

Cardcaptor Sakura

Movies

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Intro

Sakura has captured and transformed all the cards—can she conquer the big screen? How about twice!

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

Check-In

- Hello everyone! So, uh, we kind of disappeared for awhile...
- The boring reason is that we both got overwhelmed by various things, among them the holidays.
- I got really set back in late October because my fiance and I got Covid, and even though that only had me down for two weeks, it really set everything back and I'm only now getting back on track.
- It also turns out its really complicated and kind of overwhelming to plan a wedding, who knew...
- I just did too many conventions and then got a VERY quick-turnaround book project dropped in my lap. Which is now completed but not announced so I can't say anything about it! It ate my entire life during the holidays but it's DONE.
- But, before we go any further, I want everyone to go check out Wheels & Roses on kickstarter! It's possible it has ended by the time this episode comes out, but it's a roller derby magical girl animated show, and I NEED IT.

Background

- Both of these movies were made by the same main production team at the studio Madhouse that made the TV anime series!
 - That means Morio Asaka directed them, Nanase Ohkawa herself wrote them, and the character designs were by Kumiko Takahashi, who I goobered all over for her designs for the Tokyo Babylon OVA back at the beginning of this podcast!
 - She was also an animation director, along with Hitoshi Ueda and Kunihiko Sakurai.

- I did notice while doing research that she did key animation on Morio Asaka's directorial testing-ground OVA he did for Madhouse, POPS! I think that may be the first time they worked together? It would be cool to ask either of them.
- Movie 1 came out in August of 1999, and was released *in theaters* as opposed to being part of like, a brand festival like the Dragon Ball Z tie-ins movies (which we covered in bonus episodes, this is not completely random!)
 - That being said it clocks in at 82 minutes, not even an hour and a half—short snappy kids-anime-tie-in-movie territory—and spoiler alert, that is what it is!
 - I couldn't find box office numbers with a cursory search but I imagine that wasn't the be-all for this project, which is partially just to keep the hype train for the anime, manga, and merch going. It did well enough to warrant them doing another one!
 - The second Cardcaptor Sakura movie is 98 minutes, just over an hour and a half— it did also have a "Leave it to Kero!" short, which I'm sure added some seat-time for movie-goers, but the first one had the CLover music video-style short! Which was later released on the CLAMP in WONderland 2 collection—and which we'll skip for now to save for our Clover discussion, which is coming up SOON~~~
 - Anyway both movie actually won an award—that is, they each won the same award in their respective years—the Theatrical Film award at Animation Kobe, which is sadly defunct as of 2015 but was founded in 1996 by Kobe City! Well, by some amount of Kobe officials that helped organize a committee of anime industry folks (magazine editors mostly, it looks like—people from Newtype and Animedia, etc) so they could have a nice big event in the city.
 - Previous Theatrical Film awards were given to Production IG's Ghost in the Shell (directed by the eminent Mamoru Oshii), Hayao Miyazaki's film for Studio Ghibli, Princess Mononoke—and then the Pokemon Movie.
 - So take that how you will.
 - They did also give TV anime awards to Evengelion, Utena, Cowboy Bebop and eventually to CLAMP-relevant Angelic Layer and Code Geass.
 - The music for both movies is wonderful, sound tracks by Takayuki Negishi just like the rest of the series. There are of course image song/pop song tie ins as well, in the first movie you have Naoki Kaitani's "In The Distant City" and Movie 2 has "Distant Melody" by Chaka.
 - The voice cast is of course the same with additions for new characters...
 - Such as Pop star and voice actress Maaya Sakamoto, who was in the accelerated beginning of her career, providing the voice of the Nothing Card after singing 'Platinum' for the TV anime's 3rd theme song—another note in her long association with CLAMP and their productions! According to an interview she did of CLAMP for her radio show back in 2010 (thank you Chibi Yuuto and SakamotoMaaya.com) they say that they didn't actually meet until the song she did for CLAMP school detectives though!

- Because “they didn’t go to any parties back then”--and I can’t help but speculate that it had to do with how grueling their schedules were!
- For 18 years, this second movie was the last Cardcaptor Sakura primary media that CLAMP released to fans!
- But in 2018, the second movie was released to US theaters for the first time (a limited special release but still!) I’m sure as part of the campaign to hype up Clear Card which started running in that year!

Summary

Movie I

Opens with Sakura (and crew) fighting The Arrow. It’s a pretty impressive fight, and for us serves as a good way to ground us in the right era of the series, as well as watching the animation team show off what they can do with the budget.

This movie takes place before the Judgment by Yue--so Meiling is still around, Sakura’s still collecting cards, and her relationship with Syaoran is still one of rivalry and grudging respect.

That night, as Sakura sleeps, the deck of Clow Cards glows. In her dream, Sakura is in a flooded warehouse, and as she looks down into the water, ribbons flow up and pull her down into the depths.

And as the ribbons release her and she sinks down, a voice says “water is a thing that flows.”

Creepy! The animation team really brings these ribbons to elegant, terrifying life--reminiscent of Natakū’s ribbon weapons in the X movie. That and the stark, lonely darkness of this scene just really brought us back to darker CLAMP works like X!

The next day, the kids are receiving their grades before leaving for winter break. Sakura was a little nervous that her grade would have dropped (it didn’t), but her nerves were nothing compared to Syaoran. After a tense few minutes, he finally sees his grades, and breathes a sigh of relief. These he can show to his mother!

So, apparently Syaoran desperately wants to impress (or at least appease) his mother. I wonder if this will be relevant information later...

After school, Tomoyo and Sakura go to Twin Bells (you remember, the little shop with the stuffed animals and the fake Clow Cards) to buy a notebook. They are having a giveaway, and wouldn’t you know it, Sakura wins a trip to Hong Kong! What are the odds?

Actually pretty good, because when she reaches into the box for the random drawing, there's definitely magic shit afoot as we see the grand-prize-winning ball drawn magically to her hand. Of course, Sakura has no idea, and is just thrilled to be leaving the country for the first time.

And it so happens that her dad will be out of town that week, so guess who gets to take her...Touya! And naturally, Yukito and Tomoyo will be joining them.

But wait, won't we still be missing half our cast? Well, give it time...

They bring Kero along in Sakura's purse (I guess he shows up as a stuffed animal on security scans, too...although its 1999 so maybe bags didn't get x-rayed at that point? I was 12 and had never flown, so I couldn't tell you).

Pre 9-11 airport security was much more chill.

He's excited to see good old Hong Kong again...and of course, recognizes exactly none of it, because of how much the city has changed in however-many-years it's-been.

However, he says the presence is still the same...the magic is diluted in Japan, but here it feels nostalgic to him.

Also, Kero is buying none of this "randomly won a trip to Hong Kong" nonsense, and explains Clow's theory that there are no coincidences in this world. I will not accrue a Star-gazing point here but just know that I could. Kero doesn't hold his serious face for long, and proclaims that it could have no connection and he's just letting the atmosphere of the city get to him.

But really, stay on alert, kids, ok?

To highlight this for the viewer, Sakura, Tomoyo, and Kero are being watched at that very moment by mystical looking birds.

And in the next scene, we're back in Sakura's dream, with the warehouse and the water. This time, the same birds are perched above her, watching. DEFINITELY MYSTICAL BIRDS.

She also sees a lady in flowing robes, with ribbons swirling around her. The ribbons float down to Sakura, as if inviting her to grab them. Sakura reaches out...but wakes up reaching for her ceiling, back in bed in her hotel room.

The kids are definitely enjoying Hong Kong--there's a cute scene where they all go out for dim sum, and Kero is almost caught by Touya when he sneaks food from the baskets. Honestly there are a lot of cute little moments of them seeing the city, which we're kind of jumping over for the sake of time.

On one of their excursions they go to Bird Street, a place where many birds are for sale in cages. Yukito says the people of the city take their birds for walks in cages here, and Kero explains (though not to Yukito, of course), that this area hasn't changed much over the years.

Sakura is admiring cute birds when she senses a disturbance in the force. Is someone watching her?

Kero senses it, too, but doesn't think it's a Clow Card...it feels more evil than that.

That's when Sakura spots our two mystical birds. They fly away, and Sakura takes off after them, chasing them through the city using Jump.

She ends up at an old well, nestled between office buildings. The area around it looks rundown, with slabs of broken concrete, but the well itself is pristine.

Sakura stares into it, and although at first it's clear and she can see rocks at the bottom, the surface shifts as she turns away. The ribbons from her dream float towards the surface, and Sakura's eyes go glassy. Again--wonderfully animated.

She almost falls in...but is saved by none other than Syaoran, who appears and yells at her to wake up. Well, she's saved from being pulled under by mystical ribbon, that is...she still falls into the well, but it's shallow and only a bit inconvenient.

Back at the Bird Street, Tomoyo also runs into a familiar face--or rather, Meiling literally runs into her.

So, the gang is all back together!

Side note: it's very weird to me that they clearly did not tell their friends, who are from Hong Kong, that they were going to Hong Kong. Even if they aren't super close it seems like a thing you'd OBVIOUSLY do.

Maybe they tried calling their house, but they'd already left? This is before cell phones or social media, after all, so there were limited ways to get in touch with friends outside of school. And I can't remember if they'd given Syaoran a special cell phone at this point...

Yeah that didn't happen till episode 53 in the last season!! I do still think this feels a liiiiiittle like loose writing, since they don't even mention "Gee it would be nice to get in touch with our friends here for a local tour"--more like "don't think about it!"

Anyway, they all meet up, and get to go back with Syaoran and Meiling to the Li household. They are all given new clothes (Sakura because she fell in a well, but everyone just...because they wanted to draw cute outfits, I guess?).

They are also beset by Syaoran's four older sisters, who find the girls adorable...but find the teenage boys even more so. Sorry gals~

It's all fun and games until a very imposing woman enters the room...Syaoran's mother.

She immediately identifies Sakura as the one with the Clow Cards, and invites them all to spend the night. Syaoran is not pleased by this, but really has no choice—and Touya and Yukito are distracted by the sisters' attention, so they're no help.

Syaoran's mom's not the only one who can sense things, though. Later that night, Sakura tells Tomoyo and Kero that she can sense an energy from Mrs Li, and Kero says she is clearly a descendant of Clow Reed. He also reminds us that Clow's mother's family were famous sorcerers in China...and gives some more exposition that feels WILDLY UNNEEDED to us, who are watching this after the whole series, but was probably very informative to a viewer who hadn't even gotten to the Judgement yet, let alone Eriol.

That night in the Li house, Sakura has the dream again. She is in the warehouse, with the mysterious woman floating above her, tendrils of ribbon surrounding her.

This time, Sakura grabs one of the ribbons, and the voice says "I've waited for you forever." The ribbons latch on to Sakura's wrist, and draw her up to the lady. She dangles from her wrists, as the lady moves ominously towards her...and then she wakes up.

Kero and Tomoyo are looking over her, and Kero has been saying her name. They realize she has marks on her wrist, from where the ribbons grabbed her.

And...Syaoran's mom knocks on the door.

She takes Sakura outside, and activates a "compass" similar to the one Syaoran uses to locate cards. This tells her that Sakura was beckoned to Hong Kong by the woman in her dream. She warns her that a great danger is approaching, and that those with great power are susceptible to the temptation of evil. This includes Sakura, since she has the power of the Clow.

But, there is also the potential for guidance. The evil is coming from a dream, but the help she needs is also within a dream.

As the magic fades, Syaoran's mother tells Sakura that she knows she is capable of finding the answer.

The next day, Sakura and her crew leave their house, but as she's about to go, Syaoran's mother kisses Sakura on the cheek (to Syaoran's complete surprise, and probably embarrassment). She also tells Sakura to beware of water. IN HONG KONG.

Meiling and Syaoran play tour guide for the group, while the kids puzzle over everything that has happened (and Touya and Yukito enjoy the sights).

Sakura finds a cute hair ornament that reminds her of the dream lady...and it gains even more significance when Yukito sees her admiring it, and buys it for her.

The mood quickly shifts when Sakura spots the two birds again, spying on them. She takes off after them, with Kero in tow and her friends far behind, eventually being led to a storefront. When she walks in, she sees a number of ornate vases and other antiques, but many things look like they are packaged for storage.

Then, she hears ominous dripping coming from a book. On the cover of the book is the woman from Sakura's dreams, sitting at the well she encountered the other day.

Her eyes go glassy again, and a voice says "come." Kero fights to keep Sakura from opening the book, and is on the verge of biting her to wake her up, when Touya and the rest burst in. Touya shakes Sakura awake...but she also drops the book, and water flows out of it.

The room floods with water, and everyone else seems to disappear. Sakura swims upwards, surfacing in the strange warehouse from her dream. Fortunately, Kero has also managed to stay with her.

Like the dream, the woman appears above them, and the two birds fly to her--and turn into her ribbons. Lovely visual!

Kero recognizes her from the front of the book, and of course Sakura recognizes her from her dreams, but the woman is none too happy to see them. Apparently, they were not who she was expecting.

She attacks them, and Sakura uses Fly to avoid her watery attacks. The woman recognizes the use of Clow Cards...first from Sakura, and then from Syaoran.

He appeared here after the water swallowed him, but it looks like everyone else has been captured. They are being held in spherical prisons by the lady, and appear to be unconscious.

The lady, still pretty pissed, asks why they are here...she called for Clow Reed. Where is he?

Kero finds her very familiar, but there's no time to ponder that now, as Sakura and Syaoran go on the offensive to try and rescue their friends. Syaoran uses Storm to trap the enemy in a waterspout. Sakura breaks Tomoyo out of her sphere using the Sword card, and flies her out of immediate danger, but when Syaoran tries to break Meiling out, his own sword does nothing.

Before Sakura can go back for more of them, the enemy breaks out of the waterspout. Syaoran tells Sakura to escape on her own. The lady's magic is weaker above, so they should be able to

escape that way. Sakura tries to get to him, but Syaoran is captured in a sphere prison, and he implores her to run.

And although it pains her to leave everyone, Sakura manages to get herself, Kero, and Tomoyo away.

But, before they left, the lady says that if Clow Reed won't come to her, she'll go out and find him...

Sakura, Tomoyo, and Kero reappear in the old shop where they found the book. As they appear, a clock starts ticking again, implying that they were somewhere outside of time.

The book is gone now.

But, at least Kero remembers why that lady looked familiar!

She used to be a fortune teller here in Hong Kong, a long time ago. Her medium for fortune telling was water, and she would make things appear on its surface. She had a good reputation, but when Clow Reed showed up he started taking away her customers. As a result, she challenged him to fights. Kero theorizes that she must have transferred her consciousness (and magic) to the book when she died. Her hatred for Clow Reed remained, and she was likely trying to trap him in the book, not realizing he's long dead. She got Sakura instead because she has the Clow Cards.

In order to get everyone back, they'll need to find an alternate entrance to her dimension.

Of course, Sakura remembers the cover of the book...and the well she encountered earlier.

That night, with Sakura in costume (at Tomoyo's insistence), they return to the well.

There's a forcefield around it this time, so they can't get close...but Syaoran's mom appears, and uses her powers to create an opening just long enough for Sakura and Kero to go through.

They float down, and Kero announces that they are in a dimension tunnel. If they don't find the right place, they could be lost here forever! Sakura has to use her powers to sense those she loves, and follow that feeling to the correct dimension.

She emerges in a version of Hong Kong, and immediately sees the ominous birds. They lead her on a chase through the phantom city.

We get some fun jazzy chase music, and they eventually find a door that takes them to the chamber Sakura has seen so many times in her dreams.

The lady is there, and they try to tell her Clow Reed is dead, but she's not listening to them. She's been waiting for Clow Reed forever.

To make matters worse, her chamber is starting to collapse. Giant stone pillars fall around them, and the lady disappears with the spherical prisons containing their friends.

Outside, Syaoran's mom and Tomoyo brace for impact as the well explodes, and a pillar of red light shoots into the sky.

She's gone to find Clow Reed...leaving Sakura and Kero in her collapsing chamber.

Fortunately, Sakura is also magic, and uses Fly to get them to safety. They blast out of the well, back in our dimension, and fly above the city, doing battle with the fortune teller. She blasts them with water as Sakura tries to avoid her attacks, but is eventually caught by her ribbons.

Because this is CLAMP, and it *is* 1999, they are doing battle in a skyscraper that's under construction...lots of exposed beams and scaffolding.

Sakura is finally able to tell her that Clow Reed is dead, but the fortune teller doesn't want to believe it, and her fury continues in water attacks on the area. She's determined to wait for him forever, and says that he would never die. She floods the area with water, submerging Sakura...But, it looks like the fact he is really gone may be sinking in (no pun intended) .

Underwater (and not able to breathe this time), Sakura struggles against the ribbons trapping her, when she sees a strange light, and is able to see some of the fortune teller's memories. Clow Reed brought her a gift...the hairpiece Sakura noticed earlier. Maybe what she felt for Clow Reed wasn't hatred...but love?

As Sakura struggles, Clow Reed's voice says "water is a thing that flows". This prompts an idea, and she is able to activate the Arrow card that she caught in the beginning of the movie. It breaks the seals, freeing the water to rush down the side of the building, freeing Sakura.

She confronts the fortune teller, and asks if she actually loved Clow Reed. Sakura understands--it hurts to lose someone you love.

With no choice but to accept what has happened, the fortune teller begins to disappear--her form turning into droplets of water. She just wanted to see Clow Reed again, to tell him something...

All that's left behind is her headpiece, and looking at it Sakura remembers Clow's words: that water is something that flows.

The headpiece shatters, and Sakura's friends return!

After everything, they try to enjoy their last day in Hong Kong. Sakura has taken a lesson from this: she wants to share her feelings with the person she loves one day, too.

But not today. Because we have a whole nother 30 episodes or whatever before that can happen.

Movie II - The Sealed Card

Released weeks after the Tv anime ended (and if you recall, it ended without as clear a love confession as the manga had) this movie opens in an abandoned mansion—Eriol (and CLOW's) old house!

Through a hole in the floorboards, you can see a card glowing...a Clow Card!

After the title screen, we jump to Sakura mid adventure at the King Penguin slide, with Yue and Kero (both in their full form) helping out. We get to see her activate the Jump card, showing off some great animation. She's battling a series of giant creatures, using plenty of her cards to combat them. There's a flaming dragon, an elephant made of stone, a big tree monster...it's an epic battle.

So epic, in fact, because it's actually one of Tomoyo's films! She even edited epic music in and everything, and Sakura used the Create card to generate the monsters. Sakura's a bit embarrassed, but of course Kero thinks he looks very cool.

This is a cute moment that helps ground us in their world now: the anime has ended, Sakura's transformed all the Clow Cards into Sakura Cards, Eriol's gone home, and despite all her powers and adventures, Sakura is still a relatively normal sixth-grader.

Speaking of things that haven't changed...when Syaoran comes up in the conversation, Sakura gets all blushy and drifts into her own little world. Apparently, he's been gone for four months, but Sakura's feelings for him remain as strong as ever.

Tomoyo sees that Sakura is thinking about him (which becomes pretty unavoidable when he's on the screen in some unedited footage that's still playing), and Sakura observes that Tomoyo knew all along how Syaoran felt about her...it was pretty much just Sakura who took a long time to realize it.

Tomoyo says that Syaoran probably likes her precisely because she can be so oblivious. Which may be true...but apparently Sakura still hasn't answered him after he confessed his feelings to her.

It has been four months! Poor boy!

See, Sakura wants to respond to him in person, not over the phone or by letter, since he confessed his feelings to her in person. Which is pretty sweet of her.

Next, we've got a familiar scene of Sakura rushing to get ready for school. Apparently they are getting ready for the Nadeshiko Festival today. Her class is putting on a play, and Sakura will be the princess! Remember that Nadeshiko is her mother's name, and also a beautiful flower that has some symbolic significance in Japan but not usually a national holiday or anything, this is a local event.

As she packs her bag, Sakura grabs the Sakura Cards...and looks at the mysterious card she got at the end of the anime. But, there's no time to waste thinking about cosmically important magic stuff! She has a breakfast to rush through and a brother to argue with!

This scene is familiar to the point of almost being annoying--Touya even teases her for being a monster, and well, we've seen this before--but it does help get us up to speed. Sakura's been working on this play through summer vacation, and she's pretty excited about it. And remember, the Nadeshiko Festival is a community affair, so everyone will be there. Touya will even be there, helping his university run an ice cream parlor.

Naturally, Yukito will be there too.

He apparently goes to the same university! I am for some reason surprised and delighted that he got into university. But, who knows what kind of crazy knowledge he has via Yue via Clow Reed, so it's probably not surprising.

The whole town is decorating for the festival, and this only encourages Sakura to try hard in her rehearsal. It's Naoko's script (aw!) and she's playing opposite Yamazaki-kun's prince. But, the fictional confession of love strikes a little close to home...poor Sakura, I hope you get to see Syaoran again soon!

As Tomoya and Sakura walk home, we learn that at least one thing has changed--apparently an amusement park is being built where Eriol's house used to be! Hence the opening scene. I'm sure nothing could possibly go wrong...

While Sakura is practicing lines that evening, and missing Syaoran, we get a closer look at this amusement park. There's a mysterious figure lurking there...a girl with long, curly brown hair, and wings that look like they are coming out of the back of her head?

See, everything is normal here.

Sakura and Tomoyoa visit the amusement park during the day, and almost immediately Sakura senses something. She takes off, and ends up running smack dab into... Syaoran!!! And Meiling is right behind him!

Apparently, they wanted to surprise everyone so they didn't tell them they were coming to Japan. They've even planned to stay for the Nadeshiko Festival, which means they'll get to see the play.

And... Meiling whispers conspiratorially to Sakura that her engagement to Syaoran is officially broken off. There's some girl he likes, but he's still waiting to hear how she feels... hmmm...

Oh, and Tomoyo totally instigated this whole thing by inviting them to Japan while their vacations overlapped, coincidentally right in time for the festival. They are even staying with her. TOMOYO SEES ALL.

Speaking of machinations... Sakura invites them both to have dinner at her place, but Meiling announces that she has plans with Tomoyo (who agrees without missing a beat), and therefore Syaoran will have to go to Sakura's place for dinner alone.

These kids, my god. If you can't own up to your feelings, they will wing-man your asses together.

Sakura and Syaoran have a painfully awkward moment at her house as she tries to make him tea, and almost tells him her feelings... but of course she is interrupted by Kero (who senses the sweets that went along with tea).

We've still got like $\frac{3}{4}$ of this movie to go, it can't happen that easily...

Kero is the opposite of Tomoyo and seems completely clueless about what he has interrupted. There is a good bit where he transforms into his full form so he can bully Syaoran while Sakura is making dinner.

Kero does return upstairs after dinner, but Sakura's again interrupted when she tries to talk to Syaoran--this time by her brother and Yukito. She has to see him off without finishing her statement, but Syaoran does confirm that he'll see her at school tomorrow. He wants to say "hi" to everyone working on the play.

As Sakura watches him leave, Kero sleeps upstairs... not noticing as one of the Sakura Cards (The Change card) floats out of the deck, glowing, and then vanishes!

The card appears in front of Princess Emeraude--I mean, the mysterious girl from earlier--in the theme park. GASP

At school the next day, everyone is happy to see Syaoran and Meiling, and delighted that they'll be here for the festival.

Meiling is a little frustrated that their evil plan clearly did not lead to Sakura answering Syaoran's confession, but Tomoyo isn't bothered. In fact, this just means there is still a chance she'll be able to record the whole thing!

After school, Sakura, Tomoyo, Meiling, and Syaoran go home together. Meiling does chastise Sakura a bit, but also tries to encourage her. She just needs to show courage!

It's swelteringly hot, so Sakura suggests they go to a juice place she knows. It's really close, they just have to turn at a mailbox at the next street. But when they get to the street, there's no sign of the mailbox.

And, ominously, we see what looks like a cut off post begin to glow! The kids are off to get juice, though, so they don't notice.

Back home, Kero wants Sakura to write Eriol a letter telling Supi about his video game prowess. Sakura uses the framing of a letter to Eriol to sum up things for the viewer, much like she used to do with letters to Mizuki-sensei.

She falls asleep, and another card floats out of the deck, glows, and disappears.

Next we get a montage of the kids getting ready for the play, and Sakura trying and failing to talk to Syaoran. It concludes with Meiling and Tomoyo leaving Sakura and Syaoran alone again hoping SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN...But it doesn't. They are interrupted by a giant rabbit that looks like Ushagi from Wish, which turns out to be Touya in a mascot costume. At least Yukito seems aware of what they've interrupted, which is funny. Because I guess he just lived through a whole season of that.

They all get ice cream, and Yukito and Sakura get a moment alone where Yukito gives her advice about how to confess her feelings to the person she likes.

Even this conversation can't go too far, though, because another card disappears from Sakura's backpack...and this time she does notice something is weird.

She mentions it later to Syaoran, but he hasn't noticed anything...well, except that the bridge on their route has disappeared! It doesn't look like it collapsed, it looks like a big part of it was mysteriously cut away, without leaving any debris...just like the mailbox earlier.

Oh well! The kids decide to go to the amusement park the next day! How exciting!

Of course, this is a perfect opportunity for Sakura and Syaoran to be awkward, and Tomoyo and Meiling to spy on them.

They also get to ride a bunch of rides, which is fun! Time for another montage!

Again, Meiling arranges things so that Sakura and Syaoran end up alone together on the ferris wheel car. Maybe they will finally talk?

They almost do...but another card does its disappearing trick, and this time both kids notice. As soon as they're off the ferris wheel, they take off after it, and then end up at a fun house.

Syaoran confirms Sakura's suspicions: they are definitely sensing a Clow Card. He doesn't know how that could be, though, since she has already captured all the cards (like, a whole season ago).

The mysterious head-wing lady finally appears in front of them! They are thrown off a bit by the fun house mirrors, and Sakura decides to use the Through card to make their way...but the card is gone!

Finally, the girl talks. She says "give me back my friends" and more of Sakura's cards zoom out of her bag.

Sakura tries to attack with Woody, but it does no good, and the girl disappears.

So at least now we know what's up: this girl is stealing cards!

Just as Sakura and Kero are puzzling things out that evening, they get a call from Eriol. He explains that there was a card sealed underneath his mansion, and since the mansion has been destroyed, it'll start to act.

This card has never been used, and only Clow Reed knew of its existence. While each of the Clow Cards have a positive energy, used to bring things into creation, this card is different. It brings everything to a state of nothingness. It has the power to make everything disappear.

Kero asks why Clow would create such a dangerous card, and Eriol explains that with so many cards with positive energy, there had to be one to balance them with negative energy.

Kero points out this is like the concept of yin and yang...and also connects the dots and realizes that this means this one card is as powerful as all 52 of the other cards put together.

Apparently, this was all fine and good when all the cards were Clow Cards, but now that the 52 main cards are Sakura cards, the one remaining negative Clow Card is, well...freaking the fuck out (my words, not his).

Why wasn't this very important information conveyed before now??? Well, because Eriol doesn't have all of Clow's memories obviously.

Sure! Okay!

So, the girl is (obviously) the card, and she's taking the Sakura cards back...along with random buildings and stuff. Everytime the negative card takes away a Sakura card, something else will disappear as well. Things, places...or even people.

If Sakura doesn't transform this card into a Sakura card, everything will disappear!

But, in order to capture it, Sakura will have to trade the most important feeling she has at the time. Oh no!

Maybe Eriol some more useful information, but the call cuts off...apparently the card sensed Eriol and made the ~phone line~ disappear.

Sakura fills Syaoran in on everything later, and he basically tells her she has to seal it--she has no choice. If she doesn't sacrifice her most important feeling, everything will disappear.

Sakura runs through the rain crying, and literally runs into Yukito. Who totally knows he's Yue now, I just have to emphasize that because I keep forgetting!

Yue is worried about her, but at least has some advice. He doesn't think Clow would have created something that would only bring calamity (I am less convinced), so there must be a way for her to seal it without losing her most important feeling.

Sakura is at school when another card is stolen, and this time they can see the girl floating in her ball in the sky.

A big chunk of the soccer field disappears, but even worse, Yamazaki hurt himself when he fell! But they can't cancel the play...who could possibly take his place? Syaoran, of course!

Tomoyo sings at the festival, and Sakura preps for the play, all while the mysterious card watches from above.

Fujitaka makes it to the play as well, and ends up sitting next to Sonomi, who has her small army of lady bodyguards filming every performance.

And we get to see their play! It's cute, and Sakura is wearing one of her iconic outfits. It leads to lots of cute interactions between Sakura and Syaoran, including a lovely dance together.

In the play, Syaoran-the-prince confesses his feelings to Sakura-the-princess, prompting lots of emotions from all involved (including their friends backstage). But, before the scene can end, the lights explode! They are under attack from the sealed card!

Large areas start disappearing, including most of our recognizable characters! Sakura's dad and Tomoyo's mom, their friends, and even Touya are engulfed by the nothing. Viewers of a certain age (or who are well-read in German children's novels) might be reminded of the meta antagonistic force in *The Neverending Story*, but I digress.

Yue and Kero manage to escape, as well as Meiling and Tomoyo, but really this all comes down to Sakura. She has to seal it. But Syaoran will go with her.

And of course, Tomoyo gives them new outfits.

More of Sakura's cards are stolen away, and Sakura tries to fight using Windy, but predictably it doesn't do any good, and Windy is swept up with the other cards. Sakura only has a handful of cards left!

Tomoyo and Meiling also get taken, but Kero and Yue have figured out where the card is. The amusement park!

Once at the amusement park, they are attacked by various things! The horses from the carousel run at them, and a pirate ship almost crushes them. A rollercoaster almost hits Sakura, until she uses Time to stop it!

They are able to spot the girl, the sealed card, floating in the sky. Yue and Kero attempt to attack her, but it doesn't do any good, and Sakura is still losing cards. And ultimately, they are both consumed, leaving just Sakura and Syaoran.

Syaoran concludes that the cards and the guardians of Clow Reed will not work against this card...and he decides to mount his own attack.

He chases her up the ferris wheel, with some rocking electric guitar in the background, and his Thunder does seem to be hurting her...but ultimately her power is much stronger, and Syaoran too disappears.

Now it's just Sakura and her few remaining cards.

She's sad, but she's determined to never give up!

She flies after the girl, chasing her up a clock tower...until the sealed card takes Fly, causing Sakura to fall to the ground. She tries using Shield, and the girl takes that also.

Sakura chases the girl up the tower, telling her that she is determined to seal her away and get everyone back. The card protests. She was locked away for so long, and now she finally has her friends back. Why is Sakura interfering with her?

Sakura responds that the cards are not her friends. Friendship doesn't mean you do whatever you want with someone. She's completely wrong! And at that, the cards appear around the girl, as if judging her.

She asks why they hate her, why they won't be with her...but the cards just leave, forming a path so that Sakura can walk over to her.

Sakura tells her it will be ok, she will be able to join everyone. And, her magic circle appearing before her, she asks the card to return to her true form, and be sealed away as a new Sakura card.

The card gives in, transforming, and Sakura looks sad, realizing she never had a chance to tell Syaoran her feelings before this happened.

Speaking of Syaoran...he's there, too, having resisted the Nothing somehow! Instead of going to Sakura, the card's aura wraps around him. Since Sakura used up so much of her magic when she lost all the cards, he apparently registered as having more magic...so the card went to him, and so did the consequences. But even if his feelings for her are lost, he'll still...

But of course, he disappears before he can finish his sentence.

Sakura is distraught...but there's one card she forgot about. The mysterious blank card with a winged heart on it.

It activates, and after a flash of light, Syaoran is back. And a cute voice tells Sakura that everything will be alright.

The card has a name now: The Hope. And the girl is in this card now, holding the winged heart.

Sakura tells Syaoran that she doesn't mind if he doesn't have feelings for her. She loves him. He's the one she loves the most. Syaoran looks at her blankly...but then he says "me, too." Maybe he didn't have to pay the toll after all because of the fusion, or maybe he just fell in love with her all over again!

The sun rises, the music swells, and we made through this movie!

Everyone wakes up back in reality, so that's good. And Sakura and Syaoran finally confirmed their feelings for each other! Hurrah!

Discussion

Movie I

- So...visual feast, light story. For both of them. But let's talk about the first one first. I did really like seeing Shaoran's family, I feel like it explains a lot about him and we never see them in anything else!
- Lucy response
- It's weird to have a movie all about how dead Clow Reed is and then go on to have an entire season about how not-really-all-that-dead he is. But, I guess it does set him and his background up more, which is helpful.
 - Yeah, if you were watching this mid-season it would probably be tantalizing instead of slightly annoying.
- So, if they were trying to parallel the fortune teller losing Clow to Sakura understanding loss...why didn't they bring up her mom at all? Like that seems like an obvious connection that we make, but why not weave that into the story?
 - This really reminds me of the weird feeling a lot of specials and 'movies' for serialized media got in the 90s...like they're not allowed to use all the elements from the show, maybe in an attempt to make it accessible for a new viewer who isn't a fan? But it ends up feeling like a weird alternate universe where everything is kind of...simpler. Or in a less diegetic phrasing, like the writers didn't know all the lore. And that can't be the case because the writing credit for this goes to Nanase Ohkawa! I don't think they were trying to make this movie more accessible by the way, because it really is just an extended episode arc with a decent budget. It doesn't spend a lot of time re-explaining things, and it doesn't SPECIFICALLY leave things out or try to re-establish its premise—it's just a little flimsy.
- Yeah, seriously, back to parallels—they could have at least connected the Fortune Teller's Loss theme with her fighting to get her friends back? I had almost forgotten that was happening until they reappeared.
 - Yeah me too—and it's not a long enough movie to get lost in the convulsions! More like it just didn't keep focus.
- Overall I don't think this is an amazing movie, but it's a fun romp, and it's a nice to see them in a new location.
- Sections of it do feel like a 1999 travel ad for Hong Kong, extremely beautiful background paintings and shots that sell the beauty of the place and the excitement the kids are feeling exploring it.
 - I assume Hong Kong was chosen for the Reed/Li family's home and therefore this movie's setting at least partially because of the rich output of films made by Hong Kong directors/industry that CLAMP would have had access to—lots of fantastical martial arts films to be inspired by.
 - But the fact that the city is so shaped by water around and through it makes the water theme of the villainess very fitting.

Movie II

- The second movie I'd say is even more visual beauty over story substance.

- So, I rewatched this like two months after we originally watched it to write the summary...and I had managed to forget pretty much everything about this movie. It is mostly just redoing stuff from the series, but worse.
 - SO MEAN! But...yeah. It has a lot of repetition. So much repetition. Within the movie and mostly like, from the series.
- This movie super dragged for me. I remember being really excited for it as a teen, but it feels like nothing happens in it. Honestly, this would have been much better as an episode or two than a full movie, because there's not much original content here.
 - The first part of this movie can be easily summed up as DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THE SHOW???
 - You liked it when Sakura fought with her brother, and Kero played video games, and the kids put on a play, right?? Well, here that all is again! And something is happening with the cards, maybe.
 - Yeah, and the second half is 'what if the emptiness you feel waiting for these kids to do something they have already done in the manga manifested'
 - And that kind of sucks! Because this movie I think is all a gift to the fans at the time, a way to take the big finale of these two characters confessing to each other and making it not just a two-episode arc or something but a theatrically released feature film! That's sweet! And maybe it worked for fans in full hype, at the moment.
 - I know there's an anecdote from one of the Puff magazine interviews CLAMP gave right after Sakura ended where they said (this is very much a 'they said they heard' not a first person recollection) that a young male theater audience member was overheard saying "'If they kill Syaoran, I'll die too!'"
 - And they speculated a bit about whether that was feeling really connected to Syaoran, like they were also a boy in love that deeply, or whether it was that the kid was so into Sakura!
 - But that does remind me to put on fan goggles to try to understand why this movie might be the way it is.
 - Because otherwise...well I certainly wouldn't have made it this way myself. It takes an important beat and s t r e t c h e s it out WAY too much.
- So, I'm pretty sure in the manga Sakura's conversation with Syaoran was something she carefully worked up to. She wanted to treat him with respect. It was a big deal, and it was given full weight. In this, they are giving it weight by denying it until the end, but it feels like the opposite of thoughtful respect. It feels like everyone is BEGGING Sakura to act, and she just refuses for really no good reason.
 - Like, I'd understand that behavior if maybe it had been, like, a couple days since he confessed, and she was still figuring things out.
 - BUT IT HAS BEEN FOUR MONTHS. And she made a big deal about wanting to tell him to his face. HIS FACE HAS BEEN HERE FOR A WEEK, FREAKING TALK ALREADY.
 - I'm not saying that's not somewhat realistic, but it feels really forced after like the fifth mysterious interruption. Much like how the anime had to drag out Touya and

Yukito having A FIVE MINUTE CONVERSATION, this has to drag out Sakura's confession because it needs to be part of the climax. But it's not even mysterious; we know they both like each other. It's just frustrating, and makes you care *less* about the outcome.

- Yeah realistic is one thing, in fiction we need pacing XD We need tension to build and we need releases, that constant teasing is...not super compelling for meeeee
- On an unrelated note, I think Tomoyo and Naoko should date. They could make spectacular movies together.
 - Agreed!
- So, I have some more thoughts on how this could have been better.
 - The plot of their play is that, like Romeo and Juliet, a princess and prince from warring kingdoms fall in love. Wouldn't it have been interesting if there had been some sort of parallel between Syaoran's family and Sakura's? Maybe they wanted the cards back?
 - Also, wouldn't it have been more interesting if the disappearances were somehow tied to Sakura feeling her feelings for Syaoran? That every time she thought about him, something disappeared?
 - Yes! It would have! That would have been tight and creepy and dramatic AND explain why she'd have to put off confessing to Shaoran!
- Also...Is "Hope" a Pandora's box reference?
 - I'm sure it was. And I kind of like that, since the anime actually has a Pandora's Box motif with us seeing Sakura release all the cards at the beginning!
- Ok, this climax was also dumb. It relied on Syaoran for some reason paying the price for sealing the card (losing his most important feeling). Their reason was because Sakura's powers were drained, his registered as more powerful...but when has that ever mattered?
 - Even in the anime, where other people can get Clow Cards, it wasn't down to who was most powerful. It was who did the most work to defeat the card. Sakura still had to be the one to seal them, so I guess that follows this pattern, and Syaoran did manage to use Thunder against the sealed card, but I don't think that was really what led to its defeat.
 - It just seemed unnecessary and kind of illogical.
 - Yeah it was a lot of fridge logic, nothing flowed organically, I think this was written in haste during grueling scheduling foreverone involved and I won't hold it against anyone but man it is kind of a drag to re-watch.
- Also, seriously, why did Eriol allow that house to be destroyed if it was sealing a card? The plot did *not* imply that this was another lesson from Eriol (which would have made sense). So he just...sold off this expensive and seemingly important mansion to some developers?
- I HAVE TROUBLE WITH THAT TOO!
 - This probably needed another draft! But I love the Pandora's Box aspect, that was super inspired and cool.

- Oh my god Lucy we're almost done with the card Captor Sakura anime. I can't wait to read a comic and talk about COMICS, a thing I actually know a lot about! And it's gonna be a good one AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA—

Outro

Not so fast! In our next episode, we'll be discussing the dubs with special guest and Cardcaptors-correspondant Caitlin Like! We know many of you have fond memories of Cardcaptors, and we'd love to include your thoughts in the episode. You can email us at clampcastpod@gmail.com, or use the contact form on our website, clampcastinwonderland.com.

Until then, you can follow us on Twitter, Tumblr, Bluesky, Threads, and Instagram @Clampcastpod, and on Facebook as Clampcast in Wonderland. We currently do not update social media very regularly, but we do try to post whenever new episodes are live.

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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!

