

CCS Volume 7

Episode 70

Lucy

Robin

Intro

With all the cards caught...is Sakura still a card-captor at all? We're halfway through and everything old is new again!

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

Check-In

- We're back!
- Bonus episode should resume next month
- I graduated! And moved! And...I'm very tired. But I'm excited to be back to podcasting!
 - This is the first time recording from my new office, so if I sound different...that's why
 -
- I finished my debut picture book! For real! It'll be out next year and now I have to work hard on new manuscripts but yay!

Background

- So this is volume 7 if you go by the Japanese releases, but if you're reading the old TokyoPop releases it's volume 1 of the second half the series (which they subtitled as Master of the Clow). And in the Dark Horse omnibuses Robin's reading it's...The first chunk of the 3rd volume of the 4. So definitely the beginning of the second half!
- Timeline check-in?
 - This volume came out in 1998, so the chapters had been printed some time before that.
 - The Clover manga had started, in 97, and the CCS tv show would run in 98 as well.

Summary

- This volume begins with Sakura dreaming, again. She sees Tokyo Tower--always an ominous sight in any CLAMP titles--and sitting on its beams, some mysterious figures. A small person with short hair, a large hat, and long rod with a starburst on it; and a lithe figure with long hair.

- We see that it's a vision very reminiscent of X (and of her own dreams in the beginning, and of the Yue/judge) but unfortunately when she wakes up, Sakura can't remember any of it.
- It's not surprising that some releases consider this a second series almost the way Rayearth 2 was a second series—we actually get a little check-in, re-introduction from Sakura here very much like the first volume, where she brings us up to speed—who she is, who Kero is, and what her mission is. Well, was. Remember, she collected all the Clow Cards, and passed the Final Trial, and now things are pretty much back to normal.
 - Sakura still remembers the words Clow Reed said to her when she officially became Master of the Clow: “I fear I might make things difficult for you, young Sakura, but I'm sure you'll be alright.”
- At school, things are pretty much back to normal, too, except Tomoyo is sad that she won't have any more opportunities to dress Sakura up and film her adventures.
 - That, and apparently with all the Clow Cards collected, Sharon plans to return to his family in Hong Kong.
 - Sakura is sad when he says he really has to go, but lights up when he says he'll someday visit, which of course makes Shaoran blush...so it looks like those feelings are still there, as well.
 - They also hear from Kahou, who is studying abroad. Apparently, her studies are going well, and she's almost done with her degree.
 - Everything may seem normal, but Sakura can't shake the feeling that something important is about to happen. Maybe it was her dream...
- **Something** eventful for their class is about to happen, at least: they have a new student!
 - He's a dark-haired, be-spectacled boy named Eriol Hiiragizawa, and he's from England.
 - He says hi to Sakura as he's taking his seat next to Shaoran, and Sakura instantly feels a connection. There's something familiar about him.
 - Shaoran also instantly feels annoyed...but that may just be because of how Eriol addressed Sakura.
 - Later that day, Sakura is writing a letter to Kahou when Eriol appears again.
 - Actually, he catches her mumbling aloud about how she feels like she's met him before, but he rolls with it, and says that he feels the same. It doesn't feel like this is the first time they met.
 - And maybe it isn't...maybe they met in a past life!
 - He then properly introduces himself, and tells her she can just call him by his first name, if it's ok for him to do the same with her.
 - From afar, Tomoyo and Shaoran watch this interaction. Tomoyo thinks it's just a like a scene out of a shojo romance, and Shaoran seems to agree...in that he's very obviously jealous and Not Happy about any of this.
 - Shaoran runs up, with Tomoyo in pursuit, to interrupt things, and after a tense moment where he's clearly glaring down Eriol and Eriol is just smiling, Sakura leaves with them.

- Sakura can tell that Shaoran is upset, but obviously doesn't know why because she's a sweet naive child, and offers to help him in any way she can. Of course, she knows she can only help for so long, since he'll be going to Hong Kong soon...
 - But nope, Shaoran has changed his mind! He'll be staying in Japan a bit longer. I wonder why?
 - Sakura runs off to get them ice cream to celebrate Shaoran staying, and runs into her brother and Yukito.
 - Touya is exhausted because they also apparently had a new transfer student...and a very exuberant one, it turns out. Their name is Nakuru Akizuki, and they enter the scene by leaping onto Touya's back.
 - They also say that Sakura is as cute as they imagined!
 - Hmm, interesting...did Touya tell them about her?
 - Side note: we are supposed to assume Nakuru uses she/her pronouns at this point because they're wearing a girl's uniform, but so as to not misgender them we're just sticking with "they." It'll come up later in the volume, and it just felt weird to not use the right pronouns for them from the start, especially since the Japanese version would have most likely been gender-neutral for them, since that is much easier to do in Japanese than in English.
 - Later Sakura catches Kero up on the events of the day, especially Eriol, who she's realized reminds her a bit of her dad. Which is weird to say about a kid her age, but there's just something about him...
 - That's not the only weird thing, though. It's pouring rain outside, but the weather report said it was supposed to be nice out today.
 - Well, it turns out it is indeed weird...not only was the rain unexpected, but it's only falling in their neighborhood! All the surrounding areas are clear and cloudless.
 - Of course, this is an excellent excuse for Tomoyo to dress Sakura up, and film another adventure!
 - And sure enough, they are quickly attacked by water from the definitely-unnatural sky. Sakura uses the Watery card, and it's very impressive...but the aggressive water goes right through it. The card had no power over it!
- Sakura tries the shield card instead, with the same result--the attacking water just goes right through it!
 - Kero seems to sense a specific presence, but there's no time to share whatever suspicions he has! It's time to retreat!
 - As our heroes run away, Kero still ruminating, we pull out to see a lone figure.
 - Child-sized, they are standing ominously on top of a lightpost...and the rain is still pouring down, but the space around them is clear.
 - Later as Sakura is taking a bath and pondering over the strange events of that night, Kero asks her to invite Yukito over. He needs to talk to Yue. Guardian to Guardian.

- The next morning, Sakura, very embarrassed, fumbles over asking her brother to invite Yukito over. He tells her that if she agrees to make dinner, Yukito will probably come over, and of course she jumps at that chance.
 - This is one of the many times Touya refers to her as a monster (actually Kaiju I think) and is all like ‘ah how often does he get to eat monster food/ so he’s not being sappy and flattering, it’s the usual banter.
- Sakura continues to fret throughout the day, as the mysterious rain continues. She’s captured all the Clow Cards, so what could this be?
- Eriol hands her a flower to cheer her up, and tells her she has a nice smile. Sakura does seem cheered up...but the interaction seems to have definitely ruined Shaoran’s morning, as he runs up annoyed and jealous to wish her a very enthusiastic “good morning.”
 - Of course, Tomoyo is loving every bit of this, she’s just watchin’ her stories~ Better than a telenovela!
- Sakura catches Shaoran up on the night’s events, and he’s also puzzled. He can tell that some serious magic must be at work here. And the fact that Sakura couldn’t sense anything may mean that wherever this power is coming from, it’s stronger than she is. (Like, it can hide its power level!)
- Over at the high school, Touya and Yukito spot Sakura and Shaoran talking outside.
 - Of course, Touya is annoyed that she’s talking to Shaoran (he’s still not a fan), but when Yukito laughs and compliments him on being able to spot them, he goes all serious-eyes and starts to tell Yukito something...
 - But Nakuru jumps on Touya’s back, interrupting them, and tells him the teacher is looking for him.
 - When Touya leaves, they turn to Yukito, and give him an appraising look.
 - They say “you don’t remember anything, do you?” and when Yukito just looks confused, they brighten up, and tell him that if he doesn’t want “him”, they’re taking him, and they run off.
 - So that’s normal and good.
- Yukito does end up coming over for dinner, and when Touya leaves for work (after commenting on the continuing rain, which he recognizes as unnatural), Kero sneaks up on Yukito and calls Yue forth.
- Yukito is surrounded in wings, the familiar Clow magic circle appearing under him, and Yue emerges.
- He’s grouchy, though, because he dislikes being stuck as Yukito for so long.
- He’s aware of the rain issue, though, and he thinks something very powerful must be behind it. Kero of course agrees, but the real question is, what or who is the one behind things?
 - To recognize the gravity of the situation, he transforms into his true form as well.
 - You’ll remember, these forms are stronger, but also take up more energy, so both Guardians only trot out their true forms when they need to.

- The two fully-powered-up Guardians and Sakura go to investigate the rain.
 - They are sans Tomoyo this time, so Sakura gets to wear normal clothes
- Sakura, who hasn't really spent much time with Yue as, well, Yue, asks if he shares any of Yukito's memories.
 - Yes, Yue says he does remember everything that happens in his human form, even though Yukito remains oblivious about him.
 - Sakura wonders if Yue knows about her crush on Yukito...she really hopes not. Yukito is dreamy, but Yue is so imposing.
- Fortunately, they don't have to wait long before the strange water attacks Sakura. When Yue and Kero move to help her, they realize they are frozen in place, unable to move.
 - This seems to confirm something for Yue and Kero. This is *him*, apparently.
- Sakura gets caught up in a giant cyclone of water, and the Guardians are unable to help her!
 - She can't breathe, and she doesn't know where her friends are...but she's determined not to give up.
 - Sakura focuses her power, and a magic circle appears around her. But this is a different magic circle than usual. Like Clow's magic circle, it has a sun and moon in it, but it also has a large star in the middle.
 - Sakura once again summons a card, and this time her rod glows, and the little decorative wings on each side of it grow large.
 - She summons Firey, and this time the card is able to defeat the mysterious water, and the sky clears up around them.
 - When Firey returns to its card, Sakura notices that the card looks different, too.
 - There are a few stylistic differences, but mainly this card has a starburst at the top of it, instead of the sun that appears on all the other cards.
 - Kero and Yue are now able to move again, and they run up to her just as Sakura faints--but don't worry, she's only asleep!
- As they help Sakura, we can see three figures watching them this time. It's the child-like figure from before, and two other ones that are hard to make out, but which both have large butterfly wings.
 - They're observing her and her new magic, they say--and the small figure that CAN'T POSSIBLY BE ERIOL (like, its not revealed but...you can tell okay?) says 'Now things will get interesting.'
- The next chapter begins with Sakura observing an eclipse over the Tokyo Tower.
 - She sees the figures we saw at the end of the last chapter, in a little more detail but without their faces fully revealed.
- When she wakes up, she doesn't have a fever and insists she's fine but she's so tired that she can barely stay awake.
- Her dad and brother decide she's sick and have her stay in bed, picking shifts from school/work to check on her.

- Touya seems to suspect something is going on here.
- Kero is worried that Touya is onto him, and Sakura's preoccupied with how her father reminds her of Eriol (or the other way around)...
- But Kero points out a glow emanating from the Clow cards on her desk.
- The Fiery card has changed, as Sakura noticed earlier, with stars added to the back as well as the face!
- At school, Shaoran and Tomoyo are in cooking class/home ec and missing Sakura.
 - Tomoyo, who is perfect, tells Shaoran they should drop by her house to check on her (and give her some of his baking from class of course.)
 - And he's embarrassed but agrees.
 - The other kids notice Eriol is quite accomplished at baking himself--and when he explains that he does the cooking at home they compare him to Shaoran (who doesn't love it)
 - But unlike Shaoran, he doesn't live alone. He almost says one, but corrects himself to two people live with him.
 - Shaoran does not trust him, and he just smiles charmingly.
- At Keijo high, Touya is lost in his own thoughts when Yuki shows up with an absurd amount of baked goods for lunch (he's been so hungry lately)
 - Again, Touya tries to talk to him seriously and again, he's interrupted--or more like distracted this time, by Nakuru sinking a sick 3-pointer on the basketball court below them. They call out to Touya to get his attention.
 - Yuki remarks that Nakuru is a great athlete, but won't join any teams.
 - Touya says they remind him of, well, him.
 - Yuki also won't join any teams so he asks if that's why, but Touya says no, that's not the only thing...
- Shaoran and Tomoyo do visit Sakura, who's feeling much better, and they ply her with cupcakes (or maybe castella cakes?)--and Shaoran blushes when she praises his.
 - For the record, Kero also praises his, though he still insults him at the same time so one step forward two steps back.
 - They check in about Sakura's new sleepiness--she's never been affected by a battle this way before.
 - Kero says it must be because they transformed the card--
 - When she used Fiery, the magic circle wasn't the classic one designed by Clow, and now the cards have changed, too! Sakura realizes that even her staff changed, with spinning star and bigger wings, when she used it.
 - Kero says this may be her actually re-making the card with her own power.
 - And in a full page spread, Sakura looks deeply affected by this thought.
 - Tomoyo is also delighted by the thought that now the cards will be lovely SAKURA cards~~~and think of the new outfits she'll need if this keeps going~~~
 - Anyway she's using her own, limited, neophyte powers to do this rather than just tapping into the power of Clow's cards the way she had been before, hence the exhaustion.

- But, Shaoran asks....why didn't the old cards work on this new threat?
 - Kero says to buckle up cuz it gets worse—he and Yue couldn't do anything either.
 - And only two forces could neutralize them that way:
 - Sakura herself...
 - And the original master of the cards, Clow Reed himself.
 - GASP-A-ROONIE
- All right, so Eriol comes home to his stately house—its not neoclassical or anything, i think it's got an east-meets-west vibe but I'm not an architecture person—and is welcomed home by a black cat with a funny corkscrew in its tail, who he greets as Spinel.
 - The cat doesn't look like the convincingly realistic cats we saw in Wish, but rather...well...the same style as Kero-chan, once might say.
 - Oh and Spinel is a dark, often red or purple colored gemstone that can resemble ruby and sapphire by the way.
 - That is awesome, I did not know that! I had wondered where his name came from, though.
 - Unlike Kero-chan, who plays video games all day, Spinel reads books—and what's open under Spinel's paws in this scene looks fairly esoteric?
 - Spinel thanks Eriol for the extensive library he built in the house—Eriol says he did that long ago...but he looks, like, ten?
 - Then Nakuru comes home! They all ask how Japanese school was.
 - Nakuru calls Spinel "Supi", and replies that they found a 'tasty one' at school. Supi is impressed that Nakuru has the restraint to not 'snack'
 - Ah, but Nakuru admits there's a small annoyance in their way—and that the wait just makes it better.
 - Having Wish flashbacks now
 - Also they ask Nakuru why the girl's uniform rather than the boys, but their reply is simply IT'S CUTER—and why do they care about gender, Nakuru isn't human anyway, so whatever.
 - Nakuru gives Eriol a somewhat stiff embrace, asking how he likes Tomoeda.
 - Of course Eriol likes it—it's where he died, after all.
 - And we get a little floaty panel with a key with a sunburst emblem at the head.
 - Eriol invokes the power of darkness within the key and shouts release, like a certain card captor we know
 - And returns his housemates to their true forms (which both have dark butterfly wings, if you hadn't seen that coming):
 - They are Ruby Moon (Nakuru, who looks mostly the same but more glamorous and even in a slight Chinoiserie (shin-wa-ser-y) look like Yue) and Spinel Sun, who is a big black panther in the same way that Kero-chan becomes lion-like.

asks if, as a fellow newcomer to the area, he could help him get adjusted.

- Then he speaks his name in...the spell font these editions use for when Sakura releases cards' magic and stuff, and Shaoran swoons and falls out of the tree into his arms.
 - Making SHaoran blush because he's, among many things, a bi disaster.
 - And he runs away when Eriol asks 'oh are you okay? Did you faint?'
 - But Eriol is just toying with him, because, in his own words, 'he is in the way of what i want.'
- Sigh. So Rika-chan can't take Sakura to the craft store because she wants to give the teddy bear to her adult man teacher boyfriend, but that's okay because Tomoyo is taking her—and how cute, Eriol wants to tag along, too, because he needs thread! Hearing that Eriol will be coming, Shaoran yells that HE TOO WILL BE COMING.
 - And yeah there's a cute scene where Rika gives Mr. Terada the Teddy bear and when she starts to explain about the birthdays, he suggests the bear be named Rika after her, which makes her happy.
 - ANYway, Tomoyo shows off the various shops to Eriol, and Shaoran wants to have a word with Sakura. Once she confirms that no new weirdness has occurred, he blushingly bids her to call on him for help next time something like that does occur.
 - She's happy to agree.
 - At the craft store, Sakura finds a teddy bear kit she can buy with her allowance, and asks if Tomoyo is getting one, too.
 - But Tomoyo isn't, because she wants the one she loves to be happy more than she wants her love returned.
 - It is....actually a fairly heart-breaking panel, and Sakura doesn't know she's the missing person in that sentence and just asks..doesn't she want to be loved back?
 - Tomoyo says as wonderful as that would be, she really just wants that person to be happy, that's all she needs to be happy.
 - And maybe completely ignorant or maybe a bit prescient, Sakura says she bets that person is in fact very happy.
 - And while we get tissues, the boys are also finishing up their shopping—Eriol, with thread for which he has 'other uses' than just sewing (he doesn't elaborate) and Shaoran who has his own mysterious package he doesn't want to be asked about.
 - At home, Kero comments on how Sakura is struggling with her teddy bear kit, when who shows up but Yukito (Touya forgot his dictionary and he's returning it.)
 - Sakura considers how Eriol actually reminds her of her dad and Yukito in some odd way...but she doesn't have much time to think about this

because in a flash of light, Yukito has given way to Yue, and Kero-chan demands tea for them all.

- With Sakura out of the room, Kero and Yue confer.
 - Yue is stressed out about how he's not sure how much longer he can return to this true form.
 - He needs more power than Sakura's magic. As Yukito he can eat and eat to try to maintain his energy, but unlike Kero who eats and shines with his own light...Yue's the moon, which reflects light from another source.
 - Kaho's bell did help give him a burst of energy when he had to be the judge way back in the last volume.
 - But they both think that Sakura needs their help more than ever, in their powerful true forms, yet she's so exhausted when she makes a new card over...it's a bad combination. Yue notes that Kero can help her even in his power-saving form, but he's not so sure what he can do as Yukito.
 - When Sakura brings tea, he turns back.
 - Yukito is confused about how he apparently teleported from the front door, but it seems he accepts whatever lie Sakura tells him before he leaves.
 - She's just doing dishes a bit later when she feels something strange.
 - She and Kero agree...it feels like before, like Clow Reed.
- On the next page we see that she has indeed called Shaoran for help, as well as Tomoyo to film (and costume) her!
 - They agree this...is Clow's presence.
 - But before they can figure out how that's possible or what that means, Shaoran..attacks Sakura with his sword, out of the blue!
 - He swears its not him, and sure enough he's under someone else's control
 - He flips out a spell tag for Water Dragon and the water that sprays out makes visible a web of strings attached to him, turning him into a living marionette!
 - Sakura must cut the strings, but her key isn't transforming into a staff!
 - She panics until she remembers that she's now shining with the power of her own star, and changes her invocation for Release to accommodate that.
 - It works!

- She releases the sword card and and handily cuts through the threads.
 - This also transforms the sword card into her own
 - Which is great, but it took a lot out of her and she collapses into Shaoran's arms.
- In the distance, it's finally clearly revealed to us that the sinister small figure in a big hat is Eriol, and he's the one who was manipulating the now-cut strings.
 - "This is another way to use thread, Sakura" he says, though she cannot hear him to learn this lesson.
 - WHOA!

Discussion

- So here we go, new antagonist revealed! What are his goals? How far will he take it? HOW DID CLOW REED LIKE, COME BACK FROM THE DEAD AS A CHILD?
- This doesn't matter but there's a section where Sakura has to catch up to Touya on his bike and the bike was accomplished using the photocopier/photo technique, I'm like 90% sure—and it was done IMPECCABLY. Just a note on craft~~~
 - The art is so solid by this point—and by solid I actually mean light, breezy, and ethereal. IT LOOKS easy, and in terms of labor it probably was (at least compared to X and Rayearth) but only because they're so accomplished at this point that they have a good process down for making this look so good.
 - Yeah, it looks great, I love their style at this point. I also love all the call-outs or similarities or whatever to X. It's as if they were like "what if X, but not horribly tragic?"
- Yeef I forgot Eriol was presented as a potential love interest for Sakura/rival for Shaoran.
 - Sakura does seem to like him, and finds him familiar, but I don't get any sense of romantic feelings from her...or really from him. It's all Tomoyo and Shaoran reacting to the shojo-ness of it all.
 - Plus, Sakura has made a point to say how floaty other characters (Yukito, Kahou) make her feel, and she hasn't done with with Eriol.
 - Yeah she compares him to Yukito once, but mostly to her dad.
 - He's got chill dad vibes I guess?
 - Or skeezy teacher vibes!
- Before I'd read this part of the manga, I remember being kind of obsessed with Supi and Nakuru's character designs, because they were *dark* and *moody* and also *butterflies*. I'm not sure how I felt about them once I actually read it...but I guess we'll see!
 - Supi's design is so dang good. Supi and Kero are both just great examples of like, minimalist mascot design. Very good pokemon.
 - (Supi is dark type, Kero is fire type)
- I love how this actually addresses the WEIRDNESS Sakura feels with regards to Yue—because he's...a person. But Yukito is also a person? And she's been very vulnerable in front of Yukito—who she has big kid crush feelings for—but Yue is...the guy who judges her ha ha ha ha!

- This is some high weirdness and I love it
 - But oh man, uh, this is gonna be weird for Touya if he ever finds out, huh?
 - Or do you think he kinds knows?
 - He definitely know some things are up, but...I don't know.
 - One thing that's interesting about this manga is that while we're VERY keyed into Sakura's perspective, and she's decently in the action/aware of what's going on, the perspective is omniscient enough that we get like, multi-directional dramatic irony, which is tricky to keep straight.
 - Kero and Yue know a few things Sakura doesn't, Touya knows things we don't, Sakura knows things that poor Yukito doesn't.
 - We even get bits of ominous foreshadowing with the antagonists (such as they are) like Eriol, in this volume!
 - Since CLAMP employ their patented "characters bring up a serious topic and always get interrupted/trail off" thang with Touya especially but also with Kero, we the audience don't know everything they know, we just...know that everyone's suspicious.
 - And that's a little frustrating at times, and definitely gets repetitive in a way that is mostly because it's crafted for a serial that runs periodically.
 - But it is also effective, I think, in crafting a story where there's a lot of mystery despite how many visual hints are dropping
 - It keeps the tension up and keeps you guessing, but also tantalizes you with new things!
- This definitely does feel like the beginning of a new era of the series...there are even some parallels back to the first volume, with Sakura introducing herself to the reader and everything.
 - And man, her new power stuff is cool! I love the idea that up until now she's been using Clow's power, as his successor or whatever, but now things are going to be more on her terms. She's growing up and coming into her own!
- The relationship beats are also cute. I like Shaoran being jealous and Tomoyo being delighted at everyone having emotions around her. She definitely has kind of that old-soul thing, where she sees what's going on from maybe a slightly more aware perspective from her peers, at least when it comes to..."matters of the heart" I guess?
 - Rika also kind of has that going on, but I do like that they continue to handle her thing with her teacher in what feels like a very kid-fantasy way, and not as creepy as it *could* be.
 - The teddy bears are also cute.

- So, as far as, like, plot speculation...I think we both remember to much to do any kind of theorizing or speculation.
 - But MAN this Eriol kid is weird, huh? What's he's deal, I wonder?
- Hey is it just me or are a lot of these beats very Wish-like, but just done way better? Probably something else to reserve judgement on but we have Touya's serious discussion with Yukito being constantly interrupted by Nakuru, we have power-saving-mode and powerful-mode drama, we have someone wanting to 'snack' on someone...I think its fun to see these elements pop back up.
 - Yeah, now that you mention it, it really does remind me of Wish. Just...more refined.

Outro

In our next episode, we'll be discussing Cardcaptor Sakura volume 8 (or equivalent).

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

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

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

—and try not to lose an eye!