

# Magic Knight Rayearth

## Volume 4

Lucy Robin

### Intro (Robin reads)

In video games, you can always just start over and make new choices. But life isn't a video game, and you don't get a do-over...but maybe the Magic Knights can get a chance to set things right if they return to Cephireo...

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

### Check-In

- There's been a roller-coaster ride of CLAMP news recently!
  - A special animation being released with a Clear Card Arc special milestone, that's cool!
  - The rest is more down than up, though, so more like those rides that drop you.
  - The Tokyo Babylon anime website and social media are DOWN.
    - So, goodbye for now I guess?
    - As of this recording we do not know if or when we'll hear more about an anime production.
  - But there was another slight up and big down—
    - Kyoto had a promotional like, stamp station thing planned to engage tourism, with CLAMP art and characters featured
    - but like...tourism is down because of COVID.
    - And Japan is not exempt from surges and vaccination woes and basically they canceled or postponed this whole event for now due to backlash and understandable concern over how safe—or tasteful—it may be to focus on tourism.
  - And wow. That sucks.
  - This sucks! Because it wasn't the right time to do an event like that But also the economic devastation from COVID is real and can also be life-threatening. With no relief from either, and limited support from government, it feels like everything is just a catch-22.
  - Our hearts go out to India and Brasil and everywhere else that is especially struggling right now.
- It is definitely an act of escapism for us to turn the clock back to 1995 and talk about Rayearth, and I hope it offers everyone listening a little respite as well.
- Translated names? (Lucy, etc) [arg I keep forgetting to research this...next time!]

- Stargazing!
  - Robin: 4, Lucy: 3

## Background

- Depending on the way this was released in your country, you may see this as the fourth volume of Magic Knight Rayearth or the first volume of Magic Knight Rayearth 2.
- Either way, it also ran in Nakayoshi and began in March 1995, running to April 1996.
  - Recall that the first part ended in like February 1995.
  - They had more a matter of days than weeks between finishing the first half of Rayearth and launching the second half.
- The OAV and anime were already running by this point, and they'd been more involved with those than they typically are with anime, though we'll mostly save that discussion for the SUMMER OF RAYEARTH ANIME that we have ahead of us!
- But they were....really, really busy.
- And if you recall from our episode covering Rayearth book 3, The first part ended with the girls having to kill the person they thought they'd been sent to save, then crying, bereft, back on Earth where they are dumped as if nothing ever happened, with the last words being 'It's not fair!'
  - We said a few words about how readers must have felt about that, and the waiting period between the two.
- Uh. I'm going to read an exchange between the members of CLAMP from the CLAMP no Kiseki interview in the Rayearth issue. I'm kinda going to read a big chunk verbatim, because it is now very, very relevant.
  - Interviewer: 'the final scene in part 1 is quite shocking. Was the story easy to create?'
  - Ohkawa said: part 1 was really easy. We really wanted to draw the ending. If the series was geared toward boys, or an older crowd, we may have stopped after part 1.
  - Mokona said: audiences were really divided over the work. The kids were really shocked.
  - Ohkawa said: nakayoshi had previewed that there was going to be a part 2, so the older readers were pretty calm about it. They figured the story would keep going. We had a hard time creating part 2, though. We kind of wrote ourselves into a corner with that ending!'
- So let's see how they did!
- Lucy, tell us what happened in this volume!

## Summary

- This volume starts a year after the last one ended. The girls have been back on Earth all this time, and they are truly changed from the traumatic things they experienced in Cephire.
  - Hikaru's three brothers are worried about her, observing that she's been sad for a while now, and won't tell them what happened.
    - They have super goofy CLAMP energy, I love it. They would fit in well with the Duklyon boys.
    - But, they're also really sweet and supportive. They clearly want to look out for her, but they're also not pushing her to talk if she doesn't want to.

- Umi's parents are also concerned about her, although they joke that it must be matters of the heart, and Umi gets all embarrassed at how lovey-dovey they are together. But, she also wishes her worries were something as relatively simple as a romance.
- Fuu's big sister has also noticed how hard she's trying to pretend that things are ok when they clearly aren't.
  - Like Hikaru's brothers, she doesn't pressure her to talk about what's troubling her, but she does emphasise that Fuu should talk *to someone*, if she can.
  - Fortunately, Fuu is on her way to meet her friends...at Tokyo Tower.
- Our three sad girls meet at the place where they were transported, one year ago. Cephireo and Emeraude are on all their minds, and it does seem like they all feel some relief at being around people who understand what they went through.
  - Hikaru has been dreaming about Cephireo, about the things that happened, and the things they did.
  - She clenches her fist so tightly it starts to bleed, and the other two tell her to stop. Fuu wraps a handkerchief around her hand, lamenting the fact that her healing magic won't work here.
  - But Hikaru can't stop thinking about everything. She's frustrated--she wants to know why Zagato started that fight, and why Princess Emeraude did what she did.
  - Of course, none of them have the answers. They thought that as the Legendary Magic Knights, they would be heroes who could save the princess, and the world.
  - But instead, by following their hearts, they were part of a tragedy.
  - They compare their experience to video games again, but this time Umi says that she can't play rpgs anymore. They feel too real, like the enemies in the game are really her enemy. And even though she's playing the hero, she realizes the supposed bad guys see *her* as a villain.
  - They have all been hurt by their experience, but Hikaru seems the most resolute: she wants to go back to Cephireo, to a world that doesn't change. She wants to help the country that Princess Emeraude treasured.
  - The other three agree. And maybe it's coincidence, or maybe it's destiny, but a familiar light envelopes them. Just like it did one year ago.
- They appear in a different place, falling through the sky again, but this time they're in the middle of a storm, and the area around them doesn't look at all familiar. There's no sea, or volcano, or floating mountain. There's just a strange crystalline castle, surrounded by a barren land.
  - Fortunately, they land on a familiar shape--Fyula, the flying fish that rescued them last time. So this must be Cephireo, afterall.
  - They are taken to the castle, where Presea greets them. She didn't seem to be doing very well that last time we saw her, so it's nice to see that she's ok!
  - The reunion is bittersweet, though, as Presea apologizes for everything that happened. She didn't know the full truth about everything until afterwards, and she didn't realize how the weapons she made would have to be used.

- She takes the knights to see the guru and the...prince?
- They're happy to meet back up with Guru Clef (so nice to see he survived too!), but the mood remains pretty grim. He also apologizes for the things he required them to do, and for not telling them what was really going on.
  - Which to be honest, one could be pretty pissed about!
- But Hikaru isn't angry with him. She points out that since he was close to Princess Emeraude, it must have been really hard on him. And besides, they are the ones who failed the Princess and Cephiro.
- But, a voice contradicts her, and a new figure appears. As this mysterious man turns, we see a familiar face: it's Ferio!
- And we finally learn his mysterious backstory: he's actually Princess Emeraude's brother, which means the prince...is him!
- This news hits Fuu especially hard. It means that they killed his sister. But Ferio says that just before she disappeared, he heard his sister's voice. She was happy to finally be freed of her obligations as the pillar, and to be able to just pray for the man she loved. He says she found peace in her final moments.
- He says all of this while Fuu is crying, because WOULDN'T YOU BE.
- Clef also heard the princess's voice at the end. She had a message for the magic knights: "I'm sorry, and thank you"
- Now they're all crying and OH GOD MY HEART.
  - Bold, weird, impactful move to begin a story with characters actually dealing with the emotional fall-out of part one!
- But, putting the past aside for a second, Hikaru wants to know about the present. What has happened to Cephiro? Why is it like this?
  - Well, quite simply, when the pillar died, the world began to crumble. Some of them have a strong enough will that they have been able to hold pieces together and move everyone into this castle, but without a pillar they will not be able to last much longer. Cephiro is literally falling apart.
  - And there's more. The pillar used to maintain a barrier around their world, but without a pillar, they are now exposed to other lands. And people from those lands are on their way to Cephiro, constructing their own magic (and probably will-based) roads to invade the land.
    - We're introduced to three in particular, these 'lands' are...planets? Self-contained worlds of some kind, not precisely earth-like globes:
      - Autozam, which looks like a crystal trying to burst thru a shell, if the earth's core hollowed out the earth and cracked it.
      - Chizeta, which looks like a bilaterally symmetrical piece of jewelry, a very tiny disco-ball between two LARGE cones...it looks like a kind of south asian ornament I don't know the name of, but you see it in Buddhist art a lot?
      - And finally we have Fahren, which is the most recognizably planet-like, with two rings of debris-fields crossing around it.
    - And while we're surprised enough that there are worlds outside of Cephiro, that's not the only important piece of info we learn here...

- Because, you see, the pillar doesn't *have* to be from Cephiro proper. Anyone can become the pillar if they have the strongest heart, and they will be able to shape Cephiro to their will. There would be no point in fighting; Cephiro would be under the control of that foreign land.
- Since there are individuals with strong enough wills to create roads into Cephiro, it is very possible one of them might be strong enough to become the pillar.
- It's big, scary stuff, ok?
- They can only hope that the new pillar will restore peace to the land. But Hikaru looks like she's a little torn about this whole pillar thing (which I mean, can you blame her?).
- Anyway, to make everything more confusing, the Magic Knights can only be summoned by the pillar. So their presence means that there must be someone with a strong enough heart to become the pillar. But no one has any idea who that person is, or where they are.
  - HMMMMMMMMMMMM
  - But, even with them being here, Clef says it is not their responsibility to join in this fight. They've already fulfilled their duty as Legendary Magic Knights.
  - yeah...Hikaru doesn't agree. She wants to fight beside them. Her heart is telling her to stand beside them, and her experience with Princess Emeraude taught her that everyone should stand up for what they believe in.
    - Princess Emeraude was fighting for her heart, for her love of Zagato. But she also loved Cephiro, and tried to protect it as its pillar.
    - It brought her pain in the end, but she truly loved her country, and protected it with her heart as well.
    - And despite all the time they spent here, and the stories they heard about how Cephiro used to be, Hikaru and the others never got to see it at its best.
  - Umi agrees. They all matured a little during that final battle. Their fighting skills, sure, but they also grew as people.
  - Fuu is also onboard. Last time, they just wanted to get home at first, but that changed by the end. She asks Clef to let them fight.
  - Clef and the others are clearly struck by their words, but Hikaru points out that before all that, they need to find out who summoned them to Cephiro.
  - She asks Presea to give them weapons, and she summons their weapons for them. Sure enough, they are the weapons she made just for them.
  - Clef also gives them armor. It isn't as epic as the armor they had in the final battle, but he explains that this armor will respond to their needs instead of their growth, changing shape to fit the situation.
  - They will also be able to use their spells again, and will likely learn new ones as they gain experience.
    - Cue the video game level up music!
  - Clef does emphasise that with all this, they must promise to protect *themselves* first and foremost.

- The girls just have time to say a quick thank you, and then their swords start glowing, and they are transported away!
- They appear before the Mashin in a strange, dark place. They ask the knights if they will once more fight for Cephiro....which of course they will!
- They reconnect with the girls, and they all appear in the sky above the castle. Apparently the Mashin have a special dimension they hang out in until they are needed. No big deal.
- However, one of the roads into Cephiro appears in front of them...and it looks like they have visitors.
- It's...a ship! I can't even explain what this thing looks like. It like something out of Tenchi Muyo. It's just very 90s scifi/fantasy anime.
  - It has like...suspension bridge metal cables that also make it look kinda like a harp and I dig that a lot
  - Anyway, inside it is all smooth tech, and there are three people who seem to be important: Eagle, your effete CLAMP man, Geo, your buff CLAMP man, and a goggle-wearing little punk kid, Zazu, who seems to be the mechanic of the group.
  - They've spotted the Mashin, and are pretty excited, because they have their own big awesome robot. Well, Eagle does anyway.
    - I do love Eagle. Did I mention he's beautiful?
  - Anyway, very-beautiful-Eagle recognizes the Mashin, and knows about the Legendary Magic Knights, so he definitely knows some things about Cephiro. He decides to go, uh, 'greet' them, in his own robot (which they call FTO).
    - Take a moment for that one
  - He meets the knights head-on, and introduces himself as Eagle Vision of Autozam. Naturally, the girls are surprised to see him, and even more surprised when he knows who they are.
  - But, before the battle can really get underway, they are interrupted by a man on a giant black horse. He is also pretty beautiful. He is more in the mold of Yasha, but without the mullet. Honestly, he looks...a lot like Zagato.
  - He's wearing armor, and there is a little faery lady sitting on his shoulder.
    - Very Aura Battler Dunbine!
  - The knights are surprised to see this strange beautiful man, but Eagle recognizes him, and calls him Lantis.
  - Eagle takes off, and the knights can't follow him...but they can follow that mysterious guy on the horse, who took off for the castle.
- Their Mashin leave them at the castle, and go back into their special giant robot hangar dimension, telling the knights that they can summon them by saying their names. Their armor--which had transformed to be appropriately epic while they were in their mechs--also goes back to regular adventuring mode.
  - They don't see any sign of Mysterious Horse Guy, but they are greeted by a familiar form--Mokona!
  - We've really got the band back together now!

- After some much needed comic relief, Mokona leads them to a room where we get *another* reunion, this time with Caldina, Lafarga, and Ascot. Except...Ascot doesn't really look the same as he did before.
  - So, remember how he was a cute little kid? And remember how in Cephiro people's wills control, like, everything? Well, in the last year Ascot grew into a bashful teenager. Caldina teases him and says it was to impress Umi, which given how much he's blushing, seems pretty accurate. He's all sorts of magic, so sure.
    - Also he's adorable? I like a boy in earrings and sanpaku/cat's eyes (I dunno which is more salient here)
  - These three also apologize to the knights, but it feels a little lighter than the earlier scenes. Ascot also adds that his monsters are now welcome at the castle, so yay!
  - The knights ask them about the robot that attacked them, which they don't see to have much info, but when they describe the guy on the horse, something definitely clicks.
  - However, before they can say anything, the little fairy girl from earlier appears.
  - She introduces herself as Primera, and when they ask about the guy she was with, she tells them his name: Lantis.
    - Which they kind of knew because of Eagle, but this confirms it.
  - Speak of the devil, Lantis emerges from a hallway in Full CLAMP Hunk Mode, wearing chunky armor and a sexy cape, and Hikaru notices that there's something very familiar about his eyes.
  - She thanks him for saving them, and when he responds, his voice is very familiar, also.
  - Before she can figure it out, though, Larfaga and the others round on them. They don't look happy to see Lantis, and he looks pretty over them as well, so he takes his leave.
  - Larfaga explains why he seemed familiar to Hikaru: he's Zagato's little brother.
  - This sends the Knights' heads spinning. They have understandably complex feelings about Zegato.
  - Apparently, they didn't hear anything about him before because Lantis left Cephiro long before Princess Emeraude summoned them, and came back as soon as she was defeated. No one knows how he left, but they know where he was: Autozam.
  - Which, well, I guess that explains why Eagle knew him.
  - HMMMMM
- That night, while the other two are sleeping, Umi seeks out Clef. He offers to make her a sleeping potion, but she really wants to talk to him. She apologizes for how she treated him a year ago, when they first arrived. She was kind of a jerk, all caught up in her own problems, and she didn't take him seriously or realize how painful everything was for him.

- Clef tells her there's no need for her to apologize. It was natural for her to be upset, being in a strange world participating in a war that had nothing to do with her.
- In fact, he's the one who should apologize for withholding the truth from them, and not even helping them succeed.
- **But Umi** says *that's* wrong, since he was the reason they were able to grow as people, and he also provided them with Mokona, who was a huge help.
- Clearly, this is a hard time for all of them. Clef tells Umi he's glad to see them once more, but again implores them to use their armor and magic to protect themselves, this time.
- **It's** apparently a restless night for everyone, since Fuu is also out of bed. She's looking out at the storm when Ferio appears.
  - He says that despite only knowing her for a short time, he was worried about her.
  - She apologizes for being rude to him in the forest, but he shrugs it off. He's still worried about her, though. He notices she's lost weight, and muses that the three knights were the ones most hurt in the final battle.
  - **He** also presents her with the hoop earring he'd given her before. Apparently it reappeared with him after they went back to their world, but he's touched when Fuu explains that she looked for it and knew it was missing from her pocket.
  - He gives it to her again, and tells her that these earrings were a gift from his sister. Princess Emeraude told him that if he ever found someone special to him, he should give her one of the rings.
  - **His** sister knew all along that she could never be with the one she loved, but she wanted that for him. This makes Fuu cry again, but Ferio comforts her. He says that despite her kind smile, his sister always looked sad, and he'd like to remember Fuu smiling.
  - GOD THEY'RE SO CUTE
- **Meanwhile**, Hikaru wakes up alone in the giant bed she was sharing with the other two girls (well, and Mokona, who's still there).
  - **Also**, her hair isn't braided anymore, so we can see just how much of a mullet she has. It's...certainly a look. I'll admit it was definitely distracting me through the next scene, so I just want to get it out of the way now.
    - **I hated** this hair when i was a kid but now I think I can respect the power-rat-tail-mullet-majest
  - **Anyway**, she leaves Mokona in the bed, and goes to see where everyone went.
  - Seeing the storm outside, she's reminded of Princess Emeraude. If they don't find a new pillar, Cephiro will be destroyed. And yet, she can't help remember how unhappy the last pillar was.
  - She doesn't want the same tragedy to repeat itself. Thinking about how the castle was built with everyone's combined powers, and how everything in Cephiro is ruled by peoples' hearts, she seems on the verge of an idea...
  - **But** she's distracted by the sight of Lantis. He's sitting by a waterfall in an arboretum, and Hikaru is again struck by his resemblance to Zagato. It summons up bad memories.



- She approaches Lantis, clearly with something on her mind. She tells him that she's the one who fought his brother, and if he wants to, he can hit her. She knows it won't compare to what he's lost, but he can take things out on her, as long as he leaves Umi and Fuu alone.
- Hikaru explains that she was sad and depressed when they got back to Tokyo, but Umi and Fuu tried hard to cheer her up. Despite that, she knows they cried when they were alone, and she doesn't want to cause them any more pain.
- Lantis says he doesn't want to hit her. He doesn't blame her for what happened--she was just doing the duty that was forced upon her.
- And besides, she probably cried when she was alone, too.
- He tells her that she shouldn't be hard on herself. If anything is to be blamed, it's Cephireo itself.
- Which is a very interesting theory, but before he can elaborate, Primera pops up, and accuses Hikaru of trying to steal her man. Lantis saved her when Cephireo was starting to crumble, and she won't back down to anyone!
- Of course, Hikaru seems completely confused by this. She was just having an emotional conversation with a hot dude in the middle of the night! What's romantic about that?
- Meanwhile, back on the Autozam ship, Eagle's compatriots grill him about the battle, and he tells them that he saw Lantis.
  - They freak out about it, and Eagle looks sad...or maybe just tired, because he collapses, and they conclude that he must have used too much psychic energy in the battle.
  - I think it's more than that, but fine.
  - They hurry back home, before the road Eagle made to Cephireo collapses completely. Oh, oh-ho, that tells us Eagle is one of the people with a strong enough will to potentially become the pillar!
- But remember, it's not just Autozam we have to watch out for!
  - An another ship, this one shaped like a Chinese-style dragon, looms in the sky.
    - It comes from the land of Fahren, and is controlled by the crown princess Aska, who is also the one maintaining their road. And yes, she's gunning to be the next pillar.
    - She's also, like, ten, and brimming with confidence. Also seemed to be a great admirer of Princess Emeraude.
    - She wants to take over Cephireo so she can do whatever she likes with the place!
      - Definitely in the too-mature-for-her-age spunky mold of Utako from Man of Many Faces!
      - Her retainers include a mostly-eyebrows-by-mass old man type and a kid with dot eyes who is a really memorable design despite being purposefully nondescript!
  - There is also a ship, from the land of Chizeta, which looks like an Arabian palace.
    - Or like an Alladin's lamp-style lamp with a palace for a lid?

- It's commanded by two sisters, Tatra and Tarta. They apparently work as a team, and certainly seem to represent two extremes, with Tarta being very fiery and Tatra seeming very laid back. They intend to become the pillar as a team as well, and rule Cephireo.
  - They also make it clear that they want to take it over because their land is so very small.
- So, it's very possible these two countries are a little problematic, as they're both definitely inspired by kind of broad images of East-Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. It is nice to see some more characters with darker skin tones, like the two Chizeta sisters, but...yeah, it's not exactly ideal. However, so far they are at least being presented as characters with pretty distinct personalities, and we've barely seen anything of them yet, so we'll talk about them more later.
  - Yeah they all could be...way worse, but could be better >>
  - Speaking fo could be better, I might have paced this so that the Autozam section was last, because that way we'd have the contrast--Fahren and CHizeta's champions all told us what their motivation was, but we didn't get a specific 'I want to be the pillar of Cephireo because...' statement from Eagle.
  - HMMMM
- Anyway, back to our girls. I hope they all managed to get some sleep, because it seems to be day now.
- Hikaru is ruminating about Lantis, remembering his tender words and sad eyes.
  - She knows he said he doesn't blame her or the other knights for what happened with his brother, but she doesn't quite understand how he can blame Cephireo. And she's touched when she remembers what he said about her crying over what happened, too.
- For such a high-energy girl as the one we first met in volume 1, it's hard to see her so subdued!
- Umi notices that she seems off. She even touches her forehead, and comments that she might have a fever!
  - Too many thoughts of beefcake men, I guess. We've all been there.
- The other girls try to cheer her up, and tell her they know her well enough to disbelieve her when she says 'she's fine'
  - She thinks of others over herself
  - SHADES OF SUBARU
- But Umi and Fuu don't want her to carry her burden alone.
  - They had an experience no one else has had, and it has bonded them deeply.
    - Fuu recalls what her sister told her in the beginning, about how having people who truly understand can help you feel less alone because you can work through your troubles together.
      - They promise that whatever troubles come up, they'll get through them together--and with Mokona, who pops in, too!
- Some cute comic relief moments ensue--but are shattered when, well, a big chunk of the palace shatters!

- They're not under attack from the outside, it is just that this little chunk of Cephiro is slowly crumbling...and maybe not as slowly as they would like.
- Clef and Presea admit that they don't have much time left. They must find a new pillar, and soon.
- **However**, it's not as easy as simply choosing someone to be the pillar. They must have the strongest heart, yes, but they must 'walk the path of the pillar and undergo its trials.'
  - No one knows where this 'path' is, or what the trial might be. The only one who has ever traveled that road is Princess Emeraude.
- The task now is to find this road and have someone from Cephiro travel down it before the other countries arrive. If a foreigner becomes the pillar, Cephiro will be lost.
  - **But** Hikaru's also worried about what will happen if they *do* find a new pillar. Will that person undergo the same tragedy as Princess Emeraude?
  - However, there's no time to worry about that now, because the Mashin inform them that another invader is approaching.
  - The girls will go meet them in their mechs, but before they engage in battle, they're determined to find out what their true intentions are, and Clef acknowledges how much that final battle with Princess Emeraude has truly affected them.
- **Speaking** of...traumatized people, I guess, Lantis is brooding by a window.
  - He's sad at how the land looks now. It was so beautiful before, but without the pillar, it's become so ugly.
  - He remembers a time from before, when he still lived in Cephiro. He was napping in a tree when his brother came to find him.
  - We learn that he used to be the Captain of Princess Emeraude's guard, and the only "cail" in Cephiro. He complained that there were no battles to fight in Cephiro, since the pillar kept everything so peaceful.
  - Zagato asked how he felt about the pillar system. Does it seem fair for one person to carry such a heavy burden? That person is essentially the creator of Cephiro, but is their heart really free?
  - As Lantis considered these words, he saw Princess Emeraude watching them both.
  - **Back** in the now-time, Lantis is determined. He will not let that tragedy repeat itself. He will end the legend of the magic knights.
  - **OMINOUS**

## Discussion

- SO WOW—this was a lot of like, actually dealing with the aftermath of what happened!
  - Imagine, recognizing the trauma these kids went through and watching them work on processing it, and how it changes their relationships and perspectives!
- Part one was all about setting up this false sense of security with RPG cliches so they could challenge some of the oversimplified assumptions about good and evil, peace and justice, love and freedom that constrain a lot of fantasy stories.

- The girls didn't question that they had to level up their equipment and save the princess from the dark knight.
- But he was only trying to free her from an unjust system, and she was just trying to have her own happiness that wasn't sacrificed for the false stability of their world.
- Now you have three middle school girls recovering from sharing this magical experience that turned into tragedy and, frankly, murder!
  - This is heavily stylized in like, 12-year-old-melodrama-space but damn is it effective.
  - When Fuu says that her healing magic won't work in Tokyo...I dunno, that hit me with this "how is she supposed to re-adjust!"
- For them to get a second chance to help the beautiful world they grew to love, to see their magical friends again, and maybe even to make things right with the people Zagato and Emeraude left behind...
- THAT IS HEAVY STUFF FOR KIDS!
- No shit this was harder to write! It is all about dealing with the consequences!
- And we'll see how they do that with volumes 2 and 3, but for now, how did this volume hit you, Lucy?
- I was so in it, like immediately. I mean, I enjoyed the first three volumes, but there were so many characters in this volume that I'd just been waiting for! So I'm excited to finally start talking about all the stuff that happens in this half.
- Were those cherry blossoms swirling around them when Lantis said that Cephiro might be at fault for what happened to his brother? They also came back when Hikaru was remembering how he said she also cried over what happened. Robin, does this fit our pattern?
- OOO could be!

So the game-like structure for this part has been set up:

We have three challengers! And a mysterious 'path' that is like, maybe-not-totally-a-metaphor for a like, ritualistic test they'll have to undergo. WHOEVER is trying to become the pillar (one of our girls? One of their friends?) has to compete with others...but let's face it, since it's all about the strength of their hearts, it feels PRETTY SAFE TO ASSUME they'll really be competing with themselves.

But on top of that, we have our main little spunky heroine--questioning whether ANYONE should be the pillar! And trying to figure out what to do to save everyone if not that!

AWESOME to have those game elements here, but our heroes have learned from their past experience.

Art-wise it is still stellar! Lots of complex and beautiful character designs, space ships, new mecha...and SO much achingly expert tone-work on everything. It isn't as inky as X, and not as light as a certain future work ended up...this is labor-intensive! I like the big beautiful spreads for Eagle and Lantis that really hit home how beautiful and complicated these new dudes are--very shoujo manga! But very effective to make it clear to us that they are important.

The location design is...economical. A floating land mass in a fx-laden void...the castle is kind of free-form, too, so they could lean into their strengths. Not a lot of opportunities to

use photo techniques and certainly no room for toner backgrounds (which I don't think they ever use???) but still not as complex and specific as some comics would require. That lets them focus on the characters and the mecha, the attack effects and magic effects--the stuff they were excited about and which was going to capture the audience's imagination.

### Outro (edit for flavor)

In our next episode, we'll be discussing Rayearth volume 5! Or Rayearth 2 volume 2!

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!