

Magic Knight Rayearth

Volume 2

Lucy Robin

Intro

Can Hikaru, Umi, and Fuu survive battles with monsters and minions long enough to find out what it means to be a Magic Knight?!

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

Check-In

- SO VERY TIRED
 - Finals. Deadlines. Exploding (ok not really) furnaces.
 - The schedule is all sorts of off. I somehow still blame the power outage from last month.

Background

- It is so weird to be discussing something that doesn't need half an hour of background to set the stage!
 - If my math is correct, the chapters that comprise Book Two would have come out in spring and summer of 1994
 - Which means that Rg Veda and X were also running in full swing
 - And basically nothing else but periodic Miyuki-chan shorts and maybe the very tail end of Chun Hyang?
 - Which thank goodness because those 3 were enormous undertakings that honestly would likely have taken a mangaka and more than 3 assistants to complete
 - So this is really above and beyond and I'm eternally impressed.

Summary

- We begin right where the previous volume left off: the magic knights are making their way through the Forest of Silence, when they encounter a strange boy with a sword and some dashing scars on his face.
 - They are instantly on alert. Fuu says that he looks human, but after their run in with Alcione they can't be too careful about people.

- However, when Mokona seems to like him, Hikaru decides he must be trustworthy. Her sword disappears back into the jewel on her hand, and the other girls let down their guard, too.
- They introduce themselves, but Fuu warns them that they have to be careful, and not tell him too much about who they are. Or who summoned them.
- They also learn his name, Ferio, and his purpose: he is also seeking the spring Eterna, and the legendary mineral, escudo.
- Umi and Hikaru fret that this might mean they have to fight Ferio, but Fuu takes the matter in hand. Sizing Ferio up, she offers him a deal.
- Unlike Ferio, they know the way to the spring, and he can come with them if he agrees to act as an escort/bodyguard.
- Ferio agrees, just in time to fight off another monster. And with it taken care of, and some praise from Hikaru, Ferio mentions that the reason he needs the escudo is to help Princess Emeraude.
- Of course this peaks the girls' interest, but Ferio announces they keep moving before more monsters find them.
- **Mokona's** jewel emits a ray of light that guides them through the forest, but before they can get very far, Ferio announces that they're under attack. And this time, they have to run instead of fight.
 - It's a creepy three-eyed giant bird, and apparently swords won't work against it. Since they can't use magic in the Forest of Silence, they have no choice but to run.
 - Along the way, some other monsters attack them, and Hikaru and Umi make quick work of them with their swords, which impresses Ferio.
 - Their swords still won't help them against the bird, though. Hikaru tries to cut its leg, but the wound instantly heals, and Ferio explains that their only hope to defeat it is to outsmart it.
 - He gets the monster to follow him, and manages to maneuver it into charging at him while it's standing on a giant branch that has huge spikes sticking out of it. Naturally, Ferio jumps away just in time, and the bird impales itself on the spikes.
 - However, even though it's trapped (at least for now), the bird still has its, uh...breath weapon. He blasts a beam of energy (or whatever) straight at Fuu!
 - Fortunately, Ferio pushes her down to avoid the blast. Her glasses get knocked off, but she's otherwise unhurt, and she thanks him for saving her life.
 - There's kind of a charming moment where Ferio, as he's rushing to save her, says something like "idiot, get out of the way," and when she thanks him, Fuu jokes that she's never been called an idiot before.
 - Ferio also seems charmed, and tells her she's cute when she smiles. Despite seeming kind of calculating, she's actually a babe. This makes Fuu super blushy and flustered.
 - This sounds a little reductive when you describe it, but I swear it doesn't feel like that in the moment.
- **Crisis** averted, they realize the exit from the forest is in sight.

- The girls rush forward, with Umi in the lead, but Mokona lets out a concerned “puu”...and sure enough, as Umi exits the forest, she’s hit by Alcione’s Ice Attack.
- It’s...kinda rough. Umi collapses with cuts all over her body. Her wounds look serious, and Fuu says they need a doctor, but unfortunately they have to deal with Alcione first.
- Alcione explains that, since her magic wouldn’t work in the Forest of Silence, she waited here for them. She intends to kill them as payback for her earlier defeat.
- Hikaru stands up to her, and Alcione taunts her, saying that as Clef’s disciple and Princess Emeraude’s sorceress, she doesn’t consider a novice like Hikaru much of a threat.
- They girls are surprised to learn who she is, and ask Alcione why she’s fighting them. Afterall, they’re trying to save Princess Emeraude, who’s been kidnapped by Zagato.
- But of course, that doesn’t matter to Alcione anymore. Lord Zagato is her master now. Because she loves him.
- **And** with that, she attacks Hikaru with another ice spell. She manages to avoid the attack, but Alcione taunts her again, saying she’ll easily cut Hikaru up just like she did Umi.
- Remembering what happened to Umi, Hikaru becomes enraged. She screams that Fuu and Umi are like her sisters, and together they’re going to save Cephireo.
- Her anger powers her magic, and she releases a Fire Arrow at Alcione.
- Alcione is barely able to shield herself. This attack was stronger than before--the power of Hikaru’s will has increased the strength of her magic.
- Alcione is impressed, but she’s determined not to be defeated.
 - **As** she powers up another spell, Ferio looks at Fuu, asking why they aren’t asking him for help.
 - Looking grim, Fuu explains that they already asked him for help getting through the forest, and it would be selfish to ask for more help. Besides, this is *their* fight.
 - Ferio looks impressed by her determination, and maybe it broke through to Umi as well, because she wakes up, and asks where Hikaru is.
- When Umi sees the battle between Hikaru and Alcione, she pushed herself to her feet. She’s bleeding all over, but she’s determined to help Hikaru.
 - Mokona approaches her, and when Umi bemoans that she she doesn’t have access to her magic, the jewel on Mokona’s head begins to flow.
 - A ray of light shoots to Umi’s forehead, and she hears Clef’s voice.
 - He guides her to recognize the new power inside her.
 - Just as Hikaru is down, Umi releases her own attack on Alcione: Water Dragon.
- **Alcione** disappears, and the others rush to Umi’s side, as she falls to the ground.
 - She tells Hikaru she was glad she was able to protect her, as a big sister should, and that Fuu was not injured. And then Umi falls unconscious again.

- She sacrificed herself and her magic to save their lives. And Fuu is determined to pay her back.
 - She approached Mokona, and asks for its help.
 - Like before, a ray of light emits from Mokona's head to Fuu's, allowing Clef to speak to her. He helps her recognize her new powers, and Fuu is able to cast Healing Wind on Umi.
 - Now, they're all alright, and the girls thank each other. Without each of their separate powers and actions, they would have been killed by Alcione.
 - They've only just met, but Hikaru says that Umi and Fuu already feel like her sisters. If she arrived alone in Cephiro, she wouldn't have known what to do, but they give her strength. Together, she knows they can do anything.
 - The other two agree. The desire to protect each other is how they were able to connect with their powers, and they must work together to get home.
- But they can't forget about Ferio! He is observant, and tells them he has figured out they must be the Legendary Magic Knights.
 - They apologize for lying to him, but he says they were smart to do so, since they didn't know if they could trust him. The girls decide it's time they told him the truth.
 - They explain how they were summoned to Cephiro, and Guru Clef set them on their journey to save Princess Emeraude.
 - This all makes sense to Ferio. If Princess Emeraude was kidnapped by Zagaot, it explains why the monsters have appeared recently.
 - They ask Ferio to tell who he is now, and he simply says that's he's a friend of the Princess. And because of this, he knows about the legend.
 - Which, unlike everyone else so far, he's willing to share with them!
 - The legend tells of individuals who will be summoned from another world if something major happens to Cephiro. They will become the legendary magic knights, and fight evil using the power of the spirits.
 - Robin, does your version word this differently?
 - Yes, it explicitly says the 'Rune Gods/Mashin'
 - The legend doesn't explain why the knights had to come from another world, and in fact, the reason Ferio was searching for the escudo is that he was hoping *he* could become a legendary knight.
 - The four of them are at a loss for why the knights specifically have to come from outside Cephiro. Apparently Zagato is really powerful, and Fuu points out that it should be even harder for an outsider to defeat him, since they have no knowledge of Cephiro or it's magic system and monsters.
 - Although she Fuu does consider that they do know a little about these things from video games.
 - Ferio goes on to explain that the monsters and storms that are now plaguing Cephiro are because, with Princess Emeraude, the people are

full of fear. Because belief is literally power in Cephiro, those fears turn into monsters.

- As they continue discussing the situation--and Ferio makes some vague allusions to his mysterious relationship to the Princess--Mokona's jewel lights up again. It casts a red light, pointing the way to Eterna.
- With his job done, Ferio bids them goodbye. But before he goes, he gives Fuu one of his earrings, and kisses her hand.
- This leaves Fuu very blushy and flustered, and the girls lightly tease her, before continuing on their journey.
- Back at Zegato's lair, Alcione is apologizing for her failure. She's in pretty rough shape, and apologies for underestimating the knights, begging Zegato to give her another chance.
 - Zegato is having none of it, though. Despite her pleas for mercy, he destroys Alcione.
 - Behind them a voice comments on what a waste her defeat was. The voice asks Zegato for a chance to "play" with the girls, and the waterfall parts, revealing a young boy who is mostly a pile of robes and giant hat. Zegato calls him "Ascot."
- Meanwhile, the knights have been fighting off more monsters, and finally make it to Eterna. Or at least, where Eterna is supposed to be. Instead of spring, they see a raised grassy dais.
 - There's no sign of a spring...but there is what looks like a floating two-dimensional line above the dais.
 - While the other two are puzzling over it, Hikaru follows Mokona up an outcropping of rocks. Really, just always follow Mokona, ok?
 - From the rocks, she is able to see that what looked like a line, is actually the spring! T's just--2D! So you can only observe it from above or below!
 - After some debate they decide that the escudo must be *inside* the two-dimensional spring, and this is more or less confirmed when Mokana jumps into the spring.
 - Since they have no real options (and since they know by now you should always follow Mokona), the girls decide to jump in as well.
 - They climb up on the rock, and jump in together.
- They sink until they start struggling for air, but then the three of them are separated.
 - Hikaru wakes up, alone, in darkness.
 - However, though Umi and Fuu aren't there, she realizes quickly that she's not actually alone.
 - A dark form emerges...it's her dog, Hikari!
 - In her own area, Umi is walking alone, until two forms approach. As they get close, she realizes they are her mother and father.
 - Fuu likewise encounters someone, but this time, it appears to be a copy of Fuu herself.
 - Hikaru approaches her dog, but it attacks her. She tries to get it to recognize her, but Hikari remains aggressive, as it considers her a serious threat.

- When Umi tries to talk to her parents, they also don't seem to recognize her. And even more surprisingly, they attack her with with magic.
- Fuu is in a standoff with her double, with arrows raised at each other.
 - Her double attacks her, and Fuu tries to avoid the onslaught of arrows, but she gets a cut on her arm. When she attacks back, she does land hits against her double, but those same injuries erupt on her own body, as well.
- Hikaru continues to try and get Hikari to recognize her, but it continues attacking her, going so far as biting into her neck.
- Umi is also succumbing to the attacks of her parents, and nothing she says seems to dissuade them.
- Fuu isn't sure how to counter her double and fight back, since any injury she does will also rebound. And what's more, her double doesn't seem to have any qualms about attacking Fuu, even though the rebound goes both ways.
- Just as it's looking hopeless, all three girls hear a voice calling out to them.
- It addresses them as "the Legendary Magic Knights, young women from another world", and they recognize the voice as the same one who summoned them to Cephire: Princess Emeraude.
- And sure enough, the princess appears before them, telling them that they must not be overcome by grief. She encourages them to relax and think...would their loved ones actually behave like this?
- All three girls reflect on their loved ones, acknowledging how important they are to them.
 - Hikari is Hikaru's best friend, and they have a deep connection, even if they can't communicate in words.
 - Umi's parents have sacrificed everything on her and her education, and she loves them and owes them so much.
 - Fuu knows that she has a responsibility to care for herself, since so many people in her life love and care about her. She can't pay them back for all they've given her, but she can keep herself safe on their behalf.
- Through Emeraude's prompting, all three recognize that their loved ones would never try to harm them. They fight back using their own power, unlocking powerful new attacks. And as their attackers are defeated, the escudo is revealed to each of them.
- In response, the armor Clef gave them also changes.
 - Remember, it's magical evolving armor...it does that sometimes.
- The girls emerge from the spring, floating above it, and are greeted by an enthusiastic Mokona
 - And not just Mokona; Presea is also there!
 - She uses her own magic to mold the escudo into weapons for the knights: three swords, each with a unique design.
 - She explains that these weapons are made especially for each of them, and only they can use them.

- The weapons they had borrowed from Presea also return to her, but as her job completes, Presea collapses.
- She's weak, but she explains to a worried Hikaru that she'll be alright...she just used a bit too much of her soul
 - WHICH SOUNDS PRETTY BAD BUT OK
 - I think my version says something more like 'will' or 'power' so this may be less alarming depending on what the original said? But the hint that using their will-based magic may have repercussions is definitely, uh, a big deal.
- She also notices how their armor has changed, and explains that their weapons will be able to do that, as well, as their souls grow and become stronger.
- In Cephiro, she reminds us, everything is controlled by the power of your will. Weapons, magic, and destiny itself.
 - Destiny alert! Ding ding ding!
- Able to stand now, Presea explains that she put everything she had into their swords because she believes in them. So they have to believe in themselves, too.
- Of course, they are full of enthusiasm, and right on cue, Mokona summons a magic platform, complete with wings.
- Mokona insists they get on the platform, and it seems like Umi can understand Mokona now, too!
- Presea tells them they must awaken the Mashin in order to become magic knights, and their weapons hold the key.
- Still, no one explains what the mashin actually *are*, but at least Mokona seems to know what to do...and we've all learned to follow Mokona!
- Their swords disappear into the gems on her gantlet, for easy storage, and Presea tells them they must go.
- They are a little hesitant because they are worried about Presea, who still seems weak, but she assures them she'll be fine. She also thanks Hikaru for the candy she gave her, and when Hikaru tries to give her more, Presea tells her to save it for the next time they meet.
- Umi also promises to make Presea a cake when they get back, and they take off on the platform.
- As they disappear into the sky, we see Presea fall to her knees, her breathing labored. She prays to Princess Emeraude to protect the girls, and make sure they are safe.
- Up in the sky, Mokona is no longer being very helpful, as it doesn't seem to have any more directions for them at the moment.
 - Fuu points out that it's done a lot. It led them out of the forest, it summoned their transportation, and it even let them talk to Clef. It's clearly got a lot on its mind.
 - Umi seems unconvinced. Hikaru points out that the scenery below them is the same as when they first fell to Cephiro.
 - The sea, the mountain in the sky, and the volcano are all visible again.

- As they're admiring how beautiful the land is, the platform under them suddenly lurches, and starts to fall out of the sky.
- As they crash into the ocean, the jewel on Mokona's head lights up, and they are surrounded in a protective bubble of air.
- Ahead of them appears an elegant underwater shrine, and Umi reacts to it.
- She goes into a kind of trance. As they land in the shrine, and discover they can breathe here, Umi says that this is the Shrine of the Sea, and its spirit (or probably "mashin") rests here.
- The others follow Umi, and a large dragon appears before them.
- Fuu goes to stop Umi, but Mokona blocks her way.
- Umi seems to commune with the dragon, and it leans down to her, and begins to speak.
- Its name is Selece (or Ceres) a legendary mashin, and only a Magic Knight may touch it.
- This is definitely some exciting news about mashin, but before anything can happen, they are interrupted by Ascot, the kid we saw with Zagato before. He tells them Zagato asked him to go kill them.
- And that's it for this volume! Lucy's TokyoPop version does have a little omake comic at the end, but there's not too much to it. They talk about the Rayearth anime, and make some light jokes at some of the characters' expense.
 - I think my favorite part of these comics is when they talk about the internet like it's some new, magical thing. That probably made sense in 1994 when these came out in Japan (if this was even close to what they were saying), but it was pretty comical in 2002 when these were published by TokyoPop, and it sounds utterly ridiculous now. Like, Robin, do you use "the net"?
 - Unfortunately I must daily, nay even hourly, use 'the net'! My edition doesn't have those omake comics so I rely on you for them for these episodes.

Discussion

- A good read! And honestly kind of hard to stop there since it feels like we're JUST ramping up into the next phase of the story!
 - Yeah, I kind of forgot how quickly this series goes. I think that's because it gets drawn out more in the anime, but it's also that X has totally warped my sense of time.
- So what do we know thus far?
 - We know that Princess Emeraude, whose 'will' keeps the land of Cefiro structured and positive, has become imprisoned by a man called Sol Zagato, and the land is destabilized and now infested with monsters that are called up by the tumultuous fear and other negative emotions of the people.
 - So I had to check the "Sol" stuff since that didn't sound familiar to me. I think my version did mention it (in his character description at the beginning of this volume, it says a Sol is a priest who protects Princess Emeraude), but they are definitely not calling him that very much. It's usually just "Zagato" or "Lord Zagato."

- Oho! Good to know!
 - There is a legend that says that when Cefiro is threatened, individuals from another world will be summoned and they will become magic knights and use the Mashin to fight evil.
 - And we know that the legend is apparently a kind of need-to-know thing, and only people close to Princess Emeraude are aware of it. Which presents a lot of questions about who Ferio is.
 - Emeraude summoned our three heroines, who were rescued from a dangerous entrance by Guru Clef, who has some connection to Emeraude himself and wants to help the girls save her.
 - He bestows armor and magic powers on them, then points them in the direction of Mokona and Presea, who along with Serio, help them stay alive and hook them up with special weapons that serve as keys to the Mashin.
 - We also know that Sol Zagato has a lot of followers and sacrificed one of his hench-ladies...because she failed? Seems pretty sinister and his motivation is hard to parse so far.
 - Also, at least one of those followers (Alcione) was also a former disciple of Clef's, so it seems like both she and Zagato were in Emeraude's inner circle, or whatever. Curious to see if this extends to more of Zagato's henchpeople.
- How do you feel about the characters so far?
 - The three girls are so much more nuanced than I had remembered! Well, Hikaru is pretty much how I remember, but I kind of let Umi and Fuu settle into Spoiled Girl and Nerdy Passive Girl stereotypes, and they are so, so much more than that.
 - I love how Fuu is not just book smart, she's really sly and insightful. She's very calm and collected, until Ferio throws her off with his compliments...but it really feels like she wouldn't fall for false flattery. It's how genuine he is, and I think part of that is that by the time he's kind of hitting on her, he's not gaining anything from it. Which is also why it doesn't feel creepy to me. They've already had kind of a battle of wits, and moved on. Yes, he saved her, but he didn't treat her like she was something weak that *needed* to be saved. It felt very much like camaraderie.
 - Also...is someone going to teach Fuu to use a sword? They made a big deal about how the other two had sword training, and she had archery training. Is a sword really in her wheelhouse?
 - I KNOW RIGHT?
 - She's also WEIRD. Like, she's got a unique and quirky perspective that isn't just 'perfect smart refined girl';--she's funny! And I think we can infer she plays video games!

- Also FASCINATING that she had to face off against herself.
 - Maybe that speaks to the smart/talented experience? Your perfectionism is your own worst enemy?
- Yeah, the three obstacles they encountered in Eterna also really stood out to me. It's not just that they have to fight the things that are most important to them, it's that they have to recognize *why* these things are important.
 - Hikaru has this innate, trusting relationship with her pet; Umi has this sense of love, devotion, and kind of *debt* towards her parents; and Fuu's acknowledgement that caring for herself is indirectly a way of caring for the people who love and worry about her is just *so huge*.
 - Like, talk about self care!
- Ferio is such a trip for me because he really influenced everything my little brother drew in middle school so I can't not see his old art when I see this character.
 - But also I GET the appeal!
 - With his green theming and tunic and little hoop earrings, he reminds me of Link so much.
 - WHICH REALLY ties me into the ways in which this whole thing is connected to video games.
 - I was interested in how CLAMP got away with pitching this to Nakayoshi despite video games still being a stereotypically male-marketed pursuit in Japan in the early 90s.
 - And it did occur to me that Sailor Moon has a huge emphasis on arcade games, with the Sailor V game being how Usagi was covertly trained to prepare for becoming Sailor Moon, and how often she'd rather be playing games than studying.
 - So it seems like the editors at Nakayoshi didn't see any cognitive dissonance with girls playing games, which is great because girls definitely did play games in the 90s, despite what marketing wanted you to think.
 - But there is some history here to know about!
 - Like how after the early 80s video game crash, the fairly gender-neutral concept of home console games was trashed for gendered marketing for a LONG while, and we're still in the death throes of this.
 - But it's interesting to know that these days the gender breakdown is about 50-50 in the US and Japan, with some areas reporting it lopsided on the more-girls-than-boys side--such as online games and maybe even arcades in Japan?

- Only 10 years ago the numbers recorded were more like 30% girls to 70% boys.
- (The numbers for non-binary folks are definitely not something I can reference back to the 90s, sadly)
 - But since this kind of data is hard to collect and interpret, there's a chance it's been closer to 50-50 the whole time?
 - Many people researching arcades in the 80s noted less than 30% women present and playing
 - But home consoles were just a whole other thing, where having access to games in privacy meant that even if games were aggressively marketed to men using sexist imagery and shit, girls were just...gonna play 'em! Sometimes!
 - My first console was a Nintendo 64, which my little brothers and I saved up for primarily to play The Legend of Zelda, Ocarina of Time, which really grabbed us and never let go.
 - We played music and loved fantasy, it was perfect for us.
 - And I know that Link was really appealing to all three of us, including our littlest brother who really connected with male characters that were small and fast, since he felt so shut out of big muscled masculinity.
 - And, uh, myself and middle brother mostly did, too.
 - And man, I can't get over how even in that era where games were so unlikely to have female characters let alone female main characters, Nintendo did see Link's design as non-gender-specific in order to appeal to boys and girls.
 - I do like how that helps support so many queer kids' trans or nonbinary or otherwise gender-binary-busting head canons, even if Link usually has male pronouns.
- I'm actually having a harder time not Stargazing with Rayearth than I did with X!
 - Because I have Big Discussion Topics that are just not appropriate to dive into yet.
 - But maybe we can start by kind of bringing up the video game connection here?
 - CLAMP loved games--especially JRPGS which gave lots of story without demanding a refined physical skill that one can't always afford to invest building

when one, uh, has other refined physical hand skills to be maintaining--and said so frequently in this era, even making game-oriented fanart.

- If you have seen weird CLAMP sonic fan art you have been blessed or cursed, depending on your point of view.
- Fuu brings up how much their adventure, or aspects of it, are JRPG-like
 - In this volume I remember a joke about ____
 - It also comes up when they discuss weapons and armor
 - Which I think is especially interesting because all three do know the difference between fantasy weapons/armor and real ones, since they are involved with kendo, kyuudo and fencing!
 - Which are kind of stylized and not actually, uh, war-ready, but still more practical than the kind of exaggerated weapons and armor that are often in video games
 - Which could be because they are more 'rule of cool' than research OR because the ornamental or over-the-top nature of them is to indicate they are magical and not intended to be a direct reference to our history.
 - In Rayearth it is said again and again that the magic of Cefiro responds to their 'will'
 - And the 'growing' armor and special bespoke weapons are affected by who the girls are as people.
 - So we get this interesting thing where as video-gamey as it is to have their armor and weapons upgraded with this abstract concept of 'experience points'--
 - In rayearth that 'experience' is less abstracted and made into part of how the world works!
 - Which I really love
 - It feels like it comes from someone who has thought a lot about video game mechanics and how they can be satisfying even if they are 'unrealistic'--if they didn't ring true at all, they wouldn't work, after all.
 - Yeah, the world they are building is so cool! I think it really makes the video-game aspect feel like it makes sense. Which, as so many failed video-game-tie-in-movies have proven, is not an easy thing to do.

Outro

In our next episode, we'll be discussing Rayearth volume 3! That episode should hopefully come out pretty soon, since this whole month got a little...off.

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

You can support us on Patreon, by making purchases through our Bookshop.org store, or just by writing a review or sharing this podcast with your friends.

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

Until next time, remember that everything will be alright—

—and try not to lose an eye!