. I'm also the Soldier of Wind, Sailor Uranus; the leader of the Outer Soldiers. In my civilian life I'm also a NASCAR driver. There's nothing I love more than driving a race car...except for maybe my girlfriend, Michele Waters. We have a really amazing relationship. It's a true partnership in everyway. There was a time in my life I assumed I'd always be alone and that my dreams were out of reach...but thanks to Michele and her support and love I've achieved everything I ever wanted and more.

On this day I was on the practice track doing laps. I finished the last lap and pulled into the pit. I got out of my car and took off my helmet and as I did I saw another racer getting ready to practice.

"Turns are a little sloppy Amara." Ronny said.

I glared, "Thanks for the input Ronny."

Ronny Robinson is the only other woman NASCAR driver and normally this would be a great thing...only I hate Ronny. She's an over-competitive bitch anyway and to top it all off she's seeing Hunter Bradley, the ex-boyfriend of my friend Michelle Morris-James. Yes, Michelle and Hunter were long broken up before Ronny started dating him, however, considering the history of Michelle and Hunter and the fact Michelle was once Ronny's trainer (Ronny is a former Power Ranger) I consider it nothing short of betrayal for Ronny to even consider dating Hunter. It doesn't help that Ronny taunts Michelle with this fact every chance she gets. Needless to say Ronny and I were far from friends or even comrades. The only thing I wanted Ronny for was to use as a punching bag...but so far I'd managed to restrain myself to smartass and snide comments.

"I just wouldn't want you to embarrass yourself at the race." Ronny continued.

"Your concern is overwhelming." I fought the urge to roll my eyes.

"We all know who'll win anyway...but second place is better than nothing."

"You're right. I hope you'll remember that when you get second."

Ronny laughed, "You're funny Amara, you actually think you can beat me."

"I know I can. I'm the better driver by far. You're only even here because NASCAR needed a poster girl and...while I may be a good driver I'm certainly no model."

"Are you insinuating I'm only here for my looks?"

"Nope. I'm flat out saying it. You're only here for your looks."

"Wow...you're intimidated by me."

"Oh please." I said. I saw Ronny wave to someone behind me. I looked back and saw Hunter in the stands.

"I better get to my laps. Hunter and I are going out tonight." Ronny said.

"You're such a slut."

"What? For dating Hunter?"

"Yes. You know what he meant to Michelle."

"Um, newsflash...they broke up."

"Yeah, and you knew they were still in love."

"Maybe she loves him but he doesn't love her."

"Whatever. If you want to be a second-rate Michelle stand in that's your choice."

"I am NOT a Michelle stand in."

"Pretty blonde with spunk that's also a veteran Ranger and races as a hobby? Hun, if you could sing you'd be a low-class Michelle."

"You're lucky I'm not low class or I'd drop you right here."

"Bring it on Ronny. You think you can take me out? I'd have you on the floor before you can say two bit whore."

"That's it!" Ronny cried as she jumped at me and tried to punch me. I went right back at her and soon it was an all out fight. I didn't realize Michele had gotten there by this time.

"Amara!" she cried.

“Ronny, no!” Hunter echoed as they both ran into the pit and pulled us apart.

“Let me go!” Ronny cried as she struggled to get free of Hunter’s grip.

“Bring it on.” I taunted.

“Amara, stop!” Michele said.

“She deserves it!”

“Ronny, it’s not worth it. Just stop.” Hunter said, not letting Ronny go.

I glared at Hunter, “You better control your girlfriend or I’ll do it for you.”

“What is this even all about you guys?”

“Amara can’t seem to get it through her head that you’re not still hung up on Michelle.” Ronny said.

“Amara, listen, I know you don’t approve of Ronny and I but Michelle and I both have moved on. She’s married to RJ and I’m with Ronny. We’re happy.”

“That’s why you went to get her back. I know you’re the reason she lost the baby.” I was furious.

“Baby? What baby? Hunter, what is she talking about?” Ronny asked.

Michele sighed, “Amara, Michelle hadn’t told everyone about the baby.”

“Oh crap…” I sighed.

“Hunter, what is Amara talking about?” Ronny asked again.

Hunter sighed too, “I’ll explain but you can’t tell anyone. Michelle doesn’t want this getting out to the press.”

“Ok, fine. I promise.”

“Michelle was pregnant.”

“The baby was RJ’s right?”

Hunter nodded, “Yes. It was. I went to see her and we got into a fight. During the fight she nearly passed out. I rushed her to the ER…she ended up losing the baby.”

“So the reports that she was in hospital for exhaustion?”

“Fed to the media by Holly to keep the press at bay.” Michele said.

“Why were you over there Hunter? What were you fighting about? Did you really try to get her back?” Ronny asked.

“Yes.” Hunter said.

Ronny looked like someone stabbed her in the gut. I couldn’t help but smirk a little. Michele elbowed me for this.

“So I am a Michelle substitute…” Ronny said.

“No…Ronny…you don’t understand.” Hunter said.

“OK, enlighten me.”

“You knew when we got involved Michelle and I had an intense and deep history. Sometimes it’s hard to let go of that history. Yes, I thought I wanted her back, but I realized there is a reason it’s over…and there is a reason I’m with you.”

“And what is that reason?”

“I care about you and I want to be. If I didn’t want you I wouldn’t be here.”

I rolled my eyes.

“Let me go. I need to do some laps and think. We’ll discuss this when I’m done.” Ronny said pulling away from Hunter.

Hunter nodded as Ronny put on her helmet and got in her car.

Once she took off Hunter glared at me.

“Amara, I don’t know what the hell you were thinking but stay the hell away from me and my girlfriend.” Hunter said.

“Oh please. You think you have me fooled? Everyone knows Ronny is a Michelle stand in. I’m just trying to help her realize it.” I said.

“Michelle and I are over. What we had runs deeps, yes. We’ll always have that history and there will be a part of us that always loves each other, but she’s moved on and I deserve to be happy too so back off.”

“He’s right Amara.” Michele said.

“Whatever, let’s go Michele.” I said as I took Michele’s hand and headed off the track.

We got back to our apartment and I went to the bedroom and started to undress.

“Amara, you haven’t said a word since we left the track.” Michele said, following me.

“I’m not feeling overly talkative.” I snapped.

“What did I do?”

“It’s what you didn’t do. You could have sided with me in front of Hunter. Besides, Michelle is our friend. I didn’t see you sticking up for her.”

“There’s nothing to stick up for. Michelle has moved on. She’s with RJ.”

“Michele, you know what the prophesy says.”

“Amara, we cannot live our lives based on prophesies”

“But if Michelle and Hunter aren’t together then the child of lightning and thunder will never be born. They are destined to be together. This child will correct our mistake in letting the child of destruction be born.”

“Amara, if this child is meant to be she will be without any help from us. And you talk about Hotaru like she’s a demon. She’s practically our daughter...with the exception of legalities she is our daughter.” Michele said.

“Yeah, and this is the second time she’s become Mistress 9...an evil powerful enough to destroy the whole Sol System.”

“That isn’t her fault Amara. Sailor Nemesis did this to her. Maybe the Inners are right. We can save her. Maybe killing isn’t the way.”

I sighed, “I really don’t want to talk about this right now.”

I went into the bathroom and turned the shower on. I got in and let the warm water hit my skin.

Michele was right...I was pushing it. And I’d been all out of sorts since Nemesis kidnapped Hotaru. I did consider her my daughter...she even referred to me as Dad. I know this confused a lot of outsiders but it didn’t matter. I was Hotaru’s dad and Michele was her Mom. I did love her very much but I was torn. I had a duty to protect Michelle and the Amethyst at all costs. If that meant Hotaru’s life it was a sacrifice that had to be made. Why didn’t Mina understand that?

And maybe I shouldn’t be pushing Hunter and Michelle. She did seem happy with RJ...and in all honesty I liked RJ. He treated Michelle well and was a really nice guy. I guess I felt that if this prophesized child was born it would somehow counter Hotaru and maybe it would over-ride the darkness in her. Yeah, ok, maybe that was silly.

I guess deep down I did really want to save my daughter...I was just at a loss as to how to do that. I knew that Hotaru was a great girl. She was in college now and worked so hard. I was very proud of all she accomplished. She was studying to be a nurse. When I asked her why she wanted to be a nurse and not a doctor she said that it was because nurses took care of people and doctors just wrote prescriptions. Hotaru did have a good heart...but there was still that darkness that evil preyed on. And now that Nemesis had preyed on it...Mistress 9 was deadly.

I finished my shower and got dressed. When I went into the living room Michele was in there talking to Trista.

“Hey Amara.” Trista said.

“Hey.” I said as I sat down.

“Michele said you had some trouble at the track.”

“Yeah. Ronny is a bitch. Anyway, any leads on the identity of Sailor Nemesis?”

“No. Not yet. It’s not like some woman is just gonna confess and I haven’t been able to come up with any leads.” Trista said as Michele turned on the radio.

“Oh I love this song.” Michele said.

“What is it?” I asked.

“The new song by Mia Blackwood, ‘Surrender’. I love how she arranges her music.”

“I’m hungry.” I said.

“Let’s go to JKP. I am in the mood for some good pizza.” Trista said.

I nodded, “Ok.”

We got to JKP and found a seat. Our server walked over to us.

“Welcome to JKP, I’m Flit and I’ll be your server today.” He said.

“Thanks. Um...is Michelle or RJ around?” I asked.

“RJ is in the kitchen.. You’re friends of theirs?”

“Yeah.”

“I’ll get them for you. Be right back.”

A couple minutes later Michelle and RJ came out of the kitchen.

“Hey guys!” Michelle said sitting with us.

“What brings you guys to Ocean Bluff?” RJ asked.

“Wanted to know if you’d found anything more about Nemesis.” I said, “And we wanted pizza.”

“Pizza we can give you, information, not so much.” RJ said.

“RJ and I have reviewed the footage from the last battle over and over again but we’re no closer to figuring out anything

about Nemesis.” Michelle said.

I sighed, “We have to keep at it. As long as Nemesis knows who we are and we don’t know who she is she has the advantage.”

“I know. I’m working on it. Believe me.” Michelle said.

“We know you are. Patience is not one of Amara’s strong points.” Michele said.

“Soon as I know anything I promise you’ll know. Now if you’ll excuse me I was just headed out. I have to meet with Raye to discuss video treatments.”

“Bye Michelle.” I said.

“So, what can we get for you?” RJ asked once Michelle was gone.

“I’ve heard good things about the RJ special.” Trista said.

RJ smiled, “Coming right up.”

We were in the middle of eating our pizza when we heard a blast outside.

“I think that’s our cue.” I said.

“Right behind you.” Michele said as we got up and ran outside.

We got into town and saw Sailor Nemesis. She was blasting civilians. She also had some henchmen with her.

“Nemesis!” I cried.

“Ah, I knew this would draw you Goody-goods out.” Nemesis said.

“Ready guys?” I asked.

“Ready!”

“Uranus Spirit Power!”

“Neptune Spirit Power!”

“Pluto Spirit Power!”

“You’re going down Nemesis.” I said.

“Bring it on Uranus. Nemites attack!” Nemesis commanded her henchmen.

“Let’s do this.” I said.

We went to battle against the Nemites. I was trying to fight my way to Nemesis herself.

“World Shaking!” I cried.

“Deep Submerge!” Neptune echoed.

This took out enough Nemites I could get to Nemesis.

“Just you and me now.” I said.

“Bring it.” Nemesis said.

We fought hand to hand for a bit before we faced off with our powers.

“World Shaking!”

“Dark Explosion!”

Our power collided, knocking us both back.

“Uranus, you can’t honestly think you’ll win this.” Nemesis said as she stood up.

“You picked the wrong day to mess with me Nemesis.” I said as I walked up to her and grabbed her by the throat, “Who are you and what did you do to Hotaru?”

“You mean Mistress 9? I just opened her eyes to who she can be...what her true potential is.”

“What do you want!” I demanded.

“To gain the power of the Silver Crystal and Power Amethyst and make Nemesis rise to the glory it always should have been.”

“You’re supposed to be a guardian for Princess Michelle!”

“Princess Michelle is an egotistical brat who doesn’t deserve to hold the power of the Amethyst.”

“And you do?”

“I do. Not only that, I will.” She said as she kicked me, forcing me to release her.

I stumbled back, “Ugh...damn you Nemesis!”

“This isn’t over Uranus. I will be back.” She said as she vanished.

“Uranus, are you ok?” Neptune asked.

“Fine.” I growled.

We powered down and went back to JKP to finish our dinner.

“Everything ok?” RJ asked as he sat down with us.

“Nemesis. I had her...and I let her escape.” I said.

“You’ll get her next time Amara.” Michele said squeezing my hand.

“Michele is right.. MJ has faith in you guys and so do I. I think you’ll get Nemesis and save Hotaru.” RJ said.

“Thanks RJ.” I said.

“And if there’s anything I can do to help, just ask.”

I nodded, “We may hold you to that...I have a feeling we’ll need all the help we can get.”