

Phoenix Girl - Pilot

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INT. MUSEUM OF SUPERVILIANS - DAY

Extreme close-up on an intricate amulet, with a glowing red gem in the center. A recording of a victim testimonial plays off screen.

NIGHT TERROR VICTIM O.S.

It really was like being in a
nightmare you can't wake up from.

The shot slowly zooms out to reveal that the necklace is on the wax figure of NIGHT TERROR (40s, a supervillain) dressed in a vibrant purple and black outfit.

NIGHT TERROR VICTIM O.S. (CONT'D)

My boyfriend and I were just
hanging out at the park and all of
the sudden we hear this inhuman
screaming noise.

As the camera continues to zoom out we see a screen beside the figure playing the testimonial.

The video switches from the victim being interviewed to a handheld-video of a tree line. We hear something big moving in the trees, but can only see the faintest glimpse of a shadowy monster. The video switches back to the victim.

NIGHT TERROR VICTIM

And then we saw this awful...
thing. This like grotesque monster.
I can't even imagine how messed up
someone would have to be to conjure
up something like that.

The victim's testimonial fades into the background, as the sounds of bustling museum slowly fade in.

HANNAH O.S.

Lori! Help us settle this.

LORI (16, somewhat goth high schooler) steps in front of the wax figure of Night Terror, and pauses, obscuring it. She looks around and then walks toward HANNAH (17, attractive high schooler).

Hannah and three other girls are standing around a picture painted of The Blaze and Night Terror in battle. Lori stands apart from the other girls, and doesn't seem as relaxed as they are.

The museum is moderately sized and a little indelicate; containing various artifacts like pieces of rubble from battles and wax statues.

HANNAH

Do you think the Blaze is cute.
Like under the mask.

Lori studies The Blaze and wrinkles her nose.

LORI

I guess I don't really think so.

The girls look at her expectantly.

LORI (CONT'D)

I don't know, he's a little too old
for me I guess. I never really
liked his vibe. He always seemed a
little full of himself.

The girls nod.

STUDENT ONE

Ava has the worst crush on the
current Blaze.

AVA

Shut up!

STUDENT TWO

(Mocking)

Oh! Mr. Blaze come to my house
tonight and I'll make you terrible
Blaze-shaped pancakes, because I'm
so not crazy.

AVA

I was ten!

All the girls laugh. Hannah notices Lori seems uncomfortable.

HANNAH

So Lori, why did you change
schools?

LORI

Oh... Wilson just wasn't a good fit
for me.

HANNAH

Oh, like the teachers were tough
or...?

LORI

Yeah, just various problems.

All the girls stop next to a display showing a shadow monster.

AVA

(Reading)

"The Blaze was good at fighting Night Terror because her shadow abilities could not affect him. It is theorized that the superhero could use his powers to cover himself in a 'light barrier', which protected him from her shadows."

Lori snorts. The other girls look at her.

LORI

There's no way that's right. Her shadow hands could grab him.

Ava pulls out her phone and starts to look it up.

AVA

Really? That's so funny if they're wrong.

LORI

I'm sure that's not right.

HANNAH

You mean the 'Museum of Evil' isn't an extremely rigorous institution and seems a little sketchy?

AVA

No, no. The plaque's right. Her shadow's couldn't touch him.

The girls keep walking

LORI

Huh... I could have sworn-

AVA

Oh my gosh!

Ava starts pointing to a display in the middle of the room, looking scared. All of the girls jump away from it.

AVA (CONT'D)

It was glowing.

STUDENT ONE

What?!

AVA

The stone on the necklace suddenly started glowing.

The display in the middle of the room is a raised glass box with the same amulet we saw earlier on the wax statue of Night Terror inside. The only difference is that the stone in the middle of the necklace is a dull red color.

AVA (CONT'D)

But that's freaking messed up because I just read that the necklace stopped glowing whenever it was away from Night Terror.

HANNAH

Ava are you sure?

AVA

Yes! I'm completely positive. It started glowing when Lori got near it; and stopped when she got away from it.

All the girls start moving away from Lori.

LORI

Ava, that's crazy. Only Night Terror could activate it right?

Lori starts getting agitated as the other girls start giving her weird looks.

LORI (CONT'D)

Oh come on. This place is sketch. The owners probably turned on a light or something to freak people out.

Hannah relaxes and tries to calm down Ava. Ava is only growing more upset.

HANNAH

That's a good point, Ava.

AVA

Lori, why did you switch schools?

LORI

That doesn't have anything to do with this.

STUDENT ONE

No one else—

AVA
What happened Lori?!

LORI
I don't want to talk about it.

HANNAH
Ava... What are you getting at?

AVA
What if the rumors are true?

Lori hides her hands behind her back as they clench into fists.

AVA (CONT'D)
About Lori?

LORI
People say all kinds of things.
Look you've been hanging out with
me, you can see I'm totally normal.

AVA
(to her friends)
Come on. I want to go home.

Ava starts walking away.

LORI
Oh, come on guys. Look, this one
teacher had it out for me at
Wilson.

Ava stops because the others aren't following

LORI (CONT'D)
I... so what if the necklace
glowed, what does that even have to
do with anything.

HANNAH
It's a fair question.

AVA
Look I just don't feel safe
anymore.

Nobody moves.

AVA (CONT'D)
Everyone says that Night Terror's
powers were because her mind was so
fractured right?

Lori closes her eyes and start to try to control her breathing.

AVA (CONT'D)
What if the necklace recognized
that Lori had a fractured mind like
that and so it—

LORI
(Screams)
How dare you?!

Everyone shoots Lori scared or dirty looks and starts walking away from her.

LORI (CONT'D)
Oh yeah, let's pick on the new
girl.

She starts walking after them.

LORI (CONT'D)
She has social anxiety and everyone
bullies her so she must be a freak.

The fleeing friends speed up and so does she.

LORI (CONT'D)
Let's all ostracize her and call
her a psychotic monster behind her
back and then when she responds
like anybody would let's all go
"wow, what an over-reaction, she's
such an emotional—"

Hannah turns around to face Lori.

HANNAH
Look it's not—

Lori walks up to Hannah and shoves her. Caught off guard
Hannah walks into a display case and trips. Silence. Lori's
mood shifts to fear as she senses she's gone too far.

LORI
Guys, I'm so so sorry. I don't know
what came over me.

Student Two helps Ava up. Lori turns away from the girls and
runs away.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LOCKWOOD HOUSE - DAY

A middle-class house on a suburban street. Lori runs up to the front door and throws it open angrily.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOCKWOOD HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Lori slams the door behind her and runs to her room. Lester (43, Lori's nerdy-looking father) sits at the living room table reading a book. He looks up as Lori passes.

LESTER
Hey, sweetheart.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOCKWOOD HOUSE - LORI'S ROOM - DAY

Lori walks in her room and slams the door behind her. Lori's gothic, somewhat depressive aesthetic permeates her room, broken up by an occasional nod to the 70's.

Lori walks over to a punching bag in one corner of her room and starts to punch and kick it. There is a knock on her door. Before waiting for a reply, LESTER opens the door and stands in the doorway.

LESTER
Hey, honey. Did everything go good
with your new friends?

Lori does not look at him.

LORI
(sarcastic)
Yeah, everything went great, that's
why I'm in such a good mood.

Lester stands there uncertainly.

LESTER
Well, I'm here for you if you want
to talk about it.

Lori turns around to face her father.

LORI
(angrily)
I know. Do you think I'm dumb.
(MORE)

LORI (CONT'D)

You've only told me a hundred times. Maybe if you gave me one ounce of credit you'd realize that the reason I'm not talking to you is not because I have the memory of a goldfish, but because I don't want to. Thanks for coming into my room without my permission by the way, it really reminds me how much you respect my privacy!

Lori turns back to the punching bag. Lester leaves her room and closes the door behind him. WE HEAR the distant sounds of Lester and Emma talking.

Then, footsteps walking up to the door. There is a gentle knock on the door. Lori doesn't respond. EMMA (45, Lori's mother, refined and beautiful) opens the door.

EMMA

I'm sorry things didn't go well.

Lori doesn't respond. Emma walks over to a chest of drawers, opens the top one, and pulls out a length of boxing tape. She walks over to her daughter, takes one of her hands and starts wrapping it. The mothering calms Lori down.

EMMA (CONT'D)

As funny as you look trying to brush your teeth with broken knuckles-

Lori is still not looking at her mother but she smiles.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I would really rather that doesn't happen again.

Emma humorously mimes trying to brush your teeth with only a pinky finger wrapped around it. Lori can't help, but look over and snorts. She offers her other hand to her mother.

LORI

Nora says she doesn't want to be my best friend or friends at all anymore.

EMMA

What? Why?

LORI

She said after... what happened at Wilson, I was "poison." I guess she thinks if she dumps me as a friend she can get more popular.

EMMA

Oh, honey.

LORI

That's why I've been so focused on making friends at Mountain View. I thought it would be easier without people spreading rumors about me, but I guess...

Lori gives the bag a particularly hard punch.

EMMA

You weren't having luck yet.

LORI

Yeah. So when Hannah actually started talking to me and stuff, I thought I'd finally gotten somewhere. And then when she invited me out with her friends.

(pause)

I just wanted so badly not to mess things up. Then one of the other girls started acting weird and...

Lori turns around to face her mother.

LORI (CONT'D)

And she said people are spreading rumors about why I got expelled from Wilson. I just felt like I could see the next three of years of my life, feeling so lonely whenever I was at school. And it was like I was back in middle school, and everyone hated me and there was nothing I could do about it. And I just snapped.

Emma stands up and hugs her daughter.

LORI (CONT'D)

I pushed Hannah and she fell over.

Emma looks concerned.

LORI (CONT'D)
She's fine, but I ruined my one
shot at having friends again.

EMMA
Honey, you don't know that.

Lori clutches her mom tightly and nods.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Hey. You don't know what's going to
happen, right? Everyone has flaws,
Lori.

They stop hugging.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Yours are just a little more
obvious sometimes. Did you say
sorry and try to explain that your
best friend just broke up with you
and you're sensitive to people
spreading rumors about you?

Lori shakes her head.

LORI
I kind of ran away.

EMMA
Go and say sorry. Maybe Hannah
still won't want anything to do
with you; but at least if
anyone asks you about it, you'll be
able to say, "yeah, I lost my
temper, but I did everything I
could to make it right." And who
knows, maybe Hannah will get it.

LORI
Ok, mom. That sounds good.

EMMA
You're cleaning the car tonight as
a punishment. Also, please make up
with your dad. He really is trying
his best.

LORI
(Talking over Emma)
I know. Sometimes how he...

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOCKWOOD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lester has his head inside the cabinet under the sink. He is tinkering with the plumbing and a tool belt rests next to him. Lori walks up to the doorway.

LORI V.O. (CONT'D)
...handles things...

Lori knocks on the doorframe. Lester looks up. Lori smiles at him.

LORI V.O. (CONT'D)
just makes me feel even angrier.

LORI
Hey, the season finale to our
cooking show just came out. Want to
watch it after dinner?

Lester smiles, but there's a sadness to it.

LESTER
I'd love that.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINVIEW SCHOOL - DAY

A school bell ringing.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK IN A PARK - DAY

The girls Lori was hanging out with at the Museum of Supervillains are sitting on a cliff overlooking the river and eating lunch. Their backpacks lie around them.

A sheepish looking Lori with her backpack, walks over to them. The girls stop talking and stiffen as they notice her approach. Hannah stands up.

LORI
Hey, I just wanted to say sorry
about the other day. I was way out
of line. People spread rumors about
me at my old school and sometimes I
have trouble controlling myself-

Hannah cuts her off.

HANNAH
(Curtly)
Thanks.

The girls are all glaring at Lori or pretending to ignore her. She teeters on her feet, trying to decide whether to leave.

LORI
Yeah. It was all my fault so.

STUDENT ONE
This doesn't change anything!

LORI
What do you mean?

Several of other girls try to shush Student One, but she's too angry to care.

STUDENT ONE
You think you can come here and apologize and we'll stop trying to get you expelled?! There's something wrong with you.

LORI
(Shocked and upset.)
What?! Expelled? That wasn't even on school grounds. You can't!

Lori takes a step toward the other girls. Hannah jumps away from her, trips, and falls ten feet into the river behind her. All the girls scream.

AVA
Oh, my gosh! Hannah!

Lori runs to the edge of the cliff and looks into the water. WE SEE Hannah's head pop out of the water. She frantically tries to swim to the side, but her poor swimming abilities are no match for the current.

Lori jumps in the river and begins swimming toward her.

STUDENT TWO
Swim to the side!

Lori is a much better swimmer than Hannah, but the river is swollen and even she is struggling with the current. Lori reaches Hannah, grabs her, and begins swimming with all her might to the side.

The two girls reach the side. Hannah gets a grip on some rocks. Lori tries to grab the side, but can't get a good grip and starts floating downstream. She grabs onto Hannah. Hannah fights to hang on, but doesn't have a good grip and starts slipping.

HANNAH

Oh my gosh! I'm slipping! Try to grab hold of something!

LORI

Ok!

Lori reaches for another bit of rock, but can't get a good handhold. She starts to get dragged downstream.

HANNAH

Lori!

LORI

Don't worry I'll find another spot.

The river is more rocky at the section she's been pulled to. She tries to grab a boulder in the middle of the river, but is pulled away.

Suddenly she gets pulled under the water as the current goes under a large boulder. The large boulder is lodged between two other large rocks that are trapping Lori, preventing her from going left or right.

The sounds of the outside world vanish replaced by the muted whoops of water going rushing ears. WE SEE Lori fighting the current underwater. She quickly loses her strength and gets pulled deeper and deeper underwater toward the bottom of the boulder.

WE SEE her POV as her vision slowly fades until everything goes black.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER DIMENSION

Suddenly a bright light appears. The sound of Lori's calm breathing replaces the rush of water. Lori, completely dry, is lying on the ground of a tunnel. One side of the ethereal tunnel is a welcoming white light, obscuring anything down that path.

The other side of the tunnel is impenetrable blackness. Lori calmly stands up and begins walking toward the light. Suddenly something stops one of her legs.

Looking down, she sees a pure black clawed hand grabbing leg. She kicks her leg free of the hand and begins sprinting down the tunnel. More hands grab her legs and arms. She continues to pull herself free.

The white light seems to be getting further away the more she runs. A hand trips her. She falls and is dragged towards the blackness, struggling with all of her might. She screams. It is moments away from engulfing her.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Close up on a sleeping Lori wearing an oxygen mask. Her eyes open.