

## Heroically Reckless

By Marielle Geresola

After my body could no longer run, I slowly crumpled to the ground. I didn't notice that I was dropping the civilian until he gave a frightened yelp. At least I was practically at ground level when we both hit the soft grass. I stretched, trying not to wince in pain. I just wanted to stay limp on the ground.

"What are you doing?"

I looked up to see Michelle, narrowing her eyes at me, her hands on her hips. I sighed, "What does it look like? I'm saving this guy's life."

"Really? Because it looks like you caused our city to have one less building. Again."

I sat up and looked back at the gray rubble that was once a bank. There was still a visible cloud of smoke from the explosion, and I could still feel the heat radiating on my back. *Yikes*. Maybe there was a lot of damage done, but I was trying to help the situation—and it's not like other heroes haven't slipped up a couple of times. We might've trained in different cities, but I'd bet she started off rusty, too. I turned towards Michelle and narrowed my eyes at her. "Like *you're* so perfect. Have you really not had a few accidents while saving people?"

Her glare intensified. "I never said I was perfect. And at least my mistakes haven't caused four buildings to be destroyed! This time, you could've avoided it if you had just been patient."

I cringed and flopped back onto the ground, knowing that *maybe* she was right. Even I knew that it wasn't wise to start pulling out wires just because they were red. I couldn't help it, though! The bomb's clock really freaked me out. Even if Michelle had already gotten the robber to police and gotten most of the hostages out of the building, the minutes ticking away made my sanity tick away. The bomb squad was taking forever to arrive, and I couldn't just throw an explosive out onto the street. Besides, the red wires were the ones I was supposed to cut last time.

"Um, can I have help getting to my car?" The civilian winced. I forgot that he was here.

Michelle immediately straightened up her posture and hurried to him, a concerned expression on her face. "Of course, sir."

I watched as she offered him her arm and walked him to the surprisingly intact parking lot across the street. Was she not as tired as I was? She was carrying people out of the building, too, and I still felt sore. As she and the civilian neared his car, I couldn't help but notice how her left ankle had a little limp. How was she able to help him? When I looked back at Michelle's face, I saw her face scrunch up in pain for a second before her expression smoothed. As he drove off, she turned towards me with disappointment in her eyes.

I stood up, unsteady like a table with uneven legs, and walked to her. She crossed her arms, "Look, you're not the worst hero this city has ever met, but you have to understand how you're putting people in danger."

"I know, but I have to help—"

"The best way you can help is by acting differently. Stop rushing into things without thinking; stop being so impulsive. I know that you're trying your best, but you won't get better if you don't change."

"I don't know how to respond to that."

"Then don't!"

"I..."

"Maybe you shouldn't be responding to any help calls," Michelle said as her voice softened. "At least not for the time being."

I stopped walking. "Are you saying... that you're putting me on probation? Do you even have the power to do that?"

Michelle let out a heavy sigh, "Of course I don't. Even if I did have the power, I wouldn't be putting you on probation. I just want you to think of taking a break."