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SAILOR MOON

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Based on
the hit
TV series!

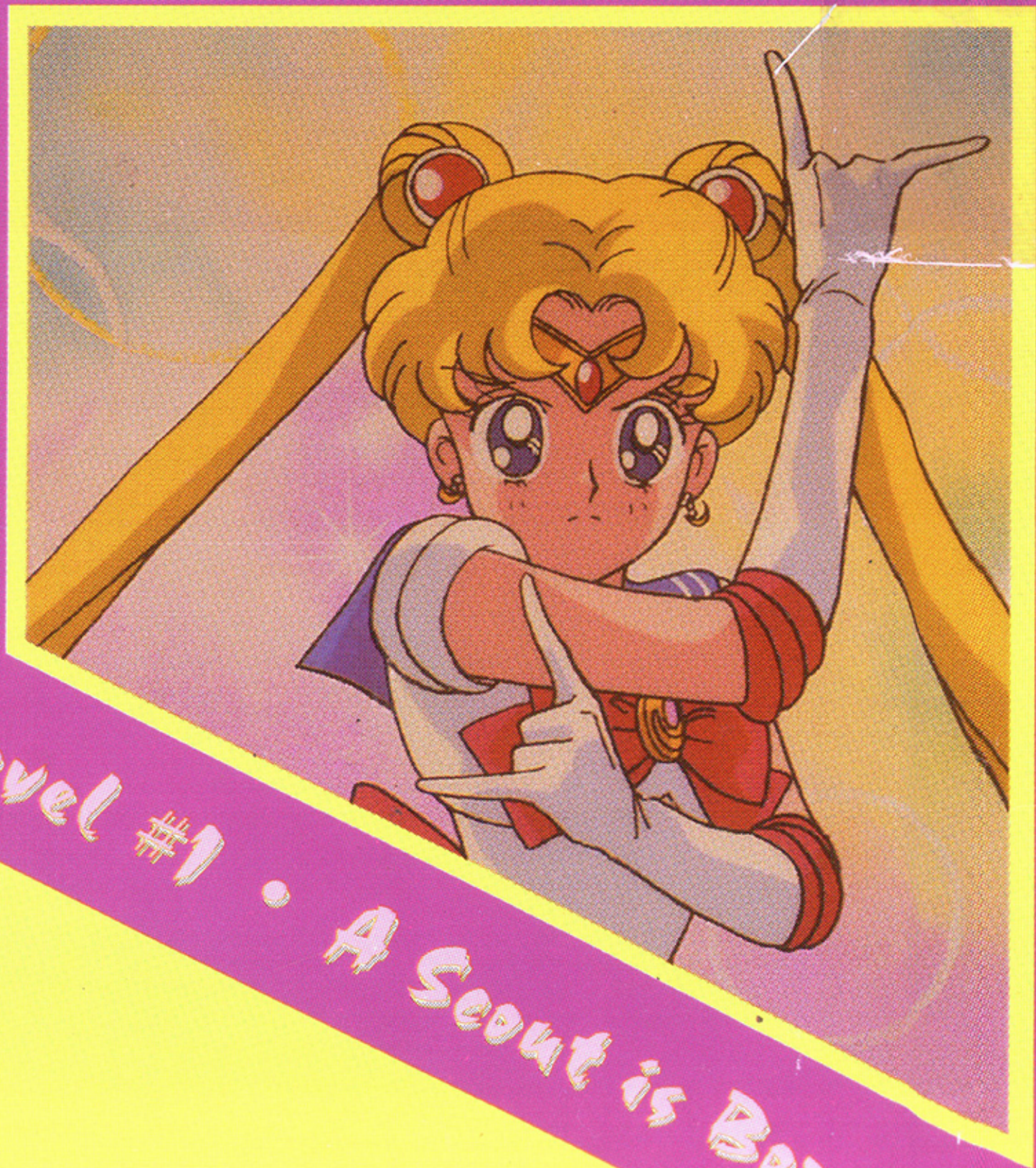
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Sailor Moon[®] the novel #1

A SCOUT
IS BORN

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Stuart J. Levy

Created by
NAOKO TAKEUCHI



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Chapter 1

Alley Cat

Buzzzzzz. Buzzzzzzzzz. Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.

“OK! OK! Stop it! Get away...” Serena Tsukino stopped panting and looked around her. “Huh? Oh, it was just a dream. Whew, I thought my heart was gonna burst.”

Yawning, she glanced around her room. She loved her purple linen sheets Mom gave her two birthdays ago, featuring little pink stars, yellow moons and, of course, cute bunnies hopping all around. Serena’s favorite animals were rabbits, which is why some friends gave her the nickname, “Bunny.”

“Serena! You’re going to be late for school again!” Her mom’s voice bounced off the walls.

Serena jumped up out of bed. The clock read 8:15. Oh no, she thought. Her teacher, Miss Patricia Haruna, would bite her head off again. Throwing on her school uniform and running into the kitchen, Serena yelled out.

“Mom!! Why don’t you wake me up earlier next time?!”

“Serena, I’ve been trying to wake you up for an hour. You wouldn’t budge,” her Mom replied.

Serena sighed. “Come on, Mom, you know I’d sleep through a war. You’ve got to nudge me a bit.”

Halfway out the door, Serena’s Mom called out after her. “Serena, don’t forget your lunch!”

Serena stopped dead in her tracks. Food? Forget food? There’s no way she could do such a thing. After all, Serena’s entire life was devoted to three things: sleep, video games, and, best of all, food.

“Thanks Mom! I love you!” Serena kissed her Mom on the cheek, grabbed the pink lunch bag (it had bunny drawings on it, of course), and ran

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off.

Ah, school again, thought Serena. Would Miss Haruna yell at her in front of everyone? She would just die. It was always so embarrassing because everyone would whisper and crack up behind her in class. Serena always had tons of fun with her friends in school, but the actual act of studying drove her nuts. In fact, if Serena had her way, school would just be the place everyone met before they went to the mall. By far the worse thing about school, though, was the time. Why 8:30 AM? *AM?! Every girl needs her beauty sleep, Serena reasoned, and getting to school that early was interfering with hers. It's just not fair!*

Serena continued to rant as she marched alongside the road. Coming to the parking lot outside the 7-Eleven, she noticed three small kids poking a stick at some black, furry object on the ground. Squinting, she looked closer.

A black cat?! That poor thing, Serena thought.

Her cheeks turning red, Serena yelled out to the kids. "Stop that! Leave that little cat alone!"

The three kids scattered, laughing and wheezing. Serena picked the little furball up.

“Poor kitty,” she cooed. “Hey, what’s this bandage on your forehead?”

The black cat’s hair above its eyes was ruffled, and there was a big bandage stuck on its forehead. Serena slowly peeled it off. Shaking, the cat looked up at Serena part frightened and part relieved.

“Wow, kitty, you’ve got a moon-shaped bald spot on you!” Serena said with a laugh. The little black cat pressed her paws against Serena’s shoulders and sprang up in the air, landing perfectly on its feet.

“Guess you don’t like being called a baldy, huh?” Serena giggled.

The cat, jumping on top of a car next to Serena, walked right up to her and looked her in the eyes.

“What are you looking at, kitty? Is my hair messed up or something?” Serena’s heart skipped a beat for a second. This cat is kind of weird, she thought.

Just then, she heard a shrill ringing sound in

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the distance.

“Oh, no! That’s the school bell! I’m late for first period!!” Serena panicked. “Sorry kitty, but I’ve gotta go!”

The black cat looked up at Serena as she ran off to school. Serena waved back and grabbed her backpack. Luckily, the school gate was still open. Hopping the stairs two at a time, Serena turned the corner and headed towards the main building. Swinging the door open, Serena dove inside the hall...and screeched to a halt.

Miss Haruna was standing there with her arms crossed, watching Serena’s acrobatics. “Alright, young lady. You can wait outside the classroom for now.”

“But, Miss Haruna! I’m sor...” It was too late. Miss Haruna had disappeared into the classroom. Serena was stuck standing outside like the class dunce.

This is so stupid, she thought. It’s not like I was that late. After all, five minutes late is fashionably late, Serena reasoned. And fashion isn’t something to take lightly. Just like good food.

Food?

Grrrrowwwwl.

Just the thought of food made Serena's stomach rumble. Speaking of food, Serena thought, she missed breakfast this morning. Clutching her pink lunching bag, Serena's eyes lit up. A little snack wouldn't hurt, she reasoned. Before she knew it, Serena was munching away happily.

The door squeaked open. "I did not have you stand outside so you could eat your lunch!" Miss Haruna towered above Serena, obviously upset.

Busted again, Serena thought.

"It's this kind of attitude which keeps you from getting good grades," Miss Haruna said, pointing to the big, fat red "30" on Serena's latest spelling quiz.

Grabbing the quiz from her teacher, Serena shrieked. "30 again?!" Mom would never let her off easy this time.

After school, all Serena could do was sulk. Sitting on the short, brick wall in the quad, Serena

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moaned to her best friend, Molly Baker.

“Molly...” she cried. “What am I going to do?!”

It was a bit tough for Molly to feel sorry for her. “Serena, you’re always late, you’re constantly munching during class, and you’re lucky if you get a C on a quiz,” Molly said. “So why are you so depressed *this* time?”

“Yeah, Serena! There’s nothing to be depressed about.” It was Melvin.

Of all the people she did not want to see, number one was Melvin. Melvin was by far the biggest geek in the entire school, and to make matters worse, he was constantly trying to hang around Serena and her friends. With his coke-bottle glasses and ratty hair, Melvin made Dennis the Menace look like a stud.

“Why’s that, Melvin?” Serena was almost afraid to ask.

“Because I messed up on this one, too. See!”

Melvin waved his quiz in front of the girls’ faces. There were only two red marks on the entire page—one “X” and a big “95” on the top.

“Melvin, you got a 95?! That’s disgusting,”

Serena yelled, clenching her fists.

“Serena, never mind him,” Molly said. “Did you hear about Sailor V catching that jewelry thief?”

“Are you serious?!” Serena jumped up, excited. Suddenly, a puzzled look came over her face. “What’s Sailor V?” Serena asked.

“Serena!” Molly cried, shocked. “You don’t know who Sailor V is? Haven’t you even bothered watching TV lately?”

“Yeah, she’s only the biggest crime-fighter in the entire city,” Melvin added. “But no one knows her true identity! It’s kind of mysterious like Batman or something. Some people say she’s some sort of secret weapon the government’s using.”

Melvin went on to describe Sailor V’s special “sailor uniform,” with a navy blue mini-skirt, white blouse, and navy blue dickey over the shoulders. Because of her uniform, Melvin explained, everyone called her “Sailor V.”

“But you should’ve seen the gorgeous diamonds Sailor V recovered from the thief!” Molly exclaimed.

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“Oh, my God, I absolutely love diamonds!”
Serena chimed in.

As the two girls started to babble excitedly about jewelry, Melvin gave up on them and wandered away.

“Hey, Serena,” Molly shrieked. “I just remembered. My Mom’s having this huge sale at the jewelry store she owns!”

“Are you serious?!” Serena couldn’t contain herself. “Do you think there’ll be a ring I can afford?”

There was nothing Serena wanted more than a beautiful diamond ring. Well, maybe a lifetime supply of pepperoni pizza and a bed made of 100% pure down feathers. This would be so much fun—to go shopping with Molly at her mom’s jewelry store.

“So, what do you say, Serena? Wanna go?”
Molly asked, grinning.

“Do I want to go? What are you, nuts, Molly?!” Serena beamed. “What are we waiting for?!”

Serena had already forgotten about her

depression. There were much more important things to do than be depressed. Little did she know that thousands of miles away, a pitch black crystal shined with the reflection of Molly's mom's jewelry store.

"Why have you not yet brought the Silver Imperium Crystal to me?" bellowed the tall, long-haired temptress with piercing, long fingernails. "Our great leader needs more energy. If you cannot capture the Silver Imperium Crystal, you must gather pools of energy from those helpless fools, the humans. Use your wits and trap them into giving us their energy. I'm counting on you, Jedita!"

"Queen Beryl," the blond-haired, GQ-looking henchman responded. "See the reflection in your crystal? If you pay close attention to it, you will notice that one of my witches is already casting her spell on those worthless humans."

"Wonderful, Jedita." Queen Beryl smirked. "I don't want a single one of them to escape without sacrificing their energy to me!"

"Your wish is my command," said Jedita, bowing on one knee.

As the black marble hallways echoed with

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Queen Beryl's wicked laughter, Jedite stared intently at the crystal ball. He could see the reflection of the store's entrance and barely read its sign, "OSA*P JEWELRY BOUTIQUE." As he watched the humans lining up to get inside, the corners of his mouth turned up ever-so slightly, forming an evil grin.



Chapter 2

Diamonds Are Forever

Serena and Molly approached the all-glass building from across the street. There must have been two hundred people crowding their way into the store, under the huge banner "JEWELRY SALE." It was so crowded that people had actually formed a line, which wound around the corner past the post office and the bank.

In front of the entrance, under the silver sign that read "OSA*P JEWELRY BOUTIQUE," an auburn-haired lady in her mid-thirties was guiding people in and out of the store like a traffic cop. Serena noticed that her nose and mouth were the

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carbon-copy of Molly's. It must be Mrs. Baker, Molly's mom.

"Now's the time! Come on in and choose your favorite ring or earrings. Everything's going like hotcakes!" Mrs. Baker clutched the megaphone like a cheerleader at a football game.

"Wow, Molly, your mom's really getting into it," Serena noted, while Molly nodded in agreement.

"She's not normally this aggressive." Molly's face turned slightly crimson in embarrassment.

Serena watched Mrs. Baker screaming into the megaphone with all her might. She thought how lucky Molly was to have a mom who sold jewelry for a living. If her mom sold jewelry, Serena thought, she'd have a constant supply of to-die-for earrings! Life just wasn't fair, she mumbled.

"So, Molly, who's your friend? What lovely blond hair she has!" Mrs. Baker put down her megaphone and came over to where the two girls were standing outside the store.

"Mom, this is Serena, from school," Molly said.

Mrs. Baker looked at Serena for a second, a glimmer in her eyes. "Well, have I got a deal for you, Serena! Do you like diamonds?"

Serena couldn't wipe the huge grin off her face as Mrs. Baker dragged her inside the store to the counter display.

"Look at this ring here." Mrs. Baker pulled out a plush-velvet case with a sparkling, gorgeous diamond ring centered inside. "Don't you know, this ring sells for five thousand dollars."

"Five thousand dollars?!" Serena gasped. There's no way she could get a diamond ring. Certainly not for five thousand dollars. Five thousand dollars?! That's how much diamonds cost? No wonder Mom always locked her diamond necklace up in the safe after a party, Serena thought.

Just then, Mrs. Baker leaned towards Serena from across the glass counter and whispered in a hushed tone. "For you, honey, this ring's only three hundred dollars!" Mrs. Baker's eyes lit up like those of a coyote stalking its prey.

"What?! A five-thousand dollar ring for

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three hundred dollars?!" Serena was so shocked she couldn't stop herself from shrieking.

The throngs of shoppers around her rushed over excitedly, after hearing the young girl's excited yelp. An old lady wearing a red scarf overheard Serena's exclamation and announced it to everyone.

"They're selling \$5000 diamond rings for \$300!!" the old lady yelled, trying to adjust her horn-rimmed glasses. Before she could even bring her arm back down, a mob of fifty people pushed her aside and rushed to the counter.

"Let me have one!" one woman yelled.

"No, it's my turn!!" another gasped, shoving the first woman aside.

Suddenly, the entire crowd of shoppers began to panic, pushing towards the counter so that the people in the front were unable to breathe.

Mrs. Baker rushed back and forth selling jewelry like there was no tomorrow, grasping a handful of bills shoved into her hands.

Serena and Molly crawled out from underneath the unruly mob.

“Those people are crazy,” Molly cried.

Wiping the sweat off her brow, Serena piped in. “Yeah, we’re lucky we don’t have to fight like that for our turn!”

Molly smiled. “That’s right, you still haven’t chosen your diamond, Serena! Which one do you want?”

Oh, yeah! Diamonds! Serena wondered what exactly it was about diamonds that made her so happy. After all, diamonds were simply rocks that people showed off to one another. But, for some reason, she found them so breath-takingly beautiful. They say a diamond is a girl’s best friend. Well, Serena thought, even if they didn’t qualify for the role of best friend, they certainly qualified as a bosom buddy!

“Serena...?” Molly waved her hand across her friend’s face. “Serena, are you there?”

“Oh, Molly,” Serena said, startled awake from her daydream. “We were talking about diamonds.”

“Yeah, you were going to choose which one you wanted.” Molly’s arms were on her hips. “You’ve got to stop daydreaming like that in pub-

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lic. It's rude!"

"Sorry." Serena would often slip off into her own world, but she didn't mean any harm by it.

"So, are you gonna get one?" Molly asked.

"Molllllyyyyy..." Serena's voice started whining like a baby's. "I'm totally broke! I used up my allowance money to the penny," Serena complained, emptying out her pockets in a desperate search.

"Why don't you ask your dad to treat you?" Molly suggested.

Serena's face lit up at the thought. "Great idea—" Suddenly, she remembered the fat, red "30" on her spelling quiz. "There's no way. Mom knows I'm getting back my spelling quiz today. She won't let Dad even talk to me."

The more Serena thought about it, the more depressed she became. For the second time today! The only thing that snapped Serena out of her depression earlier was the thought of the jewelry sale, and now that was the exact reason she had slipped back into it again.

Waving good-bye to Molly, Serena wandered away from the mob scene at OSA*P JEWEL-

RY BOUTIQUE. Life really isn't fair, Serena started to think again. No matter what she did, someone wasn't pleased with her. She wasn't trying to cause any problems. After all, it's not easy being a young girl in the world today, she reasoned. Everything is so competitive. It must have been way easier when Mom was in junior high. Now, you have to be good at the computer—the only thing Serena could do was play video games, send e-mail, chat, and surf online. Other people at school could crank out their homework—even set it up so that the computer did their homework for them! It's not fair, Serena repeated to herself.

Well, she thought, I guess I have to spend a little more time studying. Maybe one extra hour a week would do. A whole hour? Maybe a half-hour.

Wandering down the street, Serena couldn't help but feel sorry for herself. She pulled out the quiz and looked at the "30." 30?! How could she get a 30? Melvin got a 95! She deserved at least an extra 20 points for not being a geek like Melvin, Serena reasoned. After all, she only got 10 wrong!

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Or was it 12? Or 14? Let's see, she thought. Five points per question. Twenty questions total. That would make...oh, forget it! She quickly crumbled up the quiz into a ball and tossed it back over her head in frustration.

"Take that!" she yelled.

Wandering on, she heard a guy's voice behind her.

"Owww! Thanks a lot, blondie!"

Spinning around, Serena was face to face with a dark-haired, pretty-boy wearing Oakley shades, a black turtleneck, and an olive-green Armani sports jacket.

"Sorry."

Serena was shocked to see someone behind her. The crumbled quiz must have hit this guy in the head! Picking up the crumbled piece of paper, the guy opened it up and looked at it.

"30? Guess you better study a little harder next time, blondie," he commented.

"Hey! Give me that back," Serena cried, reaching out and whisking her quiz away from the guy's hands. "Some people are just too nosy!"

Serena looked over her shoulder one more

time. What a creep, she thought, watching him take off his Oakleys and look up at the OSA*P JEWELRY sign.

For some reason, though, she felt her heart beating slightly faster than usual.



Chapter 3

Destiny

A red haze drifted throughout the entire store. From one corner to the next, customers were lying on the ground, passed out. A few final murmurs could be heard from the remaining conscious few.

"I feel dizzy..." One young woman's voice trailed off as she slumped on the floor, grasping her new ruby necklace.

"Hel...p..." Another woman leaned against the glass counter, quickly falling to her knees, diamond ring in hand.

"Mommy, what's happening to all these

people?!” Molly cried, trembling.

As Mrs. Baker turned to face her daughter, her face revealed a ghastly blue sheen from her forehead to her chin. Her eyes had turned black, and her hair had become a fiery red.

“Ha ha ha ha!!” Mrs. Baker’s voice cackled with the evil laughter of a witch.

“Oh, my god...” Molly gasped, looking around for the closest door to run towards.

“Not so fast, young lady!” Mrs. Baker cornered the young girl like a wolf. “You’re not going anywhere.”

Passing in front of Crown Video Games—the local arcade—Serena caught a colorful sign out of the corner of her eyes that read “New Release: SAILOR V.”

Sailor V? That super-hero fighting evil in a sailor-style school-girl uniform? Cool, Serena thought, she’s already got a video game made after her. Sailor V really had it made. After all, she didn’t have to worry about spelling quizzes, let alone grades in general. She got to wear a much more stylish version of Serena’s boring-old school uni-

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form, and all she had to do was kick a little butt. She probably didn't do much except work out all day and watch TV to see if there were any major crimes going on. Life's *really* not fair, Serena repeated to herself.

There's no way she could show her mom that spelling quiz, Serena realized. While her mom knew the quiz results were supposed to be out today, maybe she would be too busy to remember. Then Serena could just casually sneak into the house and head straight for her room. If she pretended she was exhausted, her mom would just let her take a nap. Then she wouldn't have to face her mom with the truth!

Serena arrived in front of her house, ready to implement her strategy. Before she could creep further than the hallway, her mom came running to greet her.

"Serena! Hey, you're home," Serena's mother called out.

Uh-oh, thought Serena. She knows something...

"I bumped into Melvin earlier. He said you guys got your spelling quiz back today."

Melvin?! That jerk!! Ooooh, that little nerd was a constant pain. Just the thought of Melvin made Serena's nostrils flair.

"OK, young lady," Serena's mother's face suddenly turned stone cold. "Hand over your quiz."

Serena sighed.

Why me, she thought. No one else was this unlucky. Serena reached out towards her mom, holding her quiz, which was snapped up in a second.

"30?! Out of 100?! Serena, I've had it with you!!" Serena's mother was livid. "Get out!" she cried, pushing Serena out the front door and slamming it shut in her face.

"Mom, let me in!" Serena pounded with both fists on the door. Her mother always kicked her out when she was mad. It's weird, Serena thought. Other mothers locked their kids inside their rooms. Why did hers lock her out?

"Locked out again? What a loser!" muttered the little brown-haired boy, approaching the front porch where Serena was banging on the door. It was Sammy, Serena's twelve-year-old little brother.

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“Shut up, you idiot!” Serena cried. “Get Mom to let me in already.”

“Who’s the idiot? If only I had a big sister I could be proud of,” Sammy complained. “It’s embarrassing when everyone at school expects you to get lousy grades like your sister did.”

“I said shut up!” Serena’s blood was starting to boil.

“Come and get me, loser!” Sammy egged on Serena, sticking out his tongue and making faces. About to explode, Serena lunged for her little brother, who dodged out of the way at the last minute and escaped around the house, into the backyard.

Oooh, that jerk! Serena muttered to herself. How can life be so unfair? Being insulted by your little brother was the last straw. Serena was going to change her luck, period, no ifs, ands or buts!

Finally let back into the house, Serena headed straight for her room and plopped down on her bed. What an exhausting day, she thought. She certainly wasn’t in the mood to do homework after all that commotion. Between the mob scene at Mrs.

Baker's jewelry boutique and her annoying family, Serena just wanted to close her eyes and dream it all away.

Drifting into a relaxing sleep, Serena's mind started to numb and blur into dreams.

A red light glowed through the window pane.

Slight scratching sounded on the glass.

Hmmm? What was that? The window opening?

Pitter. Patter. Pitter. Patter.

A moment of silence.

Huh? Was the bed moving?

Lying still, Serena opened her eyes at the bed's sudden motion. Looking up, she saw before her the same scrappy black cat with a moon-shaped bald spot on its forehead that she had seen earlier that morning. Serena jumped up, shocked.

"Hey! Bald-spotted kitty! What are you doing here?!"

"It's not a bald spot. No respect..." the black cat complained.

"Wagh! The cat talked!" Serena screamed.

"You know, I do have a name, and it's not

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the cat. I'm Luna, and I've been searching for you for a long time, Serena." The black cat named Luna licked her paw gently as she briefly introduced herself.

Serena had already fallen off her bed. Gripping her purple comforter and staring at Luna in disbelief, she simply muttered to herself over and over.

"The cat...talks..."

Luna continued. "Thank god you found me and took off that bandage from my forehead. When my crescent moon is covered, I lose all sense of direction and become completely unable to talk. Obviously, it's quite a handicap. You know, cats today get no respect at all. We get tortured by bratty little kids, kicked by bums, chased by dogs—nobody even bothers to apologize, either. I'm really glad you found me, even though *I* was supposed to find *you*."

As Luna babbled, Serena simply stared at her, not really listening to Luna's words. What a weird dream, she thought, plopping her head back on the pillow.

"Serena!" Luna put her fuzzy little paws on

Serena's head and pushed to wake her up. "Come on, Serena. This is not a dream."

Serena refused to budge.

"OK, you don't believe me? I'll prove it to you," Luna asserted.

Jumping up and down as quick as lightning, Luna started spinning around in the air. Orange and yellow lights flashed in a spiral whirlwind with Luna jumping in the middle. Suddenly, the entire spiral flashed and went out. An orange brooch with a purple crescent moon dropped down onto Serena's bed.

"Here you go." Luna pushed the brooch over towards Serena. "It's a present for you."

"For me?" Serena sat up, delighted. Lifting the brooch into the air, she examined it closely. "Are you sure? Is this really for me?"

Standing up, Serena fastened the brooch to her collar on her school uniform and stood in front of her mirror.

"It's adorable," cried Serena. "Thanks, Lupy!"

"It's not Lupy! *Luna*, my name's *Luna*. No respect..." muttered Luna, slightly aggravated.

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While Serena kept admiring her new brooch in the mirror, Luna continued explaining.

“Haven’t you been paying attention to all the crimes happening in town lately?” Luna asked. “It’s all because of the Enemy. Serena, everything’s up to you. Only you can defeat the Enemy!”

Luna became visibly frustrated at Serena, who was giggling in the mirror, staring at the brooch, ignoring Luna’s words.

“Serena, pay attention!” Luna scolded. “You’re the chosen one. Don’t you see? It’s your destiny! You are the chosen Sailor Scout, whose duty is to find our princess and protect her.”

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Chapter 4 On Behalf Of The Moon

“This is so cool!” cried Serena.

She figured it was still a dream, but if for some reason it wasn't, now she'd have a legitimate excuse not to study. Of course, if it was a dream, things would be back to where they were before, but at least she had a little excitement for once.

Luna looked at Serena for a moment. “You still don't believe me, do you?”

“Of course I do,” Serena replied. “Why wouldn't I?”

Luna seemed satisfied for the time being. “OK. If you really do believe me, get ready to yell

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out your first command. Ready?"

"Aye, aye, Captain!" Serena mockingly saluted Luna, with a slight grin on her face. Cool dream, she thought.

"Repeat this phrase--MOON PRISM POWER MAKE-UP!!" Luna instructed.

Serena took a deep breath. With determination on her face, she yelled out the same words Luna had just told her.

"MOON PRISM POWER," Serena paused for effect. "MAKE-UP!!"

As soon as the last word left her lips, she felt her entire body being pulled from up-above. Almost like the feeling when a vacuum cleaner accidentally grabs part of your clothes, Serena's entire body was being sucked from all sides. The orange brooch Luna had given her started to shine, still fastened to her collar. Suddenly, from the brooch burst a spiral beam of light, which rotated around Serena's entire body like a galaxy.

Without even knowing why, Serena lifted both her arms in the air and crossed them above her forehead. Even though Serena had no clue, her clothes were automatically transformed in the spi-

ral galaxy of light. A tight sailor-styled bodysuit was glued to her body, while long, white gloves magically appeared on her arms. Her feet started glowing and quickly morphed into sparkling red boots that reached up to her knees.

Once the spiral galaxy settled down and the room was quiet again, Serena found herself in a pose. She had one leg pointed at her side and her right arm up across her forehead. Her hand created a sign with her middle finger, forefinger, and thumb extended out.

Facing directly into the mirror, she suddenly noticed her new outfit. "What are these clothes?! Luna!"

"Relax," Luna replied. "You transformed from Serena into Sailor Moon. So do you believe me now?" Luna sat on Serena's bookcase looking at Serena in her new outfit.

Serena squinted and tilted her head. "Luna, I can hear someone!"

She could hear a voice coming from the jewels in her hair-buns.

"Help! Mommy's gone crazy!"

Serena knew that voice. It sounded so

a scout is born

familiar.

“Please, somebody, help me...!”

Suddenly, it dawned on her. That was Molly’s voice!

“Luna, that’s my friend Molly.” Serena started to panic. “She needs my help. We’ve got to help her. Please, Luna!”

Luna looked at Serena with a very serious look on her face. “You’re Sailor Moon. It’s your duty to help her, not just because she’s your friend. In your heart, you know what to do. Just let it come out naturally.”

“Help...” Molly’s screams were muffled by the grasping hands of Mrs. Baker. “Please, Mom! Stop...”

Suddenly, Mrs. Baker’s face changed from a slightly crazed Mrs. Baker to a wrinkled, demonic witch. “I’m not your wimpy mother, you little cry-baby!”

The ugly witch, draped in black with veins popping out of her neck, lifted Molly with both hands and swung her in the air.

“Your helpless mother is tied up in the base-

ment where she deserves to be,” hissed the yellow-eyed witch. “After I dispose of you, I’ll send you both off to the underworld. Ha ha ha ha!!!”

“Nooooooo!!!” Molly screamed with all her might.

Suddenly, the doors swung wildly open and a silhouette of a young girl appeared against the moonlit night sky.

It was Serena, completely transformed into Sailor Moon, with her sailor-uniform costume, gleaming red jewels in the buns of her hair, yellow-orange tiara on her forehead, orange brooch with its crescent moon, and shiny red boots.

“Let go of Molly immediately, you old hag!” shouted Serena. She wasn’t even thinking about what to say. It just came out automatically.

“And who do you think you are?!” responded the witch.

“Well...um...I’m...” Serena paused for a second since she wasn’t really used to fighting evil yet. Of course, she couldn’t say her real name, but then again, why did she have to? After all, Luna had told her who she *really* was.

“I’m Champion of Justice and Defender

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against Evil!” Serena proclaimed it with pride. She felt a strange sense of warmth inside her, surging to the top. Something gave her a power she had never even known about before. Serena continued. “My name is Sailor Moon, and on behalf of the Moon, you’re punished!!”

Serena had no idea why she mentioned the Moon. This was another phrase that just came out automatically. In fact, everything she was saying was just flowing out naturally. Without really thinking about it, Serena felt strong and knew that no matter what happened, she was there to save her best friend, Molly.

The witch looked at Serena with contempt. Spinning around, she raised her arms in the air and called out to the mob of customers who had been shopping for jewels, and were now passed out on the ground.

“Rise, you scum, rise!” the witch called. “You have given your energy to our omnipotent master, and now you must prove yourselves. Get her, slaves!”

The mob of housewives, students, and working women, who had been hypnotized by the

witch, began to rise. With yellow, glazed eyes, the mob went after Serena.

“What are you people doing? Stop it!” cried Serena.

Forgetting she was Sailor Moon, she backed as the mob came closer and closer. Against the wall of the jewelry store, Serena was trapped. The mob had her completely cornered. Falling to the ground, Serena noticed her knee was bleeding and lost it.

“Wagghhh!!” Serena started balling up a storm. She was scared and injured. This wasn’t fun. Serena thought that being a super-hero like Sailor V was like living the high-life. This was all wrong! There’s no way she was really Sailor Moon.

“Get up, Sailor Moon. You have to fight!” Luna pleaded to Serena to turn herself around.

“Now’s the time. Get her!” The witch commanded the brainwashed mob to attack Serena.

“Why me? Why is this happening?” Serena screamed at the top of her lungs, crying her head off. Her mind was racing. It’s not me. I’m not Sailor Moon. I’m just a regular girl in junior high. I’m only 14 years old! How can I fight against evil?

a scout is born

This witch has so much evil power. It's not fair! Serena was really starting to panic.

Just then, a red rose landed on the ground in front of the leather-skinned witch. The witch looked up at a black tuxedo-clad figure standing on the window pane.

"Now who are you?" the witch demanded.

The wind was blowing through the open window, which lifted the man's cape up so that it flapped. Black on the outside and red on the inside, the cape made a fluttering sound like a bat in a cave. Wearing a black top hat, white pointy sunglasses, and a white bow-tie with his black tuxedo, the mysterious figure responded.

"They call me Tuxedo Mask. Sailor Moon, enough tears! Show the real you."

Serena was beyond panic and launched into her loudest set of shrieks yet.

"I can't stop myself from crying!" she wailed.

As her high-pitched shrieks became more intense, the jewels on her hair-buns started glowing and echoing the sounds. The entire room began filling up with Serena's high-pitched

shrieks, driving the witch and brainwashed mob nuts.

“Shut up, you little brat!” the witch yelled. “Stop crying already!”

Luna jumped in front of Serena and shouted out. “Grab your tiara from your head and yell MOON TIARA ACTION while you throw it at the witch!”

“Throw the tiara? Why?” cried Serena, still not used to her role as Sailor Moon.

“Just do it!” ordered Luna, losing her patience.

With that, Serena grabbed her tiara, which glowed at her touch. Lifting it off her forehead, she held it in front of her and focused on its aura. Serena could feel the power illuminating from inside the tiara. At that point, she lost all doubt about what Luna had told her and just let herself flow naturally again.

Without even remembering the words Luna said, she opened her mouth and the command came out automatically.

“MOON TIARA,” Serena flung the tiara backhand like a rocket Frisbee. “ACTION!”

a scout is born

The witch floated in the air, screaming, unable to move away from the tiara.

“Noooo!!!” screamed the skull-faced witch.

With a purple and orange explosion, the tiara hit the witch smack in her stomach. Her entire body froze and immediately turned to stone. Spider-web-like cracks raced across the stone figure. The cracks grew in size and number until, finally, the witch statue shattered into millions of tiny pieces.

“Oh my god!” mumbled Serena, mesmerized by the scene.

With the witch destroyed, the mob of shoppers started waking up one by one from their trances. None of them seemed to remember what had happened or where they were, but just left the jewelry store and wandered home in a daze.

Tuxedo Mask approached Serena and gave her back her tiara.

“You were amazing,” he said. “I’ll never forget what you did here tonight.” With that, Tuxedo Mask flung his cape over him and disappeared through the open window.

Serena blushed from his words. Her eyes

searched for him, but he was already gone. Who was he? She had never met anybody with such a magical aura about them. Tuxedo Mask--what did that name mean? One thing she knew was that she would never be the same again.

"Great job, Sailor Moon!" Luna jumped down in front of Serena, beaming with pride.

However, Serena had only one thing on her mind. Tuxedo Mask.

"Luna, who is he? Tuxedo Mask! He's soooo amazing!" Serena's heart was still beating about a hundred miles an hour.

Luna rolled her eyes.

The next day at school, Molly was so excited about her jewelry store incident that she was telling everyone. The only thing was, she thought it had been just a cool dream.

"And then Sailor V's partner Sailor Moon came into the room and kicked butt on that nasty old witch." Molly was telling all her friends about her dream, while Serena sat next to them, head on her desk.

"Molly, that's so weird. I had the same

a scout is born

dream, too!" Their friend Lisa Brownridge had been shopping at the jewelry store and had ended up part of the brainwashed mob. Lisa also thought it had been a dream.

Serena looked up at Molly and Lisa. She couldn't believe it. How could it be? She thought this was *her* dream. Everyone dreamed the same dream? It wasn't possible. That could only mean one thing.

It wasn't a dream.

Luna, the talking cat.

Transforming into Sailor Moon.

The wrinkly-faced witch.

Serena's tiara that destroyed the witch.

Tuxedo Mask. Well, if Tuxedo Mask wasn't a dream, maybe it wasn't so bad after all.

What would she say to her parents? She couldn't tell them. Her friends? She couldn't tell anyone! No one would believe her anyway. They'd say she plays too many video games and needs to study more.

It had to remain her secret.

SAILOR MOON

Chapter 5

Geek In Love

Halls lit only by fireflies revealed black columns shaped like bones. Green worms crawled on the walls. This was the throne of the beautiful but deadly Queen Beryl.

“Jedite!” Beryl barked. “You still haven’t brought me the SILVER IMPERIUM CRYSTAL. While I’m waiting, I need more human energy. At least bring me that!”

Brushing his golden hair off his forehead, the young warrior of darkness grinned. “My Queen, your wish is my command. Consider it done.”

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Queen Beryl and Jedité's green eyes locked in a trance-like stare. The evil power of this combination began to churn and bubble.

Buzzzzzz. Buzzzzzzzzzz. Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz~~.

Serena didn't budge. Again.

"Wake up, already!"

Serena looked up from under the blanket to see who was yelling in her face. A tiny black head with big eyes and a crescent moon tattoo on its forehead looked right back at her.

"If you oversleep all the time, how can you become a responsible super-hero that properly fights evil?!"

It was Luna, annoying as always. This had been continuing for at least a week.

"OK, OK, Luna." Serena yawned, stretching in her pajamas. "What time is it anyway?"

Glancing at the clock, Serena realized how late she was.

"Luna!" Serena threw an accusatory look towards the black furball. "Why didn't you wake me earlier?!"

"I tried..." Luna protested, but Serena was

already off to take her shower.

Everyone in class was quiet as Miss Haruna took attendance. Serena could hear her classmates' names being called from outside the door. What should she do? If she walked straight in, Miss Haruna was sure to give her detention again.

She had an idea.

"Melvin Grier?"

"Present!" Melvin stopped cleaning his glasses to look up and call out to Miss Haruna.

"Kim Matthews?"

"Here!"

Serena cracked open the door and snuck in quietly from the back. She had to actually duck down below the heads of her classmates so that Miss Haruna wouldn't see her.

She was almost there.

Just a bit more to her seat.

"Hey Serena! You made it to class!" It was Melvin. That jerk was actually yelling out to her before she made it to her seat! Busted again, Serena thought.

"I want the two of you out in the hallway on

a scout is born

the double," snapped Miss Haruna. She obviously wasn't pleased.

After listening through what seemed like an hour of their teacher's tirades, Serena and Melvin were stuck together in the hall. They weren't allowed back in the classroom for twenty minutes as a punishment.

"I can't believe you, Melvin," Serena said, out of the corner of her mouth. (They weren't allowed to speak.) "Why don't you stop paying so much attention to me and mind your own business?"

"I can't..." Melvin's voice trailed off, and he started to blush. "It's sort of, well, hard to explain."

Serena wasn't liking the sound of Melvin's comments. There was something fishy. Maybe Melvin wasn't getting the message that he entirely annoyed Serena.

"Melvin, I don't know what it is, but you not only embarrass me, you get me in trouble," Serena commented. "Is that your goal?"

Melvin, still blushing, shook his head. "Serena, it's just that..." Once again his voice

trailed off.

What was Melvin trying to say? Serena was completely losing her patience with him. “Melvin, you obviously don’t have a good excuse, so just don’t do it again!”

After school, Serena and Molly bumped into Lisa Brownridge, Kim Matthews, and Rica Kelton running out in a hurry.

“Hey, where are you guys going?” Molly asked.

“We’re going to get our fortune told from the old man down near the Crossroads Mall,” said Lisa. “Wanna come?”

“Cool. I love psychics. Sure, I’ll join you guys!” Serena jumped up and joined Lisa and her friends, curious what this fortune telling thing was all about.

“What about you, Molly?” asked Lisa.

“I can’t,” Molly replied. “Melvin asked me to meet with him. I guess he’s got something he really wants to talk to me about.”

“Bummer,” said Serena, slightly surprised. “That geek has really been getting in the way late-

a scout is born

ly. Oh, well, see ya later!”

Melvin looked away, slightly embarrassed.

“Molly, the truth is...” Melvin’s voice started to crack. “I’m totally in love with Serena, and I don’t know what to do!” The words gushed out from Melvin’s mouth.

“What?!” Molly shrieked.

“I want to marry her one day. She’s so awesome!” Melvin’s eyes started to gleam from inside his glasses, which were quickly steaming up.

“Melvin, you’ve got to calm down,” Molly responded. “There’s no way Serena would go out with you. She thinks you’re a total dweeb.”

“So, what am I supposed to do?” Melvin was desperate. “Please help me. Give me a suggestion, Molly,” he pleaded.

Molly paused thoughtfully, then looked at Melvin with a sneaky-looking smile creeping over her face. Melvin was too caught-up to notice.

“Melvin, you know who could give you the answer?” Molly’s eyes lit up mischievously. “You could go to this new psychic down near Crossroads Mall. Lately, everyone’s been going

there and supposedly this psychic is really good, with tarot cards and everything. You can ask the psychic how to win over Serena's heart!" Molly giggled as she finished her sentence.

"You really think it'll work?" asked Melvin, excitedly.

Molly reassured him with a pat on the shoulder. "Of course, Melvin. That's what psychics are for!"

Serena and her friends walked past Crossroads Mall, looking for the psychic's place.

"It's supposed to be right around here somewhere," said Lisa, looking around the street.

"Hey, there's a sign!" yelled Kim Matthews, pointing to a bright, neon sign that read "PSYCHIC HOUSE."

Running up to the sparkling clean entrance, the girls noticed a line circling around the block. They asked the people in line and found out everyone was waiting to have their fortunes read.

"What do you guys want to do?" Lisa asked. "It's totally crowded here."

Looking across the street, Serena noticed an

a scout is born

older place, with a slightly battered sign that read "FORTUNE FUN."

"Hey, let's go to that place!" Serena called out. "There's no line. I'm sure it's the same psychic stuff after all."

The girls all agreed, since waiting in line didn't sound fun to any of them. Poking their heads in the entrance, they saw an old man with a white beard sitting at a table draped with a white sheet. The old man was wearing a monk's outfit.

"Excuse me, are you open?" asked Serena, a little hesitant.

"Sure, come on in," answered the bearded old man. "No one comes here anymore since that new place opened across the street." His voice sounded sad.

Serena felt sorry for the old man and was determined to brighten his day.

"Well, all four of us want our palms read, so I hope you're ready for us!" Serena said, handing over her money.

The other three girls handed over their money and waited for their turns.

"I bet he knows how much you flirt!" Lisa

teased Kim.

“No, he’s gonna get you for having your brother do your homework for you,” Kim said, pointing at Lisa.

“Shhhh!” The old man scolded them and started to concentrate on Serena’s palm.

“There’s a guy who you know...” the old psychic began. “He has a big crush on you. You see him quite a lot, but he hasn’t told you about it.”

All four girls including Serena burst out laughing when they heard Serena’s fortune. But Serena, though laughing, wondered who it could be. Was the old man right? If so, who could it be?

As Lisa stepped up to have her fortune read, she looked across the street at the PSYCHIC HOUSE line. Oh no! Was that?! It couldn’t be... It was! Melvin, of all people, was next in line at PSYCHIC HOUSE!



Chapter 6

If The Shoe Fits...

After separating from Lisa and her other classmates, Serena decided to stop by the local arcade, Crown, on her way home. The truth was Serena had a thing for the guy who worked at Crown, Andrew Foreman. After hearing the old psychic's fortune about someone liking her, Serena was hoping it might be Andrew.

Even though she hung out in the arcade quite a lot, Serena had never really let Andrew know she was interested in him. He never said anything either, but he was always nice to her.

Stepping through the sliding-glass doors,

she looked around but didn't spot Andrew. In the corner, however, she noticed the brand new Sailor V game and decided to take a shot at it. After all, now that she was also a super-hero, the Sailor V game should be a cinch.

The tiny little masked girl hero in a sailor uniform carried a machine gun, which was used to shoot down dragons, witches, and other bad guys. Serena was having a pretty tough time with the game, though, and was about to leave when Andrew walked through the front door.

"Hey, Serena! Are you checking out the new Sailor V game?" he asked. "It's pretty cool, don't ya think?"

Serena smiled and felt her heart beat a bit faster. "Yeah, I like it, but it's pretty hard," she responded.

"Really?" Andrew asked. "Do you want me to help you a bit?"

"Sure!" Serena jumped at the chance for some quality one-on-one time with Andrew.

Serena kept trying to aim Sailor V, but she wouldn't make it very far before getting killed.

"Shoot!" Serena cursed. "What am I doing

a scout is born

wrong here?"

Andrew sat next to her and put his hands on top of hers to show her the right moves. "See, move up then left before shooting. That will give you a double-powered shield."

"Thanks," she said, smiling. Andrew's hands felt warm. She glanced over at him sitting next to her and saw the side profile of his face. He was really good-looking with blond hair like hers, but with a slightly darker complexion. Serena had forgotten all about Tuxedo Mask at that moment, but then again she really didn't get any more than a split second with him. Serena had been attracted to Andrew since the first time she came into the arcade over a year ago. He kind of reminded Serena of her dad, the way he was helpful and taught her how to use the game controls. (Her dad didn't teach her how to play video games, though. It was more like putting together bookcases and typical dad stuff like that.)

"So what do you think, Serena? It seems like you're getting the hang of it," commented Andrew.

"Yeah, thanks Andrew! It's a pretty fun

game. You can help me through the next level if you want.” Serena didn’t want him to leave quite yet. After getting caught sneaking into class late that morning, it was nice sharing some snug time with a cute guy. (OK, so sitting next to a guy at the arcade didn’t quite count as “snug time.”)

“Meowwww—”

Serena and Andrew jumped back a foot, scared by the sudden meow coming from the chair next to them. It was Luna, crescent moon tattoo on her forehead and all.

“Luna, what are you doing here?!” cried Serena.

“Hey, is that black cat yours, Serena,” asked Andrew. “I never knew whose it was. It’s been hanging out here a lot lately. Now I know to call it Luna.” Andrew started petting Luna on her head.

Luna kept staring at Serena and suddenly jumped up and grabbed her sleeve with her teeth.

“Luna, stop it! You’re gonna ruin my blouse,” protested Serena. Luna didn’t let up, though, and Serena got up and excused herself.

“I guess that’s a hint, right Serena?” Andrew said, with a laugh. “Thanks for hanging out.

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You've got tons of energy, so you always cheer me up when you're here. Come back again soon!" Andrew looked so cute with his blond hair falling over his forehead, slightly blowing from the draft coming in the front door.

Serena said goodbye and promised to come back soon.

Down the street, Serena gave Luna a cold stare.

"How could you interrupt me when I was just getting to know Andrew?" Serena scolded.

"I heard your mother tell you to come straight home afterschool," Luna replied.

"Luna, just because you can talk doesn't mean you need to be such a nag. It's important for a young girl like me to have a little fun in her life."

"But Serena, you have to start searching for the princess," Luna reminded her. "We have a lot of work ahead of us. There's training to be done."

"That's exactly what I was doing at the arcade," Serena insisted. "The Sailor V game is perfect training for Sailor Moon."

Serena knew Luna couldn't argue with that

reasoning. After all, Serena did need to train her reflexes, as well as her reaction time. Even though the Sailor V game wasn't completely realistic, it did provide good training for her. Serena smiled, satisfied that Luna wouldn't nag her next time she was in the arcade.

"Hey, Luna, I want to stop by the psychic one more time to ask a little bit more about the guy that likes me. I'm pretty sure it's Andrew, you know." Serena hopped over to the raggedy FORTUNE FUN entrance.

Pushing on the door, she found out it was locked. Must have closed early today, she thought.

PSYCHIC HOUSE.

The sign across the road stared her in the face, inviting her in.

"Luna, should we go to that new PSYCHIC HOUSE place or come back to the old man at FORTUNE FUN tomorrow?" Serena started to take off her shoe.

"It's up to you, Serena," replied Luna. "What are you doing with your shoe?"

"We can decide which place to go through this contest," Serena explained. "It's like a coin

a scout is born

toss, but a little more fun. If my shoe ends up upside down, we go to PSYCHIC HOUSE. Ready? Go!"

With that, Serena kicked her shoe up into the air behind her.

"Owww!" A guy's voice yelled out from behind her.

Turning around, Serena saw her shoe had hit the same guy whom she had hit with her crumpled spelling quiz the other day! There he was, acting all cool again, with her shoe in his hand. He was wearing another turtleneck, this time a white one, with a loose-fitting knit sweater on top. His hair was slicked back on top and shaved close on the sides. Although he wasn't wearing sunglasses this time, he looked like he just stepped off a runway at a fashion show.

"Thanks a lot, blondie," the pretty-boy said.

"Is that all you ever say," Serena muttered sarcastically, remembering it was the same comment the guy made last time.

"You better stop acting so clumsy or you'll never get a boyfriend," the guy said, giving her back the shoe and walking off.

“Bite him, Luna,” she muttered under her breath.

Never get a boyfriend? How could that jerk say something so mean? Maybe I already have a boyfriend, Serena thought. Something about that guy was so irritating it drove her crazy. At the same time, though, just the sight of him gave Serena a jolt of nervous excitement that raced through her veins.

SAILOR MOON

Chapter 7

Bad Boys

“Welcome to PSYCHIC HOUSE.” Wearing a pink silk robe, the psychic was a beautiful, exotic young woman, with a round dot on her forehead. Her hair was long and died slightly blue. “Come in and have a seat. What is your name?”

“Uh...I’m...Melvin Grier,” replied the embarrassed boy with coke-bottle glasses.

There was an urn in the corner with steam floating out of its spout. The psychic sat on a red velvet throne-like chair with marble columns on each side. The round table in front of her featured twelve tarot cards forming a perfect circle, set on

top of a red-velvet tablecloth. She put down two cards in the middle of the circle.

"I want you to look at these cards, Melvin," the beautiful psychic said.

"O...K..." replied Melvin, mesmerized. Melvin's eyes began rolling around in circles from tarot card to tarot card. The psychic's voice was as velvet as the tablecloth. She continued with her vocal candy.

"Melvin, do you feel my power?"

"Yes...I do..." Melvin's body was swaying back and forth.

"Melvin, I want you to understand who I am and who you are. Look into my eyes. Are you listening?" she asked.

"Yes," Melvin replied.

"I am here on behalf of a beautiful, irresistible evil master," the psychic explained in her hypnotic voice. "Now, you, Melvin—you belong to that beautiful, irresistible evil master. You are one of the evil master's drones. Do you understand who you are, Melvin?"

"I am one of the evil master's drones," Melvin replied, completely entranced by the

a scout is born

charming psychic.

"Now, here's your mission," the psychic continued. "You are to heed your most selfish and greedy desires and act on them. Do you understand what you must do?"

"I will heed my most selfish and greedy desires and act on them," Melvin chanted without taking his eyes off the psychic's hypnotic stare.

"Bring all your friends to me, Melvin. You will all help me spread the evil energy around. Together, we will capture the good energy on behalf of the master and replace it with the evil energy. Do you understand, Melvin?"

"Yes," whispered Melvin, completely infatuated.

"Take this glowing pink tarot card. It is your special energy card. This is what you will use to capture good energy in exchange for evil energy. Do you understand, Melvin?"

"Yes," chanted Melvin. "Yes. Yes."

"Don't forget to bring me your friends. Now go!" the psychic enchantress commanded.

It was a fine Thursday morning at

Crossroads Junior High, with the sun shining bright in the sky. Actually on time for once, Serena ran into Molly at her locker.

“Hey Molly!” Serena felt refreshed after a good night’s sleep. “You missed the psychic yesterday. That old man’s awesome. You’ve got to check him out sometime.”

“Speaking of psychic, you didn’t run into our geeky friend there?” Molly asked, with that mischievous twinkle in her eyes again. Serena knew her friend too well to miss that look.

“Molly, are you up to something?” Serena insisted on knowing. “You better let me in on it!”

Molly knew her face gave her away. “Alright, Serena, you got me. I can’t get anything past you!” Molly giggled and both girls started laughing.

“So what did you do this time?” Serena asked between laughs.

“Well...” Molly hesitated. “Don’t get mad, OK?” She paused again. “I sent Melvin to get advice from the psychic thinking he’d bump into you guys!” Molly had to cover her mouth to stop herself from giggling.

a scout is born

“What?!” Serena jumped. “That’s why I saw Melvin going into PSYCHIC HOUSE yesterday!” She thought back on the image of the little nerd waiting in line to see the psychic. Serena couldn’t help but giggle either.

“So did he talk to you yesterday?” Molly asked.

“No, I avoided him,” Serena explained. “We went to the old man across the street from PSYCHIC HOUSE to avoid the line. That place is packed! So, what kind of advice was Melvin looking for, anyway?”

Molly couldn’t help but giggle more. “Serena, he’s got a crush on you!” With that, Molly lost it.

Serena simply stared at Molly, who was laughing hysterically. A crush? On me?! Oh, god, Serena thought. He’ll never leave me alone now! Then she started to wonder what advice Melvin got from PSYCHIC HOUSE.

Molly calmed down and put her arm around her best friend. “Don’t worry about it, Serena. Melvin’s way too shy to confess anything to you.”

The two girls started giggling again. Just then, Melvin came strolling up, looking more like a player than a geek. Instead of his school uniform, Melvin was wearing a hot pink satin shirt and a leisure suit, straight out of an old '80s Miami Vice episode. Stunned, Serena and Molly just stared at him as he approached.

"Yo, Serena-baby! What's up?" Melvin said, leaning against Serena's locker.

"Serena-baby?!" Molly looked over at Serena and rolled her eyes.

"Melvin, you're gonna get busted for not wearing your school uniform," Serena warned him.

"Oh, yeah? I can wear whatever I want, and there's nothing they're gonna do about it!" Melvin was talking tough. "So, Serena-baby, how 'bout you and me? I've got a surprise for you, baby."

"Baby? You and me? *Please!*" Serena and Molly were trying to hold back their laughter when Miss Haruna walked up.

"Alright, young man, where's your school uniform?" she demanded.

"Hey, Patty-baby, you're lookin' pretty hot

a scout is born

today," Melvin said, giving his teacher a wink.

Miss Haruna turned bright red and looked at Serena, then Molly, then back at Melvin. "Melvin, how dare you talk to me like that! You're asking for it!"

"Like they say, ask and you shall receive," he said.

With that, Melvin strutted right by Miss Haruna, pinching her in the butt as he walked by. Miss Haruna stood in a state of shock. Molly and Serena were so stunned they stopped laughing and stood still, eyes bugging out. All of a sudden, Miss Haruna dropped to the floor and started crying.

"I am so ashamed! I've never had...a student...be so rude to me..." she struggled to get her words out between her sobs. Molly and Serena sat down next to her, putting their arms around her to console her.

Everyone in Miss Haruna's class that day couldn't ignore the most unusual sight. The biggest goody-goody in the entire class, Melvin, was acting like a total jerk, ignoring Miss Haruna's lecture, wearing the ridiculous leisure suit he had

on in the hall, and reading comics during class, laughing his loud, obnoxious laugh during the funny parts.

Serena and Molly were already shocked at Melvin's behavior earlier that morning, but during *class*?! Serena was already starting to think that something was up.

"Haaahhaaaaahhaaa!" Melvin was pounding his fist on the table, laughing hysterically at his comic book.

"What in the world is so funny, Melvin Grier?!" Miss Haruna was losing her patience.

"None of your business!" Melvin had a wicked sneer on his face.

That was it. Miss Haruna was completely fed up. Serena watched as Miss Haruna's face turned redder than a tomato. She rolled up her sleeves and marched over to Melvin's desk. As she walked down the hall, Tim House stuck his foot out into the aisle, and Miss Haruna fell flat on her face! Serena couldn't believe her eyes. Tim House was a good kid—how could he do such a thing?!

"What are you doing, Tim?!" cried Miss Haruna.

a scout is born

“It’s really annoying when you stomp in those high heels,” Tim said, laughing at Miss Haruna.

“What?!” Miss Haruna couldn’t control herself anymore. She started yelling at the top of her lungs. “Get out!! Just get out of here! I refuse to teach snotty brats like you!”

With that, Miss Haruna ran out the front door of the classroom, slamming it behind her. The rest of the kids sat in shock, totally silent. Serena knew no one would believe what had happened. Melvin, Tim, and three of their friends started high-fiving each other and yelling.

“Yeah!”

“We did it!”

“No more school!”

“Let’s go show the rest of the teachers how we feel,” directed Melvin.

“That’s right!”

“To the administration building!”

The five guys stormed out of the building, picking up rocks and sticks from the courtyard on the way. Serena noticed that part of a glowing pink tarot card was sticking out of a couple of their

pockets. Something's really strange here, she thought. Serena picked up her bag and ran after them to see what was going on.

The five geeks-turned-gangsters gathered outside the administration building, causing a big commotion.

"Yeah!"

"Let's do it!"

Mr. Olsen opened up the window and yelled out at the five boys. "Stop it right now! You kids get in here at once!"

"Come get us, loser!" Melvin yelled back and threw his rock at the window, breaking the glass.

All five boys started picking up rocks and throwing them at the administration building, breaking windows left and right. Mr. Olsen came storming outside to stop them, but they just laughed in his face and ran off campus.

Serena stepped in their path to stop them.

"Melvin, what do you think you're doing?!"
Serena scolded.

Melvin stopped in his tracks, looking at

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Serena. He walked towards her and put his arms around her waist, puckering up her lips to kiss her. "Come here, Serena-baby. I've got a nice wet one for you."

Serena pushed Melvin away and started screaming at the top of her lungs, one of the loudest noises imaginable to man.

"Agggghhhhhhh!" Serena cried, shrieking like a wild animal.

Molly had to cover her ears with both hands just to stay sane.

"Guys, let's get outta here. This chick's way too loud!" Melvin grabbed his friends and took off running down the street, jumping onto the hoods of cars and pushing other kids out of the way.

As soon as Melvin and his friends cleared the scene, Molly grabbed Serena. "They're gone. Are you okay?" Molly asked.

Serena immediately stopped crying and looked at Molly, smiling. "Well, that felt good."

"Serena, you're too much," Molly commented, shaking her head.

After school, Serena met up with Luna on

the way home. Serena had no idea what kind of trouble Melvin and his friends had caused off-campus, but she knew it must have been ugly.

"Luna, did you hear what happened with Melvin and his friends? Something strange is going on..." Serena's voice trailed off.

"I'm sure it's the Enemy. Somehow, the Enemy must have brainwashed them," Luna reasoned.

"It's got to be that PSYCHIC HOUSE place," Serena said. "I know Melvin went there yesterday, and his friend Tim had a tarot card in his pocket like Melvin's."

"Good work!" Luna seemed proud of Serena.

"Thanks. Do I get a new magical item as a reward?" Serena asked slyly.

"You've got to prove yourself a little more than that," Luna responded, smiling. "Anyway, let's head over to PSYCHIC HOUSE before things really get out of hand!"

"OK, let's do it!" Serena cried, as the two of them took off running.



Chapter 8

Psyche Out

Luna and Serena slipped into the side doorway at the mysterious PSYCHIC HOUSE. The hallway was dark, and Serena felt her heart beating fast. What would they find?

Serena looked down at Luna and whispered, "I guess this means I have to fight again, don't I?"

Luna looked up at her with a stern face. "Stop complaining! You're the chosen one."

"Yeah, I guess you're right," Serena said, accepting her fate. "At least I was chosen for something other than detention, right?"

SAILOR MOON

"OK, you've got to transform into Sailor Moon," Luna said.

Serena realized she was still in her school uniform. Uh-oh, she thought. Luna's right. If I don't transform now, whatever we find in this place will destroy me in a second. She closed her eyes and lifted her right arm towards the sky.

"Moo..." She paused. "Moon..." Serena stopped, opened her eyes, and looked at Luna. "Hey, Luna, I forgot the phrase!"

"Come on, Serena, they're going to find us here," Luna said, thoroughly disgusted. "It's MOON PRISM POWER MAKE-UP..."

"Oh, yeah!" Serena smiled, slightly embarrassed. "Hey, even super-heroes go through memory lapses every now and then."

Once again, Serena closed her eyes and lifted her right arm towards the sky. This time she was really ready.

"MOON PRISM POWER," she paused and opened her eyes, getting ready to spin around and morph. That part made her a drop dizzy, so she wanted to do it with her eyes open this time. "MAKE-UP!!" she yelled.

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With that, she started spinning around, her school uniform disappearing for a second, leaving her naked. Was she really totally naked at that moment? She wasn't completely sure because it was only for a split second. Hopefully, she at least had her underwear on. She never really checked to see if the Sailor Moon super-hero outfit had its own underwear or not. She made a mental note to check that one after the fight.

With the transformation complete, she felt her blood pumping. Wow, Serena thought. This super-hero stuff is really good for your circulation. It's like a total aerobics high times ten. Maybe some exercise company should do a special infomercial just to sell super-hero outfits. Forget the "Tummy Tucker" or "Bicep Bicycle"—this stuff would really sell!

"Come on, Sailor Moon, what are you zoning out for?"

"Huh? Oh!" Serena noticed Luna looking at her, angrily, crossing her arms (what a weird cat!). They tip-toed over to the end of the hallway and peeked outside the door.

Standing in front of a group of schoolboys

was a tall, beautiful exotic-looking woman in a pink robe with a round dot on her forehead. She must be the psychic, Serena thought. In front of her were fifteen or more schoolboys, all with pink glowing tarot cards in their pockets. Serena could barely make out the edge of the cards, but the glowing pink shone through their clothing, making it slightly visible. In the center were Melvin and Tim! The woman was speaking to them.

“You boys did an excellent job of causing trouble, but you have only begun. Each of you must get three more friends and give them cards. Then you must go into the city and start causing destruction. Do you understand, boys?”

“Yes...” they all chanted in unison.

“You all belong to me and the omnipotent master. And you are evil. Do you understand what you are?” The exotic psychic’s eyes were glowing.

“We...are...evil...” the boys all chanted, in unison again.

Serena knew she must make a move before it was too late, and there was no use fooling around. She yelled out through the doorway.

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“You’ve gone too far—brainwashing the innocent boys of Crossroads and forcing them to do your evil dirty work!” Serena yelled out. With that, she bashed open the door with a major kick.

“Who is that?” cried the psychic.

“It’s me,” proclaimed Serena. “Champion of Justice and Defender against Evil!” Serena was really happy with this phrase. She was beginning to enjoy this super-hero stuff. Especially the dramatic parts like this one. The fighting certainly wasn’t her favorite, but oh well. Uh-oh, she thought. She’d better continue. “My name is Sailor Moon, and on behalf of the Moon, you’re punished!!”

The pink robed psychic didn’t waste time to attack. She grabbed her entire stack of tarot cards and shuffled them in her hands. Suddenly, she aimed at Serena and threw the entire stack sideways so they would slice. Serena didn’t have time to dodge them, and the cards hit Serena from the side with a surprising amount of strength, knocking her down.

“Hey, those things are pretty sharp,” Serena complained. “That’s dangerous!”

Luna ran over to Serena and put her paws on Serena's back. "Come on, Sailor Moon. There's no time to worry about that."

Serena got up just in time to see the beautiful psychic's face transform into the nastiest green monster she'd seen since, well, that other witch from before. Wow, she thought. Where are these witches when Halloween comes around? She'd pay some decent money for a mask like that.

"Go get her!" the witch barked out to the brainwashed boys.

Melvin, Tim, and the other geeks-turned-gangsters crept towards Serena, their faces green and yellow eyes bulging.

"Stop it!"

The geeks-turned-gangsters-turned-ghouls kept creeping up, inch by inch, surrounding Serena.

"Grosssssss!" Serena started to scream. "If you get any closer, I'm going to have to do something nasty to you!" Serena was a little scared, but more importantly, she certainly didn't want to have these geeks put their dirty paws all over her pure and clean body. Just the thought of Melvin—espe-

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cially with a green face and bulging yellow eyes—biting her or something like that made her feel ill.

That didn't stop the boy-ghouls from coming at her. Serena was really backed up against the wall. She closed her mouth, hoping the germs wouldn't get in. All of a sudden, they stopped. Serena looked up and noticed a red rose thrown on the floor in front of the witch. Could it be...?! Serena's heart starting beating faster.

"Who's there?!" bellowed the witch.

Suddenly, a tall figure in a black tuxedo and top hat with a black and red velvet cape stood in the doorway.

"Tuxedo Mask!" cried Serena.

"Sailor Moon," Tuxedo Mask said, addressing her. "No matter how hopeless it seems, you must never give up a fight. You always have the strength inside you, inside your heart. Don't forget that and believe in yourself unconditionally."

"Got it!" Serena nodded, moved by Tuxedo Mask's words.

"See you later!" Tuxedo Mask waved goodbye and disappeared into the darkness.

"Thanks, Tuxedo Mask!" Serena's heart was

beating like a techno dance track. That guy is soooo cool, she thought.

Kiiiiiiiiiiii. Kiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.

What was that sound? Serena spun around. Oh my god, she thought. The witch's long hair had transformed into two claws, which she was sharpening on the marble floor!

"That would hurt a lot," Serena commented, looking at the long nails getting sharper, leaving deep tracks in the marble floor.

"Sailor Moon, now's your chance. Use your tiara!" Luna advised her.

"Oh, yeah," Serena remembered. "That's what I'm supposed to use—my tiara!"

Using her index finger and thumb, Serena gently lifted her glowing tiara off her forehead. She felt it vibrating, almost wanting to fight the evil witch. As she lifted it in the air, the magic words jumped out of her mouth naturally.

"MOON TIARA ACTION!" Serena tossed the tiara using a backhand throw just like a Frisbee, and the tiara took off towards the witch.

The ghoulish green-faced witch wasn't able to dodge the golden tiara, which hit her smack in

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the neck. At once, her entire body melted into a pink glowing gem that sunk into the earth through the marble. With the witch gone, the geeks-turned-gangsters-turned-ghouls all snapped out of their trance, confused about what had happened.

“Huh? What’s going on?” muttered Melvin.

“Yeah!” cried Serena, proud to have wiped out her second witch in less than a week.

Melvin and his friends looked over at Sailor Moon in awe, and left the PSYCHIC HOUSE still dazed from everything.

Looking down on the entire scene from above, and invisible to Serena or anyone else was the tall, blond evil warrior Jeditte.

“Another defeat,” Jeditte muttered. “Queen Beryl won’t be pleased.”

The next day at school Melvin was back to his normal self, but Molly didn’t let him forget all the trouble he caused.

“What?” cried Melvin. “I pinched Miss Haruna on her butt?!”

“That’s not all,” Molly said, with a gleeful look. “You tried to kiss Serena, you cussed out Mr.

Olsen, and you broke the windows of the administration building.”

Melvin couldn't even look at Molly—he was so embarrassed. Serena came up from behind, giggling when she saw Molly's mischievous look.

“Yeah, Melvin, you not only made a complete fool of yourself, you let everyone know that you're a total jerk!” Serena couldn't help but rub it in.

Melvin's face turned even redder than it already was.

“I...I'm so...” Melvin's voice was all choked up. “Serena...please...I'm sorry.”

Serena couldn't help but feel a pang of pity for poor Melvin. After all, it's not like he was really a jerk. He was just a total geek. Sure, he acted like a total jerk yesterday, but he *was* brainwashed by that witch. Serena looked over at Melvin and smiled.

“Don't worry about it Melvin,” she said. “It's no big deal.”

Melvin looked up at Serena and a big smile came over his face.

“You're right! Why should I worry about it?”

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It wasn't a big deal, was it?"

With that, Melvin went skipping off to class, happy as a clam.

Serena looked over at Molly and rolled her eyes.

"That's what you get for letting someone off the hook so easily," Molly commented, and the two girls broke out laughing.



Chapter 9

Midnight Zero

Serena snuggled deeper into her covers, hugging her huge, soft pillow. She felt like a little bunny in her pink pajamas, with footsies and all. So, she looked like a little girl. Who cares? She certainly felt cozy. Besides, she was busy listening to the love letters being read on "Midnight Zero."

Midnight Zero was the most popular late night radio talk show around. The main point of Midnight Zero was the love letters sent in by listeners. If your letter was read on the air, you won a beautiful flower brooch.

Wow, Serena thought, it would be really cool

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to win a classy flower brooch to wear to school. But how could she write a love letter without a boyfriend?

“When we were together, my entire diary was filled with you,” the deep, soothing voice oozed from the radio.

How *romantic*, Serena thought, squeezing her pillow tightly.

“Now that you’re gone, my entire diary is filled with memories of then,” the voice continued. “I want so badly to see you again. If I could, I’d finally tell you my true feelings.”

Serena felt that the whole world was silent. The only two sounds echoing throughout the globe were the baritone voice of the DJ and her heartbeat. Something inside her made her feel warm, but she wasn’t sure why. It was almost like she knew exactly how deep an emotion the letter-writer felt. But she hadn’t yet experienced love. So how could she understand?

“That was tonight’s first place winning letter,” the DJ announced. “Congratulations to Patricia Haruna, our winner from Crossroads.”

Patricia Haruna?! It couldn’t be... Could it?

Was that the same Patricia Haruna that Serena and her friends knew as “Miss Haruna” at school? Their homeroom *teacher*?! Serena decided she’d check out Miss Haruna’s outfit the next morning, searching for a flower brooch.

“Thank you for tuning in to Midnight Zero here on FM-10.” The DJ’s voice filled Serena’s room. “Don’t forget to send in your love letters. If we read yours on the air, we’ll send you a special flower brooch, which will bring you all the love you need. I’m Jay Dight and this was Midnight Zero.”

Serena jumped up off her bed. If only she could figure out how to write a love letter even though she didn’t have a boyfriend. Maybe she could pretend, she thought.

“SERENA!” Luna yelled so loudly Serena could see the back of Luna’s throat.

“What?!” Lately, Luna was getting to be a pain. After all, it’s not like she was Serena’s mother. What right did Luna have to keep bossing her around?

“Look, young lady,” Luna lectured. “Isn’t it time you went to bed? If you didn’t stay up so late

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listening to cheesy radio talk shows, maybe you wouldn't be late to first period so often."

"What's the big deal?" Serena was annoyed.

"You need to get your priorities straight," Luna said, arms crossed. "Not every girl in junior high is chosen to become a Sailor Scout. Who knows when the next battle will take place? You need your rest."

Luna had a point. After the whole Melvin incident and that nasty green-faced witch, Serena was so exhausted she slept through the entire weekend. Her mother thought she had the flu and even made Serena take cold medicine and drink tons of orange juice.

It wasn't like she stayed up late on purpose. She just loved to listen to the love letters. They were so romantic. Oh well, Serena thought. Midnight Zero was over anyway.

Sure enough, the next morning Serena overslept. Her mother and father were downstairs eating breakfast.

"Hm," her father muttered, reading the

paper. "Did you know about this sleeping sickness, honey?"

"What sleeping sickness?" Serena's mother read the newspaper about as often as Serena did her homework.

"People have been getting this weird new sickness," Serena's father explained, reading the article. "All of a sudden, you just fall asleep. Some hospitals have reported cases where the patient remains asleep for an entire week. They haven't discovered the cause yet."

"Doesn't sound that bad," Serena's mother replied.

Serena could barely make out her parents' voices from her room. Uh-oh, she thought. They'd definitely be pissed if she was late again.

With that, she grabbed her bags and made a dash for it. Her parents barely had time to look up before Serena was already out the door, grabbing her lunch on the way.

"See you guys later!" she hollered on her way out. She could hear her parents calling after her, but she kept on running. They would only make her later, she reasoned.

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Running the entire way to school, Serena burst into the classroom, panting from exhaustion.

"Miss...Haruna..." Serena exhaled words in between pants, her hands on her knees and head down in exhaustion. "I'm...so...sorry..."

As Serena looked up, the entire class had burst into laughter.

"Miss Haruna's late today, Serena!" Tim yelled out. "You don't have to apologize to *us*."

Everyone laughed.

Whew, Serena thought, wiping her forehead. Today must be my lucky day.

Just then, the door opened, and Miss Haruna entered the room. One step at a time, she stumbled to the podium like a zombie.

"Gooooood morniiiiing, claaaaassss." Every word out of her mouth just sort of dragged on out like someone was pulling it from her throat. "Let'ssssss taaaaake attennnnnndaaaaaaannnnce."

Everyone in the classroom looked around at each other. Miss Haruna was literally falling asleep at the podium.

"Tooooooaaaay..." Miss Haruna's voice dribbled out. "Yooouuu cannnn stuuuuuud-

ddddy onnn youuuuur owwwwnnnn...”

With that, Miss Haruna’s head dropped to the podium, and her entire body slumped over onto the chair.

“Somebody help her!” Molly cried out.

The three boys in the first row rushed up to the podium and propped Miss Haruna up in the chair completely.

“What’s wrong with her?!” Serena yelled out, running up to the front of the classroom. She noticed a strange purple flower on Miss Haruna’s collar. It sort of looked like a cross between an orchid and a lily. Was that the flower brooch? Was that really Miss Haruna’s love letter on Midnight Zero?! Serena’s heart raced when she thought about it.

Two boys ran to the principal’s office to get help, and the rest of the students were talking excitedly amongst themselves.

“What do you think this means?” asked Molly, looking at Tim.

“How am I supposed to know?” he answered, in his typical smart aleck fashion.

Suddenly a big grin formed on Serena’s face.

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“I know what this means,” she whispered, mischievously.

Molly and Melvin looked at her, wondering.

“No class today!!” Serena shouted, jumping up and down.

Almost on cue, the entire class burst into cheers.



Chapter 10

Future Boyfriend

Serena and her classmates looked down from the third floor window and watched the ambulance take off. What could have happened to Miss Haruna? It certainly wasn't like her to get sick—she hadn't missed a single day the entire school year!

"So what do you guys think it is?" asked Molly, looking up from the window.

Like an annoying TV evangelist, Melvin put his finger up in the air and began to preach.

"I can't believe you guys don't read the paper or watch the news on TV," Melvin lectured.

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“Everyone in Crossroads knows about the newest sleeping sickness virus. Actually, sleeping sickness was originally known to be a serious African disease carried by the Tsetse Fly.”

Molly, Serena and their classmates rolled their eyes, knowing that Melvin had begun one of his Trivial Pursuit marathons. Melvin went on and on.

“While the original sleeping sickness featured such symptoms as fever, loss of weight, as well as exhaustion, the new virus simply sends the victim into a deep sleep, which may last more than a week. The outbreak began last week, and the first victims haven’t woken up yet.”

When everyone heard Melvin’s last words, though, they all became quiet.

“You mean...” Molly started, her voice trailing out.

“What about Miss Haruna?!” Serena said, starting to panic. “I had no idea it was that serious. Is she going to be okay?”

“Well,” Melvin began again, arms crossed. “The ambulance driver said that the doctors were baffled by the new sleeping sickness, but that the

victims' bodies seemed like they were just asleep. So it couldn't be very serious. It's more like a long nap without really knowing exactly when you're gonna wake up."

"So, Miss Haruna's just taking a nap?" Serena asked, a bit doubtful.

"Probably." Melvin started poking Serena with his index finger. "Maybe you should consider taking a nap like that too. You'd probably get better grades that way!" Melvin started laughing hysterically, with Tim joining in.

"Shut up, you dork," snapped Serena, miffed. "Cute girls like me need our beauty sleep. With geeks like you, eternal sleep wouldn't cure your loser looks."

With that, the other girls around chimed in laughing and cutting Melvin back down to place.

After school, Molly grabbed Serena and brought her to the Crossroads Mall to do some shopping.

"Oh Serena..." Molly looked over, her eyes revealing a tear or two under her sunglasses.

"Molly, what's wrong?" Serena cried, sur-

a scout is born

prised by Molly's sudden burst of emotion.

"I don't really know, but..." Molly's voice was slightly shaking. Serena reached out and pulled Molly's shades off her face, so that she could really see her eyes.

"Come on, tell me what it is." Serena was starting to get concerned. Molly had always been a bit emotional. She and Molly went way back, since before grade school. Serena could remember when they used to play hide and seek in Molly's huge backyard. Sometimes, when Serena found Molly, she'd be crying but Serena was never really sure why. Even though Molly was emotional and a bit shy, when she was psyched for something, she was the most gung-ho girl around. Serena always admired Molly's adventurous side, especially because Serena was too lazy to make any extra effort. Serena always felt lucky to have such a good friend. "Molly, are you okay?"

Molly bit her lip and out came a slightly embarrassed smile.

"The truth is," Molly began her confession. "I've written five love letters to Midnight Zero, and it's been making me really moody. All I keep think-

ing about is that show and writing more love letters. Do you think I'm way weird or what?"

"Is that what you're all teary-eyed over?" Serena propped Molly's slumped body back up and smiled. "I've been listening to Midnight Zero every night, and I'm dying to write a love letter." Serena gave Molly her 'that's all?' look.

"Really?" Molly perked up immediately. "I thought I was the only one hooked on that show. I can't believe I've actually written five love letters!"

"I'm so jealous," Serena said, noticing the pink reflective sunglasses still in her hand and sliding them onto Molly's head, in a facing-up position. "I can't even write one."

"Why not?" Molly asked, confused.

"Because I don't have a boyfriend, silly!" Serena giggled, then suddenly looked up at Molly deadpan. "Come to think of it, who have you been writing all those love letters to?"

"Serena!" Molly cracked up, looking at her best friend. "You don't have to have a boyfriend to write a love letter. Think about it. Lots of people write love letters to their ex or even to people they have a crush on. So, I've just been writing love let-

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ters to my future boyfriend, even though I have no idea who he is.”

“Your future boyfriend...?” Serena repeated the phrase slowly to herself until it finally sunk in. “That’s a great idea, Molly!” Serena grabbed Molly’s hands, jumping up.

“It is?” Molly’s face showed confusion.

“Yeah, that’s exactly the kind of strategy I need to pull off a letter,” Serena explained excitedly. “See, I never thought of that before so I didn’t think I could write a letter. Now I’ll just think of my future boyfriend, write a heart-wrenching love letter, and take possession of my new, gorgeous flower brooch, just like you!”

“Well, I haven’t been chosen to win a brooch yet.” Molly put her arm around Serena as they started walking off towards the Prada boutique. “If it was that easy, I wouldn’t have needed to write five.”

The two girls laughed together and Serena reassured her best friend. “Don’t worry, Molly. I’m sure you’ll be chosen soon.”

Turning the corner, Serena bumped smack into a tall, dark-haired guy in khakis and a beige

turtleneck sweater.

“Oh, sorry about that,” Serena said, looking up. Doing a double-take, she noticed it was the same guy she had hit with her shoe and her crumpled up quiz the other day!

“So, not only are you good at throwing, but tackling too? Don’t get yourself hurt now, blondie.” The tall guy smirked and winked at Molly, who immediately fell in love.

“It’s, it’s...you!” Serena cried, really annoyed at this guy’s sarcasm. Who did he think he was anyway? Talk about attitude with a capital A.

As the guy walked off, Molly’s eyes followed his path. “You know him?” she asked Serena.

“*Know* isn’t the right word.” Serena practically had steam coming out of her ears as she stood there, hands on her hips. “He has the bad habit of showing up exactly where I don’t want him to be.”

Luna looked up at Serena, who was lying on her bed, notebook in hand.

“Let’s see...” Serena tapped her pencil on her nose, thinking intensely. “Should I start out

a scout is born

with 'Dearly Beloved'? Naw, too played out."

Serena noticed Luna in the corner of the room, rolling her eyes.

"Come on, Luna. Don't tell me you're so unfeeling that you can't relate to a love letter masterpiece in the making."

"It's not that, Serena." Luna hopped on the bed and plopped down next to her blond-haired, human friend. "Love letters are meant to be written to give to the one you love. What you're doing is pointless."

Serena stuck out her tongue at Luna. "Borrerrr-ing!"

Looking back at her notebook, Serena racked her brain for the right words. The weirdest thing was that she felt so emotional the other night when the love letter was read on Midnight Zero. So why couldn't she think of something touching to write?

She tried to imagine her future boyfriend. What would he look like? Would he be tall? Handsome? Smart? Rich? Athletic? Stylish? Funny? All of the above? Yeah, she thought. All of the above would be best. No reason to settle for

anything less.

“Hmm...” Serena grabbed her pencil, ready to start. Quickly, she scribbled ‘My gorgeous boyfriend’ on the top of the page. She put down her pencil shaking her head. That sounded too corny. What guy would want to be addressed as gorgeous? That was just a word girls used to describe guys between themselves.

Frustrated, Serena looked over at Luna. “Why isn’t this working, Luna?”

“I told you already. Love letters are meant to be written to give to the one you love. You don’t have anyone you love, Serena.”

Luna was right. How could she write a love letter when she hadn’t even been in love before? She couldn’t do this on her own. That was it! Since she couldn’t do it on her own, she needed someone’s help. Luna was obviously not much help, so why shouldn’t she just go to the source?

“Luna, we’re going over to the FM-10 radio station, and I’m going to ask Jay Dight to help me write a good love letter. He’s the perfect one to give me advice!”

Luna glared at Serena. “We’re going to FM-

a scout is born

10? Now?! It's almost dinner-time, Serena. We'll be late again and your mom will throw a fit!"

"Don't worry," Serena said, smiling. "I've got it covered."

Running out the door, Serena yelled out to her mom in the kitchen. "Mom, I'll be late for dinner. Got to go to the library to pick up some books!"

Serena could hear her mom's voice trailing behind her.

"Serena? Library? You?!"

Serena giggled and hopped on her bicycle. FM-10 was only about 15 blocks away. She used to pass it everyday on the way to grade school.

Riding up, with Luna in her backpack, she hopped off and approached the security guard.

"Sir, excuse me." Serena tried to sound official. "I'm doing a story for my school's paper, and I was assigned the interview with Jay Dight from Midnight Zero. Where do I go?"

The guard stared at her blankly. "Midnight what?"

"You know, Midnight Zero—the radio

show." Serena couldn't believe the guard didn't know his own employer's most popular show.

"Young lady, we don't have a show called *Midnight Zero* or a DJ named *Jay*, um, whatever-you-said."

"Jay Dight. Of course you do!" Serena was getting annoyed. "It's FM-10's most popular show. You've got to know it—*Midnight Zero*. It's on every night at midnight."

The guard politely walked Serena back towards her bike.

"I promise." The guard smiled gently at her. "The marketing department makes all employees memorize the shows. At midnight, the show that's on is called *Night Beat*. I've never heard it, but I've seen the listings a thousand times. Sorry."

The guard looked at her in pity, but was not about to let her inside the station. Serena, red from embarrassment, quickly hopped on her bike and took off. What was going on?!

SAILOR MOON

Chapter 11 Sexy DJ

The clock ticked once, and twelve chimes sounded out towards Serena's bed. Halfway asleep, Serena and Luna sat up when they heard the clock strike midnight. FM-10 blared from the radio, finishing a last set of commercials before the midnight hour. Both Serena and Luna watched the radio silently as they waited for the show to start.

"It's twelve midnight, folks, and I'm Jay Dight. Welcome to the most popular love talk show on radio, Midnight Zero."

"Luna, it is Midnight Zero!" Serena jumped off the bed, pointing her finger at the radio. "That

stupid security guard was either the biggest idiot around or a two-faced liar! Either way, I could tell him a thing or two.” Serena paced around her room, clenching her fists. She felt like the security guard made up the whole story just to get her away from the station. What a cheap shot! She wasn’t causing any trouble. All she wanted to do was ask Jay Dight for help with her love letter.

“Serena!” Luna stood on top of the newspaper, near Serena’s door.

“What is it, Luna?” Serena didn’t like being interrupted when she was mad.

“It says here that the program that’s scheduled for midnight is Night Beat, like that security guard said.” Luna pointed her paw at the radio schedule in the newspaper.

“So, it’s probably just a mistake,” Serena snapped. “They probably changed the show and the marketing department was too lame to bother telling either the newspaper or the security guard. At least that means he didn’t lie to me on purpose.”

Serena hated it the most when people tried to do something sneaky to her, like lie or cheat. The security guard was pretty nice, after all. It was

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good to know that it wasn't just an act—he just hadn't heard that they changed the show.

Come to think of it, Luna was pretty amazing, Serena thought. Not only could she talk, but she also read the newspaper. What a bizarre cat! Too bad Serena couldn't take Luna on David Letterman to do the Stupid Pet Tricks. Luna would blow everyone away!

The radio DJ blared. "Our first love letter tonight is from a young girl named Molly Baker, who lives in Crossroads."

"Molly's letter made it!" Serena jumped onto her bed, psyched for her best friend. "That's so cool! I'm dying to check out her flower brooch tomorrow."

"Do you believe in fate? I do. I didn't until I met you, but now I know that fate is real. Can I change fate? I don't think so. But if fate is as kind to me as it was when I met you, I know that my future is set. After all, only fate can bring someone like you to someone like me." The deep voice of Jay Dight purred on. Molly's letter sounded so touching, so beautiful, especially being read by the velvet-laced voice of Jay Dight. No listener could

imagine the true intentions of this mellow-sounding DJ as he grasped the purple flower brooch and twisted it between his fingers.

“Molly, that’s the brooch? Open it up!”

“What a gorgeous package...”

“When did you get it, this morning?”

Serena and three of her classmates, June Chin, Tina Marin, and Rica Kelton, crowded around Molly’s desk.

“Yeah,” Molly explained, proud to be the center of attention. “Some delivery guy brought it to our house this morning.”

Molly was holding a small box with pink and white wrapping paper. The paper was made of soft cotton and embroidered with little yellow flowers around the outside. The box and paper itself was too nice to throw away.

“Quick,” Serena pleaded. “Open it up so we can see the brooch!”

“OK.” Molly gave in. She was also excited about the classy box’s contents.

“Just make sure you don’t rip that paper!” Rica reminded her.

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Carefully, Molly separated the tape from the paper, gently lifting the paper from its seam. After the corners were opened, Molly removed the outer lining. Sliding the paper aside, she lifted the box's lid to reveal a plush, black velvet inner lining, almost like that of a jewelry box. In the center was a precious, soft purple flower.

"Oh, my god, it's beautiful!" cried June.

"Hey!" Serena pointed to the flower. "That's the same flower Miss Haruna was wearing the other day when she passed out."

"You know what that means?" Tina looked up at her friends. "It was Miss Haruna's letter that was read the other night on Midnight Zero."

"Oh, yeah," Serena chimed in. "They said Patricia Haruna from Crossroads. It really was her!"

As the girls chatted on about Miss Haruna's letter, Molly pinned the flower brooch, to her collar. Suddenly, her eyes struggled to stay open and finally closed. The girls jumped when they saw Molly's head completely slump over.

"Molly!" Rica yelled.

"Molly, what's wrong?" Serena grabbed her

friend's shoulders.

"She's asleep!" Tina lifted her head to reveal her closed eyes.

"Molly, wake up!" Serena held Molly in her arms, while her friends gently shook her.

"I can't believe this." June was on the verge of panic.

Suddenly, Serena, who was holding Molly and inhaling the scent of the flower brooch, slumped over onto the ground.

"Serena!!" Tina screamed, and the three girls rushed over to Serena, who had passed out. With both Molly and Serena unconscious, the entire class broke into a panic, and the entire ambulance-laden scene from Miss Haruna's incident repeated itself.

Serena felt like she was floating. Looking down, she could make out houses and streets far below. Around her, there were clouds and drafts of warm air. Leaning forward, she started to move and realized she was actually floating in the sky.

Off in the distance, she could make out a dark figure, with a top-hat and a cape. Could it

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be...him?! She leaned forward and felt herself moving towards that figure. Gradually, his shape got bigger as she approached. Coming up from behind, she could now see that it was him. Tuxedo Mask!

“Tuxedo Mask, can you hear me?”

He turned around, pointy white goggles on his face, with the red and black cape flapping in the wind. Serena’s heart was beating fast.

“Does this mean that you’re my future boyfriend?” Serena couldn’t believe herself. How could she let that question slip out? That wasn’t like her at all, to say something so, well, desperate. She would never set herself up for rejection like that.

“It seems that way, doesn’t it?” Tuxedo Mask’s nicely cut jawbone revealed an attractive smile. Serena realized that he was as attracted to her as she was to him.

“If that’s the case, take off your mask for me.” Serena’s confidence was restored.

“For you, no problem.” Tuxedo Mask lifted his arm up and grabbed the corner of his goggles. He began to lift them from his face.

“SERENA!!!”

The shrill scream cut through the entire scene, and Serena jumped up.

“Whaaaat?!” She looked around. Where was she? She was on a bed, but it wasn’t her own. In front of her was Luna, who had been knocked off the bed by Serena’s sudden motion.

“Thank god you woke up.” Luna sighed, relieved.

Luna explained to Serena everything that had happened. Luna had noticed the ambulance leaving the school and followed it to the hospital. Inside the hospital, Luna heard the doctors discussing the reports they heard from Serena’s classmates. Molly had passed out first, with Serena passing out shortly afterwards.

Leading Serena over to Molly’s bed, Luna revealed her theory.

“Miss Haruna, Molly, and you must all have passed out because of that weird purple flower,” Luna explained. “Think about that program Midnight Zero. Something’s not right.”

Serena agreed. It was too much of a coincidence that Miss Haruna passed out the morning

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she was wearing that flower, and now both Serena and Molly passed out immediately after Molly put the flower brooch on. Something was up with Midnight Zero.

“Come on, Luna.” Serena was determined to save her best friend. “It’s time for me to make a special guest appearance on a certain radio talk show.”

Luna and Serena arrived at FM-10 a few minutes before midnight. Serena felt a little guilty about sneaking out of her house, but it’s not like she was going out to party—it was her duty to destroy the Enemy.

Outside of FM-10, the security guard sat in his booth, making sure no one without credentials got inside. Serena peeked around the corner of the building and eyed the security guard’s booth as well as the tall fence looming beyond.

“Luna, how are we going to get over that mammoth fence?” Serena paced back and forth.

“Serena, don’t worry.” Luna ran back behind the building and jumped high in the air. Almost like she was a marionette, Luna did a dou-

ble back flip and landed on her feet. A thick, round pen with pink enamel and an orange jewel on the end with golden leaf decor fell on the ground with a clank.

“What’s that thing?” Serena looked at Luna, but wasn’t sure whether or not to pick it up.

“Go ahead, it’s yours,” Luna said. “You can use that pen to transform into any disguise you want.”

“Are you serious?” Serena rushed over to the pen and picked it up. “Sometimes I love being a super-hero.” She smiled and inspected the pen, excited.

“There’s not much to it. Just yell out Moon Power and whatever disguise you want to change into.” Luna lifted her paw off the ground and pointed at the pen as she explained.

“Sounds easy enough,” Serena agreed. Looking over at Luna and giving her a wink, Serena held the pen up in the air and shouted out the command with confidence. “MOON POWER...TRANSFORM INTO A SEXY DJ!!”

As soon as Serena yelled out her command, the pen’s orange jewel began to glow and rays of

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light shimmered off it. When Serena finished shouting out her command, the air around her filled with pink and orange smoke. Suddenly, the air cleared away and Serena had transformed into a beautiful radio announcer, with shoulder-length golden-blond hair, and wearing a mauve DKNY jacket and mini-skirt-suit ensemble. Her trendy white leather pumps had thick, tall heels.

“Not bad,” Serena mused. “Forget Montblanc!”

“What’s Montblanc?” Luna gave Serena a puzzled look.

“Jeez, Luna, you certainly act more human than cat, but you need to learn a bit more about style. Montblanc is only the most luxurious brand of pens in the world. At least, until you came up with this Magic Luna Pen. You should sell this thing at Bloomingdale’s.”

“Come on, Serena.” Luna started to run towards the security booth. “It’s almost midnight!”

Disguised as a sexy DJ, Serena had no problem convincing the security guard that she was a celebrity radio star about to go on the air. Serena

and Luna hurried inside the studio and peeked around the corner. The tall, blond Jay Dight was talking to the show's producer, a pretty red-headed woman with large brown eyes wearing an emerald green jumpsuit. Serena and Luna snuck up close to eavesdrop on the conversation.

"Are you pleased with the energy we've gathered?" The red-headed woman spoke first.

Serena and Luna exchanged glances.

"I had no idea how much power could be found in the hearts of young girls in love." Jedithe held a huge, round shimmering sphere in his hands. It pulsed and glowed with energy trapped inside. "This strategy has worked perfectly. The flower brooches we've sent out have sapped all of the girls' love energy and left them unconscious. Let's gather a bit more. Are you ready for tonight's show?"

The red-headed woman flashed a wicked smile. "Of course I am."

Serena and Luna watched the two enter the studio and quickly ran around to the back door. Sliding into the hallway between the radio station's offices and the Midnight Zero studio, Serena and

a scout is born

Luna approached the studio door, which had a round, glass window in it.

Serena glanced through the window and saw the blond DJ speaking into the microphone.

"I'm Jay Dight and welcome to Midnight Zero on FM-10."

"What a babe," Serena whispered.

"Serena, he's a bad guy!" Luna gave Serena a cold stare.

"That doesn't mean he's not a babe!" Serena protested. "Tom Cruise was a bad guy in 'Interview With a Vampire,' but he was still a babe."

"Yeah, but this isn't a movie," Luna retorted. Suddenly, Luna noticed bodies slumped over in the studio. "Hey look! Those three guys passed out in the corner—they must have been the real program's staff. The Enemy's kidnapped the airtime!"

"Well, it's time to put an end to these zeros from Midnight Zero!" Serena stormed into the studio past the red-headed woman, who was too confused to stop her.

"The first love letter for tonight was written by Carrie from Northridge."

Serena, still disguised as a sexy DJ, walked right up to the microphone next to Jeditte a.k.a. Jay Dight and grabbed a chair.

“Hey!” cried out Jeditte.

“Ladies and gentlemen, this story just in.” Serena’s tone was 100% CNN. “Our sources have informed us that the flower brooches given out by Midnight Zero are actually dangerously toxic plants, and if you receive one you must not take it out of its box.”

“What are you doing?!” Jeditte stood up and pounded his fists on the table.

Serena continued. “Love letters are meant to be written to give to the one you love.”

Luna tilted her head sideways. “I swear I’ve heard that line before,” she muttered to herself.

Serena was on a roll. “Everyone, wake up from your dreams and don’t let yourselves become brainwashed by this wanna-be talk radio show Midnight Zero. Turn off your radios!”

With that, Jeditte stood up and slapped the microphone away from in front of Serena’s face.

“Enough of this! Who are you?!”

“Uh-oh.” Serena realized she hadn’t mor-

a scout is born

phed yet into Sailor Moon. There's no way she could fight in this outfit. Even if she could, it would definitely be a waste to mess up this classy DKNY. Maybe she could stand it if it was an out-of-style Anne Klein, but not this DKNY. She started to panic. How could she transform before the outfit got dirtied?!

Craaaaassssshhhh!!

The entire glass wall separating the engineer's room and the sound studio came crashing down as the red-haired woman jumped through it.

Wow, Serena thought. She's got some really tough skin. It would probably help if she used body lotion on a more regular basis.

Suddenly, the red-haired woman's entire body started to shake. With each vibration, her body's silhouette faded into a different color, ranging from purple to pink to puke-green. Finally, the shaking stopped and the woman had transformed into a nasty-looking witch wearing a puke green robe. Her muscles bulged and her veins popped out from under her skin. Her flaming red hair pointed towards the sky into a spiked tornado.

"You've caused enough trouble, you little

brat,” the witch ranted. “It’s time you learned your first lesson in radio—don’t interrupt while someone’s on the air!”

The witch, her eyes glowing a yellow that resembled raw corn, opened her mouth wide to reveal pointy fangs. After taking a deep inhale, the witch exhaled with all her might, throwing a pinkish-red goo across the room, aimed straight at Serena.

The pure force of the flying goo knocked Serena so hard that she flew across the room and through the studio door, smashing into the wall inside the engineer’s room. Luna scurried into the engineer’s room, following Serena. Would Serena still be conscious or a helpless wreck?!

SAILOR MOON

Chapter 12 **Saved By** **The Mask**

Serena's body crumpled to the floor revealing a Serena-shaped hole in the wall. Debris and dust from the wall fell from the hole onto Serena's motionless form. Luna ran up to Serena in a panic.

"Serena, can you hear me?" Luna's paws gently nudged Serena's shoulders.

The witch approached the engineer's room.

Pain. All Serena felt was the burning slice of pain through her body. The shock hit her hard, but she was still conscious.

"Luna..." Her voice trailed out and she blinked three times through the dusty air.

“Serena, if you can even move, get ready for that witch again.” Luna licked Serena’s face, trying to snap her into action before the witch could strike again.

Serena could make out the muscle-clad witch’s profile just beyond the studio door. She knew her only chance was to morph into Sailor Moon and use her powers.

With all the energy she had left in her, Serena pushed herself up to a sitting position. She closed her eyes and barely held her arm up, yelling at the top of her lungs.

“MOON PRISM POWER MAKE-UP!!”

Serena felt her entire body warm up with fresh blood circulating throughout. All of her strength came back at once. As her Sailor Scout uniform finished transforming, she felt her skin flicker with light. For some reason, she actually felt stronger than she had when she morphed before. Even though she had hit the wall with such strong force, it was like her transformation into Sailor Moon had completely healed her. She was ready to fight.

“You’ve gone way too far! If you think you

a scout is born

can just use the romantic dreams of young girls for your wicked plans, you better think again.” Serena pointed her white-gloved finger right at the steroid-enhanced witch. “No way, hose-head!”

Luna looked up at Serena, shaking her head. “Sailor Moon, the phrase goes ‘No way, Jose.’”

“Oh, yeah,” Serena whispered, blushing a little. So what? She was supposed to be a superhero, not an English major. She always had trouble remembering all those cute phrases her dad used. Besides, that phrase seemed a little politically incorrect anyway. And it’s not like the witch would know the difference. Speaking of the witch, Serena realized she needed to get back to yelling at her.

“I’m Sailor Moon, Champion of Love and Justice, and on behalf of the Moon, you’re punished!”

Jedite stepped into the doorway and strolled into the room, looking at Sailor Moon.

“So you’re the one who’s been ruining my flawless plans.”

Serena’s face turned red with anger thinking about all the damage this guy had already done.

And he had threatened Molly's life twice now. The anger flowed through Serena's veins.

"So you're the jerk in charge of all this evil stuff!" Serena snapped at him with her hands on her hips.

He looked at her calmly with a satisfied smile. "My name is Jeditte."

"I already know that. You said it on the radio—Jay Dight." What did this guy think—she was an idiot?

"Yeah, but my real name's spelled differently," he insisted. "My DJ name was spelled *J-a-y* and that was only my first name. But my bad-guy name is spelled *J-e-d--i-t-e*. It's one word."

"That's really stupid," Serena argued. "What kind of disguise is that? No one can see your name spelled out—it's radio! As far as they know, it could be spelled *J-e-d--i-t-e* so that doesn't count as a disguise."

Jeditte was getting frustrated. "It's a pun! Who cares if they understood it or not?"

"What good is a pun if no one understands it?" Serena wasn't impressed by this lame-o.

"Enough of this!!" The witch howled and

a scout is born

hissed. "I'm tired of hearing you two argue. Sailor Moon, it's time to wipe you out once and for all."

The witch opened her mouth and blew out a thick stream of pink goo aimed straight at Serena and Luna. It nailed them and sent both of them flying through the wall. This time, now that Serena had already morphed into Sailor Moon, shook off the hit and flew onto the roof of the radio station.

Did this mean that Serena could fly? Of course, what good was a super-hero who couldn't fly? Then again, Batman couldn't fly. Well, maybe she couldn't really fly, but it *would* be awesome. After all, she could just fly over to the Crossroads Mall more often and get some shopping done. Either that or fly over to Crown Arcade so she could play the Sailor V game. And see Andrew! He was such a hottie.

Out of the corner of her eye, Serena noticed the protein-pumped witch flying out towards her.

"You're not getting away!" The witch yelled down to her and heaved a heavy stream of goo Serena's way.

Serena dodged the pink goo and set up for a little attack of her own.

“MOON TIARA ACTION!”

Serena hurled her glowing tiara at the witch, but the witch dodged it at the last minute.

“You’ve got lousy aim, Sailor Moon!” The witch cackled her typical witch-like high-pitched laugh as she prepared her next attack.

But Serena could feel her ability to control the magical tiara. As she moved her hand to the left, the tiara also turned to the left. What if she used her hand to bring the tiara back around and in towards her like a boomerang? Maybe she could nail the witch from the backside. She hoped the nasty bodybuilding betty wouldn’t notice.

In one swoop, Serena yanked her hand towards her, and, sure enough, the tiara started flying back. Glowing with heat and flames, the tiara soared straight towards the witch’s back. At the last minute the witch noticed its heat and turned around to see what it was. As soon as she turned around, the tiara smacked the witch flat in the stomach and melted her into nothing.

By now, Jedite had made it to the roof, and he watched as Sailor Moon destroyed the witch. Serena noticed him and was ready for him next.

HALLOWEEN

“Jedite, it’s over for you too!”

Jedite smirked. “Are you saying you want to go one on one with me?”

Serena was ready to go. She grabbed her tiara back from its battle with the witch and hurled it towards Jedite with a yell.

“MOON TIARA ACTION!!”

Jedite’s eyes focused hard on the tiara. His hand curled into a ball and sparks flew from his fingers. From his hand, an invisible force of energy launched towards the approaching tiara.

“It’s not as easy as you think, Sailor Moon,” he quipped.

Serena was shocked to see her tiara frozen in mid-flight. Jedite chuckled, which made Serena even more determined.

“Take this!” Sailor Moon raised her arm behind her to thrust the tiara towards Jedite with more power, but Jedite raised his hand.

Out of his raised hand came a huge field of energy that coiled itself over and over towards Serena. With a solid blast, the energy hit Serena and knocked her onto the ground.

“Owww...” Serena was losing the battle.

Jedite stepped towards Serena. Stepping closer and closer, he prepared to destroy Sailor Moon once and for all.

Five steps into his walk, a red rose hit his foot and stopped him in his tracks. Jedite looked down at the rose.

"Hmph," he muttered. With that, a black shadow appeared in the sky and sucked Jedite through it until he had completely disappeared.

"That rose..." Serena felt her heart beating fast. "It was Tuxedo Mask!"

The next morning at school, both Molly and Miss Haruna were in class, energetic as ever. Everyone's chatter and energy level seemed back to normal, almost like nothing had happened.

Serena, who slept like a baby the night before, was finally writing her love letter.

"Let's see. *Dear My Darling Tuxedo Mask,*" Serena read out loud, writing at the same time. "*My feelings for you—*"

A hand came down and swiped the paper from off Serena's desk. It was Molly.

"Let me see that thing," she teased. "You

know, Serena, Midnight Zero ended. Why are you writing this?"

"Give me that back Molly!" Serena swatted air, frantically trying to get back the letter she had started to write.

"No way, Serena," Molly said, laughing. "This letter now belongs to all us ex-Midnight Zero listeners."

"Molly, I'm gonna give that letter to someone. Stop!"

Serena started chasing Molly around the desks, while Miss Haruna looked over at the two girls chasing each other.

"OK, girls, what is going on?" Miss Haruna stood between them to mediate the situation.

"This is Serena's love letter," Molly explained. "I'm trying to decide if it's good enough to send to FM-10."

Miss Haruna heard the term love letter and her ears perked up.

"A love letter?" she asked. "Let me see it, too!"

With that, Miss Haruna started to chase Molly too, who wouldn't let either Serena or Miss

Haruna have the letter.

Molly laughed and looked at her best friend.

“Serena, it’s just a silly love letter. It’s nothing to fight over.”

Serena smiled to herself. That’s what you think, Molly.

