

CCS Volume 11

Episode 74

Lucy

Robin

Intro

Sakura's powers are growing, and Eriol may be out of time. Are we at the final battle already? Didn't we just start reading this, like, last week?

We're Lucy and Robin, and we'll be your guides through CLAMP's Wonderland!

Check-In

- Robin oh my god, it was so hard to read this book and not instantly go on to the next one. I am dying. Let's record quickly!
- Agreed! We're almost at the end, folks!

Background

- This is book 11 of 12, and SO MUCH HAPPENS! The tankoubon (collected volume) was originally released in February 2000. I'm pretty sure I read this in 2003 when it was released in English, because at some point I feel like the floppy comics (which was how we'd been collecting it) were either discontinued or overtaken by the collected volumes?
 - There's also a chance that I didn't actually read the ending back in the day since...in 2003 I would have been a Junior in high school and pretty busy with life?
 - I know I've read the ending less than the beginning, which I mean OBVIOUSLY that's USUALLY the case with a series, since you HAVE the first ones longer than the later ones...but also the ending differs QUITE a bit from the anime ending in some ways, and that contributes to this delightful feeling of discovery (or maybe re-discovery) that hit me as we approached this volume!
 - Anyway I'm wasting time, Lucy, tell us what happened!

Summary

- We begin with Sakura dreaming.
 - It's a familiar dream, similar to ones we've seen before: Tokyo Tower standing ominously against a dark sky, and Sakura observes that the sun and moon are disappearing. We see the shadowy figures of Ruby Moon and Spinel (Sakura is reminded of Yue and Kero, since obviously she doesn't recognize them).
 - She hears Clow's words from after her trial: "I fear I might make things difficult for you, young Sakura...but I'm sure you'll be alright."

- She sees Eriol--though she doesn't recognize him--wearing Clow's clothing and holding Clow's staff.
- Sakura hears a voice say "...if...sun...they...wake."
 - And she wakes up. But, more importantly, for the first time in this half of the series, Sakura remembers her dream. And she recognizes the child from her dream as the same figure she saw in the pond at Tsukimine shrine.
 - Kero confirms that it was a premonition dream, but here's the real kicker. The reason she was able to remember it this time must be because her powers have been growing...which means that up until now, someone was blocking her memories with magic.
 - They puzzle over what this all could mean. It's undeniable that they've sensed Clow's presence around each of the recent disturbances, but why would Clow want to make trouble for Sakura? And why would Kero and Yue's memories of Clow's last days differ so much from the vision Sakura saw?
 - Although the "whys" elude them, Kero says that given Clow's power, it's possible he could have cast a spell that would still be active even after his death.
- Sakura says that she wants to track down the images from her dreams, and decides to go to Tokyo Tower after school.
 - Today's the perfect day to do it, since her father and Touya will be out for the evening.
 - Of course, when she tells him her plans, Syoaran wants to join her. He adds that he probably won't be much help with Clow, though.
 - But Sakura assures him that he's always helpful. He's always saving her! And besides, she'll feel less worried if he's there.
 - This statement is given a full page of its own, with Sakura's smiling face taking up at least half the page. There are cherry blossoms filling the background, and Syoaran's face, surprised and maybe a little bit in awe.
 - These two are definitely having more and more little moments together.
 - Syoaran remembers Tomoyo's encouragement that if he tells Sakura his feelings, she'll accept them and answer him truthfully, and he almost tells her...but he just can't quite bring himself to do it.
 - Sakura can tell he was about to say something, though, so he promises he'll tell her when they get back from Tokyo Tower. They even pinkyswear on it.
 - Both Tomoyo and Eriol see this exchange, and when they see each other seeing this exchange, Eriol comments that Tomoyo always has a kind look in her eyes as she watches over Sakura. And Tomoyo comments that he has the same look, himself.
- Back home, Sakura discover a new letter from Kahou. And this one's a little ominous. She says that Sakura's been having a lot of difficulties, but she's sure they will end soon. However, she adds that the day Sakura receives this letter will be her most difficult day.

- She also includes a PS that says “the hint that will help most is always within you.”
 - So uh...I guess that's...good?
 - Very helpful!
- Fujitaka emerges holding a basket of laundry, and tells Sakura he's leaving soon. But first, he notices that she seems worried.
- She's surprised at first, but after all, he is her dad, of course he can tell when she's worried. And as she hugs him, she's again reminded of Eriol, and how similar the two of them feel.
- Speaking of which, Eriol is hanging out in a familiar looking house, sitting in a familiar looking chair (they're both from Sakura's vision of Clow's last day).
 - Suppi approaches Eriol, and says that he seems to have made a decision.
 - He can tell, because he's been with Eriol for a long time.
 - Eriol's been in this child form for that whole time--how long, Suppi asks, does Eriol plan to stay that way?
 - Eriol says that 'it would appear the end is near.' Sakura's powers are much stronger now, so it won't be long.
 - Ruby Moon--well, Nakuru--returns from school, and they announce that a letter has arrived for Eriol.
 - They go on to talk about their day. They've been hanging out with Touya and Yukito, even though Touya still seems annoyed by them.
 - And they're more than a little annoyed themselves, at the fact that Eriol just stood and watched while Yue took Touya's magic away.
 - They really wonder why Eriol came to Tomoeda at all. What exactly does he *want*?
 - Obviously it has something to do with Sakura, but if his goal is to stop her magic, Nakuru says that he seems to be lacking in motivation. Or maybe he's being too soft?
 - Eriol says that's possible, but it will all make sense tonight.
 - Great to know that even Eriol's goons have no clue what's going on, great communication here, superb management style XD
- Of course, Tomoyo has made Sakura dress up for her visit to Tokyo Tower, and when Sakura complains that people will be looking at her, Tomoyo says they'll just think she's in a movie--and besides, Syoaran wore his ceremonial clothes, as well!
 - He says they are for freedom of movement. I feel like with their large sleeves and long bits, his ceremonial outfit is much more likely to get caught in stuff than, like, pants, and a t-shirt, but fine.
 - And it doesn't matter anyway, because there's no one around to see them. Which is odd in itself. Even on weekdays there are always a lot of people around Tokyo Tower.
 - GOD I WANT TO GO TO TOKYO TOWER
 - Do they give you your money back if you don't become a magical girl or get Isekai-ed?

- **Anyway**, as she thinks about it, Sakura realizes that all these recent attacks have happened when there's no one around, and Syoaran points out that someone must be making it so that people stay away.
- But who?
- **And**, surprisingly (or maybe not), a voice from above them says "me." And looking, up, Eriol is standing on Tokyo Tower, dressed in his full Clow Reed get-up.
- **Elsewhere** (but in sight of Tokyo Tower), Yukito and Touya are discussing Nakuru's shenanigans...until Yukito suddenly startles, and transforms into Yue. He senses danger approaching Sakura.
- **Back** at Tokyo Tower, Sakura instantly recognizes Eriol (which is very satisfying, I gotta say), and despite his gentle smile, everyone is pretty upset.
 - Nakuru also reveals themselves, with Spinel at their side, and they both promptly transform into their true forms.
 - Sakura says that they look like Yue and Kero, and Spinel says that of course they do...they were made by the same person, after all.
 - Before anyone can really process this information, Eriol holds up a small key, and begins a spell; one that sounds very familiar. It's basically the incantation Sakura used when she awakened her key in the beginning, invoking the powers of darkness, complete with the final word: release!
 - The key transforms into his staff, and Eriol says that his name in this life is "Eriol," but in a former life, it was "Clow Reed."
 - Kero, shocked, says that would mean he's the reincarnation of Clow...but if that's true, why would he be putting Sakura in danger?
 - Eriol--looking eerily like his former self to Kero--says that it's because there's something he wants.
 - **And**, as darkness begins to swirl around him, he says "let's begin."
 - **His** magic rears up into a pillar, straight up into the sky. Although it was daylight moments before, the sky quickly darkens, obscuring the sun and the moon.
 - **And** as the sky falls dark, Tomoyo collapses.
 - Touya also collapses, in the middle of running with Yue to help Sakura. And it's not just him and Tomoyo. Around the city, every non-magical person is asleep.
 - It's even affecting Syoaran. Although he's not fully unconscious, he's definitely having to work to stay on his feet.
 - Eriol explains that he has "called the night, and all living things have fallen asleep."
 - He's a little surprised Syoaran is awake, actually; he had been meant to also fall to Eriol's spell, but it looks like he's gotten stronger.
 - But, it gets worse. Eriol explains that if they don't lift his magical night before the real dawn comes, the people of the city will stay asleep forever.
- **When** Sakura asks how she can break the spell, Eriol explains that she needs to break his spell with her magic.
 - It may sound simple, but remember, he's got Clow's magic, and Clow had an unparalleled amount of magical power. There's no way Sakura is at that level yet.

- And Sakura is still in shock about Eriol's identity; she can't use power against her friend!
- Eriol, however, does not have this problem, and informs her that they'll play with her a bit, to see if they can change her mind.
- Spinel attacks with a...Gozilla breath weapon?
 - Yeah its a whole beam coming from his mouth its WONDERFULLY DONE effects but also extremely goofy and I loved it
 - But Kero jumps in front of Sakura and Syoaran, shielding them.
- The attacks continue, with Kero unleashing his own fire breath, but ultimately he gets knocked aside.
- As Ruby Moon taunts the fallen Kero, Spinel unleashes another attack at the unprotected kids. But this time, Yue is able to shield them.
- He's carrying an unconscious Touya (which is becoming a pattern), and he explains to Sakura that Touya is also asleep, since he gave Yue his magic.
- He looks sad about that, but not as sad as when he looks at Eriol.
- Eriol explains that this is actually the second time Yue has met him in this form, and Yue remembers the time he found himself turning back to Yukito, with no memory of what had happened. And yup, that was Eriol. He wasn't ready for Yue to find him out.
- Looking truly distraught and betrayed, Yue asks why Clow would make them choose a new master if he was going to be reborn.
- And Eriol maybe looks a little sad himself, but he doesn't respond.
- Instead, Ruby Moon announces that *they* should be Yue's opponent.
 - And they get a gorgeous page to show off how good they look, and launch their attack.
- They trade blows, and Ruby taunts Yue for being so weak, even with Touy's magic...it must be because he has such a weak master.
- Which really hits Sakura hard, even though Kero is quick to say that it's not her fault.
- The two pairs prepare to face each other again, but Sakura yells at them to wait.
 - She asks Syoaran to take care of Tomoyo and Touya, and after gathering strength from his support, she confronts Eriol. Why is he doing this to them? He's always helped her before--why this?
 - Eriol says that if she wants the answer, she'll have to break his spell.
 - Morning is almost here...doesn't she want her friends to see it? And he readies a spell.
 - And that's just too far for Sakura; she won't stand him threatening her friends.
 - As he releases his spell towards them, Sakura brings out her own key, releasing her power.
 - She transforms The Shield to protect her friends, and then goes on the offensive with Watery.
 - Under his breath, Clow says that there are only two left, and Yue seems to be the only one who hears him.

- Sakura uses jump to avoid Eriol's new volley of attacks, and Kero and Yue move to protect her, but Ruby Moon and Spinel stop them first.
- Sakura is in freefall, but she's not out of allies--Syoaran casts a wind spell of his own to cushion her fall. It's clearly still a struggle for him to even stand up, but he's doing it for her.
- However, just as Eriol remarks that it's reckless for him to use magic in such a state, Syoaran collapses. He uses his sword to prop himself up, but there doesn't seem to be much fight left in him.
- Again, Eriol reminds Sakura that if she wants to save Syoaran and the others, she'll have to break his spell.
- And it looks like this is probably the last time he'll have to tell her, because Sakura looks pretty determined now.
- Sakura tries to use Windy to turn into binding chains, but Eriol blocks the spell, and tells her she can't use the same magic on him that she used to capture Yue.
 - She uses fly to give herself wings and avoid his attacks, but a fire attack hits her, catching her wing on fire, and sending her tumbling into some foliage.
 - Seeing their master in trouble, Yue and Kero fight back against Ruby Moon and Spinel with a new determination, and manage to break past them.
 - And Sakura's not alone; her cards--the Sakura cards--float around her, and she thanks them for worrying about her.
 - Kero and Yue come to check on her, but she's not sure what she can try next.
 - Sakura considers what she has. There are 19 total cards, and 17 of them have been transformed into Sakura cards. The only ones left are The Light and The Dark.
 - And then, all at once, Sakura remembers the words in her dream: "if...sun...they...wake."
 - If the sun comes out, everyone will wake up!
 - It was The Light card that spoke to her; it's the only thing that can chase away the darkness.
 - She tries using Light...but nothing happens.
 - Kero points out that the Light and Dark cards are the first cards under him and Yue. It may be that she's not strong enough yet to transform them.
 - Sakura doesn't know what to do; she can't let this continue, she has to save her friends.
 - But Kero and Yue have an idea. She should try to change the Light and Dark cards at the same time, since they are always together. This sounds like it will be even harder than just changing one (which she already couldn't do), but they may be able to help her.
 - Sakura uses her staff to transform the cards, and Yue and Kero have the ability to combine with the staff, transferring their powers to the cards.
 - Sakura asks if they would be able to return to normal afterwards, and, with a look back at Eriol, Kero says yes...if Sakura succeeds, that is.
 - If she can't change the Light card even after all that, Eriol says that Yue and Kero will have the same fate as everyone else: they will sleep forever, inside the staff.

- Hugging them both, Sakura cries that this is no good; if she messes up, she won't be able to see Yue and Kero again.
- But, getting down at her level so he can look her in the eyes, Yue says that if she doesn't act now, she'll never see any of her friends again.
- Kero says it will be alright...she still has her invincible spell, right?
- And wiping away her tears, Sakura says her invincible spell: I'm sure I'll be alright.
- **With** last respectful, almost loving looks, Kero and Yue let their forms dissolve, transferring themselves to Sakura's staff, which transforms.
 - Sakura's star remains, but it's no longer confined within a circle, and it's been joined by a crescent moon and an ornate sun, with wings bursting from each side.
 - She raises her new staff, asking Light and Dark to change for her.
 - And the transformation begins, starting at the bottom of the cards.
 - Sakura struggles, putting everything she has into it, and it's clearly difficult, as the cards continue to slowly transform.
 - A pair of hands grip Sakura's staff, and Syoaran is there, behind her, lending her his strength. He may not have much, but he does have Clow Reed's blood, so he's got to be able to help a little.
 - She's concerned about him, of course, but he draws on that invincible spell of hers, saying that he's sure she'll be alright.
 - She once again takes strength from his supportive presence, and they both focus all their energy on transforming the cards.
 - **Syoaran** does what he can, but it eventually becomes too much for him, and he collapses, asleep at last, leaving Sakura to finish the transformation herself.
 - It's really all up to her now; everything is relying on this transformation. If she fails now, she'll never see Syoaran again, either.
 - She uses this realization to help her focus, knowing she has to believe in Kero and Yue; believe in the cards; and believe in herself.
 - With one more use of her spell--I'm sure I'll be all right--**zettai daijoubu da yo!**--the transformation is complete! The Light and the Dark are now Sakura cards instead of Clow Cards.
 - And in a bright two-page spread, she uses Light to wash away the darkness.
- **From** their perch on Tokyo Tower, Ruby observes that Sakura did it, she broke Eriol's spell. And she asks Eriol: is this what you wanted?
 - **And** smiling a very genuine smile, staring up at the light, Eriol says: "Yes. Now it's finally over."
 - **As** Light illuminates the world, people start to wake up, starting with Syoaran.
 - He asks if Sakura did it, and she says she did, thanks to him. And she hugs him, thanking him.
 - Syoaran looks confused--maybe a little sad--saying he didn't do anything. Even at the end, he couldn't help her.
 - **But** Sakura disagrees. He helped her just by being there. Because of his presence, she was able to try harder.

- The reunions are not over: their task done, Yue and Kero leave Sakura's staff, returning to their true forms.
- Sakura thanks them as well, but Kero says there is no need for thanks. They're all friends, after all.
- Tomoyo is also awake, and she's relieved to see that Sakura is alright,
- Touya is still asleep, but Yue says not to worry; he'll wake up soon.
- **But** before anyone can get too comfortable, Eriol says Sakura's name, and they turn to see him standing before them, with Ruby Moon and Spinel.
- Kero and Yue get into fighting stances, but Eriol says that it's all over now. No more games.
- Well, except for one thing: the real sun hasn't come out yet, so Sakura had better change things back to night, or people are going to be a little confused.
- And so Sakura uses her last card, The Dark, to transform the city back to its natural night.
- **Sakura's** cards float around her, and she remarks that they have all changed now. They're all her cards; she made them with the power of her own star.
 - Eriol looks delighted by this.
 - But he's not going to be let off that easy. Kero and Yue demand an explanation; why has he been making so much trouble for Sakura?
 - Sakura wants to know why he did this also...but before he can answer, there's another surprise!
 - Sakura and Touya's dad, Fujitaka, has just wandered onto the scene!
 - **This** would be distressing anyway--I mean, Sakura's in a weird outfit, and he potentially just saw her doing magic--but it's extra concerning because most people are just waking up. And yet Fujitaka doesn't even look groggy.
 - He says he was just passing by when suddenly the sky became dark. And then it became light again. And everyone around him fell asleep!
 - Wait, but that means he wasn't asleep?
 - No, Fujitaka says he was fine, and seems confused why Sakura would be so surprised by that.
 - If Eriol's magic put everyone else to sleep, why would Sakura's dad be immune?
 - With a smile, Eriol simply says "Oh, my magic doesn't work against him."
 - That's when Fujitaka notices all the interesting characters around Sakura, and ask who they are (kindly and innocently, I might add--he doesn't seem like he's judging them for being odd...even though some of them are large, dangerous animals...).
 - **Before** Sakura can answer, Eriol approaches him.
 - Standing in front of Fujitaka, Eriol says "It's been awhile since I've seen my other self."
- **Mic drop. Record scratch. W-w-whaaaat?**
 - Sakura asks the obvious question on all of our minds: how could her dad be another Eriol?
 - And Fujitaka says he's not quite sure what Eriol is talking about.

- But Eriol says that's because when they split in two, Eriol was the one who inherited the memories.
- Clow Reed's soul split in two, and one of those halves became him, and the other became Fujitaka.
- That must mean that Fujitaka is a reincarnation of Clow Reed as well.
- But before they can process this information, Eriol has a request for Sakura. He wants her to cast a spell on himself and Fujitaka.
- Sakura protests--it seems dangerous, but also impossible, given what he said earlier about not being able to use magic on her father.
- But Eriol explains that's it's not impossible. In fact, Sakura is the only one who can do this.
- But he promises it's a spell that won't hurt Fujitaka.
- So, with some misgivings, Sakura agrees. Despite everything, she trusts Eriol.
- She casts a spell as he commands her, word by word.
- This spell splits the magic inside Eriol, and divides it between him and Fujitaka, just like Clow's soul was divided.
- When it's done, Fujitaka seems to be unconscious, but Eriol says he's ok. He then explains what happened, all those years ago.
- **Back** when he was Clow Reed, there was something he longed for: to no longer be the strongest magician in the world.
 - Before he continues, Eriol says that since his powers are lesser now, he will no longer be able to seal this area from others, and invites everyone back to his house.
 - It's the same house Sakura saw in her visions of Clow.
 - Finally, it's time for his explanations.
 - He had two reasons for putting Sakura through all this.
 - The first was because Sakura's new powers came from her own star. Her first staff drew from his magic (it was there in the incantation she used to release her key), but her new staff drew from her own powers.
 - This meant that the staff and the cards were no longer compatible. This wasn't something Eriol did, it was just because they used different forms of magic.
 - She was able to use Windy in the battle with Yue because she was using the Bell of the Moon, which Clow had filled with the power of the moon for that particular moment.
 - The cards would work for a while, but eventually they would have run out of magic--the power of darkness that Clow drew his magic from--and would become normal paper cards.
 - Sakura needed to transform the cards to fit her type of magic, but given how new her magic was, it would have been dangerous to do that without some kind of opposition.
 - So, Eriol created situations where she would change each card.
 - **Tomoyo** comments that Eriol really is nice. He asks why, and she says that he was always watching over Sakura with such kind eyes.

- Eriol asks if Tomoyo realized who he was, but she says no, she had no idea. Eriol tells her what WE already know: she may not have magic, but her heart's insights may be even stronger than magic.
 - Still pretty mad about this whole situation, Kero asks why Eriol didn't just tell Sakura what he was up to. But Ruby Moon points out that there was no way Sakura would have been as motivated to transform the cards if she'd known what was really going on.
 - And Suppi points out that they also used this to help Sakura's powers grow. When they first came here, she did not have the equal or greater power to Clow, so she could not have succeeded.
 - Eriol stayed in a child form for a long time, so that he could be by Sakura's side as a classmate.
 - Kero still looks pretty annoyed, but Sakura gets it. With one of her kind, genuine smiles, she thanks Eriol. He seemed to know everything about her and the cards.
 - But actually, Eriol says there's something he didn't predict.
 - Syoaran--stumbling over how to formerly address this classmate of his who has suddenly been revealed as his most respected ancestor--asks what could possibly happen that Clow/Eriol wouldn't know.
 - Looking at Syoaran, and then at Sakura, Eriol just smiles, and says he'll keep that a secret for now.
- **But**, there's still the second reason he did all this. That was for himself. As he said earlier, he did not want to be the strongest magician in the world anymore.
 - His excessive power had troubled him as Clow Reed.
 - He most disliked knowing and understanding the future.
 - So, when he died, he split his soul in two (into Eriol and Fujitaka), but even he did not have the power to split his magic in two.
 - In order to do something Clow can't do, you'd have to be stronger than Clow. In other words, someone with the power to change Clow's cards. Someone like Sakura.
 - He needed Sakura, the only one with enough power to split his magic in two. To finally give him relief.
 - Because of her, he is finally no longer the strongest magician.
 - He thanks her, apologizes for giving her so much trouble, and asks her to take care of the cards and the guardians.
 - Of course, with a big smile, Sakura says she will!
 - ...and a voice from off camera says "very good work, Sakura." But we won't be able to find out who that is until the next volume!
 - (it looks like Eriol already knows, though)

Discussion

- **Robin**, I was totally right about what the mysterious second Eriol was, and I feel very proud of this fact.
 - **Good** job XD
 - I mean in some ways they telegraphed it and in others it was so well hidden?

- Like you said earlier Robin, Eriol's also an antagonist who isn't actually an *enemy*, just like Yue was. It's interesting!
- This is kind of a component of magical girl shows--in Sailor Moon, most of the villains were pretty sympathetic as well. But there was usually a deeper force that was purely evil.
- In Cardcaptor Sakura, we don't get anyone who's really evil. The cards were mischievous and needed to be caught. Yue was looking out for the good of the cards, and (we kind of know now) his own heart. Eriol/Clow Reed was actually trying to make Sakura stronger. He did have selfish reasons, but he was still ultimately helping her.
- I mean, maybe this discussion is jumping the gun here, but it's still an aspect of the series that I really like.
- Yeah we'll come back to it for the anime too, since we'll see how similar it ends up!
- Well this feels very climactic, and we still have one volume left! What more could we have happen? Is it just going to be a denouement as we send the characters off for their lives? Or are there more revelations in store?
 - I mean...the main big thing I think of (besides the mysterious person at the end of the volume), is...will Syaoran ever confess his feelings for Sakura???
 - That's true! Once again, character relationships are given equal--if not greater--weight to the card stuff. At least theoretically. I guess we'll find out!
- And with that...lets end this so we can go read the final volume!

Outro (edit for flavor)

In our next episode, we'll be discussing Cardcaptor Sakura volume 12! This will be the last manga volume we cover for now (we'll get to Clear Card eventually, but we're going in publication order, so it may be awhile). But don't worry, we've still got the whole anime to talk about!

Until then, you can follow us on Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram @Clampcastpod, on Facebook as Clampcast in Wonderland, and on our website clampcastinwonderland.com.

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Thanks for coming with us on our journey through CLAMP's Wonderland!

Until next time, remember that everything will definitely be alright—

—and try not to lose an eye!