

Episode Fifteen: Under the Armor

COUGH! Hurlch! Cough!

“So how long are we gonna sit here breathing heavy and chokin’? What the fuck just happened?”

“It was my fault.”

“No.”

“It’s my fault...I hurt you both...my girls. And I... I don’t deserve to call myself a man!”

“But it was me that gave you those pills, and I was just so tired, I shouldn’t have called out for you like that...”

“What? What’re y’all talkin’ about?”

“Back then, at a moment’s notice I’d have to leap out’ve bed to protect the people, but.....I haven’t been able to sleep the same. And even sometimes when I do get the grace of, of nodding off...I...I’m back. The screams, the weapons, the blood, the fighting, it doesn’t leave me. And everything with Cain and the other kids hasn’t helped me either

“Walter...do you uh...do you think you have...?”

“NO! I DON’T HAVE ANYTHING!”

It was subtle...But when Walter raised his voice. “Uhk!” He noticed Nancey flinch.

SQUEEZE! Lucy balled her fists. “You ain’t nodding off are you?”

“It was... I-I-I-I’m sorry I...It was, never my intention an-and it never will be my intention to hurt either of you two. You are what family I have left. I just...I’m not strong enough yet. I-I don’t have PTSD, I don’t have *anything!* I just, I have to deal with it on my own. Just how my father dealt with his problems, he told me I have to do the same. With my own two hands. Whether they be tainted or not...And if you’d like...” ***TMP! TMP! TMP!*** “You two can take the day off.” Walter slowly climbed the stairs.

“But...Huh? You say all the time that we’re..?” ***SHF!*** Nancey put her hand on Lucy’s shoulder.

“Let him be alone for now, we’ll come back later.” ***TMP! TMP! TMP!*** “Let’s just go ask about the gem...”

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Still tired, but wide awake, Lucy and Nancey decided to ask around town about the red gem. “Hey, have you seen a gem like this before?”

I’ll save everyone some time.

“Yeeeeahhh, and RIGHT is fuckin’ subjective!”

“Unfortunately.”

“Oh, but I wanted to ask, how’s your mom doing? You’re her son right?”

“She’s getting better, my father and I have been taking care of her these past few weeks.”

“Ok ok cool, that’s really good to hear. OH, and you got the poster too right?”

“Yup I got it, Ms.Garcia almost knocked my door off the hinges. He used to always tell me about how much he wanted to do Romeo and Juliet.”

“If I ain’t oversteppin’ or nothin’, how come you ain’t go with them?”

“Raphael and all the others, their dreams are just bigger than mine. I like running the diner. Working with my mom, making good food, it’s a simple life.”

“Oh...Then...It was my fault, I broke everything in the diner... last night...on my own.

“Nice try.”

“I-I mean, w-well Raph only, ya know, did what he did because he was in a crazy position an-an-and Ms.Kelly was tryi-.”

“I know I know you don’t gotta explain it to me. I heard the whole story. And about how you got *hyp-no-tized*.”

“Damn.”

“Don’t get it twisted, I AM upset, I understand what happened and everything but I’m still irritated...But it’s alright, if he loves me as much as he says he does I’ll make him and those jackets rebuild it brick by brick.”

“So like...are you two...?”

“He wants to touch the stars, but I’m fine here on Earth. I love him, he loves me, but sometimes it’s way more complicated than just that.”

“Yeahhh...So like do y’all text? Why’d he come to the diner if he knew you weren’t there?”

“So, to my knowledge at least, most of the breakers have long since abandoned their original phones. And I’m sure you’ve noticed, but he has a... taste for dramatics. So most times he shows up unannounced.”

“Wait... You said he just shows up unannounced?”

“Yup, forever the dramatic.”

“Alright! You just gave me a good idea! Heh heh heh heh!”

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“Oh shit you ever seen a gem like this?”

“No.”

“Damn.”