

PRT 393- "Chad's Dilemma"

I was tired of sitting around my hotel room and moping. I'd been doing that for days and I really needed to get out.

It was just about a week or so ago that I found out that my girlfriend, Raye Hino, is also the super heroine, Sailor Mars...not only that, she confessed to me that she also kissed another man...not just any man either...Hunter Bradley...her friend's ex-boyfriend. Nothing about her was the Raye I recognized...the Raye I fell in love with. I didn't know what to do or where to go from here...but I did know that I couldn't sit around this hotel room another second.

I headed out and went to a pizza parlor I liked to eat. It had been days since I'd had anything but room service. I went in and found a table then I ordered a small pizza and a beer. I was waiting for my food when I saw Adam and Rocky come in. I sighed. Adam really was the last person I wanted to see right now. I hoped he wouldn't see me, but of course he did and he and Rocky walked over.

"Hey Chad." Adam said.

"Hi." Rocky echoed.

"Hey guys." I mumbled.

"How are you doing?" Adam asked.

"As well as can be expected...all things considered."

Adam and Rocky sat down at my table.

I sighed.

"Listen, I know you're upset at Raye for lying...but they are secret identities for a reason." Adam said softly.

I looked at Adam, then Rocky, "Wait, Rocky knows too? Does everyone know but me?"

"Rocky is..."

"Let me guess, a Ranger?"

Rocky nodded, "Yeah."

I rolled my eyes, "Perfect. I'm so glad everyone trusts me so much."

"Chad, it isn't like that." Adam said.

"Oh really? Then what's it like?"

"Raye didn't want you involved. She wanted her civilian life kept separate. If you knew it would have put you in danger. She thought she was protecting you."

"Right...and I guess her kissing Hunter was trying to protect me too."

Adam blinked, "Um...what?"

"Ah, something I knew that you didn't. Shock. Yeah, Raye and Hunter kissed."

"Oh my god...wow."

"Does Michelle know? That had to kill her." Rocky said.

I rolled my eyes again, "I don't know Rocky. I didn't think to ask."

"Rocky, this isn't the time to worry about Mich. Chad, I know you're upset...and I know how much it hurts when your girl is with another man...believe me. It nearly killed me when I found out Mina slept with Brett." Adam said.

"How did you ever forgive her for cheating like that? I'm not sure I can forgive Raye for kissing Hunter...how can you forgive Mina sleeping with Brett?" I asked, easing up. I had almost forgotten about Mina cheating on Adam. Maybe he would understand how I was feelings...a little anyway.

"I love her. That's really what it comes down to. I accepted it was a slip in judgment and I really believed it would never happen again. I trust her...but everyone is human and when you love someone I feel they are entitled to a second chance."

"OK, that makes sense I guess...and I do love Raye...but I love who I thought she was. She has this whole other life I didn't know..."

"She's still the woman you love...but you're right...she does lead a double life and I'm not gonna lie...it's hard sometimes to watch the woman you love go risk her life for the greater good. Again, if you love her then it's worth it."

I shook my head, "I don't know. It's all so much, so fast."

"Yeah, it is."

"And you...a Ranger...how did that happen?"

"Semi-retired Ranger actually. I only Morph in dire situations. I'm not part of an active team...neither Rock or I are

actually. We became Rangers back in high school and...well...once a Ranger, always a Ranger.”

“Wow...”

“Yeah, I know. It’s a lot to take in.” Adam said as my pizza arrived.

“Um, Ad, can we go? I really want to check on Mich.” Rocky said, shifting in his chair.

Adam laughed, “Yeah, we’ll pick up food on the way back to your apartment. Chad, you ok?”

“I’ll be ok. Thanks.” I said.

“OK, if you need anything just give me a call.”

“OK, thanks.”

Adam nodded and he and Rocky left.

After I ate I decided I needed to pick some things up at the store. I really wanted some food so I didn’t have to call room service every time I wanted a snack. I walked into the store and as I turned down the chip aisle I saw Darien.

“Chad, hey!” Darien said.

“Hi.” I replied.

“I’ve been meaning to call you.”

“If you’re going to try to convince me to forgive Raye then save it. I don’t need a lecture from her ex-boyfriend.”

“What? Raye and I dated years ago. It’s not like it was major.”

I rolled my eyes, “Whatever. It was major enough for her to write about it plenty.”

“What are you talking about?”

“What do you think her new single is about?”

“What? She said she wrote it when she was a teenager...”

“Yeah...a song about a girl who feels like a guy is over looking her for another girl...do the math Doctor.”

“Oh my god...”

“So excuse me if I don’t want advice from you.”

“Chad, I promise you, I’m not interested in Raye. That ended a long time ago.”

“Oh, I know. It’s Hunter I have to worry about.”

“What?”

“Guess you haven’t heard...Raye kissed Hunter.”

“Bradley?”

“Yes, the one and only.”

“Wow...so that’s what you’re upset about? Not the Mars thing?”

“Both actually.”

“You know she only hid being Mars because she...”

“...wanted to protect me. Blah, blah, blah. Let me guess, you’re a Ranger too?”

“No actually...Tuxedo Mask.”

“Of course you are. Everyone around me is a superhero of some kind. I just didn’t know it.”

“Chad, I understand you’re upset...I would be too...but Raye does love you.”

“Yeah, well sometimes love isn’t enough...she deceived me and I’m not sure I can live with that.” I said as I walked away. Now, don’t get me wrong, I actually liked Darien and considered him a friend...I just wasn’t in the mood for this.

I grabbed some snacks and after I paid I went back to the hotel. I decided it was a mistake to have left. I put my snacks away and then plopped on the bed and turned the TV on. I had left the TV on CMT when I’d turned it off. When the TV came on I saw they were playing Raye’s new video. I sighed and changed the channel. I found ‘Family Guy’ on another station and decided that was better than watching Raye sing about Darien. Evidently I had been the only one other than Raye that knew what that song was about. It didn’t matter. It was over. I was a civilian in a group of heroes. For years I felt like part of the group...but the joke was on me. I’d been an outsider all along.

I was lost in my thoughts when there was a knock on the door...which was odd because I hadn’t ordered room service. I went to the door and opened it. Andrew was standing there.

“Great...you too?” I asked.

“Chad, don’t. We’re friends.” Andrew said.

“Fine. Come in.” I said moving out of the way. I closed the door behind him.

"Listen, I'm sorry about everything but you really don't need to take it out on Darien or myself. We're your friends man."

I rolled my eyes, "Right...and you're going to tell me to forgive Raye too?"

"That's your call. I also heard about what she did with Hunter. I'm not sure if you should forgive her or not...but I know you need your friends."

"Why befriend little old me? I'm just a guy, not a hero. Let me guess...are you a Ranger? Or some other hero?"

"Actually, just a restaurant owner. Chad, I'm not a superhero at all."

I looked at him, "Really?"

"Yeah. Really."

"But you knew about everyone's identities?"

"Yeah. Found out early on into mine and Lita's relationship."

"So she told you?"

"Not by her choice. We were on a date and got attacked. She had to transform in front of me to save our lives. After that the cat was out of the bag."

"Wow...and how did you take it?"

"I was a little freaked out of course. Anyone would be...I was even scared at first because I didn't want to get involved with someone that put herself in danger daily."

"But you stayed with her..."

"Yeah. I decided I loved her enough to deal with it. It's not easy. Every time she transforms I worry...but it's like being with a police officer or a military soldier. It's high risk and you just have to accept it and pray that she comes home safe. And I know you're still in the shock phase, but if you really love Raye then you'll find a way to deal with it. Now, the cheating thing...that's a whole other story. I'm not sure how I would react if I found out Lita kissed another man. You may want to ask Adam about that. He forgave Mina for worse." Andrew said.

"Yeah, I talked to Adam already. And what you guys say makes sense...but..."

"Do you love Raye?"

"I love who I thought she was. She's a Martian princess."

Andrew nodded, "Yes. She is. She's also the same woman you have loved since you were 16."

"No, she isn't."

"Yes, she is. Lita is the same person I fell for before I knew she was Sailor Jupiter. Yes, she lives a double life...but Sailor Jupiter is not who she is...it's just what she has to do. Think Clark Kent and Superman...what would have happened if Lois Lane turned her back on Clark when she found out the truth?"

"So you're saying Sailor Mars doesn't chance who Raye is?"

"Exactly. She has to become Sailor Mars to help people...but it's not the person she is. She's still Raye Hino. Which brings me back to my question...all the crap aside, do you love Raye?"

I nodded, "Yeah, I do..."

"Then you need to sort out your thoughts and go talk to her."

"I..."

"It's your call...but if I were you, I wouldn't walk away so easily."

"I'll think about it."

"OK. I need to get going. Lita wants me to sample wedding cakes. If they can ever defeat Nemesis we're going to actually have a wedding."

"Good luck with that."

"Thanks. If you need to talk or anything call me."

"Thanks."

Andrew stood up, "Take care." He said as he left.

I sat on my bed alone, deep in thought. I still didn't know what to do. Part of me wanted to run home and make up with Raye...but another part of me just couldn't forgive the betrayal and lies, no matter what the reason behind it. I decided there was one more person I needed to talk to. I grabbed my keys and headed out.

I knocked on the door and waited for him to open it.

"Chad..." Hunter said when he opened the door.

"Hunter...we need to talk." I said.

Hunter nodded, "Come in."

I walked in and Hunter closed the door behind me.

“What can I do for you?” Hunter asked.

“You can explain to me what made you think it was a good idea to kiss my girlfriend.” I said.

“Chad...I didn’t mean for that to happen...honestly.”

“She is your ex-girlfriend’s close friend...how could you do it?”

“It had nothing to do with Michelle.”

“Considering you’re trying to win her back I’d say it has everything to do with Michelle.”

“Like I said...I didn’t mean for it to happen. Raye and I were just hanging out and she was connecting with me on a level she couldn’t with you and it just happened.”

“Right, the secret.”

“But that’s why she told you the truth...she wanted to have that connection with you. She didn’t want anymore secrets and you’re being an ass.”

“I’m the ass?!”

“Yes! She made a mistake. Super heroine or not, she’s still human...she messed up but she is trying to make it right. You’re an idiot if you don’t fix this with her.”

“She cheated on me!”

“We kissed! That’s it. She stopped it at that.”

“She what?”

Hunter sighed, “I tried to take it further. I wanted her...but she stopped me. She felt tremendous guilt and left.”

“You tried to sleep with her?”

“Yes.”

I punched him in the face. He stumbled back.

“Ok, since I know you’re angry I’m going to let that go without wiping the floor with you, but I think you should go.”

Hunter said rubbing his face.

“Yeah, I think I should...but one last thing...stay the hell away from my girlfriend.”

I got in my car and headed for home. When Hunter told me what happened and about Raye walking out before he took it further it suddenly hit me...she really did know she was wrong and was trying to fix it. Adam was right...since she knew what a mistake this was I could trust her to not let it happen again. Andrew was right too. Sailor Mars wasn’t who Raye was. She was still my Raye. Yes I was still hurt and angry but it wasn’t worth losing the love of my life over. I needed to go home and try to fix things with her.

I pulled into my parking place at home and went up to our apartment. Raye was in the living room watching TV. She turned around when she heard the door open.

“Chad?” she asked.

I closed the door and walked over to her and stood in front of the sofa, “Yeah.”

“Are you back?”

“It’s going to take time Raye. I feel very betrayed and I’m not sure that I trust you 100% right now but I do love you and I’m not willing to let go of that. I don’t know that we can work this out but I do know that I want to try.”

“I really am sorry.”

“I know you are...and if you’d let me I’d like to move back in.”

“Oh my god! Of course!” Raye cried as she jumped up into my arms.

I wrapped my arms around her and held her. I did love Raye so much and I knew it wouldn’t be easy, but we’d find a way to make this work.