

*"I'm stronger
Than I ever thought that I could be, baby
I used to go with the flow
Didn't really care 'bout me
You might think that I can't take it, but you're wrong
'Cause now I'm*

*Stronger than yesterday
Now it's nothing but my way
My loneliness ain't killing me no more
I, I'm stronger"
~ "Stronger" Britney Spears*

"April, your mother is here." Harley said.

I sighed. It was time for the visit. I got up, walked out of my class, and went to the lodge. Sure enough there was my mother...and him...Ed. I was glad Derek was in class, he'd kill Ed.

"Hello Cutie." Ed said pulling me into a hug. I just stood there.

"April, Ed missed you, the least you can do is greet him." Mom said.

I sighed, "Hello Ed." I said pulling away from him.

"Thank you for getting my daughter Miss Bradley, I will be taking her until tomorrow." Mom said.

"Tomorrow?" I asked.

"Usually it is recommended that the students are in by nightfall, just to keep up a routine." Harley said.

"And she can continue her routine tomorrow. Tonight my daughter will stay at the motel with her father and I." Mom said.

"He isn't my father." I growled.

"Not now April. She will be back for classes in the morning, do you have any objections Miss Bradley?" Mom asked.

"No ma'am. Enjoy your visit April." Harley said.

I sighed, poor Harley didn't deserve my mother being so rude to her. She was only trying to help me. Harley knew I didn't wanna go and she knew why.

"Come on April." Mom said.

I sighed, I knew I had no choice so I left with her and the monster.

Michelle

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"Babe, I'll be right back, I'm gonna go get some supplies out of the shed for the hike later." I said.

"OK...hey, where's Felicity?" Hunter asked.

"With Julia playing at the lake. I'm gonna go check on them while I'm out." I said.

"OK, see you in a bit."

I headed for the lake. I was almost there when I heard a scream. It sounded like Julia. I took off running. When I got there I saw James. He had Julia and Felicity cornered. He had to be after Felicity.

"Hey! James! Leave them alone!" I cried.

"Michelle, I was simply trying to spend some time with your lovely little girl." James said.

"It's me you're after, I've warned you, leave my daughter alone!" I cried.

James turned to face me.

"Julia! Get Felicity out of here!" I cried.

She took off running with Felicity.

"Alone at last, as it should be." James said coming at me.

"You asked for it." I said firing off some lightning at him. He was expecting it cause he dodged. "Stay away!" I screamed taking a fighting stance.

“You forget, I have powers now too.” James said firing a beam at me. I tried to run from it but it caught my leg and I fell to the ground. I tried to get up but I couldn’t and James was coming at me. “I have waited for this moment for so long.” He whispered as he sat on my stomach and put his hands on my chest.

“NOOOO!!!!” I screamed.

“Yes Michelle, this will be better than anything you’ve ever felt. I can make you feel wonderful.” He said.

“NO!” I screamed again, I knew he was about to rape me again. Suddenly he slumped over in pain. I freed my hands from his and pushed him off of me. I sat up and saw Hunter. He ran over to me.

“Are you ok sweetheart?” he asked.

“Hunter! I’m so glad to see you.” I said hugging him. He held me for a second then walked over to James.

“I’ve told you before to stay away from my family. You better not ever touch my wife again.” Hunter said.

“You think you can stop me?” James asked.

“I know I can.” Hunter said as James stood up. They had a stare off before going into hand to hand combat. While it was true James had powers, Hunter had ninja skills that James couldn’t anticipate. Eventually James had no choice but to retreat. I ran over to Hunter.

“Are you ok?” I asked.

“Yeah, I’m fine. Are you?” he asked.

“I think so...God, that was so close.” I said as I hugged Hunter and started crying, “He was after Felicity, if I hadn’t got here...”

“I know, Julia told me. I think you were right, sending her to stay with Tony and Mel is a smart idea. She’ll be safer there.” Hunter said.

I nodded, “Let’s go call Tony.”

James

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I was very angry after I retreated. I almost had Michelle, she could have been mine again if that annoying Hunter hadn’t shown up. I decided it was time to be rid of him once and for all. I was plotting my attack when I heard Aria called me.

“Yes Aria?” I asked

“Arisa doesn’t feel you’ve been pulling you weight around here, what have you been doing to further our cause?” Aria asked.

“As a matter of fact I had Michelle today, if not for that blasted Hunter our mission would be accomplished.” I said.

“Then I suggest you find a way to work that problem out.” Aria said.

“I was just doing that. Don’t worry. We’ll have Michelle, and soon.” I said.

“Very well then.” Aria said.

I went off to continue my plans.

Harley

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Noah and I finished up our last lap around the track and parked our bikes.

“Nice riding Har,” Noah said.

“You ready for tomorrow?” Josh asked.

“You bet. I’m gonna kill all the other riders out there.” I said.

“I wouldn’t count on that.” DJ said walking up behind me.

“DJ, what are you even doing here? You’re a freestyle rider.” I said.

“I changed specialties...and Noah, why are you practicing with her over your own brother?” DJ asked.

“She’s my friend.” Noah said.

“Some loyalty.” DJ said.

“Hey, just cause you’re being an unreasonable jerk, don’t try to tell me who I can be friends with.” Noah replied sternly. I smiled, dating Stacy had given him a backbone.

“Fine, then stay at Stacy’s tonight cause I don’t want to share an apartment with a traitor.” DJ said.

“Fine. I will.” Noah said.

DJ glared at the three of us then stormed off. He got his bike started up and began his practice.

“You didn’t have to do that.” I said.

“Yeah, I did. I’m sick of him being an arrogant jerk.” Noah said.  
“On that note, shall we go grab some dinner?” Josh asked.  
“Sure, can I invite Stacy?” Noah asked.  
Josh cringed a bit, “Um, sure.”  
“Josh can’t say anything about you dating his sister because he’s dating his sister’s sister.” I laughed.  
“Oh god, that sounds sick...” Noah said.  
I laughed harder, “Yeah it does.”  
“And she loves grossing people out by saying it at every opportunity.” Josh said.  
“It’s not sick but it sounds like it, it’s fun.” I said jumping on Josh’s back for a piggy back ride.  
“Ugh, babe, you’re getting mud on me.” Josh said pretending to be grossed out.  
“Poor baby.” I said putting my head on his shoulder and kissing his neck.  
“Stop that or I’m gonna drop you.” He said. I noticed Noah was on his cell phone, calling Stacy I assumed.  
“You wouldn’t drop me, would you?” I asked as I nibbled on his ear.  
“You keep that up and I will.” Josh said.  
“You guys are cute, can we go now though? Stacy is gonna meet us at the hamburger place downtown.” Noah said.  
“OK, let’s get going.” I said.

We got in Josh’s car and headed over there. While we drove I changed into some un-muddy clothes.  
“Harley! You’re sitting in the front seat! Everyone can see you changing!” Josh cried.  
“So? It’s not like I’m getting naked or anything. It just looks like a bikini.” I said as I slid into a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, “Besides, Noah is changing in the backseat.”  
“So? He’s wearing boxers.” Josh said.  
“And I’m wearing a bra and panties, your point? It’s the same thing.” I said.  
“No it isn’t, Noah isn’t my girlfriend.” Josh said.  
I laughed and noticed Noah turn red, “I would hope not!” I said as I put some shoes on.  
“This is the last time we take my car from the track. You guys have mud everywhere.” Josh complained.  
“Stop whining.” I said as we got to the restaurant. We went in and found Stacy and sat down with her.

“Hey.” Noah said kissing Stacy.  
“Hey yourself.” She said kissing him back.  
Josh winced again and I hit him in the arm, “Hi Stacy.” I said.  
“Hey Stace.” Josh said softly.  
Stacy smiled, “Hey guys.”  
“How was work?” Noah asked.  
“OK. I’m working on a few deals that should get Fernandez Industries back on its feet very soon.” Stacy said.  
“That’s great.” Noah said.  
“Yeah, so when you give the company back to Trent it will be in good shape.” Josh said.  
“Yeah, I’m kinda wishing I didn’t have to give it back.” Stacy said.  
“What?” Josh asked.  
“Well I like it. It’s addicting.” Stacy said.  
Josh sighed, “Anna was right, you never should have got involved in Fernandez Industries.”  
“What? Not you too...I wish everyone would stop acting like this is such a bad thing.” Stacy said.  
“But it is Stace...don’t you remember growing up and watching your father? You said so many times you never wanted to be him...you’re becoming him!” Josh said.  
“I am not! I just never understood him before.” Stacy said.  
“If you think you understand Trent Fernandez you’re in bigger trouble than I thought.” Josh said.

April

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We went to dinner then to a hotel room. All during dinner it was like Mom and Ed were trying to seem like we were a normal family. It was almost laughable, if it wasn’t so sick. After we got back to the hotel is where the problems began. Ed decided he wanted some dessert and wanted to send Mom to the store. She agreed.
“I can go with you.” I said.

“No, why don’t you stay here and we can talk.” Ed said.

“Yeah, Ed missed you, this will be a good chance for you two to catch up.” Mom said.

“NO! I mean...I missed you Mom.” I lied.

“Just stay here. We can talk later. I’ll be back.” Mom said leaving.

Next thing I knew I was alone with the monster.

“Come sit with me April.” He said patting the bed he was laying on.

“Um, actually, I’m fine right here.” I said tapping the chair I was sitting in.

“Oh come on...don’t you remember the fun we used to have?”

“That wasn’t fun, that was a nightmare.”

“It’s only because you got so tense.” Ed said standing up and walking over to me. He grabbed my arm and forced me to the bed, “See, so tense, just relax...we don’t have much time together so let’s make the most of it.”

“Don’t, please just don’t.” I begged as I tried to get away.

“Stop fighting me April.” Ed said throwing me against the wall. I fell to the floor and Ed picked me up and threw me on the bed. He pinned me down and ripped my shirt off. “I’ve missed you so much.” He said as he kissed my stomach.

“Stop!!!” I screamed.

“Shut up!” he yelled, slapping me in the face, “You went and fucked all those other men for money, so now you can shut up and let me have my share you little whore.”

I started to cry. I felt like that helpless girl again. I hated that feeling. I felt him unzip my jeans and put his fingers in me. As I felt him invading me like that again my anger began to build. I was the Yellow Ranger. I had beat lots of Arissa’s space freaks, yet here I was being attacked in the worst way and hardly putting up any fight. It was ridiculous! I wasn’t gonna have sex with him. I wasn’t gonna let him rape me now or ever again. When he went to kiss me again I bit his lip hard.

“You little bitch!” He cried easing up his grip. It left me with just enough movement to lift my leg. I kneed him in the balls and pushed him off of me.

“You will never touch me again. I’m not that same timid girl anymore. I have power now, power to take care of myself, you have nothing.” I said running from the room. I ran to the lobby.

“Please, call the cops, my stepfather hit me and he was trying to rape me.” I said to the clerk.

“Oh my god...ok...” the clerk said dialing 911 and explaining everything, “Would you like a jacket or something?” the clerk asked after she hung up.

I realized I was in my bra and unzipped jeans. I fixed my jeans and nodded. I put the jacket she handed me on. “Can I use the phone? I have someone I need to call.”

“Sure.” She said handing me the phone.

It was late, Hunter and Michelle would be in their house. I dialed that number and Michelle picked up.

“Hello?”

“Michelle! It’s April.” I said about to cry.

“April? Is everything ok?” she asked.

“He tried to do it again.”

“What? Are you ok?”

“Yeah, I stopped him this time and I called the cops. Can you come pick me up?”

“Where are you?”

“Reefside Inn. I’m in the lobby waiting for the cops.”

“I’ll be right there.”

Michelle

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I was so many things when I hung up with April. Mostly I was proud of April for stopping him this time.

“What’s wrong?” Hunter asked. We had been sitting in the living room watching TV with Felicity, she’d be going to Florida tomorrow and we wanted to spend time with her.

“Ed tried to rape April again.” I said.

“Oh my god...no...”

“Yeah, I’m going to Reefside Inn to be with her when the cops show up. See if I can get her released into our custody.”

I said.  
“I’m going too.” He said.  
“No, you need to stay here with Liss.”  
“Harley can watch her.”  
“Sweetie, this is her last night here for who knows how long...you stay. I can handle this.”  
“Are you sure?”  
“Yes, I’m sure. I love you.”  
“I love you too.”  
“Whatever you do don’t mention any of this to Derek.” I said.  
Hunter nodded, “I know, he’s lose it.”  
“See you soon.” I said kissing him before I left. I got in my Jeep and headed for the motel.

April

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The cops got there pretty quickly. I went out to meet them.
“We received a call?” an officer said.
“I had the clerk call. My step father beat me up and he tried to rape me. He’s in room 192. He can’t have gone far from there, my mom is gone with the car.” I said.
“OK, I’ll check it out, my partner is going to question you.” The officer said.
“Fine...just do something.” I said.
“What’s your name?” another officer asked.
“April Snyder. What’s your’s?”
“I’m Officer Jackson.”
“Pleased to meet you, now can we get this over with?”
“Can you tell me exactly what happened?”
“I did! He grabbed me, threw me against a wall, beat me, then tried to rape me. If you wait a couple of hours these bruises will have even more color.” I said showing the officer my arms.
“We’re just trying to get the facts.”
“The fact is that Ed Smith is a monster!” I cried as I saw Michelle drive up. She got out of her car and I ran over to her, “Michelle!”
“April, are you ok? Oh god, you look horrible” she said hugging me then looking me over.
“Are you her mother?” Officer Jackson asked.
“No, I’m Michelle Bradley, head mistress of Starlight Academy. April is one of my students. She was away on visitation with her mother and stepfather. She called me right after she called the police.” Michelle explained.
“Oh, you’re a Starlight girl?” Officer Jackson asked.
“Yes.” I nodded.
“Detectives Scott and Oliver left strict instructions to take care of you kids.”
“Yeah, Detective Oliver is my brother.” Michelle said.
“And you believe Miss Snyder’s story?”
“I never doubted her. Ed Smith is a rapist and tonight he tried to do it again.”
“Don’t worry Mrs. Bradley, Miss Snyder, we’ll handle this.” Officer Jackson said as my mom pulled up. She got out of her car and ran over.
“What the hell is going on here April?!” she asked in a yell.
“Ed tried to rape me again, this time I put a stop to it.” I said.
“I’m sorry about this officers, she can’t be trusted. She’s such a drama queen.” Mom said trying to pull me away from the officer and Michelle.
Michelle grabbed my arm and pulled my back, “I’m sorry Mrs. Smith, I believe your daughter, and I can’t believe you don’t. Look at her arm. Does it look like she’s lying? How a mother can be so blind when her daughter needs her most is beyond me.”
“We got him, we’re taking him down to the station.” The first cop said.
“You will pay for this April Snyder.” Mom said running to her car to follow Ed to the police station.
“Can I go back to Starlight?” I asked.
“That’s up to Officer Jackson.” Michelle said.

"I think that would be ok, just be ready to answer some questions tomorrow." Officer Jackson said.

I nodded, "OK, thank you."

"Let's go." Michelle said. She took me to the Jeep and drove me back to the Academy.

We went into her house first.

"April, are you ok?" Hunter asked.

"I will be." I said.

"Come here." Hunter said hugging me.

"I don't want to face the other Wildcats tonight. Can I sleep here?" I asked.

Michelle nodded, "Of course. You can have the guest room. I have a shirt you can sleep in."

"Ok, thank you...I'm ready for bed I think...Michelle? Can you sit with me until I fall asleep?"

"Of course." She replied walking with me to the guest room. I got ready for bed then Michelle sat next to the bed and started singing and brushing my hair with her hand. I gave a small smile. Hearing her sing was comforting and I soon fell asleep.

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Harley

The next day I was at the track, preparing for the race. Noah and I were doing final preps on his bike since we finished mine.

"No matter who wins we're still friends?" he asked.

"Of course. Friends." I said doing our handshake with him, "And I don't care which of us win as long as we don't let that egotistical twin of yours win."

"I hear ya, between the two of us we won't let DJ win." Noah said.

I walked back to my bike and got ready to ride.

"Harley! Wait!" Tamara called running over.

"What do you want?" I asked.

"To keep my new big sister alive." She said.

"I'm not your sister, god get that through your head, what are you talking about anyway?"

"Check your back tire."

"I just did a prep. It's fine."

"You did a prep then you prepped Noah's bike...check it."

I did and it was loose, it would have fallen off before the first lap was over and I would have crashed. "How did you know it was loose?"

"I saw DJ do it."

"DJ? That rat...he was gonna trash my bike!" I cried.

"That's a new low, even for him." Noah said.

"Must be the company he's keeping these days."

"What?"

"Your brother has been hanging with Arissa."

"You're kidding!"

"Nope. Anyway, did you see him do anything else?"

"No, just that." Tamara said.

"Probably thought that would be enough."

"Are you gonna report him?" Noah asked.

"Nope. I'm gonna shock him by beating his wannabe butt." I said.

"That's the Harley we all know and love."

I smiled, "Let's go teach that twin of yours a lesson."

"Good luck Harley." Tamara said.

"Yeah." I mumbled, then I froze, "Thanks Tamara." I said then I walked to the track.

"Good luck DJ." I said as the race was about to start."

"See you at the finish line." He said smirking.

I put my helmet on and smirked too. He had no idea what was coming.

The race started and I took off like a shot. I knew from the way DJ started to hesitate he was shocked. It was great. I ended up getting first place, Noah got second, and another rider got third.

I walked up to DJ.

“So, you thought you’d sabotage me?” I asked.

“You figured it out?” he asked.

“Yes I did and I fixed my tire. You could have killed me!” I cried.

“You wouldn’t have died.”

“Newsflash, moto is a dangerous sport and any crash can result in death. You ass, I’m just glad you didn’t win...you didn’t even get third. Guess who got first...oh yes, that was me. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have to go celebrate.” I said turning around.

“You go girl!” Mel said smiling.

“OH MY GOD!!! Melody!” I cried as I hugged my best friend, “What are you doing here?!”

She laughed and hugged me back, “Tony and I came to get Liss and take her to Florida for awhile so she’ll be safe from James. I had to see you while I was in town though. Last time I was here you weren’t in such great shape.”

“Oh yeah, well I remember everything now.” I said.

“I’m so glad, you had us all so worried. I hear a lot has happened around here. Tommy was filling us in on the way from the airport.” Mel said.

I nodded, “You have no idea.”

“Two sisters, one that’s Arissa...new boyfriend...you just can’t keep it simple can you?”

“Oh that would be boring.”

“So, you and Josh McKnight?”

I laughed, “Yes, me and Josh McKnight.”

“He’s cute.”

“Hey, back off, you have Tony.”

“I’m just saying.”

I play hit her. “Where is Tony anyway?”

“Talking to Hunter.”

“Let’s go over there.” I said as we walked over, “Hey stranger...”

“Har! Hey!” Tony said hugging me.

“It’s so good to see you. I miss you guys so much.” I said.

“We miss you too.” Tony said.

“We’re going to the Academy to get Felicity, you want to come?” Dad asked.

“Sure.” I said. We all headed for the Academy.

When we got to his house Dad decided we needed some more sodas for everyone.

“I’ll be right back.” He said leaving. I sat down to catch up with Tony and Mel.

April

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Michelle forwent Harley’s race to take me to the police station. They were finally able to get Ed to confess. He was going to end up with 10 years in prison soon as they got a statement from me. While I waited for them to call me in I told Michelle I was going to get some air.

When I got away from her I went across the street to the country building and filled out some fast paper work, making sure to add my case number. I signed it and turned it in. The paper work was an application to become an emancipated youth. I wanted nothing to do with my mother ever again.

After that I went back and gave my statement. That was it, it was over. Michelle and I headed for Starlight and Ed headed to prison.

James

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I had it all planned. I would be rid of Hunter once and for all. I hid until I saw Hunter come out of his house then I followed him. Being a ninja he knew someone was there. But even a ninja can't out run a bullet. I waited until he stopped to look around then I aimed to take my shot. It was great. I had a perfect shot at his chest.

Arissa

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I didn't trust James and I knew something was up. I managed to catch up to him and found him aiming a gun at Hunter. I got so furious. I lost one parent already and even if this was Hunter I wasn't gonna lose another one. I jump kicked James from behind. He fell forward in front of Hunter and dropped his gun. I ran over and grabbed the gun.
"Oh my god...what is going on?" Hunter asked.
"James was going to try and kill you. That is not going to happen though. James, I told you to stay away from Hunter." I said.
"He's in my way!" James cried.
"Hunter, get out of here." I commanded.
"No...I..." Hunter started.
"Go! Now! I'm not sure how long I can hold him off!" I cried.
"Fine..." Hunter took off.
"Alone at last...I always knew you couldn't be trusted and now it's time to be rid of you once and for all. Goodbye James." I said shooting him in the head before he could say a word of protest. I quickly disposed of the body and made sure there was no trace of murder on the Academy grounds then I went back to Aunt Aria.

"Where is James? I tried contacting him and he's not responding." Aunt Aria said.
"James is dead." I said.
"What? How?"
"Harley...she killed him."
Aunt Aria's expression turned darker than normal, "She will pay...we will make her pay."

Harley

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When Dad got back he told us he thought that Arissa took out James on her own for trying to kill him. I wasn't so sure. I wanted to check it out but Dad said no because we had other things to deal with. We all had lunch then Mel and Tony had to head back to the airport. They just came to get Felicity.  
"I'm so glad I got to see you guys." I said.  
"I know, I miss you so much Har." Mel said.  
"Take care of my cousin..." Tony said to Josh.  
"No worries, I got it covered." Josh said.  
"And you take care of my sister." I said.  
"Of course. She's in good hands." Tony promised.  
"I love you Felicity." I said hugging her.  
"Love you Har-re." she said hugging me.  
"I love you too sweetie." Dad said hugging Felicity.  
"Love you too Daddy." She said.  
"Wait!" Mom said running up. "I couldn't let her leave without saying goodbye."  
"Mommy!" Felicity said giggling.  
"I'll miss you sweetheart. I love you my little Crimple." Mom said kissing Felicity's nose.  
Felicity giggled, "Love you Mommy."  
"Crimple?" I asked.  
"Don't ask." Dad said  
"You be good girl for Tony and Mel." Mom said.  
Felicity smiled and Mom handed her to Tony.

“Thank you so much.” Mom said.

“Anytime Aunt Michelle. Just let us know when it’s safe and we’ll bring her home.” Tony said.

“Thank you.” Mom said hugging Tony then Mel.

We watched as they entered the boarding area.

I sighed, “Ok...now we can truly focus...James maybe gone, but Arissa and Aria are going down.”