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# SAILOR MOON

5

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the hit  
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## ETERNAL SLEEP

# SAILOR MOON™

**“Tuxedo Mask!”** Serena shouted, her eyes desperately scanning the water. She couldn't see anything. **“Where'd he go?!”**



*the novel #5 • Eternal Sleep*

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# SAILOR MOON<sup>®</sup>

Sailor Moon<sup>®</sup> the novel #5

## ETERNAL SLEEP

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Fiery Threat**

Darkness.

Serena held her hands out in front of her face, but it was too dark to see her fingers. She looked around, but it was as if she was in a black hole—nothing filled the surrounding emptiness. She reached out. Cold air slid between her fingers.

Where was she?

A tall blond man suddenly appeared in front of her, his blue eyes lit up with fire. Serena sucked in a breath and took a step back.

"I am *not* a petty servant," the blond man, Jedite, said with a hiss. He raised a hand above his

## WILD MEN

head. "I'll be back. And the next time, I won't be here for games!"

He disappeared just as quickly as he had come. Serena, alone once more, touched her chest. Where had he come from?

Raye, beautiful and serious, suddenly appeared where Jeditte had been. She turned black-violet eyes to Serena. "He probably retreated so he can fight us later, on his *own* terms, so he'll have the upper hand."

Then Raye was gone.

Serena started to breathe heavily. These were flashbacks, things that had happened to her several days before, but she had tried not to think about them. They made her nervous.

Amy floated into view. She touched her lips. "Oh God. You don't think he'll take hostages, do you?"

Amy disappeared, and Serena clenched her fists. No! She didn't want to think about this! Every time she imagined Jeditte with hostages, she got scared.

"No!" Serena cried, her voice echoing through the darkness. "I don't want to think about

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any of this! Leave me alone!"

"Serena!"

Serena's eyes popped open. Bright orange-red eyes stared straight into her own. The blonde screamed.

"YAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!"

Serena grabbed a nearby pillow and slammed it into the creature perched on her collar. The girl stumbled off her bed and grabbed her chest.

"Luna!" Serena shouted angrily. "Don't scare me like that!"

Luna, Serena's talking black cat, pushed the pillow off and glared at the blonde. "Serena," the cat snapped. "I was *trying* to wake you up."

"You don't wake people up by shoving your face at them! Geez." Serena let out a breath and brushed a damp strand of hair from her face. "And you say *I* don't have any manners. It's not exactly pleasant to wake up to a pushy cat sitting on your chest."

Luna scowled. "Well, forgive *me* for trying to help. It sounded like you were having a night-

mare."

Serena swallowed and tugged on her skirt. The bad dreams still bothered her. It had been tough getting a good night's sleep in the past week—she kept dreaming about Jedite, and the angry fire in his eyes. He was going to fight her and the rest of the Sailor Scout team in a final showdown.

"It wasn't a nightmare," Serena answered, dropping down to her knees in front of her short windowsill. "I was just dreaming about...a normal day."

Luna raised an eyebrow. "You shouted: 'Leave me alone.'"

"I say that to you every day, don't I?"

Luna sighed. "Serena," the cat murmured, "you don't have to be ashamed. You're Sailor Moon, Champion of Justice and leader of the Sailor Scouts. It's natural for you to be scared about this upcoming fight with Jedite."

"I'm *not* scared," Serena said sharply. "Jedite may have sent all those villains who tried to suck energy from innocents, but all his plans failed miserably. The guy's a dork."



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Luna slammed a paw onto the bed in frustration. "Can't you take this seriously, Serena?"

"I don't wanna." Serena thrust her nose into the air and turned to the window. "I've never let the super-hero-by-night gig bother me, so now's no time to start. You don't want me to turn into a paranoid bossier like you, do you?"

Serena ignored Luna's angry mutterings and rested her head on the windowsill. She tried not to be scared. This was Jedite they were talking about. The guy who couldn't pull off a single plan. The guy whose idea of being sneaky was going by the name "Jed" and wearing a hat. There was nothing scary about him.

An image of Jedite's burning eyes came into her mind, but she brushed it off. She didn't want to think about it.

"Hey Luna," Serena called, her eyes on the glittering stars. "Do you know much about constellations?"

"Are you trying to change the subject?" the cat asked lowly.

"Yup."

Luna growled. "No. I don't know much

about constellations. Why?"

Serena grinned and pointed to a large group of stars. "Because that one looks kinda like my crush Andrew, and I was wondering if it had a name. Like, 'Cute Blond Arcade Guy' or something."

Luna slapped both paws into her forehead. "I shouldn't bother with you anymore, Serena."

Serena giggled.

Just then, the air above the town began to shimmer. Serena sat up, eyes wide at the rippling sky above the houses of Crossroads. "Huh?" she said. "Luna, come check this out."

Luna grumpily stomped over to the window, then froze. The rippling air had started to form into a huge holographic image over the city. There was another moment of formation, and then the hologram was complete.

Serena nearly fell backwards. "Jedite?!"

"Sailor Scouts," the image of Jedite called, his voice reverberating through the city. "I know you can hear me. Pay attention, little brats."

Serena's eyes widened. The whole city would be able to see and hear him. Jedite didn't

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know the Scouts' true identities, so to address them he had to address the whole city. What would everyone else think of this?

"I'm tired of playing games with you," Jedithe said coldly. His blue eyes flickered in the air. "I'm ready to defeat you, once and for all. Meet me at 1 a.m. at the F runway of Crossroads Airport tomorrow night for a showdown. If you don't show, I'll burn this city to the ground."

Jedithe snapped his fingers. Holographic flames rushed through the city in waves of golden crimson. It looked so real that Serena had to cover her mouth with her hands and turn away.

Jedithe snapped again, and the fire disappeared. "I'll be waiting, Sailor brats," he said with a snarl, then disappeared. The nighttime sky above Crossroads was clear and empty once more.

Luna whipped her head at Serena. "Contact Amy and Raye," the cat ordered. "Make sure they saw that. We need an emergency meeting *now*."

Serena turned to Luna quickly. "But what if it's a trap?" she exclaimed. "Jedithe's not one to fight fairly."

"It most certainly *is* a trap, but we have no

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choice." Luna turned to the now-empty sky. "If the Sailor Scouts don't show up to fight Jeditte tomorrow, Crossroads is history."

In the Negaverse, the air was heavy. Queen Beryl let her long fingernails scrape down the armrests of her stone throne. The crumbling pillars stood ominously in the shadows around her.

Jeditte suddenly appeared from a black portal. He dropped to one knee before the queen. "Queen Beryl."

"Report," Beryl ordered coldly. "Did you challenge them?"

"Yes, my queen. I will fight them tomorrow night." He raised blue eyes to Queen Beryl, then clenched his fists. "I won't fail you this time, my queen."

"I should hope not," Beryl said through razor-sharp teeth. "Because you realize what I'll do to you if you *do* fail."

Jeditte swallowed and lowered his head. "Yes, my queen."

"Good." Beryl's orange eyes glowed like embers in the darkness. "Now, destroy those Sailor Scouts."



## **Chapter 2**

### **Arcade Advice**

Serena sat at her desk, a *Sailor V* comic open in front of her. She tried to ignore the conversation her friends were having nearby, but she couldn't.

"I thought it was cool!" Lisa Brownridge clapped her hands. "It was better than that virtual reality game they just moved into the arcade. That game's tiny, but that hologram last night was huge!"

Melvin Grier, his lips tight below his coke-bottle glasses, lifted a finger. "You don't get it!" His normally squeaky voice went even higher. "Don't you realize the technology required to create a

## HALO MOON

hologram that big? We don't have equipment in this city that can do that. It must have been space aliens!"

Serena bit her lip. Last night she had met with her friends Amy and Raye, a.k.a., Sailor Mercury and Sailor Mars. They had all decided that they would meet Jedita at 1 a.m. like he had asked, but they knew that it was probably a trap. Luna had told them they had to be ready for anything.

Molly Baker perched herself on Serena's desk and leaned back on her arms. "Space aliens?" she repeated skeptically. "Maybe they came to take you home, Melvin."

Melvin slammed a fist into his palm. "I'm telling you, we're under an invasion! The government has to get its weapons prepared to fight this new enemy!"

Molly smiled. "Mmm. Right, Melvin. Why don't you call the president and tell him." The red-head leaned her head back to grin at Serena. "What's up with you today?" she asked the blonde. "You've been awfully quiet, Serena. Up all night reading comics?"

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Serena closed her *Sailor V* graphic novel. "As if, Molly. The nighttime's for my beauty sleep. Comic books are to be read in school."

"*What* are to be read in school?" asked a low voice from behind. Serena turned, then gulped when she saw her homeroom teacher Ms. Patricia Haruna. Ms. Haruna did *not* look happy.

Serena laughed and rubbed the back of her head. "I said, 'Text books and fine literature are to be read in school,' Ma'am."

Ms. Haruna snatched Serena's comic book. "I'm keeping this until after school," she snapped, throwing it on her desk. She walked to the front of the class. "You can pick it up then."

Serena grumpily laid her head on her desk. Ms. Haruna probably took the comic so she could read it herself.

"Take your seats," Ms. Haruna ordered as she pulled out her attendance book. The children obeyed. Serena slid another comic book from the secret stash in her backpack and flipped it open.

There was a knock at the door. A student entered with a note for Ms. Haruna. The teacher looked at the message and frowned.

"Pay attention," she said, holding up the paper. "The principal has sent a special announcement to all the classrooms today. He says the police think the holographic image last night was a hoax, and that police officers will be cordoning off that area tonight. They ask that no one go there—it's dangerous and off-limits."

The entire class moaned together.

"No fair!" Lisa complained. "I wanted to check it out. That final fight thing sounds exciting."

Serena looked up from her comic with wide eyes. Kids were planning to go the airport that night?

"Yeah," Rica Kelton added angrily. "I was gonna go with a bunch of friends to check it out."

"I was gonna go, too!" someone else cried.

"Me, too!"

"So was I!"

Serena's heart began to pound. The comic got damp in her sweaty palms. "*Oh God,*" Amy had said. "*You don't think he'll take hostages, do you?*"

Ms. Haruna put her hands on her hips. "Don't be ridiculous," she snapped. "None of you should go near that airport tonight. Who knows



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what's going on there? Don't be foolish thrill seekers!"

"But we were gonna take the sci-fi club," Melvin said, standing up. "We were gonna help the police fight off the aliens!"

Molly rolled her eyes. "Don't you ever quit?"

Serena closed her eyes, but she couldn't get Jedité's burning eyes out of her mind. *"I'll be back. And the next time, I won't be here for games!"*

Ms. Haruna threw up her hands at all the complaining children. "Enough! I don't want to hear another word. None of you are to go to the airport tonight."

Kim Matthews leaned forward. "But Ms. H—"

"Ms. H is right." Serena stood up, her comic book clenched in her hand. She turned to the other students, her eyes quiet. "It's probably really dangerous there. You should all stay home and...study or something."

The room went deathly silent. Serena looked at her shiny black school shoes and said nothing. She didn't want to take her super-hero stuff so seriously, but when she thought about her friends in

danger, being Sailor Moon didn't seem like something to push over anymore.

"Oh...my...GOD!" Ms. Haruna's jaw nearly hit the floor. "Serena, you actually said something responsible!" Her eyes wandered to Serena's hand, and her mouth instantly closed. She scowled. "But is that another comic book?"

The class all started to talk at once, crowding around Serena.

"I can't believe it!" someone shouted. "Serena?! Against potential fun?!"

"I never thought I'd see Serena agreeing with Ms. H."

"Hey Melvin, do you think those aliens kidnapped Serena and replaced her with a robot?"

Molly placed a hand on Serena's forehead. "Are you OK?" she asked. "You're being very un-Serena-like today."

Serena turned away her eyes as the students chattered around her. OK? Was she OK? Serena wished she knew.

"Aw, man." Serena bonked her head against the *Sailor V* video game. The screen flashed the

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words GAME OVER above the crying face of Sailor V.

"Lost again?" the arcade manager Andrew asked from behind. He smiled and patted Serena on the head. "That's OK. You're improving, at least. You hit level 2 today."

"Hooray." Serena sighed and rubbed her eyes. "I'm never gonna get close to Amy. She can kick my butt at this thing."

Andrew shrugged and dumped his change on the counter. "Well," he said as he started separating the coins into piles, "that's all right. Everybody's got their talents. You're much better than Amy at some stuff."

"Like what?" Serena muttered darkly.

Andrew winked at her. "You can run a lot faster, I bet. She doesn't get the training you get in running late for school everyday."

Serena grunted. She knew she should be excited about being alone in the arcade with cutie Andrew, but she couldn't cheer up. Thinking about her friends as hostages made her worry too much.

"What's wrong?" Andrew asked with a frown. He picked up his pile of quarters and start-

ed slipping them into his belt dispenser. "You're so serious today."

Serena clasped her hands in her lap and swung her legs off the arcade stool. "Responsibilities are starting to catch up with me," she answered quietly. "I don't like worrying about things, but...it looks like I have to."

"Just because you're worried doesn't mean you have to be depressed." Andrew walked over and took the stool next to her. "Do you think you have to be depressed just to prove you're being responsible?"

Yeah, Serena thought miserably. If she was really goofy and cheerful, she'd feel like she wasn't taking the fight seriously. If she didn't take it seriously, someone could get hurt.

Andrew suddenly laughed. Serena looked up curiously.

Andrew shook his head and focused twinkling green eyes on her. He smiled. "Serena, just because you're worried doesn't mean you have to get depressed." He cocked his head to one side. "Think about it. If you're depressed, you won't be able to get anything done. Then you really won't be

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being responsible. There's strength in being positive."

Serena's eyes widened. She hadn't thought about it that way. If she wasn't confident when she went into that fight, she might lose. And to get confident, she had to start acting like good old chic Serena again.

"Besides," Andrew added, giving one of her ponytails a playful tug. "I'm not used to you being so low. I like you a lot better when you're cheerful."

Serena's cheeks turned pink. "Really?"

"Really." Andrew smiled. "So cheer up, Serena."

A group of teens walked in the door, and Andrew got up to greet them. Serena watched him go.

Maybe Andrew's right, she thought. She needed to get out of this funk. After all, how were the Sailor Scouts going to win against Jeditte without their wicked cool and totally fabulous leader?

Serena smiled and fingered her ponytail. The best thing about that whole conversation, though, was that Andrew had said he liked her. He liked her. After hearing that, how could she ever be

depressed?

Shortly after midnight, the Crossroads airport was surrounded by police. Dozens more held lookouts inside.

Nobody noticed as a black portal appeared above the airport's roof. Jedite's boots clicked on the concrete.

"Come to see me?" he murmured coldly as he raised his hand. "Sorry. This fight's reserved for three Sailor losers only."

Black light formed around his hand. Slowly, the light grew until it blanketed the airport and all of the police officers around it. The men and women began collapsing everywhere, the black light putting them to sleep instantly.

"I'd drain all your energy, but I don't have time." Jedite clenched his fist. "I have three Sailor brats to beat."

He turned in the direction of Crossroads Train Station. Cold blue eyes narrowed. "Come, Sailor Scouts. I'm waiting."



## **Chapter 3**

# **Preparing for the Battleground**

Serena and Luna ran down the dark streets of Crossroads, Serena's sneakers slapping against the pavement, sending echoes through the darkness. The blonde checked her watch.

"Twelve forty-five," she said breathlessly. "And the train station's right around the corner."

"Thank goodness you woke up in time," Luna said from beside her feet. "The girls will be there by now, and the three of you can get to the airport. I hope you're ready!"

Serena was as ready as she could be, given the circumstances. She had never slept so little in

her life. Would she be ready to fight Jedita? Serena gulped as she flew around a corner. She had never gone into a fight where she wasn't sure she would come back.

No, Serena thought. She had to remember what Andrew had said—take things seriously, but be positive. She would never win if she lost her confidence.

Serena pushed open the doors of the train station and ran in. She was surprised to find the place vacant, with not a single person in sight.

"Wow," she murmured. "I forgot what time it was." Since the train station only had local trains, Serena figured the place closed after midnight.

"Serena," Luna ordered, looking around. "Keep your eye—"

There was a scuffling sound from behind. Serena choked and turned around. Nothing.

"Did you hear that, Luna?" she asked quickly.

Luna looked up. "What? I didn't hear anything."

Serena's heart started to thump in her chest. "Don't forget what time it is!" she exclaimed,



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clenching her fists. "Psychos hang around at this hour! A totally gorgeous girl like me shouldn't be out alone with only a cat for an escort."

Luna cocked an eyebrow. "You're afraid of psychos? You fight villains on a daily basis, Serena."

"But those villains are usually really corny." Serena nervously looked around. "And I'm getting used to having the other Scouts as backup."

"Serena, I think—"

The scuffling started again. Serena screamed.

"A murderer!" she shouted. "Oh, Luna, I'm gonna get murdered!"

"Will you shut up?" someone said with a hiss from behind. A hand clamped down over Serena's mouth. Serena panicked and tried to scream.

Luna whipped around, teeth bared. She froze, her eyes widened. "Amy?"

Amy quickly pressed a finger to her lips. "Shhh!" she ordered, waving her hand. "We have to be quiet. Serena, calm down, it's us!"

But Serena didn't hear her—she was too

busy flipping out. She bit the hand over her mouth and spun a Sailor V kick at her attacker. "You stupid murderer!" she yelled. "Don't mess with this super-hero—"

Serena stopped mid-threat. Raye was behind her, and the priestess did *not* look happy.

"Serena," Raye said with a growl, gripping her bitten hand. "Shut your mouth! Do you want us to wake up the entire city?"

Serena held her head in confusion. "Raye?" she asked. She turned and saw Amy, and her eyes widened. "Amy, too? Why'd you guys sneak up on us?"

Amy bent and picked up Luna. The girl was short and slim, with short blue hair and bright navy eyes. She was also the genius of Serena's school, and was Sailor Mercury when she wasn't an everyday middle school student.

"We wanted to keep you quiet," Amy whispered, wincing. "Looks like we didn't really succeed in that."

"I think it's that Serena's too used to being loud," Raye muttered, checking the bite wound. Raye was a Shinto priestess as well as the beautiful

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Sailor Mars. Her long, midnight hair and glittering dark eyes gleamed purple when they caught the light. "We should have just shoved a bag over her head like I suggested."

Serena glared at the priestess. "So now you wanna kill me? My mom always said that shoving a bag over your head is a sure way to suffocate."

"Enough," Amy ordered. She looked behind her. "We need to make a plan of action. The trains have all left, so we have to think of another way to get to the airport." She reached out and touched Serena's shoulder. "And *please* be quiet. The last thing we want is to wake up people and let them know we're the Sailor Scouts."

Serena shot one last sneer in Raye's direction before looking to her blue-haired friend. "Can we get a taxi or something?" Serena asked. "Though I'm broke after going to the arcade after school today."

"Wouldn't that be ironic," Raye murmured. "The city being destroyed because Serena wanted to play video games."

Serena whipped around. "Raye!"

"Shhh!" Amy pleaded, holding out her

hands. "You guys!"

"Doesn't matter anyway." Raye let out a breath and brushed midnight hair over her shoulder. "No taxi would bring us to the airport. The police declared it off-limits, remember?"

"Then what are we gonna do?" Serena asked. She looked down at her cat. "Luna, you have any more secret gadgets stashed away? Strap-on wings or something would be really handy right now."

Luna scowled. "Don't be ridiculous. What do I look like, the Prize Case at Chuck-E-Cheese?"

Just then, a clanging sounded from behind. The super-heroes and their feline sidekick turned to see one of the doors in a deserted train slide open.

"What?" Amy's eyes were wide. "But nobody's operating that train."

The lights on the side of the train lit up. The electronic sign started up with a whirring noise, and CROSSROADS AIRPORT flashed across it.

Serena's palms began to sweat. Jeditte had sent the train, she was sure of it. Looked like he didn't want them to miss the fight for anything.

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"That's an invitation if I ever saw one." Raye shifted her feet, her high-heeled boots clicking on the concrete.

Serena gulped. Amy took a breath, then stepped forward.

"Let's go," she whispered.

The deserted train brought them swiftly to Crossroads Airport. As soon as the door magically slid open and the girls stepped off, the train closed up and started back up towards the train station.

Serena looked up at the huge airport and nervously clutched at her jeans. The whole situation was so *nerve-wracking*. She didn't know what to expect. She tried to remember if Sailor V had ever faced a super-villain in an airport, but Serena was too nervous to think.

The thin hand on her shoulder made her jump. Amy shook her head and gave a little smile.

"Relax, Serena," she whispered. "We're in this together. All of us."

Serena let out a breath and smiled weakly. When she was nervous, she was really thankful that she wasn't the only Sailor Scout anymore.

Raye turned to the others and brought a finger to her lips. They were in an abandoned back hallway, though they were close to approaching the main building of the airport.

Raye carefully nudged her head around the corner. Serena leaned over and whispered, "Is anyone there?"

"Shhh!" Raye turned her head back. "There are cops all over, but something's wrong."

Serena shook her head. Wrong? Slowly, Serena looked around the corner with Raye.

It was true—something *was* wrong. The police officers that were posted around the airport stood stiffly, like robots. Their eyes were blank.

"What's up with them?" Serena whispered. "They look completely out of it."

Raye's eyes narrowed. "I feel evil."

Just then, a policeman turned in their direction. He caught sight of them and his eyes flickered red.

"Oh God." Serena grabbed Raye and shrieked, "Run!"

All of the police officers dashed in the girls' direction, and the three Scouts and one cat ran as

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fast as their legs could carry them. The cops were close behind.

"What *is* this?" Amy shouted as they sprinted through the airport. "Those can't be real police officers!"

Serena grabbed her head. "I knew cops hated loitering teenagers," she cried, "but this is ridiculous!"

"They must be working for the Enemy!" Luna yelled. "Girls, transform!"

Raye yanked her pen out of her pocket. "Right," she said, thrusting her pen into the air. "MARS POWER MAKE-UP!"

Amy pulled out her pen and held it up. "MERCURY POWER MAKE-UP!"

Serena thrust her hand toward the ceiling. "Anything that'll help us fight back!" she cried. "MOON PRISM POWER MAKE-UP!"

Light burst through the airport, blinding the evil policemen. They threw their arms over their faces to cover their eyes.

Rings of fire swam through red light. The flame rings encircled Raye and engulfed her body. She closed her eyes, and the fire burned her clothes

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away and melded her Sailor Scout uniform to her body.

Blue ribbons of light wrapped around Amy. She held her breath as her clothing was washed away and replaced with her Sailor Scout outfit of blue, white, and indigo. She held out her arms and let her blue boots click against the floor.

Every color of the rainbow swirled around Serena, sending a rush of energy through her. Her jeans and tee shirt melted away, and a white leotard hugged her body. She crossed her arms over her forehead, and long white gloves slid over her arms. She pointed her toes, and knee-high red boots formed over her legs. A blue skirt appeared around her waist, and a shining tiara encircled her forehead. Dangling moon earrings, a red choker, and red hair pieces all glittered into place.

The light finally faded. The policemen looked up, but they no longer saw three middle school girls in street clothes—standing before them were Sailor Mars, Sailor Mercury, and Champion of Justice Sailor Moon.

Serena spread her feet and pointed a menacing finger. "Police officers are defenders of the



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innocent," she called. "They're just like Sailor Scouts, only not as cute. You couldn't possibly be real!"

The cops rushed forward again, and Serena tightened. Beside her, Raye clasped her hands together and pointed her two index fingers.

"MARS FIRE..." Fire gathered around her fingertips, and Raye let it fly. "IGNITE!"

Roaring flames rushed through the airport and slammed into the oncoming police officers. The fire burned them away to dust in a matter of moments, and they sprinkled to the floor.

"Great." Serena clapped her hands. "Nice, Raye."

"Not even human," Luna muttered, looking at the dust with a scowl. "Burning like that, they must have just been made of paper."

"The intelligence of that furball never ceases to amaze me," said a cold voice. The girls looked up. Serena sucked in a breath.

Jedite, tall and trim, stepped out of a black portal and hovered in the air. He crossed his arms as the portal melted away. "I was sure you'd come," he said, focusing hard blue eyes on the girls. "After

all, you *are* just a bunch of stupid girls."

"What's wrong with being a girl?" Raye asked coldly back as she took a fighting stance. Serena tried to do the same, but her knees started to shake. Jeditte looked so *serious*.

"Hmph." Jeditte narrowed his eyes. "Girls don't know how to fight. Let a man show you how it's done." He jerked his finger behind him. "To the runway, girls."

Amy clenched her fists. "Why should we fight where you choose?" she challenged. "You said come to the airport, so we came. We fight here!"

"I don't think so." Jeditte eyes glowed from beneath his golden bangs. "You don't do what I say, and this city burns. Besides," he added, smiling cruelly, "since you took that train I sent for you, I now know your civilian identities."

All three of the Sailor Scouts froze.

Jeditte laughed. "You know what that means, don't you? You have to destroy me now. So let's go." He spread his arms. "To the battleground, Sailor brats. Let's see if you can fight against the true power of evil."



## **Chapter 4**

### **Fight to the End**

It was cool outside on the runway, but that wasn't what gave Serena shivers up and down her spine. She stood beside her fellow Scouts, Luna by her feet, the crescent moon shining brightly in the dark sky. Jeditte hovered in the air before them.

This is it, Serena thought. The end. She knew she had to be brave, but she wasn't used to being heroic. She swallowed and thought of Andrew's smiling face to make her feel better. Remember, she thought. Be positive.

"So?" Raye's voice echoed so suddenly through the night air that Serena jumped. The

## HALLOO MOON

priestess narrowed her eyes. "You going to fight or not?"

Jedite snapped his fingers. A lonely airplane sitting silently on the runway behind him suddenly lit up. It began to roll in the direction of the Sailor Scouts.

"There," he said. "Fight that if you can."

Serena gulped. "Nice going, Raye," she murmured.

Raye hissed. "I can take care of that," she said as she clasped her hands together. "MARS FIRE..."

"Wait!" Amy grabbed Raye's arm. The blue-haired girl's eyes were wide. "Don't you know how much planes cost?"

Raye blinked in surprise.

"Oh man," Serena said, turning to the oncoming aircraft. "If we blow that up, we'd be paying for it for the rest of our lives!"

"So just what are we supposed to do?"

Jedite smiled. An airplane on a different runway lit up, and that, too, began to roll towards the Scouts.

Serena grabbed Luna. "Enough talking!" she

## eternal sleep

shouted. "Run!"

Jedite laughed as the three Sailor Scouts ran as fast as their legs could carry them away from the chasing planes. "Go ahead and try to run, brats," he said, spitting. "There's no way you can outrun airplanes. You'll be Sailor pancakes before you know it."

"Oh, shut up!" Serena shouted. She was mad. She had been psyching herself up for a fight—not an embarrassing hundred-meter dash. Running away from airplanes was definitely not a cool and dramatic final fight.

Raye grabbed her hand. "This way!" the priestess shouted, leading Serena and Amy away from the airport. "We can't let them crash into the building, or it'll be a disaster!"

Serena followed Raye as they headed for the right side of the runway. Serena could hear Amy's heavy breathing beside her, and she began to get worried. Amy wasn't used to running.

Serena shoved Luna onto her shoulder and grabbed Amy's arm. "Hang in there, Ames," she said as she helped pull the girl along.

"Keep running, little girls," Jedite mocked.

## WALL ROOM

Serena angrily glared back at him. "Why don't you just go fall off a cliff or something?"

The right side of the runway ended abruptly. As the Scouts reached it, Serena quickly looked over the edge.

There was ocean below them.

Serena whipped to Raye. "Mars!" she shouted. "You led us into a dead end!"

Raye quickly turned back to the planes. "Not like I knew it was a dead end," Raye muttered back. "Quit blaming me and start thinking of what we're going to do."

Amy fell to her knees, heaving. Serena took a defensive stance in front of the slim girl and clenched her fists. The planes kept coming, and Serena clenched her teeth. What could she do?

Raye clasped her hands together. "Sailor Moon," she ordered. "Cover Mercury. I'm going to have to blast the planes."

Serena turned to Raye with wide eyes. "But—"

"Cover her." Raye closed her eyes and concentrated. Fire began to gather around her outstretched index fingers. "MARS FIRE..."

## **eternal sleep**

Serena ducked down and covered Amy with her body.

"IGNI—"

There was a swishing sound, and Raye stopped mid-cry. Her dark eyes widened.

A red rose was embedded in the ground before her.

Serena gasped and looked up. Jeditte, surprised, had made the airplanes stop dead in their tracks.

"You are hopeless." A tall figure in black stood on the roof of the airport. His voice echoed through the night air. "Don't you know how to treat ladies with respect?"

Serena's heart started to pound. "Tuxedo Mask!" she shouted, jumping up. She strained her eyes to see him. With Tuxedo Mask to help, the Scouts would be much better off against Jeditte!

Jeditte sneered. "Stupid boy," he said with a snarl. "You've only delayed their doom. And now you'll share it."

Tuxedo Mask stepped into the moonlight. His red-lined cape stood out sharply behind his tuxedo, and his white mask shone. He tipped his

## HALO MOON

top hat at Sailor Moon. "Hello," he called.

Serena turned pink. He always showed up to protect her, but who was he? She clasped her hands over her chest, praying he would be able to help the Scouts now.

Tuxedo Mask jumped super-hero style from the roof and landed gracefully on the runway. "Don't try this at home," he said with a grin. He cocked an eyebrow at Jeditte. "Particularly you idiotic villains. Do you float everywhere because you're too clumsy to walk?"

Jeditte's face turned red with anger. Amy shakily got to her feet beside Serena, while Raye lowered her clasped hands.

Jeditte thrust a finger at the masked man. "How dare you insult me!" he shouted. "I'll destroy you before you have time to beg for mercy!"

Tuxedo Mask spread his feet. "You're on, pal."

Jeditte shot forward. Serena sucked in a breath as the general slammed, full speed, into Tuxedo Mask. The two men went crashing over the opposite end of the runway and disappeared.

Serena couldn't breathe. There was the



## eternal sleep

ocean around the runway!

"No!" Serena shouted, running to where they had fallen. She could hear the other Scouts and Luna running behind her.

Serena reached the edge of the runway and slid to a halt. Looking down, she saw nothing but dark, rippling ocean. "Tuxedo Mask!" she shouted, her eyes desperately scanning the opaque water. She couldn't see anything. "Where'd they go?" she cried, grabbing Amy's arm. "Did you see them fall? Where'd they go?"

Amy squinted at the water. "I can't see anything," she whispered. She turned to Raye and Luna with wide eyes. "You don't suppose—"

"NO!" Serena clapped her hands over her ears. "He's OK! I *know* he is! Tuxedo Mask can't be hurt!" Serena felt the world swirling in front of her, and she squeezed shut her eyes. She felt her heart begin pounding in her chest. Tuxedo Mask had to be OK!

There came a splash from below. Serena gasped and opened her eyes. "Tuxedo Mask?" she cried.

A great burst of power slammed into the

## HALO MOON

girls, throwing them crashing to the hard runway. Serena clutched her aching head and forced her eyes open.

Jedite, soaking wet, stood before them. He scoffed and tossed a battered wet rose to the ground. "That," he said coldly, flicking limp golden bangs from his eyes, "is what's left of your little boyfriend."

Serena couldn't breathe.

"Tuxedo..." Serena whispered. Her body had gone cold. "Tuxedo Mask..."

Jedite raised a hand. "Good-bye," he said, then shot another beam of power straight at Serena.

Serena didn't even think. Anger and hatred burned in her blood, and her body acted for her. She ripped the tiara off her forehead and threw it with all the strength she had.

"MOON TIARA ACTION!"

Serena's tiara slammed into Jedite's ray beam. The two powers exploded in a bright flash of light, and when it dimmed, Serena's tiara lay alone on the ground. She had vaporized Jedite's beam.

Jedite scowled. "Brat. I didn't know you

## eternal sleep

could do that."

Serena ignored him. She felt the hatred for Jedite rushing through her blood, and it made her head spin. She hated him. She *hated* him. He had taken away Tuxedo Mask forever! Serena clenched her fists so hard they hurt.

"Mars," she said coldly. "Take the right. Mercury, left. And spray him with your bubbles."

Amy nodded. Raye brushed her hand over Serena's fist.

"Don't worry," the priestess whispered lowly. "I'll get him."

Jedite cocked an eyebrow. "What's this?" he murmured. "Come on, little girls. You don't seriously think you can win, do you?"

"No. We don't think we can win." Serena's eyes blazed. "We *know* we can."

Amy cupped her hands together. "MERCURY BUBBLES BLAST!"

The air suddenly filled with thick soapy bubbles. Jedite coughed and took a step back. "What?" he exclaimed. "You little—"

"Right here, moron." Serena appeared in front of him, hands on her hips. She narrowed her

## HALLOO MARS

eyes. "Come and get me."

Jedite snarled. "Stupid as usual," he said as he snapped his fingers. One of the airplanes lit up again, and it started in Serena's direction. The Champion of Justice immediately ran off, the plane close behind her.

Jedite sneered. "That's right," he mocked. "Run like the coward you are." He looked around him, though the bubble fog made it hard to see. "Where are the rest of you?" he called. "Don't you want to fight?"

"Right here, Jedite." Amy suddenly appeared, just like Serena had done. Jedite smiled and sent the other plane after her. Amy ran down the runway as it chased her.

Jedite laughed. "Idiots!" he exclaimed. "What fools you are. You come right to me so I can destroy you!"

"MARS FIREBALL CHARGE!"

Raye jumped out behind Jedite and slapped an anti-evil parchment on his back. Jedite tried to turn, but his limbs suddenly froze. His eyes widened.

"What?" he whispered. The planes chasing

## **eternal sleep**

Serena and Amy stopped.

"And you call *us* fools," Raye said lowly, crossing her arms. "My anti-evil spell paralyzes evil. And you are most certainly evil."

Jedite looked to his frozen body. "I can't move!" he shouted. "No! You can't do this to me!"

Amy clenched her fists. "There isn't a single thought in your head that isn't wicked, Jedite," she called. "And because of that, Mars' parchment will destroy you. Her spell turns the work of evil back upon its master."

As Amy finished speaking, the two planes started up again. This time, they started to roll towards the paralyzed Jedite.

The blond general started to sweat. "You can't do this!" he screamed, fighting to move. "You're just a bunch of girls! A bunch of stupid teenage girls!"

Serena scowled. "Never underestimate girls," she said. "It doesn't matter what gender a person is, it just matters that he or she is fighting for love and justice. Good will always triumph."

Serena flipped a ponytail over her shoulder and focused burning eyes on the general. "So say-

onara, sleazeball!"

Jedite screamed as the planes rolled toward him. "I'll never be defeated by you!" he shouted as he motioned with his hand. A black portal formed around him and sucked him away just as the planes rolled over the spot where he had been.

Jedite fell out of the portal and onto the cold stone floor of the Negaverse. He scrambled to his knees before the throne of Queen Beryl.

"Queen Beryl," Jedite cried, clasping his hands together. "Queen Beryl, I almost had the Sailor Scouts! Please, give me one more—"

"Chance?" The queen's voice, in the darkness, was tight and high. "Jedite, you are well aware that was your last."

Jedite dropped his forehead to the floor. "I beg of you, Queen Beryl—"

"SILENCE!" Queen Beryl jumped from her throne, furious. Her orange eyes blazed with the fire of anger. "Begone, Jedite!" she cried as she raised one long-nailed hand. "Begone from my realm and any realm for all eternity!"

Crystal shot up around Jedite's legs. He

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screamed as it quickly crawled up his body. "Please!" he cried, turning his desperate blue eyes upward. "Please, Quee—" His voice was cut off as the crystal encased him entirely. He stood inside the giant crystal, frozen in a silent cry.

Queen Beryl dropped her hand and gritted her razor teeth. "I will not tolerate failures," she said darkly, pointing her staff at the crystallized Jedite. "He will remain in Eternal Sleep until the end of time. Anyone who fails as he did will share his fate." She turned her head abruptly to her side. "Is that understood, Nephelite?"

A tall man materialized out of the shadows. His hair was long, brown, and wavy. He lifted up dark blue eyes. "Yes, my queen."

"It had better be." Beryl sat once more. "You are my new head general, Nephelite. Do *not* disappoint me!"

Nephelite bowed his head, crossing one gloved hand over his chest. "Understood," he said quietly. "I will not fail you, Queen Beryl."

Serena kneeled on the cold runway in front of the crushed rose. She carefully picked it up, eye-

lids half-lowered, and cradled the flower against her chest.

"Sailor Moon." Luna's voice sounded distant and unimportant behind her. "Sailor Moon, I don't think Jedité's coming back."

"Great." Serena closed her eyes and let her fingers run over the thick rose petals.

"You did it, Sailor Moon," Amy said gently. "We all did it, together. Jedité is defeated at last."

Serena said nothing. Her fingers softly, carefully, caressed the flower.

"Serena." Raye's voice was close. A gloved hand rested on Serena's shoulder. "Serena, it's OK."

Serena bit her teeth together. "No, it's not," she whispered. "It's not. He's gone. Tuxedo Mask is...gone."

Raye was silent a moment. "You couldn't have done anything," the priestess said quietly. "You can't—"

"Leave me alone." Serena buried her face in her gloved hand and pulled her shoulder from Raye's grip. "Just leave me alone, Raye."

Raye slowly took a step back. She watched Serena's curled, trembling form a moment, then



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walked away.

Serena could feel the tears welling up in her eyes, and she couldn't fight them. She hiccuped, and a tear dripped down her cheek and onto the mangled rose.

She couldn't believe it. She'd lost him for good. She started to cry, hugging the rose to her chest. She felt that mysterious pain deep inside of her begin to burn.

It felt so familiar, she thought in her blurry mind. Like she'd lived through this before. Like this wasn't the first time she'd lost him.

"I never had him," she whispered through her sobbing. "I didn't even know who he was. I never had him and now I've lost him forever."

"Forever? Unless my watch can't survive water like it's supposed to, it's only been 5 minutes."

Serena froze. Her eyes wide, she whipped her head up.

A very wet Tuxedo Mask was crouched before her. He smiled. "Sorry to worry you like that," he said gently. "I'm not much of a swimmer."

Serena choked. Tears welled up in her eyes

again, tears of relief. "You're alive!" she cried, gripping his gloved hand.

Tuxedo Mask shrugged. "Of course I'm alive. You think an idiot like Jedita could kill me?" He brushed his fingers over her hand. "Have a little faith in me. I'm skinny, but I'm tough."

Serena laughed. He was OK! Warmth filled her body and lifted her heart as Tuxedo Mask pulled her to her feet. Amy, Raye, and Luna, standing at the other end of the runway, suddenly noticed him. They gasped.

"Anyway," Tuxedo Mask said, helping Serena brush away her tears. "You'd better get out of here before the real police officers wake up. Are you going to be OK?"

Serena nodded, smiling. "As long as you are," she answered.

Tuxedo Mask grinned. He held her hand one last moment, then turned around and ran into the darkness. In a moment, he was gone.

The Scouts and cat came running up from behind. "Serena!" Amy cried. "Tuxedo Mask's alive?"

"I don't believe that guy," Luna murmured

## **eternal sleep**

in disbelief. "Who is he?"

Serena stared off in the direction where Tuxedo Mask had disappeared. "I wish I knew," she whispered, holding the crushed rose to her chest. For now, though, Serena was just relieved that he was OK. If he had really been gone, she didn't know what she would have done.

But it was still there. Deep inside of her, she still felt that strange pain that she couldn't explain. She seemed to feel it when she looked at Tuxedo Mask, just like when she looked into a certain pair of ocean blue eyes...

Serena bit her lip. Whatever the pain was, she was worried about it. Why did she feel it, even though she knew Tuxedo Mask was OK?

A cloud passed over the moon. In her hand, Serena's fingers tightened on the crushed, beaten, dying red rose.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Tennis, Anyone?**

Deep in nighttime Crossroads Woods, an abandoned mansion stood alone and silent among the trees. Inside the main room stood Nephrite, tall and serious, his hands held up before him. He closed his eyes. A large holographic star chart appeared before him.

"Pretty."

Nephrite's eyelids lifted. A woman, dressed in the same gray general's uniform Nephrite wore, suddenly appeared in a flurry of cherry blossom petals.

"I didn't know you were so artistic," she

## **eternal sleep**

said, cocking her head. "Let me guess. You always wanted to be an artist, but your mommy told you being an evil general of the Negaverse was where the real money was."

Nephrite dropped his hands and leveled his gaze. "I thought you had better things to do, Zoycite," he said flatly.

Zoycite laughed. She focused green eyes on him. "You know teasing you is my favorite pastime," she said mockingly. "Besides, since Beryl chose you as the new head general, I want every opportunity I can get to stab you in the back and take your job."

"You don't scare me," Nephrite replied coldly.

"Then you're an even bigger fool than I thought." Zoycite looked at the star chart. "Hey," she called, crossing her arms. "What's the chart for, anyway?"

Nephrite reached out and laid one gloved hand on the holographic map. "Jedite was a fool," Nephrite said. "He never grasped the idea that draining energy from a crowd attracts a lot of unwanted attention."

"Aww. Poor Jedite." Zoycite shrugged and

grinned. "Can't say I'll miss him. The little brat always was Beryl's pet."

"People are ruled by the stars." Nephrite ran his hand down the map. "When I read these star charts, I can pinpoint the exact moment of the highest energy in a person's life. Then I can drain it."

"One person?" Zoycite cocked an eyebrow. "You're only going to gather energy one person at a time? Don't be an idiot—that'd take forever."

"I'm not the idiot here," Nephrite said sharply. He closed his eyes and the stars on the map began to move. "The peak of one person's energy is enormous. One person can provide more energy than a hundred people. The stars know, and I'm the only one who can read the stars."

"Well, good for you," Zoycite said sarcastically. The woman watched as the stars merged in the middle of the map and formed a great glowing circle. The image of a young girl with a tennis racket appeared inside the circle.

Zoycite frowned. "Who's the girl?" she asked.

"My first target." Nephrite opened his eyes and focused on the image. "Her energy is near its

## **eternal sleep**

peak. Katie Sandler is the first person I will attack."

"Love, thirty!"

Serena gave a shrill whistle. "Go Katie!" she shouted, clapping her hands happily. "Oh, Molly, she is so good!"

Molly laughed and waved at the girl on Crossroads Tennis Courts. Katie was 15 years old, with long, dark brown hair tied in a ponytail and a Nike sweatband around her forehead. The afternoon sun flashed on her racket as she threw her tennis ball above her head and served.

Katie's ball zoomed past her opponent, catching the line as it bounced into the stands.

"Love, forty!"

Serena cheered. She had never taken much interest in tennis, but she was really enjoying herself. The tennis sneakers the players wore were too cute!

"How long have you and Katie been friends?" Serena asked, turning her head to Molly. "And why didn't you let her meet me before? Katie's wicked cool!"

Molly smiled and blushed slightly. "Katie's

mom is good friends with my mom," she explained. "Katie and I grew up together. She's always been like an older sister to me."

Serena cocked an eyebrow. "I see," she said sneakily, poking Molly's red cheek. "You're blushing because you think I'm jealous, right? Jealous because I'm not your only wicked awesome totally fashionable and amazingly beautiful friend?"

Molly smiled sneakily back. "Actually, I was blushing because I thought you'd be jealous because Katie's more wickedly awesome totally fashionable and amazingly beautiful than you."

Serena squealed. "Molly, you traitor!" she cried, grabbing her friend and pulling her into a headlock. "Prepare for Sailor V's Noogie of Doom!"

Just then, a hot red Ferrari zoomed to the tennis courts and squealed into a parking space. Serena, still rubbing her knuckles into Molly's scalp, turned her head curiously. The car door opened, and Serena froze.

Nephrite stepped onto the concrete. His long, wavy hair gleamed in the sunlight. He wore a slick Calvin Klein suit complete with designer shades. He slipped his hands into his pockets and



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tossed his head.

Serena let go of Molly. The redhead straightened and laughed. "Serena," she said. "I swear, you are the most—"

"Gggh." Serena pointed, eyes wide, at Nephrite. "Gggh, gghhh, guy," she said with a choke. "M...Molly, check out that guy!"

Molly turned. At that moment, Nephrite nudged down his shades and focused shining dark blue eyes on her.

Molly froze. Her eyes widened, and her cheeks turned a deep shade of red. "Oh my God," she whispered. She covered her mouth. "He's...gorgeous."

Serena could only nod. It seemed Molly's taste in men was better than Serena had thought. The guy in the Calvin Klein was a total babe!

"Hey," Nephrite called in Molly's direction. "You there."

Molly turned even redder. "Y, yeah?" she called back, her voice practically a squeak.

Nephrite nodded at Katie. "Is that Katie Sandler playing over there?"

Molly nodded. "Yeah!" she answered quick-

ly. "Katie's practicing for the big Crossroads Tennis Tournament coming up."

Nephelite turned his head to Katie and pushed his sunglasses back up. Serena nudged the blushing Molly and smiled.

"Hey Mols," she whispered. "You have a way with guys. He talked to you when there are lots of other pretty girls watching this match." Serena scowled. "Not to mention your complete knock-out of a best friend right next to you. How come hot mysterious guys don't ask me stuff?"

Molly looked to her shoes and covered her mouth. Serena gave a start.

Wow, she thought. Molly's really charmed. The redhead didn't usually get so blown-away by a guy—Molly was pretty sophisticated, so she didn't usually guy-gaze as much as Serena did.

"Man," some girl behind them said with a whistle. "Check out that hottie! That guy's the new babe in town."

Serena turned her head. "You know him?" she asked.

The girl looked at Serena in surprise. "You mean you haven't heard? He's been the talk of the

## eternal sleep

town." The girl pointed at Nephrite. "His name's Maxfield Stanton, and he's a super-rich businessman. People say he does a lot of cool things in his free time, too. Maybe he's a tennis fan. He just moved here a few days ago."

Serena watched as Nephrite walked through the gate and onto the tennis court. Maxfield looked pretty young—probably around 21 or so.

"Young, hot, and rich." Serena laughed and gave Molly a little push. "Quite a catch, Mols."

Maxfield Stanton, a.k.a., Nephrite, went up to Katie and put a hand on her shoulder. Katie, preparing herself for another serve, stopped and turned to him.

"Yes?" she asked.

Nephrite reached for her racket. "May I?"

Katie, surprised, handed it to him. Nephrite examined the racket closely and cupped his palm around the bottom of the handle. He secretly formed a bit of dark energy in his palm and sealed an invisible symbol into the racket's bottom.

"You're not putting enough energy into your serves," he said, handing her back the racket. "This racket is capable of much more. Serve again, but

really put your soul into it."

Katie looked at him curiously. "Uh, OK," she replied, taking back the racket. Nephelite stepped back as Katie took a stance and threw the ball into the air.

Her racket slammed into the ball with such a force that the ball screamed through the air and crashed into her opponent's shoulder. The girl fell to the ground with a cry.

Katie's eyes went wide. "Sorry!" she cried, running to the net. A few fans went to the other girl and checked out her hurt shoulder.

Serena whistled. "Woah," she said. "Molly, did you see the speed on that serve? That was killer! I hope she didn't hurt that other girl."

Molly couldn't believe her eyes. "Katie's never been able to serve that well," she said, amazed. "That's a big improvement."

Nephelite smiled slightly and returned to his car. Serena watched as the Ferrari rumbled to a start and then squealed away in a flurry of dust.

That Maxfield guy was talking to Katie, she thought. Is he some kind of tennis coach when he's not being a hottie businessman?

## **eternal sleep**

But she couldn't help but wonder. Maxfield Stanton was gorgeous, but there was something odd about him. Serena looked over at Katie, only to see the girl staring at her racket with a new, strange glint to her eye.



## **Chapter 6**

# **Catastrophe at the Court**

Luna snuck into the back of Crown Arcade that night, panting heavily.

"Stupid motorists," she muttered, checking her tail. "That bus driver almost ran over me! This city's road laws are becoming far too lenient. I can't believe the number of loonies out there on the streets."

The cat shook her head as she jumped onto the *Sailor V* game. She pushed the ON button. The screen lit up, and a munchkin Sailor V appeared, holding out her hand and grinning.

"Welcome to *Sailor V*," the game said with

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buzzing and whirring noises. "If you would be so kind as to insert 25 cents, Sailor V will make sure your donation goes towards the destruction of monsters and evil."

Luna sighed. "I swear, this machine gets stupider every time I come here."

The machine beeped. "Welcome to *Sailor V*," it repeated. "If you would be so kind as to insert—"

"It's Luna, you ridiculous thing!" Luna shouted. "Stop acting like you don't know it's me!"

The game stopped, then beeped for a few moments. "Code name?" it asked.

"0091." Luna scowled. "Let me into your securities already. I almost became a kitty pancake tonight and I'm not in a good mood."

The game buzzed. "Password?"

"Sailor V is the Mistress of Justice and the Queen of Beauty. Enemies and young men alike are blown away by her goddess-like aura."

Another beep. "And who are destroyed by this goddess-like aura?"

Luna growled. "The enemies are destroyed, but the young men are all just desperately in love. Let me in!"

## SAIOR MOON

The game made a few more beeps, then the screen became a solid, bright blue. "Welcome, Luna," it said. "It's been some time since you last visited."

"It's not like you make me want to come back," the cat said lowly.

"Now, now," the game said in its beeping computer voice. "That's no way for the Sailor Scouts' guardian to be talking. The Negaverse is growing ever stronger."

"Negaverse?" Luna narrowed her eyes. "Is that where our Enemy is based?"

"Yes. It is a dark kingdom in another dimension that is sending its minions to gather energy from the city. Jedite was but a tool of Negaverse. He had a superior."

Luna looked down, thinking. "Jedite had a superior," she murmured. "And he was much stronger than the standard monsters. Are there other powerful minions like Jedite?"

"That is unknown."

Luna frowned. "Looks like we have our work cut out for us. But there's nothing else you can tell me about them?"



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"Well," the game said, "it is suspected that they are searching for the Empyrium Silver Crystal."

Luna froze. "The...the Empyrium Silver..." Her eyes widened. "You're joking."

"Of course not," the game said. "If I was joking, I'd ask, 'How many guardian cats does it take to screw in a light bulb?'"

Luna slapped a paw to her forehead. "If somebody was paying me for this job," she said through gritted teeth, "they wouldn't be paying me enough."

"But you get free magic pens."

"Shut up," the cat snapped. She sighed, then rubbed a paw into her eye. "All right, then. The Negaverse may be after the Empyrium Silver Crystal. God." She shook her head. "This could be bad."

"Villains doing evil is always bad."

Luna snarled and showed her teeth. "Do you want your plug chewed through?"

The game did not reply.

Luna jumped down from the arcade unit and landed silently on the floor. "I'll have another

meeting with the girls," she said. "We'll talk about the Negaverse, but it's not yet time to tell them about the Empyrium Silver Crystal. I don't think they could handle that right now."

"At your discretion," the game said with a buzz. "But your memories are still hazy. Although they will return with time, you must not remember much about the Empyrium Silver Crystal right now."

"I remember enough," Luna said, turning red-orange eyes to the machine. "Enough to know that if our enemies get that crystal, we're all in big trouble."

Molly leaned against the fence of Crossroads Tennis Courts the next day, a worried expression on her face. Her concerned gaze was focused on Katie.

"Ow!" Katie's opponent looked at her with contempt. "That hurt!" He spat. "Did you aim for my leg or something?"

Katie chuckled. Her eyes, normally bright blue, were a dark navy. "Now why would I do that?" she asked, grinning wickedly. "I don't have

## **eternal sleep**

to hurt a loser like you in order to win."

Molly bit her lip. The young male tennis player stood up and growled.

"You play dirty," he said, spitting. "I'm outta here!"

Katie rolled her eyes. "Bye, bye, baby," she said as the guy limped away. Katie quickly snatched another tennis ball and served it. The ball slammed into the guy's back and knocked him over.

Molly gasped. "Katie!" she shouted as she ran to the young man to help him up. He was gritting his teeth and touching his now-bruised back. He angrily pulled from Molly's hold.

"Don't touch me," he snapped, glaring at her. "Your friend's got a real problem. She'll get kicked out of the Crossroads Tennis Tournament in a second with an attitude like that." He limped out the gate without looking back.

Molly turned to Katie. The older girl was laughing, her hands spinning her tennis racket. "What a loser!" she exclaimed. "Did you see him, Molly? Leaving here with his tail between his legs! He's just upset because I kicked the tar out of him

when he thought he stood a chance against me."

Molly clasped her hands in front of her chest. "That was really mean," she said, her voice worried. "Katie, you've never treated other players like that. Are you OK? You've been acting strange lately."

Katie stopped laughing. Scowling, she gripped her racket with both hands. "So you're jealous, too?" she asked lowly. "I knew it. Pretending to be my friend when all along you've been jealous."

Molly's eyes widened. "Katie, what are you talking about?"

"Don't act innocent." Katie bit her teeth together. Her navy eyes, turning darker by the moment, burned. "I know you're jealous. All these years we've been friends, and you've always wished you could be a tennis star like me. I should've seen it sooner!"

Molly stepped forward, holding out a trembling hand. Her face was thoroughly worried. "Katie—"

"Don't TOUCH me!" Katie suddenly lashed out with her racket, narrowly missing Molly's hand. Molly gasped and snatched her hand back.

## **eternal sleep**

Katie growled. "Get out of here," she said, hissing. "The tennis tournament's in a week, and I don't want to deal with jealous failures like you. Forget we were ever friends!"

Molly sucked in a breath. "Katie, you can't mean—"

"GET OUT!"

Molly covered her mouth, and tears filled her eyes. Swallowing a sob, she ran out of Crossroads Tennis Courts, her arm thrown over her face. She didn't notice as a small symbol on the bottom of Katie's racket flickered red.



## **Chapter 7**

# **Friends Forever?**

"Negaverse?"

Luna nodded and curled her tail around her body. She was lying on one of the porches at Cherry Hill Temple with Serena, Amy, and Raye sitting beside her.

"It's the Enemy's headquarters," Luna explained. "If you want to call it that. There's some leader there who's calling all the shots."

Serena leaned back on her arms. "So there's some big cheese in that evil dimension who was ordering around Jedite?" she asked.

"Yes."

## eternal sleep

Serena scowled. Jedithe had been bad enough to fight, and somebody stronger than him sure didn't sound like a picnic. Serena had been hoping for a break.

"This is serious," Amy said, gripping her chin. The thin girl, dressed in the traditional uniform of Crossroads Junior High, looked at the ground in thought. "Since Jedithe never returned, I think it's safe to say he was terminated by this superior."

Serena shrugged and tore the top of a Pixie Stick. "You know how it is on TV," she said as she poured the powder into her mouth. "If the evil minions fail, the boss guy wipes 'em out."

Raye gave Serena a skeptical look. "Thanks for that tidbit of valuable information, Serena."

Serena, mouth full of Pixie powder, grinned and gave a "V is for Victory" sign. "If the research involves television, ya know I'm there!"

Raye stood, brushing out the back of her priestess robes. "It still remains, though," she said, picking up her broom. "This Negaverse leader must be incredibly powerful, and we don't know anything about him or her." She began to sweep.

"We need to stay on our toes. Our fight with Jedita was just the beginning."

"Right." Amy pulled her Mercury Computer from her pocket and flipped it open. "We need to train harder in order to be prepared for whatever might come," she said as she began to type rapidly. "I'll continue my research and see if I can come up with anything that way."

Serena jumped up and held her empty Pixie Stick up high. "I have an idea," she said proudly. "A good way to improve our fitness and stamina so we'll be ready for the Negaverse."

Raye looked up through her eyelashes. "Let me guess," she said lowly. "Take up tennis?"

Serena giggled. "How'd you guess, Raye? Tennis is really good exercise. What do you say we all take lessons?"

Luna sighed in exasperation. "Serena, we all know you've been hanging around the tennis courts just to see if Maxfield Stanton comes back."

Serena frowned. Luna was always able to read her mind, and it was getting really annoying. "So?" she asked. "Big deal, so I wanna guy-gaze a bit. Tennis is good for us, anyway."



## **eternal sleep**

Raye rolled her eyes. "I find it remarkable that you can put guys and Sailor business on the same level of importance."

"At least I'm not a totally rude drill sergeant."

Raye's head snapped up. "What was that?"

"Serena," Amy said, not looking up from her computer. "I'm sorry, but we don't have time for tennis lessons. We need to focus on more appropriate means of training, anyway."

Serena sat back down and sulked. Being a super-hero could be a major drag. She wished an "appropriate mean of training" could be playing volleyball on the beach with really hot guys or something. She wouldn't mind that.

"Serena."

Amy's voice broke into her thoughts. Serena pulled out another Pixie Stick and began to tear it open. "Yeah?"

"You got an e-mail from Molly." Amy looked up, pointing to her mini-computer. "She wants to see you at the tennis courts right away. She says some girl named Katie just stopped being friends with her."

The Pixie Stick fell from Serena's suddenly limp hand. Her sky-blue eyes widened. "Wh...what?" she whispered.

By the time Serena got to Crossroads Tennis Courts, the sun had begun to set. She saw Molly standing near the front gate, her face in her hands. Serena ran up. "Molly!"

Molly looked up suddenly. Serena caught her breath when she saw the tears staining Molly's cheeks. The redhead ran at Serena and threw herself in Serena's arms. "Serena!"

Serena couldn't believe it. She'd never seen Molly so upset. Molly never cried. Molly's e-mail had said Katie didn't want to be her friend anymore, but Katie and Molly had seemed fine the day before. What could have possibly happened?

"Serena," Molly cried between sobs. "Serena, something's wrong with Katie! She lashed out at me today and said she doesn't wanna be my friend anymore!"

"How can that be?" Serena asked as she tried to rub away Molly's tears. "You guys have been friends since you were little kids, right?"

## **eternal sleep**

"Yeah, but...but...oh, Serena!" Molly buried her face in Serena's shoulder and started crying harder. "She's been so cruel since yesterday! She's been hurting her opponents and making fun of them when she wins. I want to find out what's changed her so much, but she doesn't wanna see me anymore!"

Serena let her hand stroke Molly's head as she looked through the tennis gate. Katie, at the farthest court, was playing a match with a full-grown man. Serena watched Katie scorch a ball past him, then laugh as he fell to the ground in exhaustion.

Something was terribly different about Katie. The formerly polite tennis star now looked like an obsessed psycho, with a permanent wicked grin plastered on her face. Her blue eyes had turned completely black.

"I can feel evil here," Serena whispered. "This can't be...the Negaverse?"

"Hmm?" Molly started wiping away her tears, sniffing as she looked up. "What did you say, Serena?"

Serena's eyes widened in surprise. "Uh,

nothing," she said quickly, brushing the hair from Molly's face. "But you're right—Katie needs help. She looks sick."

Molly sniffed again and shakily stood on her own. "She's hardly gone home since yesterday," she said softly, rubbing her eyes. "She's hardly stopped playing, even to go to the bathroom or eat or drink."

"Then that's it," Serena lied, putting her hands on Molly's shoulders. "She's just not feeling well. She lashed out at you because of that."

Molly's eyes widened. "You really think so?" she whispered.

"Of course. As soon as she's better, she'll apologize." Serena tried to keep her eyes on Molly, but she wanted to turn around. The evil feeling was getting stronger behind her. She licked her lips and tried to calm her pounding heart. "So why don't you just go home, and I'll take Katie back to her house and help her get some sleep."

Molly gripped Serena's sleeve. "But I want to help!" she cried. "Katie's been like a big sister to me for 12 years. I won't leave her if she's sick!"

Serena bit her lip. Oh God, Molly, she

## eternal sleep

thought. Just go home before something happens and you get hurt!

"Molly," Serena said carefully, "you don't look so good yourself. Just go home so you can take a rest—"

Serena was cut off as the male tennis player screamed. He ran past Serena and Molly, throwing his racket aside and flying through the gate. "She's crazy!" he cried. "That girl's totally lost it!"

Serena turned. Katie was clenching her racket with both hands. She saw Serena and Molly and snarled.

"Molly!" the tennis player shouted. "I told you to get out of my sight!"

Molly stood up straight, brushing a last tear from her eye. "No," she called. "Katie, I'm not leaving you. You're sick and you need help!"

This is the worst time for Molly to get determined, Serena thought nervously. She swallowed and nudged Molly behind her.

Katie thrust her tennis racket towards the girls, her teeth clenched. "That's IT!" she screamed. "I've had it with you! Both of you!" The girl grabbed her racket so hard her knuckles turned

white. Black fire started to form over the strings. "Prepare to be punished!"

Serena's eyes widened. "No way," she whispered. She grabbed Molly's wrist.

A huge wave of black mist burst from Katie's racket and slammed into the girls. Serena grabbed the screaming Molly as the two of them were thrown through the air. They landed in some nearby bushes with a crash.

In the abandoned mansion in Crossroads Woods, Nephrite turned. The glowing picture of Katie on the star chart had turned red.

"At last," he said, closing his eyes. He raised a hand, palm-out, towards the picture.

"This girl's energy is at its peak," he called. "I order the demon Tenzy to drain her dry!"

Serena coughed as she fought to sit up. The Negaverse, her mind spun. Katie's been possessed by the Negaverse! She pushed through the bushes to find Molly, but the redhead was out cold.

Katie suddenly screamed. Serena whipped around to see the racket flashing red.

## **eternal sleep**

"Oh my God," Serena exclaimed, stumbling to her feet. "Katie! Drop the racket!"

But it was too late. The evil symbol on the bottom of the racket burned, and a black mist burst from it. The mist formed into the shape of a huge female.

Serena bit her lip and took a step back. Great, she thought. And I thought the Sailor Scouts were finally gonna get a break from these monsters.

The demon laughed at the now unconscious Katie. "Foolish girl," she said in a voice that was booming and low. "Your time is up. Your energy is mine!"



## **Chapter 8**

# **Mixed Doubles for Justice**

Serena hid behind the bushes. The demon that had come from Katie's racket was almost 10 feet tall.

"I never thought I'd be saying this," she murmured, "but I wish Raye was here." Raye was never scared in battle—but Serena could feel her heart thudding in her chest.

Serena sucked in a breath, then thrust her hand toward the sky. "MOON PRISM POWER MAKE-UP!"

The standard swirl of rainbow lights twisted around Serena's body and transformed her clothes



## **eternal sleep**

into her Sailor Scout uniform. Serena ran back into the court.

The demon had already gripped Katie's forehead with a huge hand. "Your energy is mine," the demon said with a snicker. "I'll be promoted, and the Negaverse will triumph!"

"The only thing the Negaverse is gonna be doing is running away in terror!" Serena shouted, trying her best to look nonchalant. She swallowed the lump in her throat and gave her best superhero glare in the demon's direction. "You nearly ruined a beautiful friendship today. I am Sailor Moon, Champion of Friendship and Justice, and in the name of the moon, you're punished!"

The demon raised a black eyebrow. "You?" she murmured, releasing Katie. She held out a hand, and a black tennis racket formed in it. "There's only one of you. I thought there were supposed to be several of you brats."

She's just gotta rub it in, Serena thought nervously. Clearing her throat, she called back, "I don't need any back-up. I'm the leader of the Sailor Scouts. I waste dozens of villains like you before breakfast every day!"

## HALLOWEEN

"With such a busy schedule, I imagine you have no time for tennis." The demon grinned and held up her racket. "So let's start a game, shall we?"

The racket didn't look all that threatening, but Serena knew better than to stand around and wait to be attacked. She reached for her tiara. "How about I just dust you, sleazeball?"

Before Serena knew what was happening, the villain swung the racket and sent a huge blast of black mist at Serena. The Champion of Justice cried out as the mist enveloped her body.

"Try to get out of that," the demon mocked.

Serena choked as she felt the mist harden around her torso. When the black light finally died away, she looked down to see a huge tennis ball engulfing her body.

Serena gave a start. "Wh, what?" she exclaimed, flailing her arms. Her arms and legs were free, but her middle was totally encased in the huge ball. "What'd you do?"

The demon grinned and lifted the tennis racket. Serena the Tennis Ball floated into the air.

"My serve," the demon said. She cocked back the racket and swung.

## **eternal sleep**

Serena went shooting through the air like she had been hit. She screamed as she slammed into the ground and bounced out of bounds.

"I score!" the demon cried. She lifted the racket to "serve" again. "Love, fifteen!"

The demon used the evil racket to send Serena flying all over the court. The monster laughed and kept tallying up her score. It was worse than that teacup ride at Six Flags. Not only was Serena getting thrown around, she was getting smashed.

"Help!" Serena screamed as she was thrown through the air. She crashed into the ground, and she bit her teeth against the pain. "Somebody!" she shouted. "Help me! Mercury! Mars! Luna! Somebody help me!"

The demon laughed. "You can cry out all you want," she mocked, sending Serena flying again. "Nothing can help you now—"

The demon was cut off as a long black rod slammed into her back. She choked and fell to her knees, only to have the rod slap her across the head and send her sprawling to the ground.

Serena suddenly stopped rolling across the

ground. The giant tennis ball around her turned to dust. Serena, spread on the tennis court, suddenly realized she was free.

"Wish everything would stop...spinning," she murmured, clutching her head. She swallowed the bile in her throat and lifted her head.

Tuxedo Mask stood above the fallen monster, his black rod balanced in his gloved hands. "My, my," he said, looking down at the demon with a smile. "You're not very pleasant, are you? And you obviously don't know tennis very well—you only scored twice. Sailor Moon bounced out of bounds several times there."

Serena's eyes widened. "Tuxedo Mask!" she shouted. She jumped up, but she was so dizzy that she collapsed again. Tuxedo Mask ran toward her, and his strong hands gripped her under the arms and helped her up.

"Careful," he said, holding her straight. "You've just been spun worse than a washer-dryer combo on full speed."

Serena had never been so happy to see him. She smiled weakly, then choked and covered her mouth. She fell against his chest.

## **eternal sleep**

Oh God, she thought, squeezing her eyes shut. She felt so sick. "I'm gonna...throw up!"

Tuxedo Mask put an arm around her and pressed a gloved hand to her forehead.

"You'll be OK," he said gently. "Just breathe deeply and relax for a second."

The demon roared in fury. "You pathetic little boy!" she shouted, pointing her evil racket menacingly. "You disrupted my tennis match! You will be destroyed!"

Tuxedo Mask's eyebrows furrowed. "Don't be so upset," he shot back. "It's not like you have any talent. Besides, there's no Olympic sport for reject monsters with stupid magic rackets."

Serena gripped a handful of Tuxedo Mask's coat and tried to stand straight. Her face was totally red, but it wasn't because she felt sick.

She'd never been this close to him before. Her heart raced. His arms were strong and supportive, and the fabric of his tuxedo was sleek against her hand. She'd never thought he'd feel so warm.

This was odd, Serena thought. Why did this feel so familiar?

## HALLOWEEN

The monster screamed in anger, and Serena looked up. The demon held the evil racket in front of her and released a huge fireball from it. Serena gagged.

Tuxedo Mask slipped his arm under her knees and lifted her like she weighed no more than a doll. He jumped and got them out of the fireball's path just in time.

He landed as smoothly as a cat, his shoes clicking on the ground. "Oooh," he said, setting Serena back down on her feet. "She's a nasty one."

Serena's dizziness was finally gone, although she was still blushing madly. When he had jumped to safety, he had cradled her very close.

Tuxedo Mask turned to her and smiled. "If you're feeling better," he said, cocking his head in the direction of the demon, "we can waste that loser."

Serena smiled and nodded. "Good idea," she said, reaching up to take off her tiara.

"No you don't!" the demon cried, shooting several fireballs at them. Tuxedo Mask grabbed Serena's arm and threw her out of harm's way. He

## **eternal sleep**

jumped aside and let the fireball roar by him.

A rose appeared in his fingers. "You need to sit down and shut your mouth," he said coldly, flicking his wrist. The sharp-tipped rose shot through the air and scraped the demon's cheek. She screamed and dropped her racket.

"Get her now, Sailor Moon!" he called.

Serena ripped off her tiara. She flung the headband with all her might.

"MOON TIARA ACTION!"

The glowing disc slammed into the demon, and the monster cried out as the golden light engulfed her. In a moment she exploded into dust, and sprinkled to the ground.

Serena let out a breath. "Finally," she said, turning her head. "Thanks for the help Tuxedo Mas—" Serena froze.

Tuxedo Mask was gone.

Serena sighed. He was always disappearing on her! If he kept doing that, she'd never get a chance to really talk to him.

Serena checked Katie, and was happy to see that the girl was OK. The demon hadn't drained her energy, and the evil force in her racket that had

## HALO HOON

made her so cruel was gone. Serena was sure the girl would be fine the next day and everything would go back to normal.

Serena bent and picked up her tiara. She was disappointed that Tuxedo Mask had left, but at least she had gotten to fight with him. She seemed to get closer to him with every battle.

"Well," she said, looking at Katie's formerly evil racket. "I guess one thing's for sure." She shook her head and stuck out her tongue. "I'm never watching a tennis match again."





## **Chapter 9**

### **Guardian**

### **Roadkill**

The sunset that night was one for the ages. The sky was alight in pink and purple hues as the sun sank quickly below the horizon.

"Right. Pretty." Serena turned to Amy and grinned. "Now can we go to the arcade?"

Raye scowled. "Serena," she said lowly. "Can't you appreciate the finer things? The setting sun's light is a million times more beautiful than the lights on some flashing video game screen."

Serena frowned. "I don't play games for the lights, I play games for the games." She looked back out at the sun. "I mean, this place is pretty, but

it's boring."

Amy let out a breath and turned around. "I just thought you might like it here," she said as she gestured to the surrounding Crossroads Park. "I imagine you don't come here often."

Amy was right. Serena usually hung out at the mall or the arcade. She had gone to Crossroads Park as a kid, but it had really changed since then. The open green was filled with healthy grass, the old benches had been repainted, and the garden was brimming with flowers. The garden was certainly the most impressive change.

"I can't believe all the flowers they have there," Serena commented. "That garden only had a few daffodils when I was a kid."

"The gardener here's been working on that garden for more than five years," Raye said dryly. "Y'know Serena, you grew up near here. Amy's from the other side of town, but still knows more than you."

Serena furrowed her eyebrows. "You sure do know how to ruin a tranquil sunset, Raye."

Just then, an old man walked up to the garden, a watering can in his hand. He was dressed in

## eternal sleep

outdoor clothes, a floppy hat drooping sadly over his face. He bent down and gently sprinkled the flowers with water.

Raye focused her eyes on him. "And there he is."

Amy smiled and waved. "Mr. Baxter!" she called. "How are you?"

The old gardener looked up. His weathered face was sad. "Oh," he said softly. "Amy. Hello."

Amy blinked in surprise. "Are you all right?" she asked. "You look down."

Mr. Baxter sighed. Amy walked over to him. Serena and Raye followed.

"It's the park," he explained, slowly lowering his watering can. "Some corporation is putting up a new office building here, and they're going to tear this whole place down."

Serena sucked in a breath. "You're kidding," she said. "Tons of people come to this park. It can't just be destroyed!"

Raye's expression softened. "And you've worked this garden for so many years. They won't give you any say in the matter?"

The old man squatted, then reached out and

touched a drooping daisy. "I haven't only worked the garden, I've worked the whole park. I tried to get them to stop the project, but they won't listen. The company's determined to put up that building."

Amy sighed. "We need new jobs around here," she said softly. "That's probably why they're so bent on this. I'm sorry, Mr. Baxter."

Mr. Baxter shrugged. "It seems there's nothing I can do," he answered quietly. "The park's time is nearly up."

Serena looked sadly at the crouched old man. Poor guy, she thought. She hoped he'd be OK.

Shortly after sunset, Luna scurried down the sidewalks in the direction of Crown Arcade. The feline super-hero sidekick was deep in thought. The attack of the Tennis Demon had shaken her.

"I can't believe the Negaverse attacked again so fast," she murmured. "The girls just defeated Jedita. How could the Negaverse have regrouped so fast?"

A honking horn broke into Luna's thoughts.

## **eternal sleep**

She looked up, then shrieked as a huge truck came zooming straight at her. The cat frantically looked for a way out of the truck's path.

Fast as lightning, a pair of arms scooped her up. Her savior jumped out of the truck's way and rolled to the safety of the sidewalk.

The truck screeched to a halt. "Hey!" the driver called, sticking his head out the window. He scowled. "Keep that cat out of the road or I'll have it taken to the pound!"

Luna was panting heavily, her eyes wide. She still seemed in shock when the young man who had saved her stood up. "Sorry!" he called. "Won't happen again."

The driver grumbled something and drove off. The young man ran his hand over Luna's fur. "You're a devilish kitty, y'know that?" he said with a smile. He held Luna in both his hands and tilted her face up. "You can't just go waltzing around in the middle of the stree—"

The young man stopped. "Crescent moon?" he murmured, looking at Luna's forehead. His ocean eyes lit up from beneath his bangs. "Now I know where I've seen you," he said, smirking.

"You're Blondie's cat. Geez, no wonder you're so careless."

"Luna!" a voice called from behind.

The young man turned. Serena, Amy and Raye looked at him with wide eyes.

"Oh my God!" Serena cried. She ran to the young man and scowled. "What did you do to her?!"

The guy rolled his eyes. "I saved her from becoming roadkill," he said as he dumped the feline in Serena's arms. "She was heading for the arcade and wasn't watching where she was going. Like owner, like pet."

Serena growled and hugged Luna to her chest. That dark-haired guy was always popping up in the weirdest places, and although Serena hated to admit it, he always got her heart pounding. Whenever she looked in his eyes, something hurt inside of her. It had been over two weeks since their brief talk on the Sunset Romance Cruise, but Serena still remembered the way her heart had fluttered at his touch.

Raye's eyes flickered with remembrance. "Hey," she said after a moment. "You're that guy

## **eternal sleep**

from the theme park." She nodded her head slightly. "Thanks for saving our cat."

"Don't mention it." The young man grinned at Serena. "Nice to see someone still knows how to say 'thank you.'"

Serena bared her teeth. It was taking all of her effort to calm her racing heart. "You won't get any thanks from me until I see proof that the truck traumatized her and not you!"

Amy sighed. "That's really polite, Serena."

"Darren!"

Serena gave a start. She turned, only to see Andrew step out of the arcade and grin at the young man. "Hey! Been a while!"

The dark-haired young man smiled. "Andrew, you're still alive. I thought your girlfriend would've skewered you by now for hanging out with all these girls."

Andrew laughed. "I didn't know you knew Serena and the girls," he said as he patted Serena's head. "I have this terrible feeling that you and Serena don't get along, though."

Serena could only stare at Andrew in shock. Her jaw nearly hit the ground.

## HALLOWEEN

No way! she thought. Andrew is friends with...him?

In the abandoned mansion in Crossroads Woods, Nephrite stood before his star chart. He narrowed his eyes.

"My last plan failed because of Sailor Moon," he said lowly, clenching a fist. "I didn't know that little brat had some guy in a tuxedo helping her."

Nephrite snorted and closed his eyes. "No matter," he muttered. "Stars, show me the human whose energy will soon hit its peak."

The stars on the holographic map glittered, then merged into a great glowing circle. The circle flashed several colors before displaying the image of an old man in a floppy gardening hat.

Nephrite opened his eyes. "Well, well," he murmured, touching his chin. "The old man who tends Crossroads Park. Looks like Mr. Baxter is the next target of the Negaverse."





## **Chapter 10**

### **What's this Feeling?**

Serena decided to ignore Darien, so as soon as the group entered the arcade she went straight to the *Sailor V* game and pulled out her quarters. Andrew walked up to her and frowned.

"You're not gonna come and talk, Serena?" he asked.

"I came to play," she said shortly. "No offense, Andrew. Why don't you just chat with your buddy like you wanted to?"

Andrew looked confused. Darien laughed. "Don't worry about her, Andrew," he called. "Blondie doesn't like me very much. It's not you

she's mad at." Andrew sighed and joined Darien at the back of the arcade.

Serena sat down next to Amy.

"Don't you think you're being a little rude?" Amy asked, pulling a book from her purse. "I mean, you're making that guy sound like a demon, Serena."

Serena shoved a quarter into the slot. "When he stops calling me Blondie, then talk to me about being polite. The guy's a creep! He makes being blonde sound like a bad thing." Serena swallowed hard and took the controls.

Being called "blondie" wasn't the only thing that upset Serena about him. Seeing him made her uneasy, like her heart was going to leap out of her chest. If she hated the guy, why did she feel like that?

Serena slammed her fingers into the game buttons and let the digital Sailor V take out her frustrations. Serena hoped that if she strengthened her hate for the guy, the weird feelings would go away. After all, she did despise the cruel sleazeball.

"I've been working." Darien's voice drifted from the back of the arcade. Serena slammed the

## eternal sleep

buttons harder.

Andrew raised an eyebrow. "That's not a good enough excuse to ditch your best friend for two weeks! I was starting to worry that something happened to you."

Darien laughed. "Happen to me?" he repeated, pulling Andrew into a headlock. "You seem to forget who beat up those punks who were picking on you last month."

Andrew pulled from Darien's hold and angrily straightened his hair. "It's not that I don't think you could handle yourself in a fight," he answered flatly. "But I always worry about you bumping your head and passing out or something. I mean, you living alone in that big apartment makes me nervous. I wish you'd give a spare key to someone besides me. What if you needed help in there?"

Darien rolled his eyes. "You worry too much," he said. "I knew I should've gotten my schedule changed so we'd have more classes together."

Andrew cried out and frantically tried to fix his hair again. "Are you trying to ruin my hair

today?"

Darien grinned. "Of course. I can't let you get too pretty and outshine me."

Andrew snorted and pulled a comb from his pocket. "Outshine you? Don't make me laugh. Four more girls asked me last week if I could hook you up with them. I'm getting sick of rejecting them for you."

"That's what friends are for," Darien said with a hum, snatching Andrew's comb away. Andrew tried to get it back, but Darien skipped out the door.

"I've got homework," he called with a wave. "Catch you later, Andrew." With that, Darien ran away down the sidewalk, his laughter trailing behind him.

Andrew sighed angrily and tried to comb his hair with his fingers. "He can be such a pain," he murmured to himself.

"He lives alone?"

Andrew turned to see Raye sitting on a gaming table behind him.

"Oh." Andrew smiled. "Didn't see you there, Raye."

## eternal sleep

"He couldn't be much older than we are," she said quietly. "Doesn't he have a family?"

Andrew shook his head and sat on a stool. "Darien was orphaned a long time ago. I only met him last year, when he transferred to my school. He lived in an orphanage across town until then."

Raye's eyes widened. "You mean he was never adopted?"

Andrew looked down. "Darien doesn't talk about it much," he said softly, "but I guess not. He's seventeen, like me. I can't imagine living totally alone like he does."

"Darien's really smart," Andrew added. "He's on a full-tuition scholarship to Moto Azabu Private High School For Boys. We're both in the eleventh grade, but we don't have any classes together because he takes all Honors and AP classes. He even helps twelfth graders with Calculus."

Raye brought her knees to her chest and hugged her legs. "You said you're the only one with a spare key to his place," she said. "Does that mean he doesn't have any other friends?"

"No other good friends." Andrew rubbed his eyes. "Darien's kind of a loner. He doesn't show

## GAME OVER

much of an interest in girls, either. He always turns them down when they ask for his number."

Raye's eyes were distant. "That's a sad story," she said softly. "He must be lonely."

"You wouldn't guess it by looking at him."

At the *Sailor V* game, the digital super-hero was blasted by a giant slug monster. The game screen flashed the words GAME OVER in Serena's face.

She yanked another quarter from her pocket and shoved it into the slot.

Though she had tried to ignore them, Serena had heard every word Darien, Andrew, and Raye had said. She jammed her thumb into the start button so hard it hurt.

An orphan, she thought. He doesn't have a family. She clutched the joystick. She knew half the guy's life story, when fifteen minutes ago she hadn't even known his name.

"Darien," she whispered under her breath. She hated how good it felt to say the word.

Serena suddenly growled and let go of the joystick. She shoved her hand into her pocket and fished for another quarter.

## eternal sleep

She had accidentally run the digital Sailor V off a cliff.

Mr. Baxter put away his gardening tools slowly, his head bent over his toolbox. He looked at the blooming garden behind him and sighed.

"It's a real shame."

The old man looked up curiously. Nephrite, in the person of Maxfield Stanton, stood beside him. The general's hands were in his pockets.

"Who are you?" Mr. Baxter asked.

"Nobody important. I heard about the park, though." He turned his head toward the garden. "You could probably get them to stop production."

Mr. Baxter shook his head. "I've tried, believe me. There's nothing to be done."

Nephrite's eyes flashed. "Oh, believe *me*," he said coldly, holding out a hand. "There's something you can do."

Before Mr. Baxter could cry out, a dark bolt of energy shot out of Nephrite's hand and hit the old man's hat. An evil symbol fused into the brim, then disappeared.

Mr. Baxter, mouth open, stopped. His eyes

turned dark.

"Now," Nephrite said, waving out his arm. "Put yourself to use. Spread your anger to the creatures of the park and fight the builders along with them. Use as much energy as you can."

Mr. Baxter slowly stood. There was a rustling in the trees around him as frenzied squirrels crowded out onto the branches. The creatures' eyes were bright red.

"I will," Mr. Baxter said, his voice low and harsh. "I will. Those businessmen and their construction workers will pay."

"And I will have your energy as well as the energy of all the animals." Nephrite's cold eyes narrowed. "Now get going."

Raye walked home after school the next day, her book bag swinging by her side. Most of the schools in Crossroads got out at the same time in the afternoon, so the sidewalks were bustling with students.

Raye squinted up at the sun. "It's such a nice day," she murmured. "I'd like to go see the park again. Only a few more days before they demolish



## **eternal sleep**

it." She brought her gaze back down and saw Darien walking toward her.

"Hey!" she called, running up to him.  
"Darien!"

He turned. He immediately took a step back, holding out his hands. "I swear to God," he said quickly. "I'm unlisted. I, uh, don't even own a phone."

Raye stopped. "Huh? Oh, I don't want your number." She smiled slightly, holding out her hand. "I'm Raye. I was at the arcade with you last night."

Darien stared at her hand a moment, then nodded. "Oh! Right." He shook her hand and smiled. "Now I remember you. You're one of Blondie's friends, huh?"

Raye nodded. "I take it girls come after you at this time of day."

Darien let out a breath. "God, yeah. Even when I wear this ridiculous thing," he said, looking down at his school uniform. "I hate this stupid thing."

Raye smiled. "Darien," she said after a moment. "Are you doing anything now? I'd like to sit some place and talk."

Darien thought a moment. "Well," he said, checking his watch, "I don't have to go to work

until tonight. I guess I have an hour or two to spare, so why not?"

"Great." Raye motioned to the Crown Fruit Parlor nearby. "Is there OK?"

Darien grinned. "Are you kidding? It's my favorite place."

Serena strolled down the sidewalk happily licking an ice cream cone.

"What a good day." Serena sighed as she and Luna sauntered by the Crown Fruit Parlor. "Man, Luna, I gotta get out and eat sweets more."

The feline rolled her eyes. "What are you talking about, Serena? You do that plenty!"

Serena giggled. "Aw, c'mon. It's been two whole days since my last Ben and Jerry's break. I think I should make an ice cream outing a daily routi—"

The blonde froze, her ice cream cone barely touching her lips. Her eyes widened as she saw them.

Raye and Darien? Together?

"Serena?" Luna looked up, curious. "What's the matter? It's unusual for you to stop talking when the subject matter's food."

"Raye?" Serena whispered under her breath. "What's she doing with Darien?"



## **Chapter 11**

### **I am Not Jealous!**

Raye moved back in her seat, allowing the waitress to set down two drinks. "Thank you," Raye said, nodding her head. She ripped open a sugar packet and poured it into her tea.

"So what'd you wanna talk about?" Darien pushed a straw into his Sprite. "I'll warn you now, though, there's not much in my life worth talking about."

Raye stirred her tea slowly. "I was just...curious. About how you met Serena, and why you two don't get along."

"Serena?"

Raye smiled. She balled her hands into fists and placed them on the sides of her head, impersonating Serena's hair buns.

Darien laughed. "Oh! Blondie." He shrugged and smiled. "We just bump into each other a lot. I have nothing against her. She's just fun to tease, though she probably hates me for it." He looked down into his drink. "Serena, huh?" He smiled and caught the straw in his lips. "That's a pretty name."

Raye stared at Darien. It was a long moment before she pulled the stirrer out of her tea. "It's interesting," she said, bringing the cup to her lips.

"Hmm?" Darien looked up. "What is?"

"You." Raye looked at him, then closed her eyes and sipped the tea. "You remind me of this other guy I know."

Serena stared through the windows of the Crown Fruit Parlor, her fists clenched. She could see Raye and Darien talking, but she couldn't hear a thing.

"Look at yourself." Luna hummed and curled her tail around her body. "You look like a

## eternal sleep

jealous ex-girlfriend."

"What?" Serena glared down at the feline. "I'm not jealous! I'm just...really confused. Why are those two hanging out?" The cold clawing began on her heart again, but she brushed it out of her mind. It couldn't be jealousy. She didn't even like Darien.

"Serena?"

Serena nearly jumped out of her skin. She whipped around, only to see Melvin looking at her curiously.

"Melvin!" Serena snapped. "How many times do I have to tell you!? Quit sneaking up on me like that!"

Melvin cocked his head. "You look like you really wanna get in the cafe, Serena. What's holding you back?"

Serena growled and turned back to the window. "Nothing," she muttered.

Melvin's face suddenly lit up. "Hey!" he said, his voice a high squeak. "It can't be that you want company, is it? I'll treat you to a drink, Serena!"

Serena's mouth opened to deliver her usual

rejection, but she stopped. If she went in with Melvin, she could get a table close enough to hear Raye and Darien's conversation.

The only thing was, she'd have to sit with Melvin. Serena sighed. Maybe giving him his wish just once wouldn't be too bad, she thought.

"Sure, Melvin." Serena brushed a ponytail over her shoulder. "You can buy me a drink."

Melvin lowered his head. "That's OK, I wasn't expecting you to agree, anyway...what!?" His eyebrows rose up from behind his coke-bottle glasses. "You mean it?"

"Sure." Serena pointed at him menacingly. "But nothing romantic! Just as friends, OK?"

"Sure, whatever!" Melvin grabbed Serena's hand and practically dragged her into the cafe. "Let's get a shake, Serena! We can get two straws for it and everything!"

Luna sighed as Serena disappeared in the cafe with Melvin. "I swear," the cat murmured. "That girl's willing to go to any lengths to spy." She turned and trotted away.

"And she says she's not jealous. That's a good one."

## eternal sleep

"But you have to reconsider!"

The businessman looked down at Amy and frowned. "Listen, little girl, there's nothing to be done. This building is being sponsored by a huge corporation. Nobody can stop it once the contract's been set."

Amy looked down. "You don't understand," she said softly. "This park...it means so much to this town. And there's an old man who tends to the gardens, and you'll be putting him out of a job—"

"That's enough." The man looked at her sternly through his glasses. "I'm sorry. The park's got one more day. Enjoy it while you can."

Amy sighed as the man walked away. "I'm sorry, Mr. Baxter," she whispered. "I tried."

Just then, a great shrieking started from the treetops. Amy looked up, and multiple pairs of red eyes looked down at her from the leaves.

Amy's eyes widened. "What?" she whispered. "What creatures are—"

Dozens of squirrels suddenly jumped out of the trees and attacked the businessman. He screamed and tried to claw off the furious crea-

tures.

"Help!" he shouted. "They're biting me!"

Amy ran to help, but a bunch of construction workers got to the man first. They batted off the rampaging squirrels, and the creatures angrily retreated to the trees.

Amy watched as the workers helped the man limp away. "What was that all about?" she wondered out loud. "Squirrels don't attack humans." She touched her lips. "God, I hope they don't have rabies."

The slim girl looked up into the trees. In the darkness of the branches, the evil red eyes stared back at her.

Amy bit her lip. "I have to find the girls," she whispered. "Something's terribly wrong."

Serena's plan wasn't working out very well at all. In the Crown Fruit Parlor, Melvin had picked a table near the window, so Serena hadn't been able to hear a thing Raye and Darien had been saying. If that wasn't bad enough, Serena had been so focused on eavesdropping, she had accidentally let Melvin order one shake with two straws. For the



## **eternal sleep**

first time in her life, Serena refused to drink the double-chocolate milkshake.

Raye and Darien soon left the cafe, so Serena dragged Melvin out the door behind them. Melvin seemed a little confused by Serena's behavior, but he didn't complain.

"Dang!" Serena said under her breath. It looked like Raye and Darien were going to take a walk in the park. With Melvin to drag around, she'd never keep up with them!

Serena momentarily released her grip on Melvin's wrist and tried to think of a new plan. The short boy didn't hesitate to link his arm with Serena's.

"This is so great!" he exclaimed in his squeaky voice. "I never thought I'd get to spend an afternoon with you, Serena. It's a dream come true!"

Serena shook him off her arm. "I told you, Melvin—we're just doing this as friends!" The blonde growled. She didn't want to hurt Melvin's feelings, but still, didn't he know when she wasn't interested in a date?

Melvin grinned. "I know," he said, turning to

a nearby street vendor. The boy pointed to the stuffed animals lined along the vendor's cart. "Want me to buy you a doll, Serena? It can be a reminder of this romantic outing."

Serena sighed. Apparently, he didn't know when she wasn't interested in a date.

"Serena!"

Serena looked up. Amy, eyes wide with fear, was running toward her. Serena's eyebrows furrowed. "What's wrong, Amy?" she asked.

Amy clutched Serena's blouse. "The animals are going crazy!" the blue-haired girl exclaimed. "A bunch of squirrels attacked a man at the construction site."

Serena shook her head. "I didn't know squirrels attacked humans. I mean, I've dug up some acorns before, but no squirrel ever jumped on me for it."

"Exactly. It's not normal." Amy took Serena's hand. "We have to go check it out. The Negaverse may be behind this."

Serena let her eyes scan the outside of Crown Fruit Parlor. "Luna isn't where I left her," she murmured. "She must've gone home. We'll do

## **eternal sleep**

this ourselves." She nodded at Amy. "Let's go."

Amy ran off in the direction of Crossroads Park, Serena close behind.

Melvin paid for a bunny doll and turned around with a grin. "Serena, isn't this great?" he cried. "A cute bunny really reminds me of y—" He stopped, surprised. He rubbed the lenses of his glasses.

"Serena?" he asked, looking around. The blonde was gone. "Serena? Where'd you go?"

Darien looked over at Raye. "They're gonna tear down the park?" he asked. "After it's been around for so long?"

Raye nodded. "Andrew told me you've lived here for under 2 years. If you haven't seen the park, now's the perfect time."

Darien frowned. "Well, I've seen it, but I haven't gone much. That's really too bad. I heard they have a really good rose garden, so I'd like to check it out before it's demolished."

Raye suddenly stopped in her tracks. Curious, Darien stopped to look at her.

"Something wrong, Raye?"

Raye's dark eyes were wide. Slowly, she put a hand over her mouth. "You," she whispered, "you like roses?"

The shrieking of nearby birds interrupted the line of questioning. Raye and Darien looked up. A great flurry of birds crowded the sky.

"That's weird," Darien commented quietly. "Those birds look like something out of an Alfred Hitchcock movie. And am I seeing things, or do they have red eyes?"

Raye took a step back. Her dark eyes flickered purple.

"I sense evil," she whispered.

"What was that?"

Raye shook her head. "Nothing," she said quickly, touching Darien's shoulder. "I'm sorry Darien, but there's something I forgot to do. I'll talk to you later, OK?" With that, the priestess bolted in the direction of Crossroads Park.

Darien held out his hand. "Wait!" he called, but Raye didn't seem to hear. He watched the girl until she disappeared.

Darien lowered his hand. "Hmm," he said, putting his hand on his hip. "If I didn't know any

## **eternal sleep**

better, I'd say I've just been ditched." He grinned. "Well, I guess there's a first time for everything."

By the time Serena and Amy reached the construction site, havoc had broken out. An army of squirrels, chipmunks, and birds had launched an all-out attack on the workers. The men screamed as they tried to fend off the crazed animals.

Serena's eyes were wide. "This is totally whack!" she exclaimed. "Who's making the animals so nuts? The Negaverse?"

There was a cry from behind. Serena and Amy turned to see a furious Mr. Baxter, his eyes black and his fist raised.

"You abusive girls!" he shouted. "How dare you support the destruction of this park!"

"What?" Amy held out her hands. "But we're not supporting it! Mr. Baxter, it's us!"

"Silence!" The old man pointed at them, his dark eyes blazing. "I have no idea who you are. If you're not fighting with me, you're against me. Prepare to be destroyed!"



## **Chapter 12**

# **Attack of the Killer Creatures**

Serena took a step back, her eyes never leaving Mr. Baxter. She knew that crazy look on his face.

"It's the Negaverse," Serena whispered. "He's been possessed. The same thing happened with Katie."

"Oh no!" Amy covered her mouth, horrified. "Mr. Baxter!"

"Transform," Serena ordered. "We can still save him if we defeat the monster that's possessing him."

As if on cue, Mr. Baxter suddenly screamed

## **eternal sleep**

and fell to the ground. The symbol on his hat burned.

"There!" Serena pointed. "That symbol!"

In the abandoned mansion in Crossroads Woods, the image of Mr. Baxter on the star chart turned red. Nephelite held out his hand.

"This man's energy is at its maximum," he called. "Fatasos, drain it all for the Negaverse!"

A black bolt of energy burst from the symbol on Mr. Baxter's hat. The old man passed out as the black light formed into the shape of a woman.

"Great," Serena muttered sarcastically. "Next time, we should scratch out the symbol before a monster pops out of it."

The hat demon was tall and green-skinned, with vines and flowers twisting around her body. She looked up at the girls and flashed razor-sharp teeth in a smile.

"Tremble, little girls," she called in a high, squeaky voice. "I am Fatasos, and before I drain this man's energy, I'll have yours!"

"Yeah, yeah," Serena muttered, throwing her

hand into the air. "That's what they all say. MOON PRISM POWER MAKE-UP!"

Amy pulled out her pen and thrust it toward the heavens. "MERCURY POWER MAKE-UP!"

Rainbow light engulfed Serena, while flashing blue ribbons wrapped around Amy. When the light show had cleared, Sailor Moon and Sailor Mercury stood before the villain.

Fatasos' eyes widened. "What is this?"

Amy clenched her fists. "This is your end, lady! We're the Sailor Scouts!"

Fatasos sneered. "Oh, right. You. I'm real scared." She raised her hands. "Animal servants, show these girls the power of nature!"

The red-eyed woodland creatures charged at Serena and Amy, and the two Scouts tried their best to fend off the animals.

"Ugh!" Serena shouted, kicking off a chipmunk. "This is like a Nature Channel horror movie. Blast them, Mercury!"

Amy cupped her hands together. "MERCURY BUBBLES..." A blue ball of light formed in her hands, and she threw it at the animals.



## eternal sleep

"BLAST!"

The blue ball of light burst into a flurry of bubbles, and the animals stopped the attack. The bubble fog made them so cold they retreated back into the forest.

The vine-demon growled. "Stupid brats!" she shouted, shooting thick vines out of her palms. "I'll just have to destroy you myself!"

The vines wrapped around Serena and Amy, pinning their arms to their sides. The girls cried out and struggled to get free.

Serena cringed. "These vines are so slimy!" she shouted. Why did it feel like the fights with the Negaverse were getting more and more unpleasant? After being turned into a giant tennis ball she had to deal with this!

Amy's knees began to buckle. "I can't move!" she cried. "Sailor Moon, can you break free?"

Fatasos chuckled. "Of course not," she answered. "I'll pull these vines so tight, it'll give 'hourglass figure' a whole new meaning!"

Serena gagged as the vines around her middle tightened. "Ow!" She choked. "If I wanna get



## **eternal sleep**

she said lowly, pointing her index fingers. "This time while my fire's aimed at your head."

Amy struggled to her feet. "You'll never win," she called. "Your angry army of animals have caused enough mayhem. The Sailor Scouts will not allow you to give nature a violent name!"

"We fight for love and justice and the tranquillity of the earth," Raye said. "In the name of the Sailor Scouts, you're punished!"

Serena jumped to her feet. "You guys!" she shouted. "You're totally swiping my lines. Who's the leader here, anyway?"

Fatasos held up her palms. "Two Scouts, three Scouts, either way." She bared her teeth. "You're all squashed Scouts in the end!"

Before the demon could shoot, a flash of red streaked through the air. The demon looked down and saw a red rose buried tip-first in the soil.

"What!?" Fatasos whipped her head around. "Who threw that?"

"Mmm." A voice reverberated from the trees. A gloved hand pushed away some leaves, and Tuxedo Mask smiled down at the Scouts. "So many pretty speeches today," he said with a hum. "It's so

inspiring. You guys should do assemblies at kids' schools."

Serena brightened. Tuxedo Mask! The fight suddenly didn't seem so unpleasant, after all.

Tuxedo Mask grinned down at her. "Hey, Sailor Moon," he called. "Why don't you whack this weed?"

Serena grinned back. "Right," she said, pulling off her tiara. She turned to the nature demon and scowled. "I've had just about enough of your unnatural nature. I'm nipping you in the bud!"

Raye rolled her eyes. "OK guys, enough puns for today."

Fatasos snarled. "You'll never defeat me!" she shouted. "I will destroy you with my—"

Serena rolled her eyes and chucked her tiara. "MOON TIARA ACTION."

The golden headband zapped the demon, and she was vaporized before she could scream. The three Scouts and one Tuxedo-clad savior watched Fatasos sprinkle into a neat little pile.

Serena clapped her hands. It always felt good to see that neat little pile of vaporized villain.

## **eternal sleep**

She suddenly realized that Tuxedo Mask might still be there, and she turned quickly to the tree. "Tuxedo Mask?" she called.

But he was gone.

Serena sighed. Amy patted her on the shoulder. "Relax," the blue Scout said. "I'm sure he'll stay around long enough for a talk one of these days."

Serena rubbed the back of her head. "Yeah," she muttered. "One of these days." She frowned. She wished she could make cool exits like that.

She didn't notice Raye staring at where Tuxedo Mask had been.

An hour later Mr. Baxter awakened. He opened his eyes with a groan, his hands weakly pressing against his cheeks. "What happened?" he asked. Serena, Amy, and Raye, all de-transformed, stood above him.

Amy smiled. "You had too much sun," she explained, holding out a hand. "You'll be fine. Particularly if you go to the construction site. They have something very good to tell you."

Mr. Baxter took her hand. "Really?" he asked as all three girls helped him to his feet. "What?"

"You'll see." Serena hummed as she nudged him toward the group of businessmen at the construction site.

Serena laughed. "Man," she said with a whistle. "I never thought the Negaverse would cause something good to happen. Those crazy animals scared the workers so much, they're canceling the building project!"

Raye watched Mr. Baxter's face light up as he talked to the men.

"Indeed," the priestess murmured with a smile. "This park is safe, after all. The Negaverse would throw a fit if they found that out."

The girls all laughed. Just then, Darien approached. He saw Raye and his eyes widened.

"Raye?" he asked. "Is that you?"

Raye turned pale. "Uh-oh," she whispered under her breath.

A sly grin crossed Serena's face. "Aw, Raye," she cooed, pushing Raye toward Darien. "Why don't you tell Darien why you had to ditch him so suddenly for your friends?"

Raye glared at Serena, then looked at Darien. "Uh, sorry," she said quietly. "We had

## **eternal sleep**

a...school project discussion that I forgot about. But it's over now, so we can continue that walk if you want."

Darien smiled. "Sure. I haven't asked you about Blondie's personal faults yet."

"What!?" Serena's look shot daggers at him. "You're talking about me? You total creep!"

Darien grinned and patted Serena on the head. "Don't be jealous of Raye," he drawled. "Just because she gets to hang out with a totally gorgeous guy. Besides, my mind's always on you."

"And what new insults can you come up with for me!" Serena shouted. She clenched her fists and held one up under his nose. "You'd better watch it, pal," she said with a growl. "If I'm angry enough, I may just sock you in the face."

"You'd need a stepladder for that."

Amy covered her mouth and tried desperately not to laugh.

Before Serena could reply, Melvin ran up from nowhere. He latched onto her.

"I found you!" he cried in his squeaky voice. "Oh, Serena, now we can finish our date!"

The others chuckled as Serena shook off

Melvin. "Melvin!" she yelled. "How many times do I have to tell you? It's not a date!"

Darien put an arm around Serena. "Don't be shy," he said, pulling Melvin to Serena and joining their hands. "I think you make a lovely couple."

Serena shrieked. "You're so dead!" she screamed at the older boy. Darien grinned and stepped out of her pounding range.

Melvin frowned. "Serena," he asked sadly. "This guy isn't your...boyfriend, is he?"

Serena froze. Slowly, dangerously, she turned to Melvin. Her eyes burned. "What did you say?"

Melvin squeaked. "Uh, OK, just checking! I didn't really think he was—"

Melvin stopped talking and started running. Serena, her ears steaming, chased after him.

"How dare you!" she screamed. "How dare you even think I'd be interested in a creep like him! Just wait'll I get my hands on you!"

Darien laughed and watched the two disappear over a hill. "Wow," he said with a grin. "This is a lot more fun than taking walks. Remind me to hang out with you guys more often."



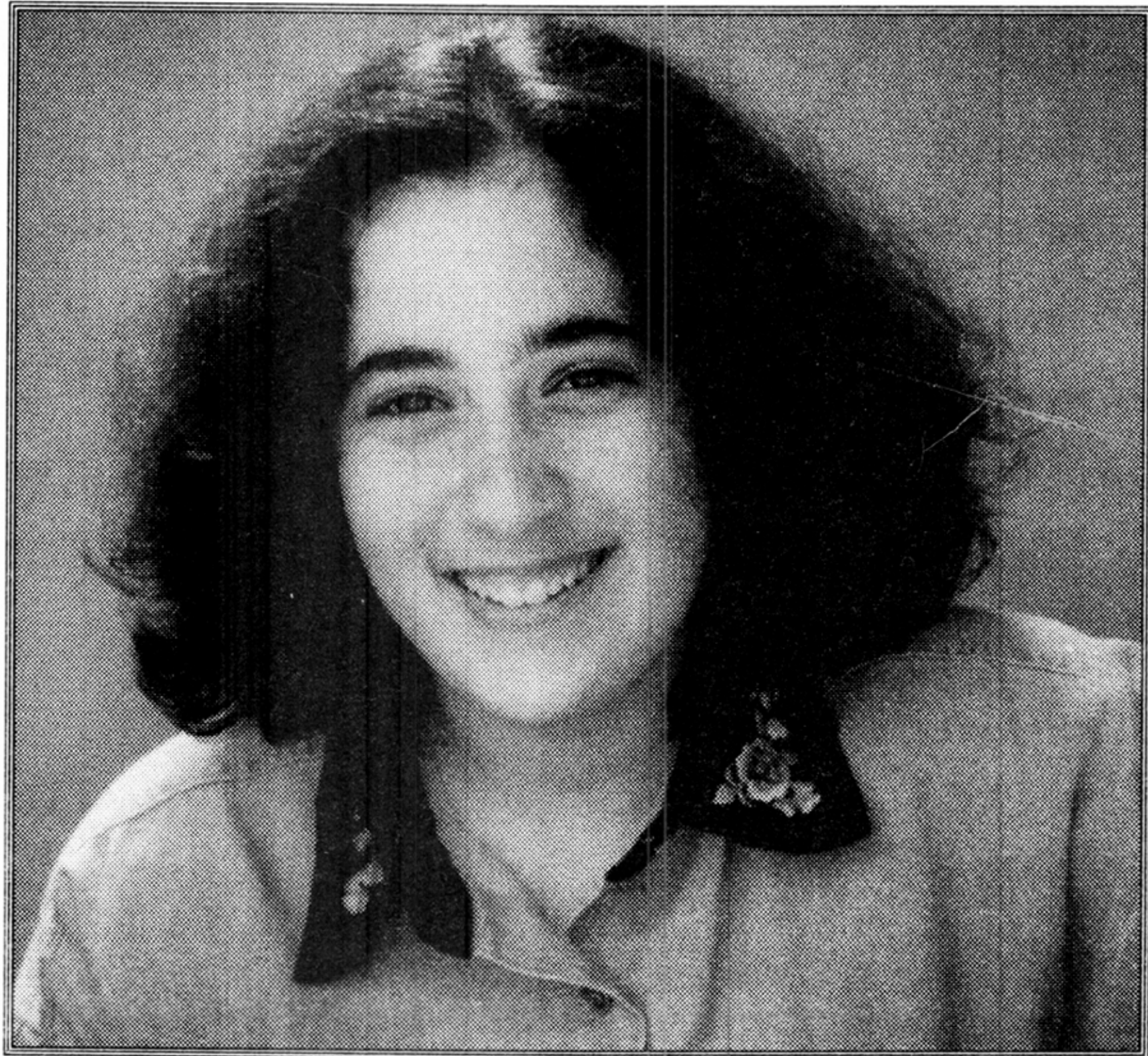


***Scouts on Film, the 6th Sailor Moon Novel, will be available in May 2000. "Scouts on Film," huh?! That doesn't sound too bad, unless you consider Nephelion plans to steal the Scouts' life force by capturing them on film—film from an evil camera! Ouch!! Makes me 'shutter' just thinking about it. Check our website at:***

**[www.mixxonline.com](http://www.mixxonline.com)**

**for the latest info on Sailor Moon novels, Sailor Moon Pocket Mixx, Smile Magazine, TokyoPop, Sushi Girl, and the complete line of Mixx comics, graphic novels, and entertainment products.**

## About the Writer



Lianne Sentar began her career as a writer at just 13 years-old working on an extensive fantasy novel entitled *Thief*. During the next two years, Ms. Sentar wrote hundreds of pages of fan-fiction and published them both on her website ([http://members.tripod.com/~Lianne\\_Sentar/](http://members.tripod.com/~Lianne_Sentar/)) as well as on other international fan-fic sites. Based on her initial online publishing success, Ms. Sentar self-published her first novella *Rain* in the fall of 1998. Since its initial release, *Rain* has been through four reprints and continues to grow in popularity. In the summer of 1999, 17-year-old Lianne began writing the *Sailor Moon* novel adaptations with the second *Sailor Moon* novel, *The Power of Love*. Ms. Sentar is currently working on her second original novel, the fantasy *Children of the Sky*. Ms. Sentar lives with her family in Connecticut, USA.