

SUBURBAN  
SENSHI  
オーバーハブ 戦士

SEASON  
1



*WELCOME TO THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD*

**T**  
AGES 13+

CONTAINS:  
VIOLENCE, POTTY HUMOR,  
ALCOHOL, ICE CREAM USE,  
SMOKE AND CIGARETTES  
AND LANGUAGE.  
BAD FIGHT, MENTAL ISSUES,  
TOOTH PAIN, DRUG USE,  
AND MILD CANNIBALISM.

STORY AND ART BY DOCTOR XADIUM

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the entire Suburban Senshi fan community, without whom I would have probably dropped the project aeons ago. You all have literally changed my life. You rock.





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**SUBURBAN**  
**SENSHI**  
コバーガン 戦士

SEASON ONE  
**Prologue**



***URGENT NEWS FLASH!***

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2002  
REMASTERED APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2016

## STORY AND ART BY DOCTOR XADIUM

It was a slow, lazy day. Ten'ou Haruka and Tomoe Hotaru were taking full advantage of the time to catch up on their favorite hobbies—car repair and binge reading, respectively.

The sound of Haruka working outside could be heard in the garage as Hotaru quietly read, the television providing little more than comforting white noise.

That situation changed suddenly, however, as the TV abruptly flashed the words “URGENT NEWSFLASH” in thick, white san-serif letters against a seizure inducing strobing background, the emergency broadcast system tone beeping.

Hotaru, who until this moment had been relaxing prone on the floor reading a copy of *5/5/2000: Ice, the Ultimate disaster*, chuckling to herself at the dire humor of man's ultimate nihilistic peril, raised her head quickly and looked at the Television screen, gazing intently into its depths.

“Perhaps the time is now,” she muttered to herself in a pleasant, sing-song tone. “Perhaps the simmering hatreds of the world have finally risen to the surface, and the bestial hatreds of mankind have finally given birth to the cathartic horror which will purify the world in its passing...”

Hugging herself, she raptly focused upon the screen, hungrily awaiting the newsreader's next words, eager to see the disaster that would unfold!

“The GOVERNMENT has installed BLACK BOXES into your Internet Service Providers to watch your Internet surfing!” an all-too passionate newsreader yelled from the screen.

“Or not.” Hotaru sighed sadly, mentally shrugging and returning to her book, which was a serious discussion of a potential world-ending cataclysmic pole shift the time it was written. but now in 2002 was nothing more than sad cataclysmic comedy.

There was the sound of a door slamming open.

“What did he just say?” Haruka asked rather anxiously, panting, leaning into the entryway from the living room. Her clothes, hands and face were covered in oil and grease, which she was now tracking into the living room as she anxiously made her way to one of the cream-colored sofas facing the television.

“You’d better not let Michiru-momma see you doing that,” Hotaru warned darkly as she dimly noticed Haruka leaning back into the couch, smearing a trail of doubtlessly indelible motor oil on the fabric in her wake.

“Huh?” Haruka shrugged and took note of what she’d just done. “Damn! Oh well, can’t be helped. The Porsche is giving trouble again.”

Hotaru’s brow twitched slightly in aggravation. “Haruka-poppa,” she began slowly, “‘trouble’ is when the engine stalls or the wipers fail to engage. ‘Trouble’ does not cover the effects of ramming into the back of someone’s Ferrari *thirteen times*.”

Undeterred by this logic, Haruka gazed off into the middle distance, intoning darkly, “He was in my way.” She tightened a fist. “He was in my way and I had to get the dead body to the car crusher before those psychotic brothers did me in.” She smiled. That foolish Nephelite had learned his lesson well.

Taking a moment to parse this, Hotaru slowly murmured “This ‘Grand Theft Auto’ real-life simulation club of yours is getting a little out of hand I think.”

Haruka snorted derisively. “Feh. Michi told me I needed to get into some stress-relieving activities now that I can’t work out my aggression beating up monsters and the like.”

“Ahh, the price of peace,” Hotaru muttered bemusedly.

Tell me about it.” Haruka casually leaned over to the wet bar behind the sofa and grabbed a beer—which for her, mind you, was no mere ordinary mortal beer—it was an ultra-expensive imported libation which has to cross at least six different national borders and be sealed in cryogenic

packaging to guarantee its freshness, with one tin costing as much as a moderately overpriced bottle of champagne.

Sipping, Haruka continued to watch the rest of the television broadcast.

“When *you* are targeted, the first you’ll know about it is the KNOCK AT YOUR DOOR as the cops hand you your JAIL SENTENCE!” the sweaty, overly paranoid announcer declared.

“My kind of justice,” Haruka remarked approvingly. “Swift, ruthless and effective.” She nodded to herself.

“So no wasting time with all that ridiculous ‘Due Process’ and ‘Let’s make sure they’re really Guilty’ then.” Hotaru muttered under her breath, privately galled. “That’s so you, Haruka-poppa.”

“Bah,” Haruka dismissively replied, pausing to imbibe a little. “When have I *ever* rushed to judgement?”

A vein throbbed noticeably in Hotaru’s forehead for a moment as she heard those asinine words. Remaining as calm as she could, she forced her gaze to remain on her book and hissed Oh, I don’t know... just perhaps that time you tried to VAPORIZE me because you THOUGHT I might be trouble?” She rocked back and forth, still traumatized by the memory.

Haruka sighed, looking at her with a mix of irritation and annoyance. “You’re never going to let that go, are you?” she demanded. “Well that’s *high talk* coming from a girl who’s tried to blow up the world TWICE because she THOUGHT the bad guys might be trouble.” Haruka took a large gulp of her beer.

Incensed, Hotaru arched stiffly. “Pardon me, I KNEW they were trouble,” she insisted. “After they’d *beaten you all up* I was pretty SURE. In your case you just came after me because I was THERE.”

Haruka shrugged from her shoulders, looking at her stepdaughter incredulously, amazed this was even a *problem*

for her.

“Hey, it’s how I operate, OK? Swift and aggressive, like the wind. Besides, it turned out well enough in the end.” She shrugged again even as Hotaru turned beet red—well a fleshy pink due to her pronounced anemia—took another mouthful of her drink and turned back to the television as Hotaru silently fumed, the Silence Glaive phasing in and out behind her as her ire grew.

“If you think you’ve cleaned your computer - you are WRONG!” the television announcer screamed, sweating profusely under the pervasive weight of his imagined conspiracy. “*They* can recover from your PC every single picture or item you have *ever* watched on the Internet!”

Haruka reflexively spat out her drink, showering the space between the couch and TV with beer particles. This space also included Hotaru, but given the sheer look of absolute terror on Haruka’s face, she didn’t mind.

Alternating her gaze a few times between Haruka’s reddened face and the histrionic gesticulations of the conspiracy theory television show host, she quickly realized what was happening.

Despite outward appearances of perfection in public, privately at home Haruka (and Michiru) were both rather normal, flawed individuals.

In practice, what this meant was that while in public Haruka—due to the magic of the Ikuhara Perfection field—was always able to manage looking proficient at using a computer without actually knowing very much about them, at home she was about as competent as your average grandmother. Anything aside from working E-Mail, web browsing and hardcore computer games were her limit. Anything more than that required help from either Hotaru, or in extreme cases, Mizuno Ami.

Hotaru also knew that she was not allowed to use Haruka’s personal computer at all, so she had to suspect there was something there Haruka wanted to desperately

hide.

“You need PROTECTION!” the TV host screamed, ripping open his shirt in a paroxysm of fear for some reason. “You need the EVIDENCE ELIMINATOR!”

“I need an Evidence Eliminator” Haruka mindlessly intoned in slack-jawed reply.

Hotaru sighed deeply at just how impressionable Haruka-poppa could be.

“Gah,” Hotaru she snorted with disgust. “You remind me of someone who’s just fallen prey to a Jedi Mind Trick.”

“You watch too many of those movies!” Haruka snapped in reply, confident of her own mental fortitude, demanding in the next breath “Now where do I get one of these Evidence Eliminators?!”

The television helpfully displayed an internet address at that moment, which Haruka dutifully memorized.

“What are you so worried about?” Hotaru teased, enjoying her discomfiture. “What have you got on your computer that’s so compromising?”

“Oh I don’t know!” Haruka exclaimed exasperatedly, flailing her arms in the air. “All sorts of things!”

“Like what?” Hotaru asked dangerously, raising an eyebrow.

Haruka pondered. “The complete Eminem discography in MP3 for one thing, all those video games like Grand Theft Auto 3, Nascar 2002, Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit... not to mention the WWF stuff—” She continued to ramble for a time.

Hotaru’s eyes widened. Apparently Haruka-poppa and the notion of Intellectual Property law were not on speaking terms. She was more amazed, however, that Haruka-poppa had managed to download all those things on the house’s execrable dialup internet connection.

For her part, Haruka was still rambling. “Then there’s all those chain letters I’ve been forwarding—and I know I haven’t told any of you this but one time I put my address

in one of those ‘Make Money fast’ letters and I’ve been getting cash ever since—”

“Is that why envelopes keep coming here stuffed with money?” Hotaru asked under her breath, shocked yet somehow relieved. She had privately assumed Haruka-poppa had been running some kind of Yakuza protection scheme.

“—And then there’s the lemons about Michiru and I that I saved from USENET—”

Hotaru blanched. Only Haruka-poppa would save erotic fanfiction about *herself* that fans had written.

Seeing Hotaru’s reaction, Haruka coughed, her face beet red. “Well, I was going to hunt the authors down and exact harsh revenge for their slanderous lies, I assure you!” She nodded authoritatively, convincing exactly no one.

Hotaru nodded dumbly. “You’ve been getting around a lot online, I see.”

Haruka shrugged. “Well, it’s all point and click, right?” she protested. “That ‘Google’ thing should be outlawed. Stick your name in it sometime and see what it prints out about *you*.”

“I have,” Hotaru replied darkly. There was a reason many Sailor Saturn “shrines” had mysteriously gone defunct in the past few months. It was a Death *Reborn* Revolution, dammit, and Chibiusa wasn’t *that* large a part of her life.

As she settled into a dark contemplation of what she would do to the slanderous authors who took such great liberties with her life, Haruka quietly stalked off.

A few minutes and one explosion later, Haruka returned, shaking her head.

“Well the link on the TV just led to a bunch of awesome por—err, obscene material,” Haruka reported back, “so I just gave up and put the computer down with the Space Sword.” She wiped her hands in a gesture of satisfaction, pleased with the notion of a job well done.

“That’s that, then,” she declared with pride.

“But the television host said the black boxes were located at the ISPs,” Hotaru protested.

Haruka looked at her uncomprehendingly. She could tell you all about Idle Air Control Motors, Knurled Pistons and Tappet Heads, but Internet Providers? Nope.

“The Internet Service Providers,” Hotaru pressed. “The logs of what you had been getting are all located *there*, not on your computer. I mean, of course that stuff is evidence, but still...”

“So how could the evidence eliminator eliminate my evidence if the evidence evidently existed external to my PC?” Haruka alliteratively asked.

“It’s all lies,” Hotaru replied flatly. “The program was a fraud.”

Haruka sighed, and grabbed a conveniently-located Sledgehammer.

“Well that settles it,” she declared, heading for the door. “I’m going to pay a little visit to our ‘ISP’ and see about these boxes personally.”

“But—” Hotaru prepared to protest that the ‘Black Boxes’ were probably a lie as well, but Haruka was already out the door.

“Oh well,” Hotaru sighed. NTT DoCoMo was in for a nasty surprise. At least she could get back to reading her book in peace.

After a moment, the front door opened.

“I’m back,” Michiru said pleasantly, stepping inside the vestibule as an overworked young man in a grey uniform who was carrying twice his weight in grocery bags staggered in behind her.

“Put the groceries in the kitchen, dear,” Michiru commanded the overworked wage slave as she turned to regard the living room.

The retail peon cursed under his breath as Michiru suddenly screamed “WHAT DID SHE DO TO MY



SOFA!” from the living room, having seen the black pit of oil and grease that was all which remained of her once beautiful recliner.

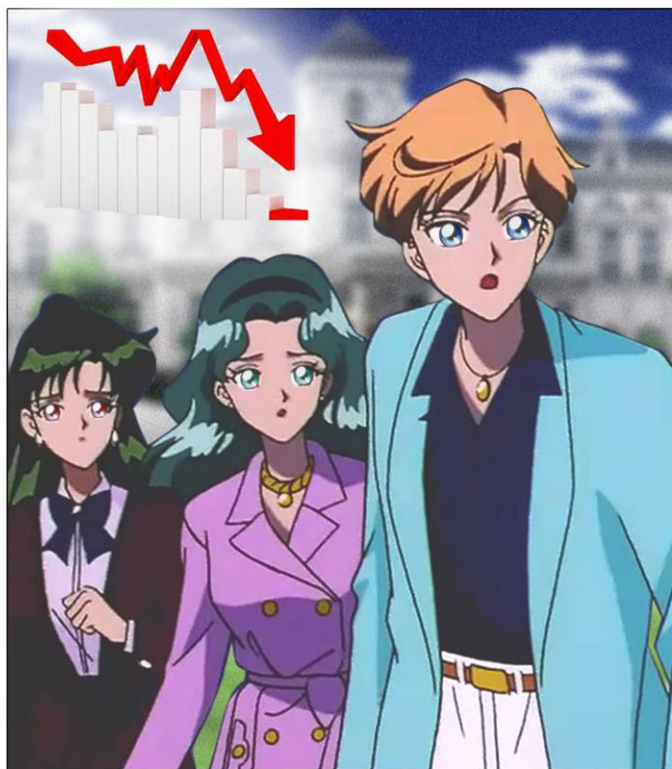
“That settles it!” Michiru declared irately. “None of that *WWF Smackdown!* wrestling garbage for Haruka tonight! I’m going to watch *the Three Tenors*— and so is she!”

Hotaru chuckled to herself, looking around at the spacious, palatial estate her kidnappers of foster parents had brought her to. It was going to be another fun day.

But even as she thought that, a sea of cockroaches slowly made their way to a certain space-time door in the 31<sup>st</sup> century, a tidal wave of gross insectitude that was going to change the course of their lives... forever.

**SUBURBAN**  
**SENSHI**  
サブサバン戦士

SEASON ONE  
**Episode 1**



***OUR STOCK IS FALLING***

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2002  
REMASTERED APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2016

Atop a high hill overlooking the urban sprawl of Tokyo sat a large two story, ten bedroom manor situated in the center of an immaculately manicured lawn. To its left, there was a large traditional koi pond, to its right a massive swimming pool and tennis court. Directly in front on the curved brick driveway, dozens of exotic speedsters from a variety of nations were parked, all in perfect condition.

This palatial enclave cut off from the busy city beyond was known as Kaioh Manor, after the British aristocrats who constructed it in the late 1800's.

For two centuries it had been home to the Kaioh family; for two centuries it had been their treasured legacy.

But no longer.

#### A FEW MONTHS AGO

A limousine slowly made its way up the long, winding driveway that led to the front door of Kaioh Manor, its piano-black paint job glistening in the harsh glare of the noonday sun as it rounded the final turn towards the massive driveway that made up the front of the property.

The vehicle slowly creaked to a halt. Presently, its back door opened, Tomoe Hotaru clambering out, wearing her customary tight black bodysuit and grey shawl, which fluttered in the wind as she struggled to pull some baggage out with her.

Heading for the front door of the manor, and panting slightly from the exertion, she smiled as she saw two of her three foster parents—Ten'ou Haruka and Kaioh Michiru waiting for her.

Haruka, as was her wont, was dressed in a tomboyish outfit—a white pantsuit and blue shirt, while Michiru was wearing one of her usual, elegant blue dresses.

“Michiru-momma, Haruka-poppa, I'm back,” she

reported happily.

Michiru waved at her. “How was your trip, dear?” she asked sonorously.

“It was fantastic!” Hotaru exclaimed, a slight spring in her step. “Paris was wonderful!” She was beaming, a truly rare sight.

“I’m glad you enjoyed it, kiddo,” Haruka said with a smile. “But you know, if you’d waited for me and Michi to go on tour there, we could have all gone together.”

Hotaru’s smile froze. “Yes, together...” she exhaled through gritted teeth. “How nice.”

Her sarcastic tone was lost on Haruka, who grinned and slapped her on the back, the gesture nearing sending the frail girl pitching forward. “Welp, I’m off to race the Jag a bit. I’ll be back before dinner starts, okay, Michi?”

She gave Michiru a peck on the cheek.

“Yes dear,” Michiru replied cheerfully. “I’m sure Chef will have a wonderful dinner prepared in honor of Hotaru’s return. Drive safely.”

“Heh,” Haruka replied, giving her a thumbs up. “Always.”

Hotaru blanched as she saw this. Telling Haruka to “Drive safely” was like telling Jaws to “be nice to swimmers”. Her precision driving was saved for the track or impressing young gamer girls on the GOD Racing game at Crown Game Center.

As Haruka made her way towards the parking garage, there was a large blast of purple light over the swimming pool, and a large figure tumbled forth from the vortex-like haze, splashing down unceremoniously.

Everyone turned to look at the new arrival, casting their gaze on a bedraggled Meioh Setsuna.

The usually composed and aloof woman dragged herself out of the water, coughing and struggling to stand upright. Haruka and Michiru quickly rushed to her aid, but Hotaru stayed back, a sinking feeling rapidly developing in

the pit of her stomach.

Haruka and Michiru quickly helped her up.

“Setsuna!” Haruka exclaimed to her chest, doing her best to avoid the sight of Setsuna’s wet, clingy blouse, but her eyes being drawn there anyway. “Are you all right?”

“Yes,” Setsuna replied irritably, shoving her back a bit. “But you won’t be,” she proclaimed darkly.

Holding out her Time Staff “Big-Assed Key”, she tilted it towards the group, showing them the Garnet Orb affixed to its top.

At first glance, everything looked normal, but then it became apparent that the garnet orb was strangely dark and mottled, with hairline and spider-cracks all over its surface.

“What happened to the—” Michiru began.

Setsuna looks around nervously for a moment. “The Garnet Orb is over ten thousand years old. It has seen battle for much of that time. As with most things that age, it is only inevitable that it should one day... break.”

She hoped they would just accept that explanation. But no, Hotaru had to use her intelligence.

“Break?” Hotaru asked incredulously. “How? We haven’t fought any enemies for over five years! How could it just—”

Archly, Setsuna interrupted her, yelling “that is unimportant!”

Mind whirling back, Setsuna remembered what had happened just moments ago, relatively speaking. Her gaze became glassy and fixed on the middle distance as she remembered.

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In strictly linear terms, of course, it will have happened roughly a thousand years from now, in the 31<sup>st</sup> century.

Surrounded by the wafting mists of eternity and standing solitary guard at the gate of time underneath the Crystal Palace, Setsuna—in her true form as Sailor Pluto—

absently watched the howling coruscations of the Time Vortex, picking out odd events to examine and contemplate, but otherwise bored out of her mind. The red light of the Garnet orb pulsed eerily in the twilight.

Standing impassive, with her hands squarely on her staff like a Guard at Buckingham Palace, she narrowed her eyes and focused on an image of a tall blonde girl bringing down a massive gate at the edge of Tairon Space with one punch, but before she could make out any details, her concentration was broken by a light touch on her shoulder.

Eyebrow twitching, she tried to ignore the sensation. But she couldn't. Its radius was growing. A new sensation, lower now. It was like a thousand small fingers ticking her legs.

Looking down, she saw HUNDREDS of large cockroaches crawling on the floor and up her legs. Internally panicking—because if there is one thing the mighty Senshi of Time cannot stand, it is cockroaches—she swung her staff around deftly, aiming the Garnet Orb at the sea of disgusting insects.

*“dead scream”* she whispered, and a mighty arc of Plutonic energy lashed forth from the Talisman into the vermin, incinerating them.

Seeing the vermin vaporize, Pluto sighed in relief and dropped her defensive pose, but the moment's respite did not last. She quickly resumed her stance as another wave of roaches appeared.

“Where are they coming from?!” Pluto asked herself in a panic as she fired volley after volley of energy at the creatures, sweat forming on her brow. Her power levels were much lower than they used to be at her prime, thanks to the meddlesome International Astronomical Union, whose decision to relegate Pluto to non-planet status some thousand years earlier had significantly eroded her power base, and she couldn't maintain the pace of her defense.

Frantically trying to track the source of the infestation,

Pluto finally realized the Time Gate was slightly ajar—and the co-ordinates on the other side specified the early Paleozoic Era. The creatures were coming from Earth’s distant past.

Moving quickly, she attempted to close the door, but noted something *else* coming though. Apparently the cockroaches of that era could grow to be several feet long. She knew this because several of them were now looking her in the eye, hissing and flapping their wing sheaths.

*“dead scream. dead scream. dead scream deadscreams deadscreamDeadScreamDeadScreamDEADscreamDEADSCREAM!”*

Amidst the sound of titanic energy blasts, pus-filled explosions and glass shattering, Pluto found her energy spent, her transformation dissolving away. Now just Meioh Setsuna, she stumbled backwards, falling into the Time Vortex, just barely managing to will herself to the year 2002.

Shivering, Setsuna snapped out of her reverie, making eye contact with the others again. “At any rate, with the damage to the Orb, my predictive abilities have been severely curtailed. So I was unable to see certain things happening...”

“Like what?” Haruka asked curiously.

“Well, as you know,” Setsuna began pedantically, “the vast bulk of the money that goes towards supporting our luxuriant lifestyles comes in from the concerts you and Michiru hold all across the world, which is then sagely invested by me in what would normally be considered high-risk stocks—”

“—For those without the ability to see the future, anyway.” Hotaru interjected, suddenly realizing the full implications of what had happened. Her face fell. “Oh dear.”

Haruka and Michiru looked at each other worriedly.

“Please,” Setsuna entreated, “Haruka, tell me you sold that stock I told you about last week when I told you it might have been a good idea?”

Haruka shook her head and grinned. “Naw,” she replied. “I had a race. I was going to do it this afternoon actually.”

“Too late,” Setsuna intoned darkly, as thunder cracked across the darkening sky.

The next few weeks were a blur. Headlines across the globe screamed “ENRON COLLAPSE! COMPANY FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY! SHAREHOLDERS LOSE BILLIONS!”

First to go were the fancy cars from the driveway of Kaiou Manor. Then the Swimming pool was drained as the pool boy had to be fired. The koi in the koi pond were put up for adoption, and then finally the manor itself was shuttered and sold.

The quartet looked at one another in despair. It was the end of an era... and unbeknownst to anyone, the beginning of another.

.....

The interior of their new three-bedroom home was nothing short of a shambles, with packing boxes laying overturned everywhere, packing peanuts and foam strewn all over the floor, clinging to anyone walking past. None of the furniture was anywhere near its proper location—not that they had much left after the foreclosure.

Unable to afford a fancy professional moving service—not if Haruka wanted to keep her Ferrari—the small family had haphazardly moved itself.

By Japanese standards the new “Ten’ou House” was a fairly extravagant affair—a two story edifice with a two car garage. But one look at the nonexistent frontage and densely packed Azabu-Juban neighborhood it was in (there



were barely four feet separating this house from the next), combined with the scruffy-looking children riding their bicycles in the street, and Haruka, Michiru, Setsuna and Hotaru all knew that their lives were going to be quite different from then on.

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## MICHIRU'S PROBLEM

Haruka sat at the makeshift kitchen table, watching Michiru experimentally fiddling with the controls of various kitchen appliances. It was like watching an infant struggle with toy blocks for the first time.

“Well, now that Chef is gone, I suppose you’ll have to do all the cooking, Michi,” Haruka playfully joked.

Michiru turned to face Haruka with a look of mortified dread upon her usually serene face. “You don’t understand, Haruka— I haven’t had to cook. *Ever*. I came from an exceptionally privileged background— and one of those privileges included never having to prepare a meal for myself.”

Haruka frowned. Being filthy rich up until recently, any time she had eaten, it was either in a high-class restaurant or from meals prepared by their rather surly British chef who bore a striking resemblance to comedian Lenny Henry. “But surely you had to make some meals for cooking class in school,” she protested weakly. “or something?” She looked for hope.

Michiru simply regarded Haruka as if she were an alien. “I went to an *elite private school*. We learned the finest points of etiquette and social grace, and how to graciously accept and stylishly devour a tasty meal— but we NEVER learned how to make them. That’s what servants are for!”

Haruka looked at her blankly. It had never occurred to her that the talented, musical and artistic genius, Kairoh Michiru, could not cook to save her life.

“What about you?” Michiru turned the question around almost desperately. “You had a rough start in life, having to fend for yourself and make a place for yourself in the world. Surely *you* can cook.”

Haruka laughed confidently, and pointed at herself with her right thumb. “Of course I can! I can cook anything—”

Michiru’s heart leapt

“—As long as it’s instant.”

into her throat.

Haruka held the back of her head sheepishly. “Hanging out with the boys at the speedway didn’t exactly lend itself to a mastery of *fine cuisine*, you know.”

“But it did give you your killer fashion sense,” Michiru replied dryly.

“Haruka-poppa,” Hotaru interjected as she wandered into the kitchen, “I—”

“HOTARU-CHAN!” Haruka and Michiru cried in unison. “You can cook, *right?*”

“Only if you prefer slow agonizing death,” Hotaru replied flatly, with no trace of self-deprecation in her voice. “Thank Usagi-san for taking it upon herself to pass on her ‘mastery’ of the domestic arts to me. Putting ‘love’ into the recipe to add taste doesn’t really work when your heart is as black and cold as a rough-hewn chunk of coal. Thank the Kami we had Chef.”

It took Hotaru a minute to discern just *why* they were asking her about her culinary capabilities. She paused and eyed them critically for a moment. “Don’t tell me— the two of you can’t—”

The frightened look in their eyes told her everything she needed to know.

Hotaru reflexively gulped, slowly intoning, “As you

know, I enjoy the study of World History.” She began to back away as she continued speaking. “Right now I am recalling the tale of the ‘Donner Party’... a poor group of travelers who ran dangerously short of food during their journey towards the American West in the 1800’s... at a severe loss for food, they eventually resorted to eating their own—”

Wisely, she completed her exit of the room before she could put ideas in their murderous little Outer Senshi heads.

“Instant’s not so bad,” Haruka slowly ventured after a few moments, as she watched Michiru begin to twitch slightly.

“This is insane!” Michiru snapped, whirling and pointing to the variety of cookware arrayed before her. “What am I supposed to do with this?!”

“As always, I have the crucial piece of information needed to save the both of you from total disaster.”

Haruka and Michiru both turned to see a poised and confident Setsuna standing in the doorway. “Give all that cookware to me,” she commanded.

## LATER THAT DAY

“This food tastes *\*so\** good,” Haruka mumbled between large, enthusiastic bites. “I’d almost forgotten what it was like so good.”

“I don’t see what’s so special about it,” Hotaru observed calmly, carefully consuming her meal. “It tastes okay.”

“Bland,” Michiru declared flatly, poking at her food with a cheap utensil.

“With all the money the pawnbroker was able to give us for the cookery,” Setsuna explained slowly as she took a bite out of her sandwich, “we should be able to eat like this for a few weeks—at least until Michiru can be taught to cook properly. Sadly, my duties at the Time Gate prevent me from being home to cook three meals a day for all of



RAW—”

The next instant, the television went dead, followed by all the lights in the house.

Now together in the darkness, Michiru drew Haruka closer, murmuring sweet nothings in her ear. Maybe the evening could be salvaged after all...

“Damn!” Haruka exclaimed, pulling herself away to Michiru’s surprise and ire.

Unable to see, Haruka got up and managed two tentative steps forward before tripping on a half-empty packing box. Thudding to the floor, she got back up and carefully made her way to the fuse box as Michiru grumbled to herself.

After a few minutes of blind stumbling, Haruka was able to reset the breakers, and then began stalking around the house to see what could have caused the breakers to trip. Hopefully she could get it sorted out before the commercials were over.

“Nothing downstairs,” Haruka muttered to herself, making her way up the stairs and towards Hotaru’s room.

“Let’s try that again,” she heard from the other side of Hotaru’s door. There was the sound of a loud POP and fizz, and lights in the house went dead again.

“MICHIRU!” Haruka yelled, unwilling to chance the stairs in the dark. “COULD YOU RESET THE BREAKERS!”

After a few moments came back on. Haruka frowned and made her way into Hotaru’s room.

Hota—” she began, checking herself when she saw what was happening.

On her knees, Hotaru was desperately rigging a sad amalgam of extension cords, power strips and wall socket multipliers in order to try and get her massive lamp collection, which she had somehow managed to protect from the repo men, lit.

“Taru,” Haruka began slowly, “you can’t plug that many

things into the sockets... the circuits can't handle it. More than that, we can't afford to have all those lamps going all night like we used to. You're going to have to turn them off."

"Turn... them off?" Hotaru swiveled and she looked at Haruka wild-eyed. "I just finished painting the walls black and sealing off the windows!" She gestured broadly, still holding a lamp cord in one hand.

"Hotaru-chan," Haruka continued slowly, "you know that's not exactly the healthiest environment for you—"

"Healthy?!" Hotaru began almost incredulously. Tossing aside the cord. "Since when have *you* been concerned about my *health*, Sailor Assassin?"

Haruka scowled, tired of hearing this old refrain. "That again? Look, just because I tried to kill you that *one* time—" she snapped.

"—not to forget the time you DID kill me," Hotaru interjected flatly.

Haruka slapped her forehead in exasperation. "Hey, Michiru was in on it too, you know! Why do you keep blaming me?!"

Hotaru sighed, standing and walking over to a dry-erase board. Taking a purple marker she began drawing a crude comic with sketch figures of Sailors Uranus and Neptune, as well as a terrified looking version of herself. Then, she proceed to add speech bubbles as follows:

Uranus: That kid looks like trouble. I say we kill it now, just to be sure.

Neptune: But Uranus, we could be wrong, she—

Uranus: It is our sacred duty, our hard duty, to kill. We must kill, for that is source of our angst, without which we would not be cool.

Neptune: Oh, but the horror of killing a young girl—

Hotaru: Please don't kill me! I'm just a girl!!

Uranus: See the evil in its wicked eyes! It might be a threat! Ostracize it, then kill it! Then we can weep about the injustice of it all and be so COOL!

Neptune: But—

Uranus: Watch as I use my strangely androgynous influence to dominate you emotionally!

Neptune: ...

Uranus: That's right... for the sake of our master plan, to be cool and duplicitous, to make us look like the hardcore Sailor Senshi we know we are—

Neptune: THE \*\*\*CH MUST DIE!

This was then followed by scenes of abject carnage visited upon stick Hotaru, who ended the comic a mass of bloodied red squiggles.

Haruka scowled. “That is *so* out of context. Anyway, just because I killed you once does not mean you can have these lamps. We just can't afford it.” She gestured broadly around her. “Besides, they don't even *fit* in your room!”

Hotaru looked around at the lamps crammed on top of her bookcase, dresser, desk and bedhead and sighed. This new room simply did not have room for fifty lamps.

“This kind of thing is why people were beginning to say you were Goth or something,” Haruka muttered under her

breath.

As fast as the Senshi of Wind was, Haruka almost got clocked by the lamp Hotaru hurled in her direction. She quickly fled the room.

For her part, Hotaru looked around at her black walls and sighed. She just liked a mysterious atmosphere, that's all. And was it her fault her complexion was naturally pale? And so what if she had an overly morbid interest in apocalyptic prophecy and the ancient mysteries of the world? And, dammit, black was her favorite color because it just *\*was\**, not because of some insipid cultural trend!

"Goth, eh..." Hotaru sighed to herself. Could things get any worse?

Yes. Yes they could, as she would soon discover.

## THE NEXT DAY

"Sunshine Yellow?!" Hotaru asked incredulously as she lamented the new color "gracing" the walls of her room. While she had been out, Haruka had painted the walls and made some other alterations to her habitat. In place of her lamp collection, there were now two banks of dual four-foot fluorescent lights spilling harsh glare-filled brightness into the room, and all her aged books were crammed haphazardly into a flower-wallpapered bookshelf.

Hotaru just stood there, veins throbbing in her forehead. She pondered getting out her Silence Glaive and putting an end to the room / world / herself right then and there.

"This is a much happier atmosphere, dear" Michiru cooed as she walked by, surveying the room, as Haruka joined her. "if a bit bland. I'll paint a mural on one of the walls for you later, if you like."



“A scene from the Fall of the Roman Empire might be nice,” Hotaru replied sincerely, hoping to salvage something—anything—from this horrid turn of events.

“A seascape,” Michiru declared definitively, completely ignoring Hotaru. “Yes, a nice, fresh, sunny seascape.” She nodded to Haruka.

“The sacking of Alexandria?” Hotaru tried again weakly.

“Wind, waves, and birds,” Michiru droned on in almost a singsong. “It will be nice to bring some culture into this new home of ours.”

“Nero’s assassination of his mother,” Hotaru hissed angrily, hoping Michiru would get the point and accede to her wishes.

“The seaside is so beautiful this time of year,” Michiru said to Haruka, utterly missing the implication, linking her arm in Haruka’s. “shall we go see it?”

The two older women left Hotaru’s doorway, now completely oblivious to her existence.

#### A FEW HOURS LATER

“HOTARU!” Haruka yelled from the downstairs portion of the house. “Aren’t you done yet? We’d like to get going to the beach!”

Hotaru would have replied if she could have—but her eyes were glassed over, a bit of drool leaking from the side of her mouth. The handset of her replica 1930’s telephone was wedged firmly between her shoulder and her ear. An incessant stream of babble was coming forth from the earpiece.

*“—and my boyfriend is sooo cute and he has such nice white hair and his clothes are so princely, of course that’s the way it should be because he was the attendant to a prince so naturally he’d look dashing and suave and supremely cool, don’t you think? He’s—”*

“Uh,” was all Hotaru could force out. Chibiusa had called several hours ago, having gotten a hold of Hotaru’s

new number, and all she could do was

blabber on incoherently about her boyfriend Elios. The worst part was she kept repeating herself, over and over and over...

“—and that VOICE of his... some people say it makes him sound too old, like a creepy old man but I think it gives him a certain magnetism, you know, just like that Akio from Revolutionary Girl Utena, I mean come to think of it the kid looks just like that Prince Dios guy too, that nice white hair and the princely clothes, they’re soo lovely—”

“HOTARU!” Haruka called from downstairs desperately. It was almost noon and all the women would be out there in their tiny bikinis and she did *not* want to miss that.

“Uhh,” Hotaru did her best to snap out of it. This really was too much. Frowning, she snapped, “Chibiusa, your boyfriend is a horse. *A horse*, Chibiusa. Do you understand what that means?”

“Yeah! He’s soooo Black Stallion!” Chibiusa cooed.

Hotaru scowled, correctly inferring that was probably come kind of reference to his nethers, and she and put the phone down on her table. As much as she liked Chibiusa, the girl sometimes made her wish she could smash the Time Gate into a thousand microscopic bits.

“Hotaru,” Haruka said, finally coming into the room to see what was holding her up, “we’re ready to go.” She saw the phone sitting on the table, the tinny sound of Chibiusa’s hyperactive voice flying from the earpiece.

“You’d better say goodbye to the little one,” Haruka advised.

Hotaru picked up the phone and yelled as loudly as she could into the mouthpiece, “YOUR BOYFRIEND IS A HORSE!” and hung up the phone.

“Now Hotaru,” Haruka chided sternly, “That’s no way to talk about Chibiusa’s boyfriend.”

“I’m just talking about Elios,” Hotaru countered.

“That Pegasus guy?” Haruka asked. Hotaru nodded.

“Then I can dig it.” Haruka frowned. “Ready to go?”

Hotaru nodded and the two of them headed downstairs.

## WON’T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

Outside, Haruka, Michiru, Hotaru and Setsuna gathered in the small driveway of their new home, ready to hit the beach.

“At least we got to keep my favorite car,” Haruka said, as she looked at her yellow speedster. “Shall we?”

“My, my, my, what a nice little toy you have there, Uranus.” A condescending, smarmy voice from next door.

“*Excuse me?*” Haruka said indignantly, turning to see a man with long red hair wearing a sharp business suit leaning over the brick partition which separated the two adjoining properties.

“Nephelite?” Haruka asked incredulously. “But you’re supposed to be de—”

“Never happened,” Nephelite replied suavely. “Got out while the getting was good. Beryl was killing her generals left and right, and I saw the writing on the wall, so I faked my own death, got married, quit the Dark Kingdom and became *insanely* rich. That shower of purple sparks I seemed to explode into? Dark Kingdom Transporter beam.”

As Haruka processed this, someone shrieked “Ready ta go, Neffy deah?” in an odd Southern / Brooklyn hybrid accented voice from somewhere inside Nephelite’s house, which, Haruka noted, was annoying larger than hers.

“In a moment, Naru-honey,” Nephelite said suavely. “I was just looking over our new neighbor’s car.”

A rather short girl with red hair and no fashion sense came out beside Nephelite.

“Osaka Naru?” Haruka realized. But wasn’t she hooked up with that coke-bottle eyeglass wearing nerd Umino?

Naru looked at Haruka's car and chuckled, leaning on Nephrite's arm. "Dat little boxter ain't got nothin' on yah Ferrari, honey muffin."

Haruka growled as Nephrite smiled ingratiatingly. "I've always wanted to race the world famous Ten'ou Haruka."

Haruka smiled slyly. "How about right now? We're just heading for the beach."

Nephrite nodded as he patted Naru on the bottom. "Well we were heading for the *bank*, to deposit all my *money*, but I'm sure a little diversion to the beach wouldn't be a problem, right, dear?" He gave her a little pinch on the derriere.

Naru cooed and giggled in delight, nodding. They hopped in the car and eased it onto the road.

"Haruka—" Michiru began quickly, not liking where this was going. She and the others pondered getting out of the car.

"Not now," Haruka muttered darkly, as she made her way to the driver's side. Forget girls in bikinis. She was going to teach this jackass a lesson.

"But Haruka," Michiru protested. "The—"

"Not now!" Haruka snapped, getting in the car and sidling it up to Nephrite's sleek red Ferrari, which was purring in idle at the head of the street.

"Haruka-poppa..." Hotaru began slowly, straining to look at the dash from the backseat. "You—"

"He's going!" Haruka suddenly yelled as Nephrite began pulling out. She slammed her foot on the gas pedal.

"And we're not." Setsuna pronounced solemnly as Haruka's car stalled and froze in place while Nephrite's zoomed out of sight.

"We forgot to gas up," Michiru slowly explained.

"No we didn't!" Haruka protested, turning to face everyone. "We went to a gas station right after McDonald's, remember?"

“But you *never filled the tank*,” Hotaru scolded.

“You mean *I had to*—” Haruka’s face fell, realizing she had taken something very important for granted.

“There’s no full service in this neighborhood,” Setsuna confirmed.

“I’m used to having a pit crew,” Haruka protested, now in a royal funk. Her gloomy reverie was shattered by the sound of a Ferrari’s horn behind her.

“Hey,” Nephrite said smarmily, leaning out of his car’s narrow window. “I know you were probably just giving me a handicap, what with me being an amateur racer and all, but I hardly think allowing me *free reign* of the course was necessary.”

Veins throbbed in Haruka’s forehead, but she simply sighed and said nothing in reply.

“Welcome to the neighborhood~” Nephrite mockingly declared as his car passed Haruka’s. The last thing Haruka heard as the car went out of her sight a second time was Naru’s high-pitched laughter.

*Oh great, she thought. I’m never going to live this one down.*



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## PREVIEW OF NEXT EPISODE

*Fed up with her torturous living conditions, Hotaru convinces Haruka to spring for a high-speed Internet connection! But when Hotaru forgets to set a password on the connection, Haruka discovers a whole new world on the Internet! Will anyone’s lives ever be the same*

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SEASON ONE  
**Episode 2**



## ***TECHNOLOGY BYTES***

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2002  
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“So,” Haruka said, hefting the long, ribbed object in her left hand experimentally, “you just put this inside...”

“Exactly,” Pedro confirmed with a smile in his smooth Latino voice. “Just be sliding it in and then begin with the pumping action.”

Haruka grunted as she thrust it in. It was not as hard as she had expected.

“Excellent,” Pedro complimented her, voice deep with total satisfaction. “For now you have become the master of the art of self-serve refueling. There is no more I am able to teach you.”

Standing at the fuel pump of the ESSO Gas stand, Haruka snorted with disgust as the pump began dispensing fuel into her tank. “I can’t believe I actually \*paid\* someone to do such a simple thing for me all these years.”

The attendant, Pedro, chuckled. “It is an honor and a privilege to have one such as yourself here at my humble establishment, Ten’ou Haruka-san.” Poor Pedro could never seem to keep a job for very long, but with prestigious customers like these, he thought, perhaps his fortunes were finally going to change for the better.

Haruka, in something of a hypnotic daze, watched the gas pump’s gauge spin for a few seconds, marveling as the liters sold— and the eventual hole in her wallet— grew larger. Her concentration was broken, however, by the sound of a roaring engine, followed by gunfire and police sirens.

Turning away from the pump, she saw a massively overpowered ‘66 Mustang painted in jet black roaring down the street, bullets spraying from an Uzi pointed out the drivers’ side window.

Far behind the Mustang, several police cars rushed in pursuit, dodging their exploding brethren as the Uzi bullets found their lethal mark and took out several of the chasing vehicles.

“Who’s that?” Haruka asked Pedro, nodding her head at



the driver of the black mustang, who looked like a cross between Thomas Chong (of Cheech and Chong fame) and Rick Steiner (of WCW wrestling fame) on a serious dose of trippy stimulants.

Pedro shrugged, sighing. “Oh, he is Insane Eddie ‘El Diablo’ Vasquez. *Es muy malo*. Every day he tears through these streets in his demon car, shooting up the police. They are powerless against his Super Race Car from Hell, the ‘El Demonico V’... they say no one can catch—”

Pedro found himself talking to a cloud of exhaust smoke as Haruka and her car were gone from the fueling station in a roar.

“You cannot hope to catch El Diablo!” Pedro yelled out after her. Dimly, he noted that there was fuel spilling all over the ground— Haruka had left without removing the gas nozzle from her tank, and had thus ripped the fuel hose in half. Fumes and flammable liquid were everywhere.

Before Pedro could react, however, his cell phone rang, a small spark from the vibration motor setting the airborne gas particles alight, triggering a huge explosion.

“NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!” Pedro screamed as he shot up in the air, riding the shockwave as his gas station went up in flames.

## A FEW MINUTES LATER

Rose petals drifted into view.

Haruka, her clothes and face charred black, walked calmly into the driveway of her house. A small wisp of smoke issued forth from her hair, but she didn’t notice— or at least she pretended that she didn’t.

“Haruka-poppa?” Hotaru asked with mildly detached concern as she came out the front door. “Are you all right?”

To be honest, she didn’t really care about the answer.

“Certainly,” Haruka said, flashing a winning grin, humbled by the concern displayed by the kidnapped foster

child she had tried to murder many a time. “I simply had to teach a wayward criminal some manners, that’s all. He learned a painful lesson— no one may use a *car* as an instrument of evil as long as Ten’ou Haruka breathes air.”

“Where’s your car?” Hotaru asked, stepping behind Haruka to look, not really seeing anything in the driveway. There was a crunching noise as she walked.

“You’re stepping on it,” Haruka replied somewhat less enthusiastically.

Enjoying a delicious moment of *schadenfreude*, Hotaru picked a pathetically small piece of license plate off the bottom of her shoe. She feigned distress at Haruka’s plight.

“That’s all they could find,” Haruka declared solemnly, bowing her head for her car. “Between having the back end being on fire due to the gas tank exploding, and having a high-speed demolition derby with the *truly* Insane Eddie Vasquez, there wasn’t much left.”

“And what of this ‘Eddie?’” Hotaru asked. “How’s he?”

Haruka considered how to answer. She paused, holding a finger up in the air. “You know that American idiom, ‘Street Pizza?’”

Hotaru nodded numbly, picturing it.

“Well, that’s too clean a description.” Haruka declared, suddenly stumbling forward with an “Aughh!” sound, crumpling to the ground, wincing in pain.

“Your leg.” Hotaru intoned clinically, not even pretending to really care.

“Yeah, it’s broken,” Haruka muttered, standing up again and hobbling to the front door, dragging the broken one at an odd angle.

“Shouldn’t you be in a cast?” Hotaru enquired. “Not that I don’t see some divine justice in your suffering, considering the pain you’ve inflicted upon me in the past, but still—”

“Nonsense!” Haruka exclaimed, waving off Hotaru. “If there is anything famed anime director Kuniko Ikuhara has

taught us in his rather well-done visual adaptation of our lives—for which we are still demanding royalties—is that neither Michiru nor I are capable of being brought low by the fallibilities of the common man. A broken leg is as nothing. My inherent perfection will come through. You’ll see.” She grinned confidently.

Rose petals drifted around Haruka for a moment, and then a whole ton of wet petals suddenly slammed down onto her head, knocking her flat onto the ground.

“But that ‘perfection field’ only works in public,” Hotaru muttered resignedly. “You’re at *home* now.”

“Damn,” Haruka mumbled, passing out under the weight of the soggy petals.

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## THE NEXT DAY

Pulling herself out from underneath Hotaru’s mahogany desk (which had been tastelessly repainted white) Mizuno Ami sat up, then stood, stretching and checking Hotaru’s laptop, to which she had attached a clunky network adapter.

“The Internet connection from NTT DoCoMo is now complete,” Ami announced, clicking on the PC’s mouse and loading up Google. “Do you think you can do this now, Hotaru-chan?” Ami asked, much as a teacher would.

Hotaru nodded. She had paid rapt attention to Ami’s lesson on computing technology and the internet. “I’m sure I can, thank you,” she replied with a smile.

“If I might ask, why did you change to NTT’s service instead of Panasonic’s HiHo DSL?” Ami asked, wondering how people who hadn’t learned to bond multiple connections into something she called “gigabit” internet managed to survive.

“The mascot characters in the “Panasonic Hi Ho” ads terrified me,” Hotaru admitted bashfully. “I still can’t get their song out of my head.”

Ami nodded, the ads were nightmare fuel indeed. She speculated that with the rise of the internet they would one day be forever preserved digitally. It was a horrifying thought.

Looking at Hotaru's flower-wallpapered bookshelf she frowned. "Shall we go?"

Following Ami's gaze, Hotaru sighed. "The décor was definitely *not* my idea."

"It's... not the décor," Ami muttered under her breath, trying to avoid further discussion on the topic of what she had seen *on* the bookshelf. She mentally chastised herself for even having a reaction to what she had seen.

Forcing a smile, she gestured to the doorway. "Shall we? That ice cream you promised me in exchange for the DSL installation awaits."

Hotaru would not be moved, however, realizing what had caught Ami's attention.

"You mean these." Hotaru said flatly, pointing to the books on the bottommost shelf of her bookshelf, the titles reading as follows:

- YOUR FATHER IS NOT MARRIAGE MATERIAL
- DAD IS NOT YOUR HOMEBOY
- KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY IS A BAD IDEA
- INBREEDING CAN HAPPEN TO YOU
- HOW TO AVOID BECOMING YOUR OWN MOTHER
- LEARNING TO LOVE YOUR SPECIES
- BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: AN ARRESTABLE OFFENSE
- HORROR STORIES OF HUMAN-HORSE INTERACTION
- WHEN ANIMALS ATTACK VOL. 7: HORSEPLAY GONE TOO FAR

Ami gulped slightly. "Err, yes."

Hotaru shook her head sadly. "Such is the price of

friendship. I had to read all this to prepare myself.”

“Prepare yourself for what?” Ami almost didn’t want to know, but a morbid curiosity drove her on.

Hotaru gestured to the first set of books. “It took me a whole year to get Chibiusa off her neurotic obsession with her father. Now, as soon as I had her normalized that way,” She groaned, pointing to the second set, “we have The Horse to deal with.”

“Pegasus?” Ami enquired.

Hotaru nodded. “So what if he can turn into a boy at convenient intervals? One day, after the wedding, she’ll wake up to find the groom nibbling on carrots and sugar cubes and expecting a REAL roll in the hay. Then what?!”

Ami frowned. “You’ve put far too much thought into this.”

Hotaru scowled. “Would you rather I leave my best friend running around town telling everyone she’s in love with a *Horse*?”

“He’s mythical?” Ami countered weakly.

“So is Mephisto,” Hotaru snapped, “it doesn’t mean you’d want him running around with you...” she frowned. “Well, unless you were a closet Faustian or something... but at least that deal gives you *infinite power*... not a combination bridegroom / racehorse!”

“I wonder,” Ami replied neutrally, pondering the issue deeply for the first time, “would a flying horse be at an advantage in a horse race? Would he be permitted to enter?”

“You’re missing the point,” Hotaru dryly replied, picking up a copy of “THE SICK TRUTH ABOUT HORISING AROUND” and heading for the door. “Let’s go eat some Ice Cream while I ponder how to break the truth to Chibiusa about her fantasy love.”

Going downstairs, the two girls saw Haruka sitting idly on the couch, her plastered left leg propped on a footstool.

“We’re going now, Haruka-poppa,” Hotaru announced.

Haruka waved to her absently, sipping a can of slightly expensive beer, eyes glued to the television as usual.

Ami nudged Hotaru when they were out the front door. “Hotaru, you’ve re-aged to your proper age of 23. Don’t you think you should stop calling Haruka-san ‘Haruka-poppa?’”

Hotaru shook her head, a slight smile on her face. “Every time I say ‘poppa’, somewhere in the back of her mind, Haruka’s guilt responds, eating away at her subconscious like a dark plague. It reminds her of the terrible wrongs she did to me, and the fact that I now look up to her as a parental figure— she, who has done so much harm to me— it will eventually eat her alive.” Hotaru chuckled. “Only then, at her darkest hour, will I accept her repentance and allow her forgiveness.” Her smile grew darker.

Ami nodded blankly. Sometimes Hotaru-chan was just plain scary.



## BACK AT THE HOUSE

“Haruka-poppa” echoed in Haruka’s ears. Somewhere, deep in the back of her mind, her subconscious smiled. That kid really really loved her, despite her angry words to the contrary every time they spoke for more than five minutes.

“Michiru!” Haruka called out, but got no reply. Pausing for a moment, she tried again. “MICHIRU!”

Nothing.

*She must still be outside working on her new painting,* Haruka mused.

“Excellent,” she said to herself, casually getting out of her plaster cast.

As a Senshi of the outer solar system she had remarkable healing and recovery power even for a Sailor Senshi, and so her broken leg had already healed in the hours since it had been hurt. But she wouldn't let the others know it was fine *just yet*— after all, their sympathy was nice. After tomorrow they'd reason it was healed anyway. Better to milk the injury while she could.

The doorbell rang.

"Damn!" Haruka exclaimed, quickly hopping back into her cast and grabbing some crutches. Hobbling over to the door, she opened it, but saw no one.

"Ahem," came a small voice from below. Haruka looked down to see a familiar pink-haired midget.

"Chibiusa-chan?" Haruka asked, looking down at the impossibly tiny pink-haired girl. "Hotaru just left."

"Actually, I'm looking for Puu," Chibiusa replied, indicating Setsuna.

Haruka tilted her head up and to the left, indicating the upstairs. "She's in her room, locked up. I don't know what she's been doing the last few days, actually. She might like a visit from 'Small Lady'." She smiled.

Chibiusa grinned and ran in, bounding up the stairs to Setsuna's room.

"She didn't even notice my leg," Haruka pouted, moving to close the door but stopping when she saw Nephrite passing by, Naru hanging off his arm.

"Nice fashion statement," Nephrite suavely mocked.

"Sorry to hear about your car— if you want, I have a Volkswagen Thing out back you can borrow if you need to get around— but then again, it might be too fast for you." He laughed diabolically.

Haruka fumed.

## UPSTAIRS

"Puu!" Chibiusa yelled at a closed door. "PUU!" She

pounded on it violently.

From behind the door, a muffled voice could be heard. “Leave me alone!”

Chibiusa was taken aback. The terrified, distraught voice she heard coming from the back of the door was nothing like the calm, reserved tone she was usually used to hearing from Meioh Setsuna.

“I’m coming in!” Chibiusa announced, producing her Luna-P floating toy and tossing it in the air. “Luna-P! Change into a bazooka!”

Clearly spending time with her biological mother in the past had not taught Chibiusa the fine art of subtlety.

With a “KRAKATHOOM!” sound, the door—and the forward half of Setsuna’s room—caved in. Amidst the debris, Chibiusa found a crouching, disheveled Setsuna staring down bleakly at the ground. In her left hand he was clutching a half-crumpled note, which Chibi-Usa gently tore from her grasp and read. Its lack of Kanji and frequent strikeouts pegged it as a letter from her future mother, Neo-Queen Serenity:

“Setsuna, because of your inability to wield the Garnet Orb, and your consequeneest inability to control the Time Gate, you are relieved of duty until further notice. Please take care of Small Lady for me as my present self, I mean my self not presently now but presently then, umm, I mean my self that is there with *you* will be too busy trying to concieveve Chibiusa to actually be bothered taking care of her and you have nothing else to do and we wouldn’t want you to get bored. **Thanks!**”

Chibiusa blinked for a moment, processing it. Then after a beat, she exclaimed “YAY! You get to take care of me! We’ll be spending ALL of our time together from now on!”

Setsuna sobbed heavily.

Chibiusa looked at her askance. “What’s wrong, Puu?”

Setsuna looked at her with wild, blood red eyes that strangely mirrored Chibiusa’s own. “What’s wrong? *What’s wrong*, you ask? I can’t see the future, that’s what’s wrong!”



“But—” Chibiusa began. Setsuna continued ranting.

“I spent my whole life, my whole LONG life, being cool and mysterious because I could wander amongst you humans and tell you things before they were going to happen. I could prognosticate events to 99% probability. I knew just when to waltz in, and just what to say in order to set events into motion the way *I* wanted them to go.

“Meioh Setsuna, never at a loss for words— never saying or doing the wrong thing because she had seen all the possibilities and she always picked the right one! Setsuna, the woman who always had the answers, the woman who held time and space, life and death, right in the palm of her hand— I was a player on the grand stage of the Cosmos, hell, I was THE player! I traded a lifetime of solitude and onerous duty for the ability to be BETTER than everyone else, and now... and now... I’m just like one of YOU!” Setsuna sobbed at the humanity of it all. Literally!”

She broke down into an Oscar-worthy pile of misery and tears.

“But at least I’m here!” Chibiusa cheerfully retorted. “Now that the Time Gate is off limits, I’m stuck here for possibly *forever!*”

Setsuna just began to bawl. Oblivious, Chibiusa pondered something. “Hmm. If that’s true, then I can be my own big sister when present me gets born.”

Somewhere, Hotaru suddenly felt the need to buy a whole new set of books.

## DOWNSTAIRS

“She wasn’t crying that loudly when she saw my broken leg,” Haruka muttered with with disgust as she tried to block out the wails of sorrow coming from upstairs. Carefully making her way up the stairs with her crutches, Haruka decided to go see what was wrong with Setsuna, but

stopped in front of Hotaru's room.

The door was ajar, and Hotaru's computer screen was glowing. She had apparently forgotten to turn it off before she left with Ami.

"First lamps, now computers," Haruka grumbled, making her way in to shut off the device. As she reached for the power switch, the computer boomed,

"You've got Mail."

Hotaru's personal privacy meaning absolutely nothing to her, Haruka clicked on the new E-Mail icon, and froze as she opened a message entitled: **ADV: THEY CAN SEE EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE!!**

Haruka blinked and continued reading:

>Do you think you are SAFE??  
>Do you think you have PRIVACY??  
>YOU are WRONG!!  
>  
>It's the INFORMATION AGE and  
>THEY can see every move YOU make  
>Your life is an OPEN BOOK!!  
>  
>You need PROTECTION!!  
>  
>For only ¥38,000—

Haruka snorted and deleted the message. "Stupid ad," she muttered. But as she stared at the computer screen, she took pause. She did not fully understand the Internet and all its associated technologies—used only to abusing her perfection field to allow herself to look suave and sophisticated in a public setting, where computers were somehow notoriously easy to gain entrance into and held all vital information a mere six keystrokes away from the user—and Ten'ou Haruka *never* trusted something she could not fully understand.

Doubt remained.

Loading up a web browser, Haruka found a search engine and typed in her name. With no small measure of pride, she watched as Google reported 2,380 hits. No doubt pages established by her legion of devoted racing fans (who had finally come to terms with the fact she was a woman), or the small but rabidly fanatic group of fans of her concert piano playing.

Haruka, like anyone, appreciated being praised. So she clicked on a link at random, and prepared for an onslaught of fanatical adulation.

What she got was a post to USENET entitled “Haruka and Michiru: Secrets.”

Haruka was in shock. Her command of English was perfect—partly because of her constant world travel and partly because of the Absolute Perfection field—and so she was able to appreciate every word in the document—every tawdry, salacious, suggestive, lewd and lascivious word.\*

Haruka had encountered the “lemon” fanfic for the first time.

Her face turned beet red as she found herself drawn to paragraph after paragraph, like a speeder forced against her instincts to slow down in order to view the full gory details of a particularly grisly accident.

But this fic was no accident, Haruka mused, finally looking away from the screen, her fists trembling with rage. Whoever had written this—

—Haruka looked at the top of the post—

—”NEFFY666@AOL.COM—

—was far TOO accurate in their depictions of her nocturnal activities.

Suddenly the E-mail she had read earlier made perfect sense. It had been a warning from some concerned citizen, telling her about the surveillance this “NEFFY666@AOL.COM” was carrying out on her house— it HAD to be!

Haruka fumed. She regretted having deleted the E-Mail. She would have liked to interroga...err, congratulate whoever it was that had sent her the warning.

“How can I find out who’s watching me?” Haruka mused to herself. She hit the “back” button on her browser and watched as a popup ad presented itself.

“GET THE BESTSELLING WIRELESS COLOR VIDEO CAMERA!” its text screamed.

“That sucker’s TINY,” Haruka thought to herself. “Perfect for watching the watchers.”

Navigating to the X-10 homepage, Haruka quickly placed an order for 50 cameras, setting the family’s plan to save up for a bigger house back by two years.

“But they won’t get here in time,” Haruka realized, scowling. Her need for vengeance was brutal, visceral, and needed *immediate* satisfaction.

“Besides, I don’t know who’s watching me,” she fretted, turning her head towards the window.

“—the hell?” she muttered under her breath, seeing what looked to be Nephelite staring back at her through large high-powered binoculars.

“NEFFY666...” Haruka scowled. “Nephelite... of course.”

In a blind rage, Haruka made her way to a search engine. “The press keeps saying the Internet is a hotbed of criminal activity that promotes social mayhem. Let’s see how right they are.”

Typing in “**send a car to hell**” she sat back and watched as 293 search results poured in.

A few minutes later, and with an evil glint in her eye, Haruka hit “print”, grabbed the resultant printout and made her way downstairs, forgetting all about her supposedly broken leg.

At the same time, Michiru was making her way up the stairs slowly, carrying a veiled canvas. She paused and flattened herself against the far wall as Haruka stormed past

her, clutching a sheaf of papers in her hand.

“Where are you going, dear?” Michiru asked curiously.

“Store,” Haruka grunted.

“Could you pick up some milk—” Michiru began.

“Not that kind of store,” Haruka muttered, making her way to the foot of the stairs and towards the front door.

Michiru shrugged and continued upstairs, going to her room and depositing her work in progress. Afterwards, she headed for Hotaru’s room.

Also disregarding any potential privacy issues, she made her way to the computer.

“I wonder what Haruka was researching,” Michiru asked herself idly. She pressed the “history” button and noted a search for “Ten’ou Haruka”.

“What an egotist she is,” Michiru said self-righteously as she entered her own name into the search engine. She smiled as she saw 2,310 hits. She would have frowned had she known Haruka’s result had been higher.

Michiru clicked on a link and saw a badly scanned photo of one of her paintings, underneath which there was a typically glowing review.

“This painting now available for sale on eBay!” the end of the review proudly proclaimed.

“What’s an eBay?” Michiru asked herself. “Probably some elite arthouse.”

Most things with the word “Bay” in them tended to be elite, or at least faux elite, anyway, which was good enough. She clicked on the link to eBay experimentally.

The same picture as before appeared, with the following text underneath:

**“‘BENEATH THE SEA’ by Kaio Mitcheroo. this is like a really profoud peace painted by that totally cool genuis concert painist KAioo Mitchitu.”**

Michiru’s left eye began to twitch involuntarily.

**“Tere are perspectives and waves that are done perfectly like a daVinci or microangelo.”**

Michiru smiled a bit at the imperfect sentiment.

**“Worth a lot of \$\$\$ CASH i got it from my mum as a stupid graduation present.”**

The twitch in Michiru’s left eye returned, stronger now.

**“Looks out of place enx to my ANDY WARHOL stuff so I need to sell it FAST FAST! GREAT INVESTMENT!”**

“Andy War— that HACK!” Michiru’s face went blue as blood left her face at the comparison of her talented, sensitive masterwork to that... soup can painting, populist low-talent.

Now seeing red, Michiru clicked on “see current bids” to see how much her lovely painting was selling for.

“THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS, reserve NOT MET?!” Michiru fought down the urge to scream. Dignified daughters of the house of Kaioh did not scream in an unladylike fashion. But her was one of her paintings— a labour of love, a testament to her genius, her CHILD— being sold for less than a TENTH of its actual value.

“I’ll just see about that,” Michiru muttered, entering a bid for three thousand dollars. Now, she thought, now they would begin to see the true value of her work, and others would be sure to bid higher in an effort to secure a part of her masterful corpus. She dimly knew that if no one did up The bid, she’d have to pay, but the chances of that happening were unthinkable.

She hit refresh. There were no new bids. Unthinkable.

## ONE HOUR AND SIXTY REFRESHES LATER

There were no new bids. Absolutely unthinkable.

## TWO HOURS AND NINETY REFRESHES LATER

No new bids. Ridiculously unthinkable.

Michiru's brow creased and she wrinkled her nose trying to figure out what was going wrong. She looked up the profile of the person selling her painting, hoping to send her an E-mail chastising the person for treating her artwork like any OTHER piece of paint and canvas... and noted a reference to the person's "blog."

"Blog?" Michiru asked herself as she clicked. She found an online personal journal, where the details of the journal owner's life were cataloged in almost painful detail.

"A place where people post every detail of their lives. But these lives are so boring," Michiru sighed. "They need insight into the life of someone fresh, dynamic, personable and filled with a deep insight into the world."

Michiru quickly registered herself a weblog and began typing furiously. Soon the world would know and appreciate the grace and beauty that characterized the everyday existence of Kaioh Michiru.

## OUTSIDE

Dressed in an all-black jumpsuit and gloves, Haruka made her way quietly to the back of the house, arms loaded with supplies picked up at the hardware and office supply store. Sneaking to a hole in the fence which separated her house from Nephelite's abode, Haruka slipped across the property line.

With drum and bass military commando music playing in her head, Haruka took one last look at the papers she had printed out earlier, committing her notes to memory. Crumpling up the paper into a ball, she swallowed it grimly. The die had been cast, the gauntlet had been thrown down, the cards were on the table and the s[BLEEP]t had hit the fan. She was committed to the path.

Crouching, she skulked over past Nephrite's decrepit Volkswagen Thing and made her way towards his sleek red Ferrari. She produced her supplies and recalled her instructions, as provided by someone called "Jolly Roger".

**>How to have phun with someone else's car.**

Nephrite's car, Haruka noted with dark satisfaction.

**>If you really detest someone, and I mean detest,**

Haruka mentally pictured a decapitated Nephrite roasting alive over a pit of boiling oil covered in honey and being set into by hungry ants while vultures picked at his flesh from above.

**>here's a few tips on what to do in your spare time.**

Haruka looked at her watch and nodded. Then she followed the directions, ran out of the yard and sat back to watch the chaos when Nephrite got to the car.

A FEW HOURS LATER

Hotaru waved as Ami left, making for the bus stop. They had spent hours discussion child psychology and advanced Freudian analytical techniques, with a focus on species other than *homo sapiens sapiens*. It had not been the most appetizing discussion to have over ice cream and



coffee cake, but it had given Hotaru some useful strategies to employ on Chibiusa when the time was right.

Tucking her new copy of “ANIMAL ATTRACTION IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY” in her pocketbook, Hotaru saw Haruka sitting on the front steps, staring intently at Nephrite’s Ferrari across the way.

“Haruka-poppa—” Hotaru began.

“Not NOW!” Haruka hissed, her eagle eyes locked onto Nephrite, who was coming out of his front door with Naru hanging off his side. She was saying something to him, but Haruka could not hear it.

“Sorry about it nawt goin’ well, honey muffin!” Naru screeched in her Deep South Brooklyn Bronx accent.

“Feh,” Nephrite replied. “Stupid defective binoculars. Still, it’s just as well as it would be a source of constant ridicule if anyone knew that a former King of the Dark Kingdom was occupied in as menial a pursuit as... birdwatching.”

“That’s it,” Haruka muttered under her breath as she watched Nephrite pry Naru off of him and make for the Ferrari. “Go to your doom, you perverted jerk.”

Nephrite seemed to sense Haruka’s gaze and looked back at her. “Taking fashion tips from the whelp I see,” Nephrite boomed as he noted Haruka’s all-black outfit.

“WHELP?” Hotaru hissed angrily. But privately she was more incensed with Nephrite’s comparing her to Haruka.

“I meant no offense,” Nephrite boomed. “Don’t go goth on me and wreck the world in your rage, eh, Saturn-chan?”

Hotaru clenched her fist. Sometimes she wished homicide wasn’t so socially disfavoured. She prayed to the Kami that the self-righteous fool would be chastised ere long.

As Nephrite got into his car, Haruka worked hard to suppress a chuckle, her mind recalling the text from the anarchist’s cookbook.

>Remove his [OMITTED FOR PUBLIC SAFETY] and pour approximately 1

>Cup of gas in it. Put the [OMITTED LIKE THEY DO IN MACGYVER] back, then

>wait till their car starts. Watch as it becomes

Haruka watched as Nephrite started the car and it became

**> a cigarette lighter. A 30 foot long cigarette lighter.**

As the back of the car exploded, Hotaru blanched and frantically told Kami she had not meant for it to go THAT far. Haruka merely chuckled darkly.

In a panic, Nephrite scrambled to get out, his arm hitting the windshield wiper lever. A loud scratching noise could he heard. Apparently someone had inserted glue tacks onto the wipers. He watched in disbelief as they scored patterns into his lovely windshield.

Crawling out of his car, Nephrite started at Haruka, who was now laughing uncontrollably.

As his car exploded behind him, Nephrite's eyes glowed red.

"This is payback for that race I beat you in last week, ISN'T IT?!" He roared. "Well FINE, Ten'ou! If you want a war, you've GOT a WAR! This isn't over, not by a long shot! THIS ISN'T OVER!"

Shaking his fist in fury at Haruka, Nephrite went back inside to plan his counterattack.

"Haruka-poppa, did you—" Hotaru asked, in her heart already knowing the depressing answer.

Haruka raised her hand in a silencing motion. "You're too young to understand certain things, Hotaru-chan."

Hotaru frowned. "I'm at my proper age. I'm not that much younger than you,

and I daresay my understanding of things is vastly superior—”\*

“—That’s what he gets for peeping in on private things,”

Haruka declared with satisfaction, getting up and walking in the house.

Hotaru shrugged and made her way inside as a very distressed-looking Chibiusa made her way outside.

“Chibiusa-chan,” Hotaru began cheerfully, intending to show her the new book she had bought with Ami, but she changed her mind as she looked at the worried child’s face. “What’s wrong?”

“Puu,” Chibiusa began slowly, a worried look on her face. “She—she just won’t stop laughing.”

Inside the house, Michiru dazedly made her way downstairs, not even hearing Setsuna’s increasingly deranged laughter as she worried about how to break the news to Haruka that she had just landed the family three thousand dollars in debt for one of her own paintings.

Idly she wondered if she hadn’t been too candid in her blog, but that was the least of her worries.

Hotaru, for her part had made it back to her room, stared at her computer screen in complete and utter shock. Michiru-mama had failed to navigate away from her page, and her blog entry was there for her (and, Hotaru thought miserably, the world) to see.

Numbly, she re-read the page, hoping that perhaps her eyes had deceived her.

“...and the circumstances I have to live in. Take Setsuna. She’s supposed to be this wise woman. But all she is an old, bitter crone who delights in playing with my life like I was just some kind of tinker toy. She has no boyfriend, because of her job (she’s a kind of security guard, you might say) so she takes delight in confusing us with riddles and playing us like puppets or, more apropos, pawns. She never stays around to help in household affairs, and she always acts so Holier-than-thou!

“Honestly, just because she’s an ancient crone doesn’t mean she has the right to judge me. She hasn’t got an inkling of the depth of my thoughts or the delicate sensibilities of my genius.

“And speaking of that, there’s Haruka, the one I love. She’s a philistine I tell you— a real Philistine. Certainly she has her redeeming points— her loyalty and protectiveness for instance— but she’s not exactly the sharpest tool in the shed. If it’s not sports like wrestling or racing or running, or beer or mechanical nonsense, don’t expect her to be able to hold a prolonged conversation. She’s got a nasty temper and a short attention span, and she can only ever ‘get’ a third of the depth in my works. It’s a miracle this woman ever managed to master the piano like she has— I’m sure it’s a recessive gene or something. And don’t get me started on her \*clothing\*— my friend Mamoru (a man) borrows \*her\* clothes sometimes.

“You’d think Hotaru would be my salvation, as she let me teach her the violin and she has more than half a brain on her head and she is somewhat perceptive. But no! This girl is the very definition of the word ‘repressed’. Sitting alone in a room that she would prefer darkened, wearing nothing but all black and reading about history, mythology, poetry and apocalyptic mystery, you’d think she was studying to be a medieval monk or something! And sanctimony— she personifies that. She holds a grudge and thinks that just because Haruka and I have made one or two slight errors in judgement in the past regarding her that we’re somehow flawed individuals. Well I have a friend named Kuniko who could tell her otherwise. I tell you, it’s no surprise this girl has no friends. Talking down to everyone and constantly acting precocious- it’s all I can do to avoid going mad. If talking with Haruka is like trying to pleasantly converse with a high school jock, then talking to Hotaru is like talking to the head nun of a Catholic School— lots of fire and brimstone. I won’t even start going on about Usagi and her friends—”

If she had had the training for it, Hotaru would have been kicking up a huge *ki* storm. As it was, her eyes were glowing purple, the sigil of Saturn was on her forehead and the silence glaive was phasing in and out of existence in Hotaru’s left hand— and she wasn’t even transformed.

Thankfully, supreme self-control asserted itself, and Hotaru slammed the left mouse button, clicking on “print”. She then deleted the web copy of the blog.

Putting the sheaf of papers in a safe place, Hotaru smiled tautly. “*Fire and Brimstone, eh?* All in the fullness of time. In the fullness of Time.”

Speaking of time— Setsuna’s maniacal laughter climaxed at a deafening roar and then fell deathly silent.

## SETSUNA’S ROOM

Setsuna stood stiffly, regarding herself in the mirror. She had spent thousands of years of her life ensuring the proper flow of time. She had dedicated herself to making sure that the future of Crystal Tokyo, the Crystal Imperium and Chibiusa was preserved and protected. She had suffered from afar as the eternal romance between Princess Serenity / Tsukino Usagi / Neo-Queen Serenity and Prince Endymion / Chiba Mamoru / King Endymion grew, never confessing her own feelings for the prince of the Earth. She had resigned herself to a life of suffering in solitude.

But the last few hours had taught her some things.

### **One - Chibiusa was an annoying little brat.**

In the past, Setsuna’s dealings with Chibiusa had been brief fifteen or twenty minute conversations in between official palace functions or when the child was in conflict with her parents. They had been welcome breaks from the eternal tedium of the Time Gate. But spending hours with her now, with no duties to return to, and having to hear constantly about her boyfriend Elios (a.k.a. Mr. Ed) and having to cater to her every spoiled whim had taught Setsuna that Small Lady WAS a spore begging to be crushed.

### **Two - She was a free woman.**

Having been fired by Neo-Queen Serenity, she was no longer in control of or responsible for monitoring the proper flow of time; indeed, she could do nothing about it even if she wanted to. This led to what had been the most shocking [and cathartic] conclusion of all:

### **Three - Chiba Mamoru was fair game.**

Sure it was a “miracle romance”. But keeping Usagi and

Mamoru together had the following consequences:

- 1- The world would freeze.
- 2- Chibiusa would be born.
- 3- Setsuna would become a nigh-immortal spinster.

None of these were acceptable, and now that Future Serenity had been so kind as to discharge her from duty, she was FREE to do what she wanted... GET what she wanted, and damn the consequences because, after all, it wasn't her job anymore to worry about them!

A sick grin spread across Setsuna's usually stolid face and a bit of rabid foam dripped from the corner of her mouth.

## DOWNSTAIRS

"I don't understand, Haruka," Michiru asked confusedly. "Why did you order FIFTY wireless cameras?! You know how strapped we are for funds! We won't even be able to afford *McDonald's* at this rate!"

"I have a broken leg?" Haruka countered weakly pointing to her re-attached cast, desperately trying to play the sympathy card.

"I passed you going down the stairs without it, BAKA." Michiru snapped.

Haruka scowled. Damn that woman's powers of observation!

"Why don't you tell Haruka-poppa about the painting you bought," Hotaru chimed in smoothly. Her investigation of the browser cache had been most useful. She would have to thank Ami for teaching her that trick.

Michiru fell silent.

"What painting?" Haruka asked dangerously, smelling blood.

“Oh, just the one for three THOUSAND dollars.” Hotaru replied with glib satisfaction.

Haruka’s face went blue. “How much?”

“It’s a real *Michiru original*,” Hotaru concluded with barely-restrained glee.

“WHAT?!” Haruka almost went postal. “You PAID for one of your OWN works? You can just make more! You churn them out like dollar store ornaments!” She threw her hands up in the air.

“You don’t understand my artistic suffering!” Michiru cried, storming out.

There was a loud BOOM from the front lawn as Haruka’s lawnmower exploded.

“What the HELL?!” Haruka made for the window.

“I expect that’s just Nephelite taking revenge for you blowing up his car for no reason,” Hotaru observed as neutrally as she could.

“What do you mean, ‘no reason?’” Haruka asked weakly.

Hotaru shook her head, revealing what else her investigations into the browser cache had taught her. “In actuality, NEFFY666 is a pimple-faced socially deprived nerd with dreams of writing the ultimate Utena-Anthy-Haruka-Michiru-Lain-Key hentai lemon, currently living in a trailer somewhere in Manitoba Canada. He or she has no connection to Nephelite whatsoever.”

Haruka looked outside at the flaming lawnmower and slapped her face. She winced as Nephelite yelled out “and this is just the beginning, Ten’ou! You hear me?! The BEGINNING! You thought the Sailor Wars were tough, biatch?! Now you’ve thrown it down with the Nephelite!”

Haruka groaned. She was so out of it that she completely missed Setsuna bounding down the stairs, a look of ecstatic joy on her face.

Running out the door, Setsuna stood in front of the flaming lawnmower, casually batting Nephelite aside like a fly. Looking up at the sky, she stretched out her arms.

“CHIBA MAMORU!” she yelled.

“SOON YOU WILL BE MINE!”



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PREVIEW OF NEXT EPISODE

*Chibiusa, you say you don't like your Mamo-chan anymore? You say you've got a good thing going with Horsey-boy? Well look out, because Auntie Setsuna is going to change your mind! But Hotaru has other ideas! She's siding WITH Pegasus? What is Usagi going to say about all this? And what is Michiru doing in that Kitchen?! Haruka, play nice with Nephelite! And why is [BLEEP] here? You know who I mean, [BLEEP]! Next time, on Suburban Senshi, Episode Three: "There's something about Mamo-chan!" You better get ready!*



SUBURBAN  
SENSHI  
オーバーハブ 戦士

SEASON ONE  
Episode 3



*THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MAMO-CHAN*

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2002  
REMASTERED APRIL 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2016

Tomoe Hotaru stood by a lake in her pajamas underneath a mysterious moonlit sky. Around her was a dark sylvan glade filled with the sound of crystal trees chiming softly in the breeze. Beside her, standing in the middle of the dark water, she spied an ethereal Pegasus, calm and serene. Quickly, she became captivated by its pearly white coat, its sublime grace and mysterious presence. The Pegasus snorted slightly, and inclined its head, beckoning her closer... ever closer.

Hotaru stretched her hand out tentatively.

There was a slash. The glint of hard adamantium. A gusher of oxygenated blood. The severed head of Pegasus bobbing in the blood-filled lake, looking up in shock at the stern visage of Sailor Saturn.

“you... decapitated me...” the mythical beast’s head spluttered, gasping in its slow, slightly creepy pedophilic voice.

“Stay out of my dreams, foul tempter of innocent youth,” Sailor Saturn proclaimed darkly, as Hotaru woke up.

Deep in the depths of her (now Pegasus-free) dream world, Hotaru smiled. A feeling of calm relaxation spread across her being.

“Death... coming towards us!!” she dimly heard. The words didn’t seem to be coming from the dream. She frowned.

“Is someone talking about me again?” Hotaru’s waking body mumbled, not quite conscious yet. A massive explosion soon fixed that, however.

Hotaru’s eyes opened just in time to see the front of her room door blown open by what could only have been a Deep Submerge attack. Having nasty flashbacks to the last time she faced such an attack, Hotaru reflexively

transformed into Sailor Saturn as Sailor Neptune appeared in her room.

Before Saturn could demand an explanation, Neptune yelled “Hurry up, Hotaru! Jump out the window before it’s too late!!”

Hotaru looked at Neptune askance. She wondered if this weak ploy was really the best they could think of to try and kill her after all these years.

Neptune shook her head. “It’s not what you think! No time to explain, dear! Why do you think I’m transformed for? It’s the only way!” Michiru quickly leapt out the window without further ado.

Saturn shook her head. From a wonderful dream of noble and decisive assassination to being asked to defenestrate oneself— such was a day in the life of a Sailor Senshi. She was about to look out the window to see what Neptune was doing on the front lawn when Sailor Uranus came roaring into the room, not even bothering to stop, merely yelling “move, death cloud, hurry!” before leaping out the window herself.

“Death Cloud?” Saturn mouthed before shrugging and leaping from her window, landing safely on her feet some thirty feet down. There she saw Haruka and Michiru looking at each other with the oddest expressions on their faces.

Well, she reasoned, if they de-transformed, this “Death Cloud” thing couldn’t be a new enemy. Saturn de-transformed.

“So what is this Death Cl—” Hotaru began.

Raising her hand imperiously, Michiru cut her off and pointed up, where a green cloud of apparently corrosive mist could be seen wafting from Hotaru’s window. “Haruka made it this morning while playing with various household cleaners and solvents.”

Hotaru scowled and looked at Haruka. “Still playing with anarchist text files from the internet, I see.”

Haruka nodded her head absently, staring intently at the cloud. “Go the other way,” she hissed under her breath, subconsciously trying to will the cloud to pass over onto Nephrite’s property. “No, not that other way, the *other* other way...”

“Wow...” Nephrite said sarcastically from his front lawn, looking up at the cloud from behind expensive Italian sunglasses. “Look at that thing go... is that the best you weak pathetic Senshi can do? Child-youma in the Dark Kingdom expelled more potent fumes after eating bean burritos.”

Haruka balled up her fists and tried willing the cloud even harder.

“Don’t you think this little revival of the Dark Kingdom war has gone on long enough?” Michiru asked Haruka after Nephrite had gone back inside. “First you blow up his car put putting gas in his muffler. Then he shoots up the side of the house with a potato cannon. You retaliate by pouring super glue in all his locks—”

“Just a bit of harmless fun...” Haruka growled through gritted teeth.

“Well, at least I have my precious painting back,” Michiru sighed, walking into the house for a moment to retrieve the painting she had “rescued” from the philistines on eBay.

“I can’t believe you paid three thousand dollars for it,” Haruka said, looking at the depiction of a calm blue sea under a bright blue sky.

“Hmph,” Michiru exhaled. “You probably don’t even know what this all means.”

*She probably thinks it’s just waves under the sky or something,* Michiru thought. “So?” She asked, what do you see when you look at it, hmm? Can you appreciate its finer subtleties?”

Haruka looked at it and shrugged, taking her best shot. “It’s just waves under the sky—”

At that moment a random member of the public walked past the front yard within earshot.

From out of nowhere, rose petals drifted into view. A seeming choir of angels began to hum.

“—which clearly symbolize the deep psychological mysteries of man—embodied by the ocean— hidden under the thin veneer of the reflected self as shown by the sunlit waves,” Haruka suddenly concluded, as the passerby murmured “wow” to herself and walked off.

For a moment the world was watercolor, and then everything was back to normal.

Michiru blanched, a large drop of sweat beading on the side of her head. “I’m impressed, dear.”

Haruka grinned and gave her a thumbs-up. “I’m just perfect, I guess.”

Michiru sighed. “Well, I’m sure I can sell this to a reputable art dealer for a princely sum. Then we’ll all eat like royalty.”

Just then, the green death cloud descended, killing off the grass on the lawn as it moved, passing in front of the painting, melting the paint into unrecognizable blobs. Michiru looked at the scene, jaw agape.

“Well, it certainly is ‘surrealist,’” Haruka quipped.

“You don’t even know what that word means,” Michiru griped.

Hotaru sighed. “You know, the fall of most great empires was precipitated by a lack of ability to adequately fund vital infrastructure or provide for the nutritional needs of its people. Not that I’m comparing us to a great empire—” she watched as Haruka and Michiru began screaming insults at one another. “—no, we’re now at the ‘vicious infighting colonists stage’. Definitely.”

## A HALF HOUR LATER

Taking a break from the shenanigans at home, Hotaru had made her way across town, where she met up with Aino Minako—who was fresh back from some investigations in America in her old guise as Sailor V—sitting with her at an outdoor table sipping lime soda.

“Ne, Hotaru-chan,” Minako said after taking a long sip of her drink, “are you sure you want me to do this?” She frowned slightly.

Hotaru nodded. “It would be extremely helpful if you would.”

Minako sighed. “It’s *so* hard being the Goddess of Love sometimes,” she complained. “Everyone always needs your services.”

Hotaru ignored the conceit, just wishing she would get on with it. “Well?”

Minako looked past Hotaru, past the 10 AM crowd in the outdoor eating area, and towards a young couple seated at a park bench—a slender platinum-blond male dressed in a red shirt and dark purple pants wearing a reversed black baseball cap, sitting extremely close to a very short pink-haired girl.

“Well,” Minako began after studying them intently for a few moments, “Chibiusa has six fillings, Elios has none—just—” She looked harder, askance “—some false gold caps on his teeth?!”

Hotaru sighed. Since Sailor Venus’ powers granted her dominion over the element metal and *allegedly* the force of love, Hotaru had been relying on Minako to use her inherent ability to determine if two individuals were truly suited for one another in order to gauge the severity of the Elios- Chibiusa problem. Instead, Minako had apparently chosen to use her ability to sense and identify any kind of metal instead.

“I’m not really interested in their *dental work*,” Hotaru

replied somewhat exasperatedly. “Are they a match?”

Minako wrinkled her nose slightly. “Always respect your elders, Hotaru-chan, I’m getting to that.” She concentrated intently on the pair for a second.

“There’s no problem,” she declared finally.

Hotaru looked at her intently, disbelief flashing over her features. “Really?”

“They’re a perfect match,” Minako insisted. “Of course Elios’ powers could be messing up what I see about him.”

“I see.” Hotaru got up, her expression clouded. “Please, continue to enjoy your meal,” she began darkly. “I shall be back shortly.”

“Wait!” Minako exclaimed, standing up quickly and pointing at her accusingly. “As Sailor Venus, the protector of lovers everywhere, I can’t allow you to go interfering where true love has begun to flower!”

Hotaru looked at her as if she were mad. “Minako-san, the boy is a *Horse*. Why do you think he’s wearing that ridiculous baseball cap? It’s to hide his *horn* from the public eye. Look how he’s drooling all over Chibiusa— like he’s pining for a sugar cube!”

Minako frowned, shaking her head. “You know what they say—” she pointed to the sky profoundly, “‘Love is a very splendid fling.’”

Hotaru blanched. Minako’s malapropisms were getting worse with time. “You mean to quote the Bard: ‘Love is a many-splendored thing.’”

Minako sweatdropped. “Doesn’t matter,” she finally declared, gearing up for an Oscar-worthy soliloquy. “Love is love. Someday you’ll understand that. It’s my job to protect that love. I can’t let you destroy it.”

Hotaru snorted. “I’m Sailor Saturn, the soldier of ruin, remember? Destruction *is* my duty,” she countered, stalking off, her black-clad form cutting through the bright pastel crowd around her like a dark harbinger of doom.

Minako briefly thought of interceding, but the truth was she too was a little worried about the horse situation, emotions aside. Besides, she thought as she sat down and picked up her drink, *this could get real interesting real fast.*

On the bench, Elios leaned over Chibiusa, mumbling in her ear. As Hotaru listened to him, she noted his voice was unsettling, like the glib tones of a far-too-much older, eerily subtextual pedophilic man.

“That’s right, honey,” Elios suavely declared. “I’m the *man*. I can make *all* your dreams come true. Dreams are what I’m all about, after all, my little Suga Baybee.”

A dark shadow crept over the couple.

“And I’m all about nightmares,” Hotaru intoned darkly. “You’re quite different when out of the public eye, eh, my *equine* friend?”

Elios looked up at her with an air of smug amusement. Chibiusa just stared at his face in a dream-like trance as he responded, “Well if it isn’t Goth grrrl. Look who’s talking about being different. Aren’t you usually polite to excess?”

“Not to my enemies,” Hotaru retorted, scowling. “And for the record, I am *not* ‘Goth’. The time is nigh for us to settle our differences, you vile manipulator of the dreams of innocent youth.”

Clouds began to gather, and raindrops began to fall. The vast crowds of the midmorning dispersed, leaving only the interested parties in the park.

“You’re just a speciest, you know that?” Elios spat, getting up, eyes flashing darkly as Chibiusa, for her part, was still gazing into the middle distance with hearts for eyes. “‘Humans for Humans’, and all that. Well, It’ll be my pleasure to teach you to be more open minded.” He regarded her figure and smirked. “Or do you secretly want some of what da sweet Elios has to offer?”

“Perish the thought,” Hotaru said, changing in a flash to Sailor Saturn, her Silence Glaive’s wickedly sharp curved edge pressing dangerously against Elio’s throat, “or



preferably... just perish.”

Elios blanched.

“The Glaive cries out for the blood of the profane,” Saturn said with a bit too much relish, as if she too was competing for a non-existent Oscar.

With the sound of a ricocheting bullet, a rose shot out of the sky and flew in the space between Saturn and Elios, separating the two. Saturn could almost swear she heard cheesy music in the background.

“Hold! It is unbecoming for fellows on the side of light to fight amongst themselves,” Tuxedo Mask dashingly declared, leaping from high up in the trees to a position alongside Sailor Saturn.

“Uhh, excuse me,” Saturn asked icily, “What exactly are you doing?”

Tuxedo Mask looked at her and quietly whispered “well, ever since Usagi’s services as Sailor Moon have not been needed, I’ve been showing up whenever any of the other Senshi have needed backup in a fight. At least, that’s the plan. I need to keep my reflexes sharp.”

“Endymion-sama!” Elios exclaimed, suddenly sounding like a well-behaved young man. He had also quickly transformed into his priestly robes and kneeling on the ground in deference. “Sailor Saturn was going to attack me, the loyal servant to your family since time immemorial.”

“What is the meaning of this?” Tuxedo Mask demanded, looking at Saturn accusingly.

“Well let’s see,” Saturn began, unimpressed. “An older man with a great deal of experience in the ways of the world who is in actuality a flying animal creature, actively trying to seduce a much younger, naive girl— *your own* future daughter. This is the injustice I am seeking to correct.”

Tuxedo Mask scowled and turned his gaze to Elios. “I had never thought of it in those terms before.”

Elios calmly stood and produced a picture of Mamoru and Usagi from within his jacket. "Ahem. I believe you too have experience in the 'older male woos younger naive female' department."

The rose on the ground wilted as Tuxedo Mask sweatdropped, the hypocrisy of his stance now fully exposed. "I— uhh, leave it to you, Sailor Saturn!" he suddenly announced, quickly flying up into the trees.

Within seconds, unbeknownst to the others, Tuxedo Mask suddenly found himself enmeshed in a large net.

"Yes," said a dark and sinister voice. "Welcome to my net of intrigue."

"Shouldn't that be 'web' of Intrigue?" the trapped Tuxedo Mask asked.

"Silence!" the voice cried out, suddenly a lot less dark and sinister. A giant needle lashed out and stabbed Tuxedo Mask in the arm and everything went dark.

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Back on the ground, Saturn was once again squaring off with Elios. "Looks like you won't be getting any help now, Pegasus," Saturn icily declared.

With a flash, Elios was transformed into Pegasus. "Don't mock my power," Pegasus warned in his borderline creepy pedophile dub voice. "I powered up all the inner Senshi."

"So," Saturn countered, "That was only because you stole all their clothes and refused to give them back unless you powered them up each time. I powered up all the other outer Senshi and Eternal Sailor Moon."

Pegasus frowned. "I won't let you get between me and my Reenie!" Pegasus exclaimed.

"Reenie?" Saturn asked, despite herself.

"My pet name for her. A lot nicer than 'Chibi', don't you think?"

“Your perversity knows no bounds,” Saturn growled.

“Die!” Pegasus launched into the air, gyred once and swooped towards Saturn, energy crackling from his big golden horn.

“Silence Glaive, SURPRISE!” Hotaru launched her one offensive attack that she could mount without dying (since unlike Death Reborn Revolution, she did not have to put all of her energy into it at once). The ground under Saturn cracked and exploded, a crater forming everywhere save the spot upon which she stood. A wave of energy lashed out from the Silence Glaive smashing Pegasus in the side.

Like a shot down jet fighter, Pegasus veered out of control and landed in some far-off bushes.

Sensing someone approaching, Saturn quickly de-transformed.

“What’s going on here?” The local police chief asked.

Hotaru looked at her surroundings— a massive smoking crater, still issuing forth wisps of residual energy. Thinking fast, she lied “I think I saw Son Goku come past a moment ago.”

Ironically, unbeknownst to any of them, he *had*, the tempo of his battles now on such an accelerated plane that they weren’t even visible to the untrained eye any longer except for the effects they had on the terrain.

The police chief snorted. “Damn that Son Goku and his friends, always flying all over the place, having their fights and ripping up huge chunks of the Earth. It’s like ‘NOBODY ELSE has to live here’... oh NOOO... ‘so let’s just devastate the city because we CAN— Between them and Gojira—”

He trailed off into a long, winding rant, completely forgetting about Hotaru, who simply sighed and went to the bench where Chibiusa sat alone, still in a daze.



## THE TOMOE RESIDENCE

“Did you bring it?” asked the manically grinning Professor Tomoe, his face obscured by shadow, hyper-polished glasses glinting in the darkness.

“I have the sample right here,” Setsuna replied, pleased with herself, holding up a large hypodermic needle filled with blood. It was almost the length of her arm.

“I didn’t actually need that much blood,” the mad Professor remarked, taken aback slightly.

“Better safe than sorry,” Setsuna chided, donning a white lab coat. “Were you able to get the other sample?”

She followed Tomoe down into the depths of his rebuilt home laboratory.

“Easily enough!” the Professor replied, sporting a wide crimson grin. “There were samples all over the house to choose from. She was here almost every day at one point.”

The duo approached a fancy microwave-like device which had a black star emblazoned on the front.

“So now what?” Setsuna asked.

Professor Tomoe took the hypodermic needle from Setsuna and injected it into a small seed-like egg, which he then tossed into the microwave-like box, which already contained some other random objects.

“We set the monsterbake on high for three minutes,” Tomoe replied, chuckling, “and then *it will be born!* MUAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH!”

## THREE MINUTES LATER

As Setsuna stood gazing in admiration at the Professor’s latest creation, Tomoe continued to laugh maniacally. After a few seconds, the usually reserved and aloof Setsuna began to chuckle... finally exploding into similar diabolical laughter.

“So you see,” Hotaru concluded, thrusting a copy of the explicitly illustrated THE HORSE WHISPERER GOES TOO FAR in Chibiusa’s face, “this is what actually *would* happen if you fulfilled your carnal desires with Elios. As you can see, there has been severe hemorrhaging—”

Chibiusa expelled the contents of her stomach.

Hotaru smiled inwardly. While she did not particularly enjoy torturing her friend with the horrific imagery found in works such as SO YOU WANT TO MAKE A CENTAUR, it was necessary to introduce Chibiusa to the harsh reality of the world Pegasus was trying to lure her into before it was too late. And now that Pegasus was incapacitated somewhere, he couldn’t use his dream powers to keep the pink-haired girl in his thrall.

“*That’s* what he really is?!” Chibiusa asked in shock, staring at some of the pictures. “The fairy tales never—”

“They never do,” Hotaru replied coldly. “They never do.”

“It’s OVER!” Chibiusa exclaimed. “I don’t want to have anything to do with that... with that *BEAST* again!”

Hotaru nodded to herself in satisfaction. Now she could let Minako and the others set Chibiusa up with a nice, human boy. The way was finally clear.

“I’m glad to hear you’re free, Small Lady,” Setsuna said, walking into the park with a big smile on her face. “We were all worried about you.”

Chibiusa grinned. Hotaru smiled, but felt a creeping darkness in the back of her mind.

“Will I ever find someone, Puu?” Chibiusa asked desperately.

“Of course, dear,” Setsuna said, stepping aside to reveal a very blank-faced Mamoru. “He’s right here.”

Hotaru and Chibiusa both threw up.

A long moment passed silently, broken only by the

sound of a sudden gust of wind.

“That’s her *father*,” Hotaru hissed.

“Yeah!” Chibiusa protested. “I’m all over that Electra Complex!”

Hotaru nodded. It had been a long, hard year, full of false starts and horrible psychological trauma, but Chibiusa had persevered and come out cleansed of her unhealthy affection for—

“Oh it’s all right,” Setsuna cheerfully replied, “This is merely a *clone* of Mamoru-san.”

Without warning, Chibiusa screeched “MAMO-CHAN!”, and foaming at the mouth, launched herself at the clone, clamping herself firmly onto him.

“I love you,” the Mamo-clone uttered flatly.

Hotaru lost all strength in her knees and had to sit down, watching helplessly as Chibiusa glommed onto her father-but-not-her-father. “The consequences of inbreeding still exist...” she began weakly, sounding more like Ami-chan than anything else.

“CHIBIUSA!” Tsukino Usagi yelled, storming into the park. “Hands off my Mamo-chan!”

“I love you,” Mamo-clone said to Usagi lifelessly.

“MY Mamo-chan!” Chibiusa protested, as she and Usagi began to get into a fight.

“This is your doing, isn’t it, Setsuna-mama?” Hotaru declared darkly, looking over at the wickedly grinning Setsuna. “But I don’t understand...” she frowned. “You don’t have the technical capacity to make a clone, much less the necessary infrastructure—”

“That was all provided for me by... your father.” Setsuna replied with all the gravitas of a James Earl Jones.

Hotaru started. “Father?” She hadn’t heard from him in a long time. “I’m going to go see him and get to the bottom of this.” She scowled.

Setsuna shook her head. “Your father is ashamed to see you, remember? That’s why you’re living with us to begin

with.”

Setsuna’s thoughts wound back through time.

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APRIL 11<sup>th</sup>, 1994

Professor Tomoe sat with baby Hotaru in his front lawn watching the sakura blossoms fall from the trees in the front yard of his home.

“Oh, my child,” the mildly spoken, white haired, well-dressed man said to his baby. “I know you have probably forgiven me for what I did to you... I only did it because I wanted you to live. But the shame devours me. I can’t bear to see your smiling face any longer, knowing what I have put you through. Soon that nice woman will be here, and you’ll go to live with her and her friends. Please try to think kindly of me in your memories, Hotaru-chan.”

Setsuna walked into the front yard. “It’s time,” she said gently. “We will take excellent care of her— this we all swore.”

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Setsuna snapped back to the present. “It was a noble sacrifice,” she exhaled with an air of breathless inspiration.

Hotaru glared at her. “You know my body may have been that of a baby,” Hotaru began coldly, “but my mind was still fully developed. I remember everything perfectly.”

“Do you?” Setsuna asked offhandedly, holding the back of her head sheepishly, hoping that wasn’t true.

This time, Hotaru’s thoughts wound back through time.

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APRIL 11<sup>th</sup>, 1994

Professor Tomoe sat with baby Hotaru in his front lawn

watching the sakura blossoms fall from the trees in the front yard of his home.

“Do you like the blossoms, Hotaru-chan?” Professor Tomoe asked his baby.

“I have come for the child,” came Setsuna’s voice, booming imperiously from somewhere behind him.

“Who are you?” Tomoe asked the woman he could not identify, craning his head to see her properly.

“You are not fit to raise such a child,” Setsuna said darkly. “For you are too mentally unstable.”

“Are you from social services?” Tomoe asked. “I may have amnesia, but—”

With a THOK! Setsuna slammed Tomoe on the head with her Time Staff, the Big Assed Key.

Professor Tomoe groaned for a moment, memories beginning to flood his mind. His visage clouded for a moment, becoming obscured by shadow, his glasses glinting in the light. He laughed maniacally.

“Now that we’re all here,” Setsuna continued in a more business-like manner, “you know that your daughter has the latent power of Saturn in her.”

“I also know you tried to *kill* her,” Professor Tomoe replied in a somewhat bemused tone.

“So did you,” Setsuna parried.

Tomoe shrugged. “Technically I was trying to keep her alive. So the demon possession thing went *a little too far*. Your point is?”

Setsuna leans on her staff confidently. “My friends and I want to take care of her, raise her in a sheltered environment, where it is unlikely her powers of destruction will re-awaken.”

“And if they should?” Tomoe asked.

“Then we’d ‘take care’ of her.” Setsuna replied darkly.

“I can’t just give up my daughter,” Tomoe protested. “I wuv my cuddwy widdle destructo-muffins~!” He cuddled Hotaru, who cooed with pleasure.



Setsuna frowned. “Do you really want to run the risk of her getting killed in an accident again, or taken over by some pan-dimensional being of evil?”

“That won’t happen,” Tomoe replied confidently. “I’m not going to do any more research into parallel universes. Ever.” The quietly chuckling mad scientist raised a hand in a solemn gesture.

Setsuna raised her eyebrow. The lie was a transparent one.

Tomoe’s face fell, defeated. He handed Hotaru to Setsuna. “Here. Just be sure and take *good* care of her. Because if you don’t—” he began to laugh diabolically as Setsuna sweatdropped.

Growling, Setsuna realized the jig was up. “That’s right,” she snapped defiantly. “‘Keep your friends close and your enemies closer’ was what we had all decided that day.” She frowned, suddenly puzzled. “But wait...” she began quizzically. “if you knew all that, why did you stay with us?”

“Keep your friends close and your enemies closer,” Hotaru echoed with dark amusement. The two women eyed each other warily.

“So what is your plan?” Hotaru asked as she watched the two Usagis fighting over the cloned Mamoru. “I thought losing the Garnet Orb put an end to your days of blatant manipulation.”

“Oh no, my dear,” Setsuna replied, not a little manically. “Now *the gloves are off*. For where I was once the guardian of Order, I will now be the bringer of carefully controlled Chaos.”

“If you control it,” Hotaru protested, “it’s still Order.”

“Silence!” Setsuna boomed. “Thanks to that clone, the real Chiba Mamoru will be MINE!”

“I don’t understand,” Hotaru began. “Why—”

“You will when you’re older,” Setsuna replied magnanimously.

“Gah!” Hotaru fumed. “I MEAN—” she calmed down, “why not keep the clone *for yourself* and leave the real Mamoru and Usagi together? Why did you undo all the work I did getting Chibiusa to be normal?”

“The clone,” Setsuna began slowly, “has *problems*. For instance, it’s limited three word vocabulary—”

“I love you,” the clone intoned as Chibiusa and Usagi tugged at it in different directions.

“—also, I want the original. *The classic*. As long as Chibiusa is glomping on ‘Mamoru’ like Shampoo on Ranma, Usagi will be too jealous to notice anything amiss. Besides, I think this one is more affectionate than the real Mamoru ever was.”

“I love you,” the clone cried as Usagi hit it for being too close to Chibiusa.

“So you’re saying you don’t really want affection,” Hotaru said flatly.

“I want... victory,” Setsuna admitted with relish. “Sweet, vengeful, twisted victory above reason or sense! VICTORY!!” She began to cackle madly.

Hotaru rolled her eyes. “You’ve been spending too much time with father.”

## A FEW HOURS LATER, BACK AT THE HOUSE

Haruka sat in the kitchen, her chin resting on what passed for the kitchen table. Glumly she looked at the tacky red-and-white checkered surface of the plastic tablecloth. “I really miss my car,” she murmured sadly. “Speeding across three lanes of traffic, the wind ripping through my hair, the sound of police sirens in the background, pedestrians screaming... if only we had money again.”

Michiru, who was standing with her back to Haruka, sighed in sympathy. “Well, if you hadn’t bought all those X-

10 cameras, you might have more money, dear.”

“They serve a purpose,” Haruka said softly, still wistful for her car.

Upstairs in Haruka’s room, a computer with the sign “WAR COMPUTER” resting atop it monitored live feeds from every inch of Nephelite’s house.

Taking pity on Haruka, Michiru slid a plate with a food-like substance in it in front of her. “Here you are, dear.”

Still daydreaming, Haruka idly took hold of some with her chopsticks, putting the “food” in her mouth. Almost instantly she began to choke, gag, and spit.

“ARE YOU—” Haruka gasped, “TRYING TO—” she spat, “KILL ME?!” Her overacting would have been prime Oscar material.

Michiru’s face became a mask of anger. “It can’t be that bad! I’m *really* trying!” Grabbing some of the food—and this term is used very loosely—with her own chopsticks, Michiru put a huge glob in her mouth.

“OH FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!” she screamed, feeling a wave of nausea spread throughout her body.

“We have to do something about this,” Haruka whined helplessly.

## UPSTAIRS

In Hotaru’s room, Ami and Hotaru sat at her desk, furiously working with the Mercury Computer.

“So,” Ami began pedantically, “we input the genetic sequencing data here, parent one on the right, parent two on the left...”

Looking at the screen of the tiny supercomputer, Hotaru saw a picture of Chibiusa on the right, and Mamoru on the left, with various GTTCATCAGGCTAGCA patterns superimposed, representing their genetic structure.

“Now,” Ami continued, “we develop the most likely genetic sequence of the

offspring by invoking the MERGE factor, and taking into account the greater propensity for genetic resequencing found in females, we have—”

The pictures fused and morphed, beginning to change into a new form. Suddenly the computer began to beep frantically.

“It can’t handle the output data!” Ami said in a panic. “Dark energy is beginning to be emitted by the new genetic pattern ITSELF—”

Pink Energy began to arc out of the palmtop, striking various parts of Hotaru’s room, scoring and charring whatever it came into contact with. The power blew out her computer, fluorescent lights, and charred her flowered wallpaper a dark black.

At least that last part was an improvement, Hotaru noted.

“I can sense the sheer malevolence in it,” Hotaru said, fear beginning to creep into her voice.

With a pop-like THAM! the Mercury computer exploded into a thousand shards, raining debris all over Hotaru’s room.

“Inbreeding between Mamoru-san—or his clone—and Chibiusa-chan must never be allowed to occur,” Ami said, the terror in her voice plain for anyone to see. “The resultant offspring would be the greatest threat to the world ever known.”

Hotaru looked at the ravaged remains of her room and nodded.

“But Chibiusa-chan’s Electra complex is too strong,” Ami said weakly. “There is no way we can break it now that Chibiusa-chan actually has a Mamoru-san that is not her true parent.”

Hotaru looked at Ami with an expression of grim determination on her face, solemnly declaring “Oh, there is a way. But to go that way is to sell oneself to the Devil. The horse-faced devil himself, Elios.”

Ami looked at Hotaru as if she was mad. “But you know that’s an unhealthy alternative.”

Hotaru shook her head. “Sometimes a lesser darkness must be served in order to preserve the light.”

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## THE TSUKINO HOUSE

As Usagi and Chibiusa were still at the park busily fighting over the false Mamoru, Hotaru found it relatively easy to sneak in. Making her way up to the attic which served as Chibiusa’s room, she sought out her target.

Finally, after searching almost every corner, she found what she was looking for—a small bell.

“I can’t believe I’m doing this,” Hotaru muttered to herself. Holding the bell, she slowly, embarrassedly dropped to one knee. Clasping her hands in front of her, she looked down and prayed, as sincerely as she could manage, “Please Pegasus... protect everybody’s dream...” She coughed, mustering up the will, “—twinkle yell.”

Nothing happened.

Hotaru fumed. So the benighted horse was making her work for it, eh?

“TWINKLE YELL!” she screamed.

Suddenly the sound of a disconnected phone number could be heard. “We’re sorry, this bell is no longer in service. Please recheck the apparatus and try your invocation again.”

Hotaru dropped to both knees in shock. At that moment a powerful vision assailed her mind, revealing Pegasus’ location.

“Is THAT where he ran off to?” She didn’t know whether to be amused or repulsed.

## A LOCAL BAR

“An’ you know I’m really powerful, man.” Drunken Elios waved his cup of sake around at the half-conscious drinkers around him. “I can make chur dreams come true.” He hiccuped.

“O ya?” asked a barfly next to him. “Then send in a chick, right now.”

Hotaru walked in the bar, doing her best to avoid showing any outward sign of revulsion at the sweaty smell of liquor and spirits combined with the stench of human pathetitude.

“Whoa,” the barfly said in awe of Elios’ power before passing out.

“Hey, baby,” Elios said as suavely as a plastered loser can. He squinted and realized who he was talking to. “Oh, ish you. EVERYONE!” He yelled. “EVERYONE!”

Somewhere, a patron belched.

“Behold, the pale-faced assassin of joy!” Elios laughed, and moved aside so Hotaru could sit next to him. “Did you get Chibiusa outta the way to make room for yourself? I shoulda known! HA HAA!” He laughed and slapped Hotaru on the back.

“Control yourself,” Hotaru said stiffly, pulling Elios to his feet. “You’re coming with me.”

“She just can’t get enough!” Elios yelled as the rest of the people in the bar utterly ignored him.

Dragging him outside, Hotaru thrust a large cup of coffee into his hands. “Sober up. Chibiusa’s in trouble. Your little ‘Reenie’ needs you.”

Elios looked at her incredulously. “You just broke us apart, now you want us back together again? I don’t get you.”

Hotaru scowled. “There is nothing I would like more than to see you permanently removed from this plane of existence, in preferably the bloodiest and most gruesome manner imaginable. The mere thought that a boy that is also

a horse would presume to have his way with my best friend is repugnant to me. But there are worse things in this world, and unfortunately, as the fates would have it, one of them has surfaced today.”

She explained the Mamoru clone situation.

“Hey,” Elios said bitterly, “at least he’s a full on human being. Shouldn’t you be happy about that?”

“I don’t think he’s fully human,” Hotaru mused. “Not if my father had a hand in his creation. Come on, we’re going to investigate this.”

“Wai-wait,” Elios said, suddenly looking a lot more composed and sure of himself. “So you, Tomoe Hotaru, my sworn enemy, are saying that you actually need me, Elios, to help you?”

“Why yes,” Hotaru replied dryly. “I need you to use your power of subliminal seduction to help me brainwash my best friend back into falling in love with a horse boy so she doesn’t end up marrying a clone of her own father, yes indeed.”

Elios scowled. “Fine, but I warn you now. You might win this battle but lose the war.” He laughed at her dilemma.

“You can always be eliminated later,” Hotaru replied far too casually as she walked towards her father’s house.

“You’re too damn scary,” Elios said, following behind slowly. “So I got the plan. I’ll transform into Pegasus and impale that Mamoru wannabe with my Golden Horn. Then when he’s dead, everything will be back to normal.”

Hotaru looked at him askance. “That’s *\*not\** the plan, that was your drunken threat after I told you about the clone. Daimons can be easily defeated, but we have to be sure that’s what we’re dealing with.”

## BACK AT THE TEN’OU HOUSE

“I’m so sorry, was that your motorcycle?” Haruka





your being. You will be incomplete without—”

“No.” Mamoru replied flatly.

“What do you mean, ‘No’?!”

## PROFESSOR TOMOE’S SECRET LAB

“Hello?” Hotaru asked trepidatiously as she entered the lower level of her father’s secret lab. She had never actually come down to this level before... well actually she had—just before she died... the first time. Or was it the second time? Hotaru was unsure.

“Hotaru-chan!” Boomed the voice of Professor Tomoe, who suddenly stood before her, his face still obscured in darkness, his glasses glinting as brightly as ever. “There is something you should know...” He took in a deep breath.

“Something they have never told you...” He wheezed again. “Hotaru-chan,” he began profoundly, “...I AM.... your father.” He laughed heartily.

“I’m well aware of that,” Hotaru said matter-of-factly.

“Oh! Uh, yes!” Professor Tomoe stepped back and then took the opportunity to laugh maniacally again. “So what brings you here today?”

“We know you helped make that clone of Chiba Mamoru,” Hotaru explained. “We were wondering if—”

Professor Tomoe held up his hand. “I’m sorry, I can’t talk about it.”

“Huh?” Hotaru and Elios looked at him confused.

“Now where is it...” Tomoe rifled through his pockets, fishing around for something. “Ahh!” He produced a piece of paper, on which was written in large letters, “NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT.”

Hotaru looked at her father askance. “You signed a non-disclosure agreement with Setsuna-mama?”

The Professor shrugged. “Hey, the money was right.”

“Money?” Hotaru asked incredulously. “What money!? She told us all she was broke!”

Professor Tomoe coughed and pointed to the NDA.

“It covers that too?” Hotaru asked weakly. “Well do you mind if we look around the lab?”

Tomoe shook his head.

“What are we looking for?” Elios asked.

“Anything we can use to detect, view, or remove daimons,” Hotaru muttered.

“Daimons?” Elios asked.

“Demons from a parallel universe my father has a nasty habit of using to make monsters with.”

“Now I see where you get your charming persona,” Elios quipped. The next moment he was gasping for air as a bolt shot through his back, and a crystal shaped object flew from his chest.

“Hmm,” Hotaru said clinically, putting down Eudial’s old pure-heart extracting buster rifle, “It seems like every joker out there has a pure heart these days.”

“Now now, Hotaru-chan,” her father chided gently, “put the pure heart back into your boyfriend there.”

“He’s not my boyfriend!” Hotaru said archly. “He’s actually a perverse freak of nature that turns into a HORSE when the mood strikes him, and he can freely invade people’s dreams in that form!”

“Really?” Professor Tomoe replaced the pure heart and looked Elios over appraisingly. “What a fascinating specimen. He must have some rather unique characteristics.”

Hotaru raised an eyebrow. “Would you like to examine him, papa?” she asked as sweetly as she could.

“Could I?” her father asked with raw, childlike glee.

Hotaru smiled as sweetly as she could, which was frankly a terrifying sight. “Then, as a favor to your only child—who, I might add, you did cause to get killed on no less than two separate occasions—could you please point me to an instrument that will reveal the true nature of that Mamoru clone?”

“I can’t,” Tomoe said, “because of the agreement. But if while I’m taking horsey-boy here down to the dissection chamber, I should happen to leave you alone in the room with the Daimon Buster Ray located right there next to your LEFT hand... no, your other left—well, that wouldn’t be a violation, would it now, Hotaru-chan?”

Hotaru’s eyes glistened with tears at the profound moment of sincere family bonding. If the moment had been broadcast on television it would have been a sweeps week emotional moment for an afterschool special.

“No!” Elios cried as Professor Tomoe began to drag him off. “Don’t let him do this to me!” he yelled.

“Would horsey like a carrot?” Professor Tomoe asked as they moved out of range.

“NOOOO!” Elios screamed. “Damn you, Tomoe Hotaru! DAMN YOU TO HELL! I WILL GET YOU—AUUUUUUUGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!” There was a hellish scream and then blessed silence.

“It looks like I won’t be needing your mind power after all,” Hotaru declared with relish as she loaded the thirteenth “D” battery into her father’s Daimon Buster Ray.

## ICHINOHASHI PARK

“I don’t care what you say! I say this man is NOT my father and I’m gonna MARRY HIM!” Chibiusa screamed.

“I love you,” the clone cooed.

“But if we accept what you say as true, and he’s not Mamo-chan, isn’t true then that you only want to marry him because he looks EXACTLY like your father?!” Usagi shot back, wagging a finger in Chibiusa’s face.

“I love you,” the clone repeated.

“That was really complex thinking of you, Usagi... pretty good considering your brain hardly gets any OXYGEN!” Chibiusa snapped in reply, biting her finger.

“I love you,” repeated the clone.

“I prefer to think of it as EFFICIENT use of RESOURCES!” Usagi screeched, waving around her throbbing finger.

“I love you,” droned the clone.

“He’s MINE!” Chibiusa bawled, locking her hands around the clone’s neck in a super-glomp anime jedi death grip.

“I love you,” gasped the clone.

“THAT—IS—MAMO-CHAN!” Usagi roared. “Princess Tsukino Usagi Small Lady Serenity, I FORBID YOU TO MARRY YOUR OWN FATHER!!!”

“I love you,” the clone weakly squeaked as its air supply continued to decrease.

At that moment, an explosion to the south caught both girls’ attention. They didn’t realize it at the time, but across town, Haruka had just detonated a “fertilizer bomb” (not made of fertilizer, it shoots OUT fertilizer) all over Nephrite’s yard; the resultant nuclear cloud of manure being visible for a quarter mile.

Chibiusa stared at the cloud, letting go of the clone, which gasped for breath. Usagi continued to stare at the cloud mesmerized.

“I love you.” the clone gasped.

“Chibiusa-chan!” Hotaru yelled urgently, arriving on the scene with the Daimon Buster Ray. “You must listen to me. I think there’s a daimon in that clone. This ray will take it out... or something.”

“I love you,” the clone interjected, a bit more insistently.

“Do we have to?” Chibiusa whined. “You never let me have any boyfriends.”

“I love you!” interjected the clone in more of a panic.

“Let’s see,” Hotaru said, pondering. “Your previous choices so far have been a) your father, b) a horse, c) a monster who looks like your father. You’re not doing very well.”

“I love you!” the clone persisted.

Chibiusa frowned. “So let’s see if you’re right.”

“I love you!!” the clone insisted.

“Would you *please* shut up!?” Hotaru yelled, taking aim, and firing the ray at the clone, which spasmed and twitched in a ray of blazing electric light. For a moment, its innards were visible.

“Look,” Chibiusa said in awe, “you can see inside it...”

“Those are the ingredients my father must have used as a base,” Hotaru noted. Inside the clone was a daimon pod, and a Valentine’s day card which read, predictably enough, “I love you”.

Suddenly the daimon pod cracked open while still in the clone, and a wild eyed, short, and radioactively pink simulacrum of Chibiusa (plus fangs and glowing eyes and venom) could be seen emerging.

“He must have used your DNA for the daimon base, and Mamoru-san’s for the host clone body,” Hotaru mused. “Eheheh, that father of mine.”

Chibiusa retched at seeing the distilled raw essence of herself cavorting within the clone. “I don’t think I like this clone anymore...” she whimpered.

Hotaru shut off the beam and patted Chibiusa on the back consolingly. “Come on, Chibiusa-chan, let’s get out of here.” Taking Chibiusa by the arm, she pulled her away from the scene.

Chibiusa nodded.

“I love you,” the clone snarled as the two girls left.

“I love you too,” Usagi replied, finally taking her eyes off the cloud of manure (which was raining back down on the city) and giving the clone a big hug. “Finally, I’m glad that girl gave up. It was getting disturbing, her wanting to marry her own father. Now we’re free to be married as we should be.”

## BACK AT TEN'OU HOUSE

“HARUKA!” Michiru yelled, pointing at Haruka, “you’ve gone too far this time! The whole block smells like—”

“S[BLEEP]T!” Haruka exclaimed. She hadn’t expected the payload to be that intense. Now both her home and Nephrite’s were covered in smelly brown horse excreta. At least the parts of the lawn killed by the morning’s death cloud would be back in fine shape in no time. Also, now she knew why Hotaru had been so opposed to Chibiusa and Elios—their house would have probably smelt like this all the time.

“You’re DEAD!” Nephrite yelled from outside, a gas mask over his mouth. “I finally have in my possession the instrument of your destruction, brought down especially from the North Pole!”

“Queen Ber—” Haruka and Michiru looked at each other worriedly.

“Behold!” Nephrite boomed, stepping aside. “Return of the—”

“Jedite!” Haruka and Michiru watched helplessly as the formerly flash frozen dark general emerged from behind Nephrite.

Rubbing his eyes, Jedite surveyed the torn and blasted foul-smelling landscape and nodded. “So, I see the Dark Kingdom won the war, eh?”

“Uhh, no,” Nephrite said quietly. “We got trounced. But I brought you BACK so you could take vengeance on some Sailor Senshi and be my loyal lieutenant once again!”

Jedite looked at Nephrite incredulously. “If we lost, then there is no Dark Kingdom. If there is no Dark Kingdom there is no command structure. If there is no command structure—” Jedite picked some of the manure off the ground, “—then you can eat THIS!” He threw it in

Nephrite's face with enough velocity to topple the taller man over.

Crossing the property line, Jedite looked at Haruka and Michiru. "So who're the Sailor Senshi? You two, I suppose?"

"Uranus," Haruka said defensively, making a fist.

"Neptune," Michiru replied cautiously.

"Ahh," Jedite mused, seemingly unconcerned. "Well, war's over. I did my job, got frozen for it, that sort of put me off the whole Dark Kingdom thing. So do either of you know a place where a noble ex-general such as myself can get a job around here? I'm rather glad to not be living in a dark cave

filled with youma—" he surveyed the landscape, "—not that this filth ridden cesspit seems to be much better— but it's something, I suppose."

"What are your skills?" Michiru asked.

"Oh, the usual," Jedite replied. "Slaying, torturing, fearmongering, energy collection—"

Haruka and Michiru shook their heads.

"—threats, cooking, intimidation—"

"Wait!" Haruka's head snapped up to alert attention. "Did you just say 'cooking'?"

Jedite nodded.

"Real cooking, with human foods, not with youma fingers or something like that?" There was a light of hope in Haruka's eyes.

Jedite chuckled. "I used to be a General of the Earth before Beryl got her claws into me, you know. Yes, real human food— although," he pondered reflectively, "in the Dark Kingdom 'human food' meant something else entirely—"

"Whatever!" Haruka exclaimed. "You're hired! We need a cook in the worst way!"

"And what will you pay him with," Nephrite coughed mockingly from his yard, sitting up and spitting out some

manure, “some of that fertilizer off the ground? You’re poor, pathetic peasants now, remember?”

“I will pay him,” Haruka replied coldly, locking her gaze on Nephelite’s own, “with the chance to get constant, unrelenting, sweet delicious revenge on you for as long as you live... next door.”

“Sold!” Jedithe declared, sneering at Nephelite. “See what you get for talking down to me in front of Beryl?”

“Tracherous DOG!” Nephelite snapped. “You haven’t seen the end of this!”

“Well, everyone, it looks like we may have some money after all,” Michiru said proudly. “I’ve just finished my latest work of art.”

Pointing to her still-veiled canvas, Michiru waited for sufficient interest to build, and then she hauled off the cover, revealing—

“Is that what I think it is?” Jedithe asked curiously.

Haruka nodded dumbly, a sweatdrop forming on her head.



## SETSUNA’S SECRET LAB

“WHY?!” Setsuna screamed, turning up the lab’s Tantalus Ray to “mind melting” level. “Why is it that every two-bit monster and demon queen in the universe has had their way with your mind, Chiba Mamoru, but I can’t even get you to accept a SIMPLE HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION?!”





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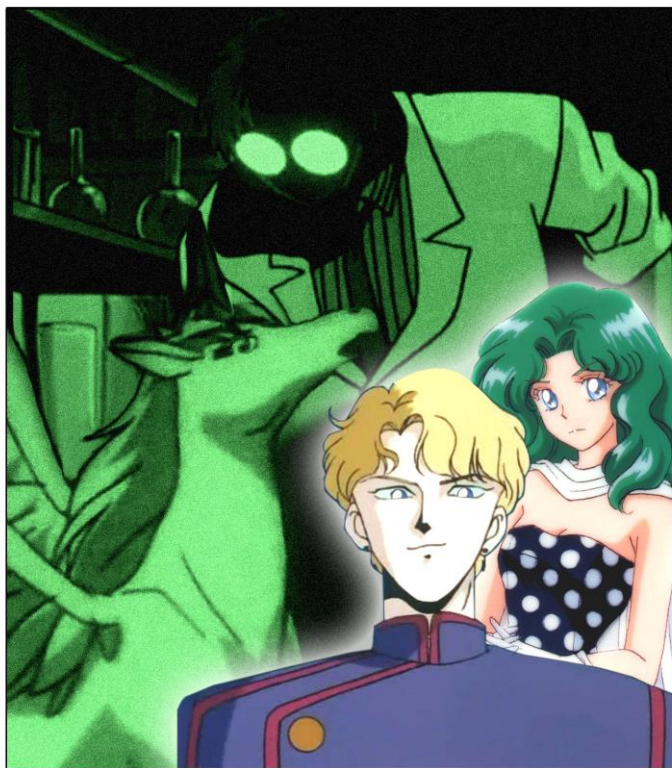
## PREVIEW OF NEXT EPISODE

*Who says it's bad to beat up a dead horse? No One? Oh well! Michiru's new painting is revealed, but no one likes it! Hotaru and Haruka take a break from the action as we take a special look into "The Secret World of Kaiob Michiru", next time on Suburban Senshi! You better get ready!*

STORY AND ART BY DOCTOR XADIUM

**SECRET**  
**SENSHI**  
スーパー戦士

SEASON ONE  
**Episode 4**



***THE SECRET WORLD OF KAIOH MICHIRU***

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## THE NEXT MORNING

Michiru looked at the “food” in her breakfast bowl disdainfully.

“Jedite...” she began, her voice a bit muffled from the gas mask she was wearing, “you call this ‘breakfast’? I thought you told us you used to be an excellent chef.” She used her chopsticks to hold up a small kernel of butter-coated microwave popcorn as an example of his fine “work”.

Jedite, who was still dressed in the uniform of a Dark Kingdom general (he felt weak and pathetic in anything else), stood in the doorway to the kitchen and scowled—not that anyone could tell—for he too was wearing a gas mask.

“I *am* an excellent cook. Is it my fault that you people don’t have any ingredients for me to cook with?” Jedite walked forwards and pushed open the refrigerator door—revealing a half-molding loaf of bread, a stick of butter and a curdling box of milk.

“I’m sure there are items in the freezer—” Michiru began to protest.

Jedite blanched. “I don’t do *freezers*.”

“What?” Michiru asked. “Why not?”

“Spending ten years in Eternal Sleep sealed in a giant ICE CUBE will do things to a man—even a General of the Mighty Dark Kingdom.”

“If it was truly ‘Eternal Sleep’ you wouldn’t have gotten out after only ten years,” Michiru protested.

“Gah,” Jedite fumed. “Who knew Queen Beryl was given to hyperbole?”

Michiru shook her head. “Well, fear not, you’ll get your ingredients soon enough.” She stood and looked off into the middle distance, her eyes glistening with the power of firm resolve. The ornate dress she was wearing rustled slightly as a breeze passed through the house. “Today is the

day our stock rises again— for today is the day my newest painting will be revealed to the elite masses and we will sell it for a fortune!!”

## THE LIVINGROOM

“Spray a bit more under there, would you?” Michiru asked, raising up her arms. “I think the smell is almost covered.”

Jedite shook his head. “There’s not enough in this can of freshener to cover that fetid stench.”

Michiru scowled. “Do please try.”

Jedite sprayed for five solid minutes until only translucent propellant issued forth from his aerosol can. “There... this is as good as it gets.”

“Any improvement?”

Jedite sniffed the air experimentally. “It still smells like the crater under the Youma Outhouse.”

Michiru shook her head in disgust. Ever since Haruka had detonated the fertilizer bomb over Nephrite’s house, the entire area— house, inhabitants and associated items— had possessed the fresh scent of a cow pen in the morning dew. They had tried various means of disinfectant, including multiple applications of Sailor Mercury’s Shabon Spray attack, but nothing had worked.

“I hope this stench doesn’t linger when I get outside,” Michiru muttered. “I need to be at my best when I present the painting to the Tokyo Artisan’s Guild at ten.” She hoped her Absolute Perfection field would disinfect her as soon as she got into public.

“I don’t see why you should be worried,” Jedite muttered under his breath.

“Why thank you,” Michiru gracefully replied. “Your appreciation of my inherent perfection is greatly appreciated, dear.”

“No,” Jedite corrected, scowling. “I mean I’ve *seen* that painting you’re so proud of. One glance at that abomination and the least you’ll have to worry about is a bad smell.” He shook his head.

“Feh!” Michiru turned up her nose. “You sound just like Haruka did before the police came and hauled her off to jail for setting off that bomb. They certainly were angry at her.”

“Well,” Jedite replied sarcastically, “who would have expected that coating a quarter mile of Azabu-Juban with fresh manure would aggravate the local authorities?” He frowned. “Speaking of which,” he continued darkly, “shouldn’t you be trying to ‘bail her out’ or something? I don’t know how you Sailor Senshi do it, but if this was the Dark Kingdom we would have already killed the policemen, blasted the jail to rubble and freed our compatriot.” He tapped his forehead. *Or was that ‘free first’ then ‘smash to rubble’?* he pondered. Yes. *That* would explain the abnormally high number of casualties in Youma rescue attempts over the last few years of the war—

“Hah!” Michiru scoffed. “If this were the Dark Kingdom, you would have left your ‘compatriot’ to rot in jail while you jockeyed for position with Queen Beryl. The only time you’d break into jail would be when you were ready to assassinate him.”

“True.” Jedite shrugged. Killing was just a way of life in the Good Ol’ Dark Kingdom.

“Anyway,” Michiru continued dismissively, heading for the front door with her covered painting, “We don’t have the funds to pay for any sort of bail. Hotaru-chan has gone to the police station to check on Haruka. Hopefully after I get this painting sold we can do something more about the situation.”

“You’d have to *pay* someone to take that thing off your hands,” Jedite declared coldly.

“You poor man,” Michiru cooed condescendingly, her voice suddenly full of elite compassion, “Living in the Dark

Kingdom, bereft of art and culture, you have lost your sense of artistic appreciation. Why don't you come with me to the Guild auction today?" Michiru asked. "Then we'll see if I have to *pay* to get rid of this painting or not," she added darkly. "Our days of eating at McDonald's will finally be over!"

"This should be amusing," Jedite replied, smirking. "I always like to see Senshi humiliate themselves."

Before heading out, Michiru wrote in her diary:

Many accuse me of having little to no personality, because I always seem to be playing second fiddle—I mean violin—to Haruka. But those people are completely wrong.

Isn't it obvious? Granted, I am quiet and demure when Haruka is present, because that woman is so loud and aggressive it's virtually impossible to get a word in edgewise when she gets going. I just don't waste my energy trying. But when I'm on my own, left to my own devices—I can be quite formidable—if I do say so myself. Remember, I recruited *her* to be a sailor soldier. It wasn't the other way around. And who was the original one willing to make the hard sacrifices? Exactly.

.....

Lush, ornate splendor. The overbearing air of pomposity and excessively modulated grace. This was the rich atmosphere that permeated the Tokyo Artisan's Guild. Here, Kaioh Michiru was in her native element.

Jedite coughed, almost choking, as he followed Michiru into the grand hall of the Guild.

"Something wrong, dear?" Michiru cooed sweetly, swiftly spinning to see the source of the Dark Generals' discomfiture.

"Those damned sakura petals," Jedite said. He spat out a few for good measure. "Do they follow you EVERYWHERE you go in public?" He brushed a significant quantity out of his hair. "And where DOES that music come from?! How do you stand it?"

"Such is the price of perfection," Michiru melodramatically mused.

As Michiru moved through the thickening crowd cautiously carrying her precious painting, Jedite made his way over to a trio of old ladies who were contemplating something.

“A pristine example of pre-neo-post-classical simplicicism,” the first old woman exhaled. “Look at the sublime curvature of the surface, representing the unity of reality—the almost existential isolationism of the apparatus, precariously dangling from the ceiling—representing man’s struggle to hold onto his frail existence in the midst of a vast universe, the dim light it emits from within—a clear allegory to the human soul, the—”

“My dear woman,” Jedite began haughtily, “you do realize this is merely a light bulb, don’t you?” He pointed up at the solitary bulb hung off a rickety aluminum fixture which was suspended from the ceiling by a thin cord.

“Is there a performance component to this piece?” the second old woman asked, eyeing Jedite curiously.

“He must represent the questioning ego-force in man’s fallen nature,” the first old woman mused. “Are you the inner self?”

Jedite fumed. “It’s just a light bulb, see?!” He flipped the light switch on and off, causing the bulb to blink.

“Ohh,” the third old woman said, clapping her hands gaily, “Interactive! I bid 60,000 yen!”

The former Dark General’s face grew clouded. “Sixty thousand!” Jedite boomed imperiously. “Don’t you pathetic fools realize—”

He paused as the three women shrank back in obvious fear, “—that Mr. Bulb and I are worth *far* more than sixty thousand?”

Jedite chuckled. These fools would apparently pay ridiculous sums of money for just about anything in the name of art. He could make a killing.

One of the old women gripped his arm and squeezed it.

“Ooh,” the hundred-sixty year old crone said, “this is a nice firm one.” Drool leaked from her toothless gums. “Eighty thousand!”

“One hundred thousand!” the first old lady screamed, raising up her cane in indignation, hobbling over to Jedite and finally leaping towards him, latching on in a weak glomp attempt.

“N-Now wait just a minute...” Jedite panicked as old ladies began to approach him from all directions, waving stacks of bills. “Wait, please!”

He looked around as the crowd began to swallow him. “Kaioh?” he asked in a panic. “Kaioh!?” He screamed in raw terror before being overwhelmed.

For her part, Michiru was standing on stage, smiling. Her hands were positioned precisely over her painting’s cloth cover.

“And now,” the owner of the gallery intoned in a muted, posh, pretentious voice, “Kaioh Michiru, presenting her latest work, ‘Sunset as seen from within a cave inside Mount Fuji...’”

A hush spread over the inhabitants of the gallery as Michiru deftly disposed of the dark cotton cloth which had been covering her latest work of wonder.

When painting this work. Michiru had envisioned a swollen orange sunset, bisected horizontally by a purple-black bank of clouds and dotted all over its surface with glowing silhouettes of white seabirds, as seen by someone looking at it from within the stalagmite / stalactite covered entrance to a cave in the side of Mount Fuji.

Unfortunately, from anyone else’s perspective, it really looked like—

“Someone’s about to eat a giant hamburger!” someone exclaimed, prompting a wave of laughter throughout the gathered crowd.

(The “sun” was just the right shade to be hamburger



bun, the clouds a pattie, and the birds conveniently looked like sesame seeds. The stalactites and stalagmites projecting from within the cave looked suspiciously like demonic teeth.)

“We thank Michiru-san for her wonderful joke,” the posh announcer said, a hint of elegant panic in his voice. “Now if she could please present the real painting...”

Michiru stood speechless, resisting the urge to go slackjawed.

“The real painting, please,” the announcer continued, voice now quivering in panic.

“This... this *is* the real painting,” Michiru slowly stammered.

“This creative abomination!?” one of the audience members jeered. “Get it off the stage!”

Michiru stood there, unmoving. She didn’t understand what was happening. She was certain that every day she had worked on that painting the last few weeks she had only been thinking about the picture of that sunset and the clouds in her mind. She had no idea how a hamburger could have worked its way into her imagery.

Then, memories flooded back to her.

“This food tastes \*so\* good,” Haruka mumbled between bites.

“I don’t see what’s so special about it,” Hotaru replied calmly.

“We should be able to eat like this for a few weeks,” Setsuna noted.

“But I HATE McDonald’s!” Michiru protested. “I HATE IT!”

“Where are you going?” Michiru asked curiously.

“Store,” Haruka grunted.

“Could you pick up some milk—” Michiru began.

“Not that kind of store,” Haruka muttered.

Michiru shrugged and continued upstairs, going to her room and depositing her work in progress.

Michiru sweatdropped. “I can’t believe you got that.”

Haruka nodded. "I'm just perfect, I guess."

Michiru sighed. "Well, I'm sure I can sell this to a reputable art dealer for a princely sum. Then we'll all eat like kings."

"eat like kings..."

"Eat Like Kings..."

"EAT LIKE KINGS..."

Realization struck her. Ever since the family had lost all their money, she'd been obsessed with the quality of her dining experience. The sick, helpless feeling has obviously taken over her work—the one thing that had been her refuge from the world. Now her shame had become an object of public scorn.

As swiftly as the revelation had come, however, Michiru brushed it aside as being impossible. She decided that she was simply panicking, and decided to be "objective" about the matter.

She looked over the painting.

A giant hamburger about to enter the mouth of its eater stared back at her.

Michiru froze. Objectively, she was doomed.

"This is a high-class auction," the presenter chastised in a pompously gruff fashion simply saturated with superciliousness. "We have a certain standard to maintain, and this... 'popular' art simply has no place in our gallery."

"Popular art?" Michiru fumed. "POPULAR?" She pointed to the painting. "My technique has been compared to that of Michaelangelo himself—and HE came out the lesser!"

"Yes, but at least the great master never painted fast food," the presenter coldly quipped. "Kindly get off the stage." He turned up his nose. "And for god's sakes, woman, use some deodorant. You smell like something that

crawled out of a—out of a—" he turned his nose up even more. "It pains me to use such a *crass* word—barnyard!"

Michiru scowled. “My masterpieces have always sold for millions of yen! This one is NO different!”

“You couldn’t sell landscapes fit for postcards if THIS is the shoddy quality your work has sunken to!” an especially pompous English heckler yelled oh-so-politely. “Ever since you lost *your family’s* money you’ve become very weak, yes, very weak indeed... almost \*common\*, I dare to say!

Why I’ll wager you used to PHAYY someone to paint, ehm, for you...!”

A shockwave ran through the crowd. In an instant rumor became fact. In the next instant, like a rabid Pokémon on anabolic steroids, “fact” evolved into scandal.

Crumpled silken handkerchiefs flew from the petite hands of effete gallery-goers, all aimed squarely at Michiru’s face. A sinister hiss arose from the crowd. The hiss soon escalated into a veritably vicious, yet perfectly polite, boo.

“I’ll show all of you!” Michiru declared as forcefully as she could without yelling, on the verge of tears but hiding it magnificently. “You *snoobs* may not appreciate my talent, but there are *thousands* of people out there who do!”

“Bah!” the announcer hissed. “Without us, without *our* publicity, *our* connections and *our* support, you would be nothing. We spit upon you!” He demurely spat on the ground in a motion laden with ritual disgust.

“We shall see,” Michiru stated firmly, stepping off the stage and storming through the tittering throng.

“Scuse me,” someone said from alongside Michiru as she sought out Jedite. “Miss Michiru, Ah’d like ta have a word with ya, ifs Ah may.”

Michiru turned around to see a pathetically short old man in a huge cowboy hat and business suit looking up at her. He stuck out a hand. “Mah name’s ‘Big Bob’ Robert McCoy, from th’ great nation of Texas, located in th’ heart of A-Merica on th’ other side of th’ Pah Cific.”

Michiru extended her hand gracefully and nearly got her arm wrenched off as

the tiny overcompensating Texan violently shook her hand.

“Is there something I can do for you?” Michiru asked politely, doing her best to smile as she tried to regain feeling in her shoulder.

“Wells, ma’am, as a matter of fact there is. See Ah own a chain of businesses in the States - ‘Big Bob’s Bigger’n Hell Burger Barn’— Ah’m sure you’ve heard of it.”

Mentally, a huge question mark popped up next to Michiru’s head, but she nodded politely.

“It’s kinda y’all t’ lie like that, it really is. Shows good breedin’. Always be kind to yer elders, Ah like that about you!” “Big Bob” laughed raucously for a moment, and tried to slap Michiru in the back in a show of jolly camaraderie. Unfortunately due to his stature he impacted something else entirely. Michiru did her best to avoid violence.

Bob continued. “See we’re kinda invisible cuz at the moment, we lack th’ most important thing a business needs—a good logo. McDonald’s has them thar arches, Wendy’s has that goshdurn pig-tailed kid, Checkers has that drive in thang goin on, and we—well ma’am, t’be perfectly honest with you—we ain’t got jack squat.”

“You want me to design you a logo?” Michiru asked. Corporate work had never occurred to her. Something about it offended her sensibilities as a fine artist.

“Well shucks, you dun already did that!” Bob pointed to the big painting. “That’s th’ best damn lookin’ burger Ah ever did see! Makes the drool just fly outta my face. Hoo-wee! That big burger’s a *perfect* logo fer a chain of ‘Biggerun Hell Burger Barn’s, wouldn’t ya say?”

“It’s not a hamburger,” Michiru said archly, pointing to the elegant kanji she had brushed in the top right corner. They read “Sunset as seen from within a cave inside Mount Fuji.”

Bob laughed again and tipped his hat. Ah’m sorry mah dear, but strappin’ a pair of antlers onto a jackass and

shovin’ a laser pointer up his nosehole ain’t gonna make ‘im into Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, if’n y’catch mah drift.”

Michiru just stood there dumbfounded.

“Let’s get down t’ brass tacks,” Bob suddenly said seriously. “Behind me is a briefcase plum chock fulla money. Ah’m talking Benjamins, Hamiltons and Mon—rows.

Hell, Ah even think Ah got a Zachary Taylor or two in there. Ah’m talkin’ Green. Samolians. Dough. Bread. El Mucho Grande Dinero. Five million jen-u-ine U-Nited States American dollars fer the rights to that thar picture in totality and perpetuity... that’s ahh, lock stock an’ barrel fer folks like you and me. Damn lawyers, they’re gettin’ t’me.”

“My masterwork? As a *logo* for a fast food store?” Michiru laughed at the ludicrousness of it. “I can’t have my work be associated with something so, well, pardon me for saying so—low class.”

Big Bob picked his nose before continuing. “In case you ain’t noticed, ma’am, you ain’t exactly on the A-list with these ‘civilized’ high-falootin’ social types anymore. Not that that’s necessarily a bad thing, mind.”

“Hmph.” Michiru frowned. “I don’t need them or their connections. Nor do I need *your* money. I’ll re-establish my legacy all by myself, thank you very much. I’m afraid I must decline your offer. Good day.”

“JEDITE!” she called out, moving away.

“Ah’ll be here all day!” Bob yelled, “and so will th’ money!”

Michiru knew that certainly it would have been easier to just take Big Bob’s money. But she felt that there were certain things that should never be compromised—things like her morals, ethics, loyalty and standards. After all, she reasoned, if you sink to the level of the mob around you, you *become* the mob. She wasn’t going to sell out her principles just because a bunch of short-sighted egotists

failed to see the underlying grace and subtle depths of her work. No. She was going to go out into the world and make a name for herself all over again, then return to the gallery in triumph. With her natural artistic genius, she reasoned, she was sure it wouldn't be long before those critics were eating their words. What she didn't realize was that, as Hotaru had once told her, "Pride invites a fall." And she had just sent out a gilded invitation.

After a few moments, she chanced upon Jedite.

"Help me," Jedite begged weakly, crawling towards Michiru. His uniform was ripped and tattered; smudgy lipstick covered his face. He slowly staggered to his feet.

"Why is there currency stuffed in your waistband?" Michiru asked uncomprehendingly. "You really ought to use a wallet. There are thieves everywhere these days."

Jedite looked at her with the look of a tortured animal. "You... you don't know... the horror—" he dropped to the floor, momentarily passing out.

"This is no time to be unconscious!" Michiru snapped, dragging him to his feet. "I have to seek my destiny!" She looked up the heavens with fire in her eyes.

"First seek a hospital," Jedite replied in a slurred voice, weakly raising up a shaking arm.

## ACROSS TOWN— THE SECRET LAB OF PROFESSOR TOMOE SOUICHI

"Come on," Professor Tomoe said slowly. "Eat the carrot."

"No," Pegasus refused, his mouth coated with globs of liquefied carrot. "No more, please."

"Eat," Tomoe said firmly. "You need to be at full strength for this next experiment."

The winged horse shook its head slowly. "I'll never give in to—"

Tomoe rammed a huge spoonful of carrot goo into Pegasus' mouth. He then turned to a bench behind him, picking up a large drill like object.

Holding it up, the Professor observed it in the light. It was a macabre design, a precision crafted piece of wickedly malicious engineering. Spikes protruded from the central drill, which whirred and hissed with a high-powered pneumatic screech as Tomoe played with the trigger switch.

*Whirr!*

Click.

*Whirr!*

Click.

*Whirr WHIRR!*

Click.

Insane laughter.

“Wha- what are you going to do with that?” Pegasus asked in fear. The rest of his body had been immobilized in a steel restraining harness, and his head was resting on a modified chinrest.

“With this baby?” Tomoe looked at it and laughed diabolically for a moment, revving it up and bringing it dangerously close to Pegasus' eyes. Darkly, he began, “Oh, with this 360,000 RPM wonder, I'm going to scramble your...” Tomoe turned around, facing away for a moment.

“BREAKFAST!” Tomoe turned around again, and he was using the drill like a blender, chopping some vegetables into instant mush. Pegasus sighed in relief.

Pulling out a fork, Tomoe absently turned the mush over. “And with this little baby,” he mused, looking at the fork maniacally, “I'm going to rip into your mythical horseflesh and gouge that golden crystal right out of your head.” He began advancing on Pegasus, fork dripping mushy carrot goo.

Pegasus' scream was drowned out by Tomoe's crazed laughter.

## THE SECRET LAB OF MEIOH SETSUNA

“Researcher's Log, Day Seven. For some reason I cannot determine, Chiba Mamoru is completely resistant to any form of brainwashing. Nothing I do turns his mind away from Tsukino Usagi. I can't even get him to cluck like a chicken. Why is it that I fail where everyone else had at least temporarily succeeded? Beryl, Nephelena...”

Setsuna put down her tape recorder and sighed, unable to answer that most elusive question. “I wish I could ask those evil people how they did it,” she mused out loud. Then the answer struck her like a thunderbolt.

They had all been thoroughly evil.

And while she may have become somewhat less good lately, Meioh Setsuna was still not evil. She frowned and looked at herself in the mirror. There was only one way she could continue the experiment.

Picking up a Daimon pod she had taken from Professor Tomoe, Setsuna closed her eyes. She would have to follow the good doctor's lead. After all, as Usagi always showed by example, love demanded sacrifice.

Opening her mouth, Setsuna swallowed the Daimon pod and waited.

Nothing seemed to be happening. Cautiously opening one eye, Setsuna looked in the mirror. In an instant, her face became pitch black, as if sucking all the light around it into nothingness. Her red eyes shone forth like bloody headlights, and her mouth was visible as an exaggerated crimson parody of its former self.

She felt a new, dark power rise within her. Involuntarily, she coughed out a laugh. Then another one, louder and



longer this time. Within moments, she was laughing madly, her hands reaching for the heavens as if to crush them in her very grasp.

“YES...” she said in deeper, more ominous voice. “NOW \*I\* HAVE THE POWER!” She laughed even more insanely. Dark Setsuna regarded herself in the mirror and frowned. “How do I shut that off?” she asked herself, involuntarily laughing madly a few seconds later.

## THE TSUKINO RESIDENCE

“Now, Mamo-chan, you have to behave,” Usagi said to “Mamoru” as she pulled him towards her house. “This is the first time I’m going to formally introduce you to the family as my fiancé. So you have to keep things cool, especially when it comes to my dad. He’s gotten used to seeing you, but he gets a little touchy sometimes when he thinks about losing me.”

“I love you,” the Mamoru clone said, nodding.

“You’re so romantic!” Usagi cooed, as they headed for the front door of her house. It was already open, and both her parents stood there, waiting.

Kenji Tsukino was obviously doing his best to avoid a scene.

“Mama, Papa—” Usagi began.

“I love you,” the clone interjected.

Kenji and Ikuko looked at each other.

“How nice,” Kenji said, taken slightly aback. *He already thinks of us like parents,* Kenji thought. *Maybe he wasn’t going to be a problem after all—*

“Please come in,” Ikuko said, approaching Mamo-clone.

“I LOVE you,” the clone said, in a completely situationally inappropriate tone.

“WHAT?!” Kenji said, turning red as it became completely clear the clone was making googly eyes at the

wrong Tsukino female. And worse yet, it took a *little* too long for the wrong Tsukino female to get offended... at least in Kenji's view.

"I love YOU!" the clone roared at Kenji as it maintained a wristlock on Ikuko.

Kenji recoiled. "Look, My bread's not buttered that way, okay!?"

Usagi looked at the proceedings, not completely certain as to what was going on. She had introduced Mamoru to her parents, he had confessed feelings of familial love for them, and now he was grabbing mother by the arm and father was pulling out a shotgun...

"We better go!" Usagi said, pulling the clone away from her mother.

"I love yooooou!" The clone protested as it looked at Tsukino Ikuko longingly before being pulled away. A shotgun blast barely missed its head.

"I know you miss having parents, Mamo-chan!" Usagi said to the clone as they ran, "but that was going a bit too far!"

.....

Michiru was determined. Certainly, it had been a shock seeing her work panned by all the people she had considered to be her intellectual and cultural peers, but she *knew*, deep down inside, that she was given a gift from the Kami to make beautiful paintings, and she wouldn't let anything stop her from sharing the fruits of that gift with the world. She would practice anywhere, anytime. Her art would grace every corner of creation—

"Are you sure this is wise?" Jedite asked, derailing her train of thought, feeling much better after repairing his clothes and getting some level 5 sterilization cleaning from the hospital.

"Of course it is," Michiru replied confidently, taking some spray paint she had just found lying on the sidewalk

and using it to paint over the primitive, child-like scrawlings she had spied on a nearby wall.

“It’s almost done,” Michiru declared with pride.

“Ay maan,” said a decidedly unintelligent fellow from somewhere behind the duo. “What chu be doin to our wall, maan?”

The wall Michiru was spraying had been covered with loads of gang graffiti. Now, the center of the ode to garish urban scrawl had been replaced by an exact replica of the famous “Adam reaching for God” portion of Michaelangelo’s work on the Sistine Chapel.

Michiru and Jedite looked behind them to see no less than sixty thugs wearing purple leather jackets and green camo pants, all holding up guns pointed squarely at their direction.

“Chu better put our chit back da way it was, maan,” the lead punk threatened as menacingly as a punk with a ridiculously bad accent could.

“Or *what?*” Jedite asked darkly, wisps of black energy beginning to mass around his gloved fists.

“Or da Purple Death is gonna bentilate chuu wussies...” the lead punk continued.

“Why do you think we’re ‘wussies’? Because we care about fine art and speak proper Japanese?” Michiru “hmped”. “I can sink to your level, I simply choose not to.”

“Chu can’t talk the walk, fancy laydee,” one of the punks jeered.

“Yo man,” his leader interjected. “Dat don make no sense.”

“Yo, chut up man!” the first one fired back.

The leader promptly shot his minion dead. “Chut up chorself, esse.” He looked over at Jedite. “I gots ta enforce da discipline, chu kno?”

Jedite nodded approvingly. He was all too familiar with the mechanics of summary execution for purposes of troop

intimidation.

“Likes I was saying before I was so roodlee inter rupted, laydee,” the lead punk continued, “Chu gots no rights messin on our turf. Chu ain’t gots da gangsta spirit. Chu can’t walk like us, hang like us, or talk like us, maan.”

“Of course I can!” Michiru insisted. “I am perfection itself! I can do *anything* required of me at any time! Just ask Kuniko Ikuhara, my good friend who help chronicle my life for that animation that TOEI still hasn’t paid me royalties on !” She frowned. She knew TOEI had found out about the Sailor Senshi from the mangaka Naoko Takeuchi, but how had *she* gotten the story—?

The punk pondered for a moment, having heard that name somewhere before. “Dat trippy dude who made dat cho about dat screwed up wussy boy who fought in da icky giant robot ting?”

“No, that was Hideki Anno.”

“Watever. Look, homes— chu speaks our language, we lets chu go. Chu be full of it, we fill chu with something else... eheehh” He cocked his gun menacingly. “Hot burning lead.”

Jedite snickered and whispered to Michiru, “does this fool have any conception of the powers he’s messing with?”

Michiru shrugged. “Obviously not. Observe.”

Sakura petals began to fill the air as a demonstration of imminent perfection announced its approach.

Jedite scowled. “I meant in a military sense.”

Michiru concentrated on speaking like a thug mofu.

In her mind, she thought: “Yo—homes—you—be—trippin’.” But the words coming out of her mouth were vastly different.

“Thou art most verily of unsound mind, good sir.”

“The hell?” The gang leader asked his minions.

Michiru sweatdropped and decided to try again.

She thought: “I be cool. I’m down wit chu homies.”

She said: “Forsooth, I am splendid! But fear not, for I

am well pleased with thee and thine associates.”

“Ass-ociates?” The punk leader sounded out the difficult polysyllabic word. Then ‘realization’ struck. “Chu be callin’ me an ‘ass socialist’, lady?!”

At first, Michiru had no idea what was going wrong. Panic was getting the better of her. Then, with a sense of dread, she realized the problem. Thanks to her Perfection Field, she was a perpetually perfect public person. The price of perpetual perfection, was that she could *never* sink to anyone else’s level in public, no matter how hard she tried. *Ever.*

It was then she also realized why people really thought she was boring. It wasn’t Haruka—for whom being perfect meant being cool, aggressive and more like an everyman kind of... woman—no, it was her. For her, perfection had always meant never making snide witticisms in public, uttering shocked profanities, or granting the world a graphic display of any of her soul wrenching pains. She knew then that she could only be imperfect at home or in private, where no one other than her friends or family would ever know. The Absolute Perfection Field which had served her so well in the past, had doomed her to a life of perpetual personalitilessness.

“Now chu die,” the punk leader said angrily. “nobody disses the Purple

Death and lives, maan!”

Michiru pulled her transformation wand from hyperspace and in a flash became Sailor Neptune.

“Hey yo,” the leader of the “Purple Death” said, pointing at Neptune, “Check it out! She tink she’s won ah does Sailer Scouts, eh? Es muy stupida...”

“Sailor what?” Neptune asked, confused. Jedite, for his part, started laughing hysterically.

“Yo, wat chu tink is so funny, esse?!” The lead punk started unloading his clip into Jedite. The others followed suit, firing on Jedite and Neptune.

“What’s so funny?!” Neptune asked, holding up one arm to deflect the bullets from her face, barely noticing as the bullets bounced off the toughened body-armor like material that made up her Sailor uniform.

Jedite, for his part, was struggling to contain a belly laugh with one hand while projecting a dark force field with the other. “Hahahahaha...’Scout’... I can’t believe it actually worked.”

“What worked?” Neptune asked dimly.

“In the early days of the war, Queen Beryl asked us to come up with a plan to feed negative propaganda against the Sailor Senshi into the public consciousness. So we hired the most incompetent dubbing company around, and got them to repurpose that anime TOEI was making about all of you, using horribly uncool slang, overbearing censorship and illogical plot substitutions... hehehe... the plan was to make you all look as incompetent and pathetic as possible... I mean, what the hell is a ‘sailor scout’? A seaman who sells cookies door to door? HHAHAHAHAHAHA... I can’t believe it actually worked!

“Why I bet to this day the vast majority of North Americans think you’re just a bunch of weak-willed whiny little saps who have to be saved by a man in a Tuxedo instead of it being the other way around!” Jedite roared with laughter.

“Very funny,” Neptune muttered, launching a “Deep Submerge” into the middle of the gang bangers, breaking many of their bones and drowning a few.

“What are you doing?” Jedite asked one particular foolhardy punk who was poking at his force shield with a stick.

“That bubble looks gay, yo.” the punk replied, still poking it.

“That’s hardly progressive of you. And besides, do I look like Zoicite to you?!” Jedite lashed out with a wave of black power that melted the punk in his boots. Then he began to chuckle again. “Zoicite... oh yeah, I got him good in that dub too. Made them turn him into a *woman* HAHAHAAAA!”

“Isn’t this a bit unfair?” Neptune pondered as she absently used a “Submarine Reflection” to take out another dozen punks, leaving piles of bodies on the ground.

“Fairness?” Jedite asked. “You’re talking to a General of the *Dark Kingdom*. We excised that word from the dictionary.” He looked around at the waves of lemming-like punks that continued to advance. “But you’re right— we are wasting time here. I’ll take us somewhere more useful.”

Grabbing Neptune’s wrist, Jedite teleported them out of the alley.

“Cool, maan!” one of the punks said as they vanished. “We pumped dem so full of lead dat dey discentigrated, maan!”

The Purple Death declared victory and moved on.

## A DARK ALLEYWAY

“Where are we?” Neptune asked, detransforming into Michiru.

“A dark alleyway,” Jedite replied flatly. “Former branch headquarters of the Dark Agency— our aboveground cover operation.”

Jedite’s features clouded. With venom, he continued, “That was until Danburite was cruelly tortured to death by that b[BLEEP]h Sailor V.”

“What?” Michiru asked, confused.

“We all know the tale,” Jedite said with genuine hatred in his voice. “Stories have been told all throughout the Dark Kingdom about how Sailor V

came across Danburite and slew him without mercy, subjecting him to mental and physical torture for hours before he died. We heard she finally grew weary of toying with his emotions and shot him full of Venus Love Megaton Shower attacks before throwing him off a cliff, all the while cackling like a possessed youma.”

“I see,” Michiru replied in shock. She never knew Minako had it in her. “And they call Haruka and me ruthless,” she muttered under her breath.

“Anyway,” Jedite continued, “We established a lot of front businesses to serve as energy gathering points for the Dark Kingdom. Even with all their blind luck, Sailor Moon and company couldn’t have found them all. I’m sure some still exist. You could distribute your work through them, I suppose.”

Michiru nodded. It was the first time in history a Sailor Senshi and a General of the Dark Kingdom had fought on the same side in battle on purpose. Needless to say, it was only fitting and proper that the first alliance would have been forged by someone as capable, calm and levelheaded as herself.

## TSUNAMI CAFE

“YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?!” Michiru exploded, offended beyond belief at what he was hearing.

“Play your fiddle for us in Karaoke bar we want,” the wizened old, somewhat green with jaundice man said to Michiru. “Big Country Western Theme tonight there is, need fiddler we do. You good fiddler, see you on TV all time, yesss.”

Michiru scowled and muttered “You should learn to speak Japanese better.” In reality she was just angry about being asked to play a *fiddle*.

“I am a world class master *violinist*,” Michiru declared in clean, clear accentless, perfect English. “I play a *violin*, not a



fiddle.”

“What difference be there?” The old man replied in English. “Fiddle’ it is when *buy* you want to. ‘Violin’ it is when *sell* you want to, yess.” He chuckled impishly.

A vein throbbed in Michiru’s forehead. “Are you saying the great Stradivarius was in the habit of manufacturing *fiddles*?!”

“Ahem,” Jedite attempted to interject. “You are trying to *land* a job, not *lose* one...”

“Quiet!” Michiru snapped. “A fiddle, for your edification, has a *flatter bridge* than a violin. It’s a completely, utterly different instrument!”

Jedite shook his head. Her state of denial was complete.

“Cares does who?” the old man wheezed. “Play or play not, makes no difference to me it does.”

“You need this job,” Jedite pressed Michiru.

“Here!” The old man produced a fiddle, thrusting it into her hand. “And now you must also sing.”

Michiru froze. “Do what?” Talented as she was, she could not sing. Her high notes were murderous, and even she knew it.

“I’ll sing,” Jedite muttered. “Metallia knows I’ve done everything *else* under the sun. You play.”

Michiru, disposing a lifetime of classical training, began madly running her bow across the surface of the old man’s violi... err, fiddle.

Jedite began to sing in the tune of “Devil Came down to Georgia”:

“The General went down to Tokyo. He was lookin’ for energy to steal. He was in a bind ‘cause he was way behind, and Beryl was at his heel...”

## SEVERAL HOURS LATER

“One Hundred Thousand Yen,” Jedite noted with satisfaction, thumbing the cash he and Michiru had earned.

“*That* is the difference between the fiddle and a violin,” Michiru remarked bitterly, “Had I been playing a violin just now, you could have multiplied that by a thousand.”

“Will this be enough to get Ten’ou out of prison?” Jedite asked.

“I don’t know,” Michiru admitted. “But my reputation hasn’t been restored by playing the fiddle in a Karaoke bar.”

“No one will ever know,” Jedite replied comfortingly.

“HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN!” blared every TV in Tokyo five minutes later.

Michiru watched helplessly through a shop window as a reporter excitedly chattered.

“This is Nakai Masahiro, headlining your local news report. Cameras were fortunate enough to be able to capture world-class violinist Kaioh Michiru playing a \*fiddle\* at the Tsunami Cafe in Azabu Juban. While rumors have persisted that Kaioh-san has been experiencing financial and creative difficulties lately, this latest incident has now seemingly confirmed them.

This, coupled with her disturbing presentation at the Tokyo Arts Guild earlier today, has fueled speculation that Kaioh-san may be suffering from a nervous condition or something mo—”

There was a BLAM! as Michiru smashed her Aqua mirror through the shop window and the television behind it in rage.

“Should you be using that mirror in that way?” Jedite asked, watching as Michiru retrieved her Aqua Mirror from the innards of the charred, smoking television set.

THE DARK AGENCY HEADQUARTERS (A WHOLLY OWNED AND OPERATED SUBSIDIARY OF THE DARK KINGDOM, INC.)

“First art, now music,” Michiru muttered. “All my

traditional skills are closed to me now as far as making a real living goes.”

“Can you write?” Jedite asked, idly thumbing through a Dark Kingdom Rolodex. “One of the few remaining shell companies is an advertising agency of some kind.” He paused. “What the hell was Danburite thinking? No wonder we never had any resources except that damn castle and cave at D-Point... he was throwing all the cash around up here!”

“I’m sure I can write,” Michiru replied confidently. “Let’s go.”

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“What... have you done to me?” Pegasus asked weakly, a giant band-aid slapped onto the top of his head. His body faded in and out as he focused his vision and looked for the Golden Crystal, which was sitting on Professor Tomoe’s work desk, a small puddle of blood underneath it.

Tomoe looked at Pegasus and shrugged, picking up the crystal to reveal a smashed rat underneath. “I was planning to use this crystal of yours to force my way into the dream world and sabotage the human collective unconscious—”

“You monster!” Elios snorted. “Why would you do such a thing?”

“Ahem,” Tomoe cleared his throat. “You’re the freakish animal thing that invades people’s dreams in the guise of a mythical creature to cavort with young children and you’re calling *me* a monster?”

Pegasus sighed. People always latched onto *that* when they got angry. So he broke into a few dreams, stole a few kisses... they all appreciated it—appreciated him. Yeah, baby. Mastah Elios the Mack Daddy from the Land of Illusion. Yeah YEAH. He liked the sound of his own thoughts. Uh-huh.

“Anyway,” Tomoe said, “I hate what Jung calls the collective unconscious, known to you perhaps as the thing

my daughter's favorite poet Yeats called the *Spiritus Mundi*.

"Did you ever have an idea—one that was SO good you knew it would make you wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, only to find out that two weeks later, some fool on the other side of the PLANET has just come out with the same exact thing, and you're out of luck?"

Pegasus shrugged. "I've never needed money, so—"

"Well *I* have! And so have lots of others. The Australian aborigines believe in a state called the Dreamtime, where the waking world and the dreaming world intersect. That is your domain... the domain across which those lucky few are able to snatch OUR good ideas out of the ether and move them right into their wallets!"

Tomoe pointed to the far corners of the lab. "Look around, horsey boy. See these things?"

Pegasus looked. "VHS Camcorder, DVD player, Four Slice Toaster, Laser pointer, Plasma Television, Auto-flush toilet."

"All my inventions," Tomoe bitterly observed. "But because I was paving the way for the grand ascension of Master Pharaoh 90, I didn't have time to patent any of them... and guess what?! Some young punks ripped my ideas right out of the ether. Now look at where they are and where I am!"

"They're rich and you're... a psychopathic superscientist with seemingly infinite resources?"

Tomoe shrugged. "Well, anyway, it's the principle of the thing."

"You'll never succeed!" Pegasus said with relish. "You don't have the power to wield that crystal!"

"And don't I know it," Tomoe said casually. "I tried shaking it, praying to it, hitting with with various lasers, cursing at it— nothing works. So, now I use it to smash the small rodents which invade my lab and prop open the doors while I'm working."

“WHAT?!” Pegasus asked incredulously.

“Remember kids, proper ventilation is a must in any mad scientist’s secret laboratory,” Tomoe said to a security camera. “Well, I’m off... ciao!” He laughed madly, placing the golden crystal on the ground near the lab door.

“Wait!” Pegasus said, fading in and out. Without the crystal he was dying. He needed to think fast. “You need me!”

“For what?” Tomoe asked. “Oh, you’re right, I do.” He turned around and looked at Pegasus’ legs appraisingly. “I’ve been needing an industrial strength glue for quite some time—” He chuckled darkly.

“NO!” Pegasus said, mind racing, trying to reach into Souichi’s twisted maze of a mind. “It must be hard working here without assistants.”

“Well,” Tomoe began, “I used to have some, you know. Very bright and talented people. And it was especially fun to watch them playing twister.” He chuckled perversely. “But, even though they all tried very hard, they just kept dying on me, one after the other. Strange, really.”

“And I take it your daughter doesn’t want to follow in your footsteps?”

Tomoe shook his head. “Not that I blame her. Getting killed twice during the course of my mad experiments will tend to put even the most dedicated offspring off from pursuing a career in Mad Science. But some of us,” he said, adjusting his glasses, “are in it for the thrill of that next profane creation, the next twisted thing that emerges from the font of darkness, stinking of hell and crying for the souls of the innocent. Some of us yearn for the moment when their creations spring to ignoble life, and try to rip the innards out of their maker in supreme ingratitude—”

“Yes, YES!” Pegasus said, working hard now. “The thrill and glory of bringing life to the lifeless, meddling with forces beyond understanding or factory warranty! The ecstatic joy of corralling small children—” he paused. “Of

*dissecting* small children and turning them into hellish freaks!”

“No, school does that to them,” Tomoe corrected, quickly becoming interested now in what Pegasus was saying. “Have you an interest in the Dark Side of Science?”

“Oh, most certainly,” Pegasus replied smoothly, becoming more confident now “I would like to follow in your intrepid footsteps, Professor Souichi Tomoe.”

Professor Tomoe cackled. “You give me the collective unconscious, and I’ll give *you* a place at my side.”

“Very well,” Pegasus agreed darkly. Soon he would have his power, and then he would exact horrible vengeance on both Professor Tomoe and his daughter Hotaru.

“Excellent,” Souichi Tomoe agreed. Soon he would have the collective unconsciousness, and then he would have some super industrial size mystical Pegasus Glue.

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GO-GO CREATIVE THOUGHT DESIGN  
AN AD COPY SHOP ON THE EDGE OF AZABU-  
JUBAN

Michiru was actually enjoying her new job. It involved writing friendly words and phrases that would appear on the sides of many Japanese consumer goods. She had been told people appreciated seeing them. As a child of a wealthy family, she had never bought any domestic products, instead spending her money on luxury imports from the West. So this was a new area for her. She had been asked to write in English, which was no problem for her— she had had the best tutors in all of Japan.

Her first assignment was to write an ad for what seemed to be an antidepressant tablet. Proudly, she handed her copy over to the manager, a young, driven, college-educated man.

It read:

STRESS can form the basis of an unhealthy lifestyle—making you suffer greatly. Our tablets are so effective against stress that they set a standard of excellence in the industry.

“Hmm,” the young man said, examining the card carefully. Then he looked at Michiru quizzically. “I don’t understand. I thought Jed said you were good.”

Michiru just stood there, shocked for a moment. Presently, she recovered. “Oh?

Is there something wrong with the grammar, or the spelling? I—”

“It’s all wrong,” the young man sighed, exasperated tone.

“But—” Michiru began. “I am perfectly fluent—”

“So am I!” the man said indignantly. “Listen. Four years ago a young girl came in to work for us. This was before I knew how to speak English fully.

She said she needed part-time work. She told me that her friend had gone to England for a year and come back, teaching her full English afterwards. I told her to go ahead and write some copy for us. This is what she wrote for the same product you just did:”

‘evirob’ - is the essence of weird life. It will makes you too too ill. Try our extraordinary works. you can find It’s another standard!!

“That is... horribly bad.” Michiru remarked.

“No!” the man disagreed. “It is horribly GOOD! Foreigners love to buy this stuff, just to laugh at it! It makes the Dark Agency tons of money! And of course it makes them underestimate us. Makes them think we cannot spell their language or use their grammar properly, so they do

not watch us too closely. One day we will dominate advertising all across the world, and they will never see it coming!”

“You *must* be joking,” Michiru replied dryly. “Who was this girl?”

The man pointed to a picture labeled “Our great Savior.” It was a very familiar odango-haired blond.

“Her lack of grammar has made us millions,” the man said with reverence and awe. “You would do well to emulate her example.”

Michiru felt tears of pain forcing their way to her eyes.

#### SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Michiru handed in her next work, hands trembling with pain at having to overcome her Absolute Perfection field.

Let’s Try homeparty fashionably and have a joyful chat with nice fellow. Fujinami’s straw will produce you young party happily and exceedingly!

“Much better!” her boss said with pride, handing her ten thousand yen. “Can you do this every day?”

Michiru felt the blood leave her face. Within seconds she was down for the count.

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“Mighty glad t’be doin’ business with ya, ma’am,” Big Bob said, admiring his new company logo. “Gonna airbrush me a huge steer in the middle a’ this here thang an’ tack copies up all over the southwest. Yee-haw! Git along, little doggie!” He grinned and wolf-whistled as Jedite and Michiru made their way out of the gallery.

“Well,” Jedite observed, “It may have cost you your principles, your reputation, your dignity and your perfection, but you did it. With that money, your living



standard will be back to normal, whatever that is.” He pointed to the briefcase stuffed with money Michiru had just put down.

Michiru shrugged. “After repairs to the house, Haruka’s bail and lawsuit settlements with the neighbors, I don’t know how much we’ll have left. But at least you’ll have enough ingredients to work with from now on.”

“You’re keeping me on?” Jedita asked incredulously. “You could rehire that, what was his name, ‘Chef’ fellow.”

“Nonsense,” Michiru said. “You’ve been very helpful. Besides, some of the songs he used to sing to me...”

Inwardly, Michiru frowned. Of course she wanted to rehire Chef and be rid of Jedita. But, she realized, he had seen her at her lowest, and she couldn’t risk him running off and publishing a tell-all book about the worst day in my entire life. For as long as she allowed him to live he would stay safely on her payroll.

It had been such a horrid day, even though she had made the equivalent of five million dollars. Her peers still thought she had devolved from graceful virtuoso and master painter to a cheap pop artist / fiddle player. She had actually tried to use *slang* and prostituted her genius for a few measly dollars. She had truly lost it all, she thought. *Thankfully it can’t get any worse*, she thought.

“Tanks for da green, Biatch!” yelled a seemingly random member of the Purple Death as he ran past Michiru, grabbing her briefcase full of money and teleporting out of sight.



## EPISODE 4 OMAKE

Since Haruka and Hotaru didn't appearing in today's episode, and because they're being paid to be in every show this season, as a special service, today, they will be answering mail from YOU, our SUPER loyal fans!

**HARUKA:** Now wait just a damn minute! I'm not answering \*anything\* until I get something taken care of!

What.

**HARUKA:** Last episode some fool dropped *Rose* petals around me instead of *Sakura* petals when I was being perfect! How can I be perfect with *Rose* petals?! I DEMAND satisfaction!

*(The two notes that usually sound before Neptune and Uranus appear sound. A TON of sakura petals unceremoniously SLAM onto Haruka from above.)*

**HARUKA:** *(sticking her arm up through the pile weakly)* Alright... then.

Good. Our first question today is for Hotaru, and it's from Adam H., who asks:

"Why didn't [Saturn] and Pluto put up a fight when Uranus and Neptune (as Animamates) took their Star Seeds? Why did they meekly accept it?"

*(Hotaru leans forward to answer. Haruka quickly gets out from under the pile of sakura petals, stands, and moves up behind Hotaru. In a flash, Hotaru has her Silence Glaive out, holding it backwards, its curved edge pressing against Haruka's throat.)*

**HOTARU:** (*flatly, not even looking behind her*) One more step, Haruka-poppa, and the last sensation you will ever feel is the acrid taste of your lifeblood spilling into your mouth as you prepare to accept the bitter embrace of cold eternity.

**HARUKA:** (*sheepishly, moving away*) I think I'll just sit down now.

**HOTARU:** Well, Adam, I can understand why you think we just took it meekly. But in point of fact, this could not be further from the truth. You see Toei Animation was forced to omit certain scenes from the anime due to financial pressure imposed upon them by certain parties who wished to suppress the truth I am about to reveal. This is what was omitted—

**HARUKA:** —Don't listen to her! It's all lies!

**HOTARU:** Finally sensing the chance to finish the mission they had been unable to complete in Sailor Moon S— that being my elimination— Uranus and Neptune had just sent a pre-arranged signal to Pluto, who, as you may recall, was standing right beside me. Pluto then grabbed my arms, hoping to restrain me so Uranus and Neptune could get a clear shot at my starseed.

But anticipating their duplicity, I had already begun to move sideways, hoping to put Pluto in the line of fire so I would have enough time to protect myself with a “Silent Wall”.

Unfortunately, my timing was less than perfect and we struggled, ending up swinging back into our original positions just in time to have both our starseeds ripped out of our bodies, which is what you saw.

I hope that clears things up for you, Adam. Thank you for

your question.

**HARUKA:** (desperately) It's all a tissue of slanderous lies!  
All of it!

Our next is question is from GKScotty, who asks:

“To both Hotaru and Haruka... As Outer Senshi, you're among the people closest to Setsuna. Is there any truth to the infamous “Setsuna = Mamoru” theory?”

**HOTARU:** Actually, that issue will be covered in the next episode of Suburban Senshi. I'd like to tell you more about it, but I really can't because, in truth, even the writer doesn't quite know how he's going to tackle that particular brand of insanity. Thank you for your ques—

*(Hotaru winces as a loud noise can be heard in her earphone)*

**HOTARU:** The producers wish me to issue a clarification. *(flatly)* It's not that the writer doesn't know, he's merely concealing the surprise from everyone *(mumbles “including himself”)* for maximum effect.

**HARUKA:** *(laughing nervously)* So I guess the answer is to stay tuned for the NEXT EXCITING EPISODE of Suburban Senshi!

*(there is the sound of a cash register drawer opening followed by a stagehand handing Haruka a fat wad of bills)*

*(SUDDENLY an slightly-tanned orange-blonde girl with brown eyes in a leather vest, orange bow, white silk shirt and tan pants bursts onto the scene)*

**S???A:** Oh man you guys have no idea, the solution you'll see in the next episode only touches on the true terrible

truth of Puu-P's pretty pathetic part in the fantastic future of Suburban Senshi, but you'll have to wait a few voluminous volumes to view that very— (*a large book appears from offscreen and drags the girl away*) wait! I'm not doooooonee!!

(*Both Haruka and Hotaru sweatdrop*)

**HARUKA:** Who the hell was that?

**HOTARU:** I'm not sure, but didn't she look a little like Minako-san?

**HARUKA:** (*shrugs*) Anyway, I think we should move on to the next question now...

Next up is one from Biclaxaltonian, who asks:

"Sailor Moon, how did you react when Piccolo blew up the moon?"

**HARUKA:** (*leaning forward*) Okay, look. First of all, Sailor Moon isn't even *here*, and—

**HOTARU:** (*interrupting*) —You don't know the answer, do you, Haruka-poppa?

**HARUKA:** (*mumbling*) What are you talkin' about?

**HOTARU:** That's why you are being so hostile, isn't it?

**HARUKA:** Look! this section is supposed to be about questions to the two of *us*, and besides—

**HOTARU:** (*leaning forward towards the camera and blocking out Haruka*) I apologize for Haruka-poppa. You see—

**HARUKA:** (pushing her way back onscreen) It's *obviously* a stupid question, I mean— (*she points up, the camera follows and pans to the moon*) —as you can plainly see, the moon is \*right\* there. (*with an air of decisive finality*) Cogito Ergo Sum.

**HOTARU:** (*Forcibly displaces Haruka once again*) Forgive her please, as she is profoundly ignorant as to the true workings of the world. To answer your question: Sailor Moon did not react at all, as all the previous occasions on which the moon had been destroyed occurred before the birth of Tsukino Usagi.

**HARUKA:** Uhh, Hotaru, I think you're losing it. (*Haruka points up to the MOON, which is quite obviously there— she makes a "crazy" sign next to the side of her head.*)

**HOTARU:** I see some education is apparently in order. What Haruka-poppa fails to understand is that after Kamesennin—

**HARUKA:** —The famous martial artist of legend—

**HOTARU:** —Please do stop trying to sound as if you understand what's going on, Haruka-poppa.

(*Haruka fumes and sits back, cracking open a beer and chugging it*)

**HOTARU:** After he blew up the moon to stop Son Goku from ever again becoming a giant ape—

**HARUKA:** (*on a buzz*) That's crap. People don't turn into giant apes.

**HOTARU:** But Son Goku isn't a 'person'—he's a Saiyajin...

**HARUKA:** A vegetable?

**HOTARU:** An alien. And as our special guest will confirm, these particular aliens can turn into giant apes when exposed to the light of a full moon.

*(camera PANS over to a very pissed-off looking Vegeta)*

**VEGITA:** Girl! You said there would be someone for me to fight here if I gave you my little explanation about Oozaru transformation! Ever since Kakarotto went off to wherever it is he went, I've been spoiling for battle!

**HOTARU:** Don't worry, Vegeta-san. There will be someone soon enough...

**VEGITA:** Fine. *(Pedantically)* As prince of the Saiya-jin race I can confirm that the surface of the old moon was composed of a special material which allowed it to reflect great quantities of a specific wavelength of light called 'Buruz'. When 17,000,000 units of Buruz strike the eyes of a Saiya-jin, a gland in the Saiya-jin tail secretes a hormone which sparks the transformation into Giant ape—\*

\* I saw something like this online a long time ago, maybe on a.f.d., it's not my stuff—Xadium.

**HARUKA:** *(yawning)* Bo-ring.

**VEGITA:** *(twitching)* What did you say?!

**HARUKA:** *(smirking, drunk)* I hear Mr. Satan is gonna kick your *ass* at the next Tenkai-ichi Budokai.

**VEGITA:** *(Instantly going Super Saiyan)* WHY YOU— *(leaps forward and tackles Haruka, who transforms into Sailor Uranus. They tumble offstage where the sounds of violent battle can be heard.)*

**HOTARU:** (*rubbing her hands together*) Excellent. Now that Haruka-poppa is “out of the picture” so to speak, I can conclude my answer— the moon Haruka-poppa keeps pointing to is actually a special two dimensional non-Buruz reflecting fake, specially designed by Kami and surreptitiously launched into orbit by the French government in an attempt to preserve the spirit of romance and tidal stability the world over. This is why NASA was forced to fake a moon landing in 1969— imagine their shock when the real orbiter passed through little more than an asteroid field. Thank you for your question, Biclaxaltonian, I hope we’ve all learned something today.

**HARUKA:** (*crawling back on stage, battered, broken and bleeding*) Yeah. Never get into a fight with a drunk Super Saiyan...

**HOTARU:** You’re the one who’s drunk.

**HARUKA:** (*totally out of it*) Am I not Super-Saiyan?! IS my hair not blonde?

**HOTARU:** (*flatly*) I don’t think that’s quite how it works...

Our next question comes from Steve R., who asks Haruka:

**HARUKA:** (*slurred*) Finally! A question for me!

“I have some neighbors I need... removed. Can you help? How much?”

**HARUKA:** (*really slurred now*) Eheheheh... Anywhere, anyplace, anytime, man. As long as the money’s right, I can get my hands on some bleach, two sticks of butter and a can of turtle wax, an’ I’ll get all MacGyver on their ass— no



worries. But it's gonna cost ya. A lot. Maybe even a million dollars. An' if I do this thing for you, someday, and that day may never come, I will ask a favor of you—”

*(Hotaru cuts her off)*

**HOTARU:** *Grazie Mille*, Don Ten'ou MacGyver. Unfortunately we here at Suburban Senshi cannot be directly linked to any acts of assassination, foreign or domestic. Thank you for your inquiry, Steve.

Our last question is from Anomie, actually has two questions, one for each of you:

“For Hotaru: How exactly do you manage to wash your blacks and keep them so...well, black? Do you just have a lint filter that surpasses all ordinary lint filters? Or is there some sort of mystical secret I'm missing? After all, everyone knows that black is the best color to wear - it goes with everything!”

**HOTARU:** You are to be commended on your fine fashion sense, Anomie. As I have discovered through years of rigorous experimentation and analysis, the key to maintaining perfect black clothing is relatively simple. You require two key elements: one, a lint brush of unparalleled quality, and two, infinite time with which to wield it.

However, neither you nor I possess that luxury. Fortunately for us, there is a company called Persil which makes a wonderful (ironically white) product called “Black Velvet”. It does an exceptional job of keeping my blacks black. Be warned: It has something of a scent and is a touch expensive, but that last part's all right— I always charge my purchases to Haruka-poppa's credit card. Thanks for your question.

**HARUKA:** *(startled sober)* You WHAT?!

“And for Haruka: Have you thought about introducing LSD to Nephrite’s water supply? A carefully placed releasing system would dose him and Naru quite well. In the quest for revenge, psychotropic drugs say you care.”

**HARUKA:** Great sentiment! I saw that trick on the X-Files once. Wasn’t it cool?! Well, I’d love to try it out, but the truth is I can’t— you see, right now I’m actually *stealing* Nephrite’s water supply— I attached a diverter pipe from his house main and haven’t been paying for water for over a month! So I obviously can’t taint it.

But honestly, if you listen to that Naru girl, the way she talks... (*apes a hybrid Bronx / Georgia accent*) “Oh, Neffy, dat’s so KEWL!”— I think she’s already dipping into the lysergic acid, if you know what I mean. Thanks for the question!

(*from offstage*) **NEPHLITE:** By the way, Ten’ou, that wasn’t my *water* main you tapped.

**HARUKA:** What?

**NEPHLITE:** It was my *sewer* main.

(*Haruka and Hotaru both turn green and run for the nearest bathroom*)

Uhh, that’s all the the time for questions we have on this episode! Thank you all for your submissions and enjoy the rest of the show!

**NEPHLITE:** MUHHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

.....

## PREVIEW OF NEXT EPISODE

*Haruka gets out of jail, but what's this? She can't pull any more pranks? Michiru-san goes out for revenge while Usagi finds out that Mamoru is... NO WAY!! Hotaru tries to hunt down Setsuna's embezzled fortune but has a run in with Pegasus and finds out that he's her— sorry, no spoilers here! Next time on Suburban Senshi— “The Truth is Out... Here!” You better get ready!*

STORY AND ART BY DOCTOR XADIUM

**SUBURBAN**  
**SENSHI**  
サブサバン戦士

SEASON ONE  
**Episode 5**



***THE TRUTH IS OUT HERE***

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JULY 05<sup>TH</sup>, 2002

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“Right this way, miss.”

Hotaru apprehensively walked into the prisoner detention area. It was surprisingly sterile and well lit, but the stench of rum-soaked breath filled the air.

“Hotaru-chan!” yelled a jubilant, yet strangely wild-eyed Haruka, who had run up to the bars of her cell, gripping them tightly. “What took you so long?! Do you know how long I’ve been stuck in here with—”

Haruka looked behind her, focusing for a moment on the inert, hairy, rum-soaked mass that was her cellmate.

“—Goichi.” Haruka shuddered.

Hotaru frowned. “It was my fault entirely. I made the cardinal mistake of looking for you in the *women’s* section.”

“Ten’ou- Yur a womun?” Goichi asked, slowly lurching to his feet, a distinctly unhealthy gleam in his eyes.

“Yes,” Haruka said calmly, turning around. “And unless you sit back down, you’ll be one too.” She made a fist and compressed it with her other hand until her knuckles cracked.

Goichi retreated to his corner.

“So you’ve come to bail me out, right?” Haruka asked hopefully, again clinging to the bars like an almost desperate child.

“I’ve no money,” Hotaru said flatly.

“You won’t be needing any,” said the guard who had escorted Hotaru to the detention area of the Tokyo District Court. “The judge is ready to hear your case now.”

#### SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, COURTROOM #4

“Ten’ou Haruka, it is especially shameful for one such as yourself, an idol to millions of Japanese youth, to be engaging in these petty, destructive acts!”

The judge pointed to a video screen, where a news camera was pointed at a huge nuclear cloud of manure, which was slowly expanding to fill the sky. Within moments screams could be heard as the cloud obscured the sun. Then there were the panicked screams as a hailstorm of fetid manure began pelting the ground, squishy slops of horse s[BLEEP]t slamming into people, buildings, houses and trees. The camera eventually got hit and the picture blanked to static.

Haruka hung her head as the judge leaned forward menacingly. “This court fines you two hundred million yen for the damages caused to the Azabu-Juuban area, and furthermore, bans you from EVER engaging in any more acts of anarchy! You have one week to pay the fine, or I will gladly send you to jail for three years!”

Slamming down his gavel, a giant “GUILTY” appeared on TV screens in the courtroom.

As Hotaru led a despondent Haruka out of the courtroom, she reflected that things could hardly get any worse.

## SOMEWHERE IN TOKYO

Chibiusa walked into the convent, knowing that this was the only way she would ever be happy.

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## EXCERPT FROM THE JOURNAL OF TOMOE HOTARU

Dear Journal. Let me tell you about my day. It has been said that a great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within.

*(scrawled picture of Ten'ou House)*

The essential cause of Rome's decline lay in her people...

*(scrawled picture Haruka and Michiru in the kitchen)*

her morals...

*(scrawled picture of Dark Setsuna trying to brainwash Mamoru)*

her class struggles...

*(scrawled picture of Michiru chastising an old man about fiddles)*

her failing trade...

*(scrawled picture of Kaiob Manor being respossessed)*

and her consuming war...

*(scrawled picture of Haruka laughing as Nephelite's car explodes)*

...and our domestic situation is no different. History is a cyclical pattern like any other. It tends to foreshadow its future workings and strongly echo, if not completely revisit, its past machinations.

Now of course some of you would maintain it to be a conceit of the highest order to compare the inner workings of our humble home with the life cycle of the mighty Roman Empire. But if we learn the lessons of nature, we can see this is not the case. Physics and Mathematics have shown us that reality is a fractal, that is, a self-similar mechanism whose structure is such that the grandest of shorelines is reflected in the structure of a tiny grain of sand. As above, so below. And if there was any doubt that we were below, one needed only to look at the way things were going at home in 2002.

Envision my day with me, Journal. And Weep. Weep at the suffering of it all.

Over there on the couch wearing the “Mr. Satan” T-shirt and tattered jeans is my adoptive “poppa”, Haruka. An astute observer might note how tightly she’s clutching her can of faux imported lager. It is her only solace, now that Nephrite has all but won their little skirmish by virtue of the court order. Well, she also has the upcoming Tenkai-ichi Budokai on television. Projecting her stress onto the matches is the only way she can overcome her own frustration, I suppose.

“Hey, Hotaru-chan!” Haruka calls to me. “Isn’t this great? This is the best matchup in years! Krillyn v Yamcha, MaJunior vs. Son Goten, Trunks vs. Number 18, Vegeta vs. Ubuu, and the winner gets to face Mister Satan!”

Ridiculous. I took the opportunity to once again remind Haruka that despite the seeming quality of the undercard, there was nothing to it. Regardless of who makes it to the final bout with Mr. Satan, he always wins because the finale of the tournament is obviously *RIGGED*.

Haruka took the opportunity to dismiss my insight as anti-Satan bias. Hmph. As Juvenal said, “Two things only do the people actually desire—bread and circuses.” Well Haruka had her little circus. Unfortunately for the rest of us, the empire had precious little bread.

“Something wasn’t right about that punk.” Jedite’s voice. Ahh, yes. The mighty Dark General. Apparently he and Michiru-momma had something of an adventure whilst I was off trying to find Haruka in jail. From what I can gather, she lost a great deal of money in some kind of robbery.

The irony of a General from the Dark Kingdom and the Senshi of Neptune being robbed by a common street thug does not escape me. Nor apparently has it escaped Michiru-momma, who has done nothing all day besides sit and sulk, while Jedite continuously calls out for swift vengeance.



“He’s too short for that! Blind him with a Taiyouken!”

That was Haruka, yelling and screaming, her arms flailing so much it’s a wonder her frothy beer hasn’t slipped from her grasp and become a dangerous projectile. Oh dear. I spoke too soon— there goes Jedite’s uniform jacket.

Well, since Michiru-momma is too depressed, Jedite is fuming over his ruined uniform, and Haruka-poppa is tied up in the Budokai, I suppose I will have to be the one who sorts out this situation, inconvenient as that might be. As Gurdjieff could have easily said about them, “we want cooked chickens to fly into our mouths.” In other words, Someone has to take responsibility or the situation will never improve.

Recalling my conversation with father regarding Setsuna-momma’s funding of his mad experiments, I decided to find a competent accountant— someone who could “show me the money” as it were.

It took me several hours of fruitless telephone conversations before I found someone who appeared to be competent enough to handle the matter. We set up an appointment, and I began the walk to her office, which was not terribly far away. This meant a walk under the blistering morning sun, which was murder on my delicate skin. (Let it never be said I do not sacrifice for family.)

Oddly enough, as I was making my way to her office, I saw none other than Chiba Mamoru... correction, his *clone* (no sane human jogs across the street repeating “I Love You” to angry motorists) and Minako-san’s cat Artemis heading for a local pub. It only dimly occurred to me to enquire if anyone had even bothered to tell Usagi her boyfriend was a clone.

Before I could ponder that thought more deeply, I found myself at the Accountant’s office. It was small. The object d’art which had been placed in seemingly haphazard locations, badly placed magazines and painful ‘muzak’

which assaulted my ears all combined to give the room a non-threatening, comfortable atmosphere— but I could see the sinister precision behind the placement of every element. It was chaos giving rise to a carefully crafted order, designed, no doubt, to put potential auditors at ease.

“Tomoe Hotaru?” the accountant asked, appearing from a back room and settling comfortably in her medium backed, cloth covered chair. “Tendo Nabiki.”

I noticed her subtly using her elbow to shove a “proud partner of Arthur Andersen” desk ornament to the side.

“So how can I help you?” she asked, an altogether too-bright smile lighting her features.

It made little sense to beat around the bush. “I suspect my relative has embezzled family funds. I want you to verify if this is the case, and if so, provide me with a location for those funds.”

“Oh, I get that a lot,” Tendo said, leaning back in her chair. “What’s the name of your relative?”

“Meioh Setsuna.”

As I uttered the words, I saw Tendo’s eyes widen momentarily, her knuckles whitening. I could almost swear a drop of drool came forth from the corner of her mouth.

“THE Meioh Setsuna? The one who owned a third of the Tokyo Delta?” She looked at me with an almost ravenous expression.

“The same,” I replied curtly. Clearly this Tendo respected wealth a great deal. This might not be a good sign.

“One Million Yen,” Tendo said flatly, holding out her hand.

I started. “I don’t have that kind of money,” I said as neutrally as I could.

“I don’t work for free, you know,” Tendo said in a tone that indicated she had taken offense. “And even if I was inclined to give you credit—which I’m *not*— locking it up with someone the likes of Meioh Setsuna requires access to

computer hackers, information hunters and a good bodyguard.”

Most of what she had said made sense, except the last part. “Meioh Setsuna would never do you any harm.”

“You haven’t heard what I heard.” Tendo turned away from me, her arms crossed. “You think she got so rich just *picking stocks*? No one could be that good. She’d have to be a time traveler or something.”

Tendo had no idea. “A retainer, then?” I asked, holding out twenty thousand yen.

“No dice.” Tendo was adamant. “I also have professional pride to think about. If I just let little goth waifs like you waltz in and take up my valuable time, what example do you think that would set? I’m so good at my job that wherever I go, people are waving at me.”

GOTH?! The sheer unmitigated cheek! Notwithstanding the seriousness of the situation, I could not let the offense slip by unchallenged. “Yes,” I replied coldly, trying to channel Haruka, “and perhaps if you did a good job, they’d use *all* their fingers instead of just the one when they waved.”

“Save the flattery,” Tendo retorted, turning and pointing out the front door. “Come up with the cash or find someone else.”

I left the office wondering if her arrogant attitude was rooted in a justifiable confidence in her abilities, or if she was merely, as I suspected, a jerk. Still, there was no way I could come up with a million yen. As Renard had done before me, I had finally come to know what separated me from the beasts— financial worries.

Scarcely had I taken three steps away from Tendo’s office when a large diamond fell from the sky, landing conveniently at my feet.

Normally I raise a skeptical eye at coincidence, believing that luck is merely the residue of design. Certainly the appearance of a very large, very expensive looking stone at

my feet just when I required such an item pushed the very bounds of synchronicity to their limits, but this was no time for paltry quibbles.

Rushing back into the office, I presented my find to Tendo, who nearly fainted at the sight of the diamond.

After several hard hours behind her computer, Nabiki (she had become *considerably* more friendly after obtaining a large diamond) informed me that Setsuna-momma had indeed embezzled from us.

“She was very clever,” Nabiki said. “The audit trail is so convoluted it looks like a Mobius strip. But what it boils down to is, she transferred all her funds from your joint family account to an offshore account the day before the Enron stock tanked and wiped the rest of you out. That, combined with the fact that she seems to own half of Japan via some complicated trust and land-exchange deals makes her an insanely rich woman. She could crush us like ants.” Nabiki shuddered, and slammed a lot of buttons on her computer.

“I didn’t see any of this,” Nabiki suddenly pronounced. “And you were never here. You’ve never met me.” She got up to bid me farewell.

This was too good to pass up. “If I never met you,” I said slowly, “then there was no need for me to give you the diamond.”

“What diamond?” Nabiki said slowly. Somehow she had already hidden it— and I had been keenly observing her all the while.

Impressive.

I shrugged. “Very well. I suppose it would be irresponsible of me to start a rumour that you were digging around in Meioh Setsuna’s affairs.”

Nabiki, to her credit, did not flinch. “Come on,” she said coolly, “You know that rumors are like seagulls. Once they start to fly, they get crap on *everybody*.” She said the last word dangerously.

This one was worthy enough to leave well alone. I nodded and made my way outside. Now I just needed to find out where Setsuna-momma was, and then I could compel her to—

“This is Sakura speaking. You want a Pizza delivered where?”

It was some blonde Pizza delivery girl with a small scooter talking into a cellphone. I tried to ignore her.

“But I don’t know where ‘Meioh Setsuna’s Secret Lab’ is!”

Moving blindly on instinct I rushed over and forcibly displaced the unfortunate girl, grabbing her phone. “Could you give me driving directions?” I asked in as good an approximation of her voice as I could muster and ran off.

As I left I could have sworn I heard the girl say my name, but that was impossible. The next moment there was an odd wheezing, groaning sound and I felt a cold chill run down my spine. Looking behind me, the girl was gone. It mattered not. It was time for Setsuna-momma and I to have our reckoning.

Several minutes later, and consumed with the fury of the righteous, I stormed into Setsuna-Momma’s lab, only to be confronted with what could only be described as a horrifying sight.

Setsuna-momma and Prince Endymion (a.k.a. Chiba Mamoru) were locked in what could only be characterized as a passionate embrace.

“What in heaven’s name is going on!?” I demanded. As I prepared to transform into Sailor Saturn and show them both the penalty for their erroneous ways, I could only think of Russell’s statement that the world “will pass away,

burned up in the fire of its hot passions: and from its ashes will spring a new and younger world, full of fresh hope, with the light of morning in its eyes...”

At that moment, as a hail of bloodied pink flesh rained down from above, and the severed limbs and maimed face of my best friend Chibiusa thudded and splattered on the ground before me, I could only add two words to that sentiment— “...or not.”

END JOURNAL EXCERPT

.....

“And how DARE you tell Rei-chan that you love her!?” Tsukino Usagi glared at her clone, a red battle aura swirling around her body. “You’re MY fiancé!”

“I love you,” the Mamoru-clone replied flatly.

“You seem to love *everyone* these days,” Usagi fretted darkly, moving towards him menacingly.

“Uhh, Usagi?” called out Artemis, who had been spying on the duo for several minutes. The small white cat hopped down from his position on top of the front yard fence and landed at Usagi’s feet. “Luna says she needs you at the shrine. *Right now.*”

“Nobody called me on the communicator,” Usagi protested, going to check it.

“No!” Artemis yelled. “She said it’s too sensitive for the communicator.”

“Uhh, okay!” Usagi nodded firmly. “I’ll deal with YOU later,” she said, looking daggers at the clone before running off.

“That was a close one, eh?” Artemis whispered to ‘Mamoru’. “Lucky for you I happened to be walking by, old buddy. Want to go have a drink?” The duo had been drinking buddies ever since Artemis’ future daughter Diana had appeared from the future. Common futurekin had

given them a common ground.

“I love you,” the clone replied appreciatively.

“I’ll bet you do,” Artemis chuckled as the duo headed for the nearest pub. “It’ll take hours for Usagi to figure out she’s been had.”

#### A FEW MINUTES LATER

“Watch where yer goin, ya retard!” A ticked off motorist shook his hand in anger as Mamoru-clone jogged carelessly across the street, seemingly oblivious to the people around him.

“I love you!” the clone shot back along with a strategic finger.

“Damn, Mamoru!” Artemis exclaimed, doing his best to catch up with the clone, “You don’t usually act like that until *after* you’ve had a few!”

The cat looked back for a moment, catching a glimpse of a familiar, waif-like black-clad figure walking down the street.

“Crap,” Artemis said to the clone. “I hope Hotaru didn’t see us going in here, otherwise Usagi’s gonna find out.”

But the clone wasn’t listening, already drunk from one too many beers.

#### THE SECRET LAB OF PROFESSOR TOMOE

“There, now...” Professor Tomoe said slowly as he carefully lowered the bloody Golden Crystal into Pegasus’ head. “Activate the crystal, my good equine.”

Pegasus suppressed a scowl. Once the crystal was fully charged he would incinerate Souichi Tomoe. But first he would let the man taste his power, just to throw him off guard.

Concentrating, Pegasus unleashed the power of the crystal, flooding Tomoe with energy.

"I see it," Professor Tomoe exclaimed, his mind suddenly expanded to the Nth degree. He could touch the thoughts of people all over the planet. "I SEE EVERYTHING!"

"Good," Pegasus said, shielding his own mind. "Now let me out of the harness," he said darkly.

"You are out, my good fellow," Tomoe said distantly.

Pegasus frowned. "But then why can't I move the rest of my body?" He tried to flex his muscles.

"What body?" Tomoe asked, still enraptured. "You're just experiencing what they call 'phantom body' syndrome." He absently held out a mirror.

To his shock, Pegasus saw his severed head staring back at him in the mirror, wires hooking his arteries up to a blood pump. The area where his body should have been was filled with a giant vat labeled "Mystical Strength Krazy Glue".

"WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!" Pegasus roared.

"I did say I would give you a place at my side, didn't I?" the mad professor said, laughing insanely as his mind floated further into the human collective unconscious. "Well you are at my side, are you not?"

"You will pay," Pegasus said, thrusting his consciousness through the golden crystal and into Souichi Tomoe's mind. "If you saw fit to destroy my body, then the least I can do is TAKE YOURS! And you're not a small kid, so I won't GO EASY ON YOU!"

Souichi Tomoe felt his mind beginning to crack under the pressure of Pegasus' assault. His body would soon be compromised.

Frantic now, and aided by his resident Daimon, Tomoe scanned the collective unconscious for someone-ANYONE similar enough to him in temperament to house his consciousness.



As Pegasus' power rushed into his body, Tomoe finally found someone. In fact, this person's mind was almost like his! Now if only he could make it out before—

Pegasus slammed the door shut, and with a triumphant yell pulled the golden crystal from his now dead ex-head, slamming it unceremoniously into Tomoe's ex-forehead. Tomoe's body was now HIS!

## A SEEDY BAR IN AZABU-JUBAN

"I Luuv you," the drunken Mamoru clone crooned.

"Yeah, she is a bit bossy," a drunken Artemis concurred. The crescent moon on his forehead, which let him talk to and understand humans, could translate any language, except Canadian French or Welsh, and thus it was translating Mamoru-clone's Daimon speak into coherent thought patterns.

"I love Ikuko so much, and I wish that that bossy Usagi would just get out of the way," the clone mumbled drunkenly.

"You got that backwards," Artemis declared woozily, waving a paw.

"Huh?" the clone asked, not understanding.

"You luv Usagi," Artemis corrected drunkenly. "Whoa, did you eat THAT?" He watched the clone eat some gross-looking food from atop the counter.

Suddenly the clone doubled over, a sharp sticking pain in his stomach.

"You okay?" Artemis asked, dizzily jumping off his barstool and following the staggering clone outside. "Whoa," he exhaled. "that's some beer belly you got there all of a sudden, man."

The clone suddenly made a mad dash, almost leaving Artemis behind.

"Hey, wait up!" Artemis yelled, following the clone towards the sound of a ringing alarm bell.

“Watch where you’re going, you pathetic excuse for a Prince!” Jedite yelled as the Mamoru-clone barely avoided slamming into him. Firing a bolt of dark energy at the clone as it ran away, Jedite fumed. He was having a rough enough day as it was.

### THE SECRET LAB OF MEIOH SETSUNA

“A HA HA AH”, Dark Setsuna laughed pathetically, raising her arms in a bad caricature of Professor Tomoe. “You— Will— Fall—Before— ME..”

Mamoru, still tied up in a chair, sighed. “No, Setsuna. It’s no good. I know you’re still good at heart, even with that thing inside you.” He idly began loosening his bonds. He’d had enough of this game. His Usako was waiting.

Setsuna’s face fell, her blood red demonic eyes filled with tears of frustration. “WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?!” She wailed.

Suddenly her whole body stiffened. Her demonic smile grew wide and strong, and her body seemed to grow in size.

“Now then,” she said in a voice virtually identical to Professor Tomoe’s, “You were saying I was still good?” She grabbed a fork off a nearby table.

Suddenly Chiba Mamoru knew fear.

Dark Setsuna had to strain to be heard over the sounds of hideous agonizing torture coming from her victim. Idly cradling a phone on her shoulder as her arms automatically worked the megacraniial drill, she yelled, “I’d Like to order a pizza! Address? Meioh Setsuna’s Secret Lab! What do you mean you don’t know where it is? Hello? HELLO? Yes, I’ll give you driving directions!”

### ACROSS TOWN

The obscured body of the Pegasus-possessed Professor

Tomoe shrank back to avoid being spotted by Hotaru. Little did the girl know that soon his terrible revenge would be visited upon her.

## BACK AT THE HOUSE

“Yeah yeah YEAH! You better run back to your teacher, Ooo-Boo! That RULED!”

Haruka toasted the television as the updated brackets for the 32nd Tenka-Ichi Budokai came on screen. The overly cheerful announcer blasted “And it’s down to the quarterfinals as we have first Yamcha vs. Ma Junior, then #18 vs. Vegeta! And remember, the winner gets to fight Mr. Satan!”

“WHOO-HOO!” Haruka yelled, waving a small “Mr. Satan” pennant. For Ten’ou Haruka, life was pure joy, court-imposed sanctions or not.

## THE TSUKINO HOUSE, FRONT YARD

“You have to forgive him,” a barely sober Artemis said quickly, not understanding the source of Usagi’s anger. “Just because he ate that weird food at the bar... He didn’t know what he was doing and—”

“How COULD YOU!?” Usagi screamed louder than she had ever in her whole life. “After all we’ve been through, I can’t believe you went and got yourself...” Knees weak, she collapsed and began to wail.

“Got himself drunk?” Artemis raised a paw, trying again. “Umm, he goes out with me once a—” Artemis paused as the clone threw up a sizeable chunk of vomit.

“Don’t try to fool me!” Usagi yelled, pointing at the clone. “A woman knows these things!”

Artemis looked at her confused.

“Eating the weird food! The sickness! The recent overemotionalism!”

“—Love you,” the clone spluttered in between hacking up chunks.

“And most of all, that BELLY!” Usagi pointed at the massively swollen belly on Mamoru-clone. “HE WENT AND GOT HIMSELF PREGNANT!”

Artemis slapped his forehead with a paw. Luna had told him Usagi had been sleeping a lot in Biology class but *come on*.

“PREGNANT!?!” Yelled Kenji Tsukino, who came barreling out of the house at high warp speed. “What have you and that boy been DOING?!”

Kenji glared at Usagi, who was surprisingly angry at Mamoru for someone carrying his child.

“Why don’t you ask HIM?!” Usagi yelled. “HE’s the pregnant one!”

“WHY YOU—” Kenji freaked out at Mamoru. Then he paused and scratched his head, eyes bugging out at Usagi. “HOW STUPID ARE YOU?!” he freaked out.

Except Usagi wasn’t stupid at all.

## THE SECRET LAB OF MEIOH SETSUNA

“Now,” Dark Setsuna cackled, evil energy coursing through her mind like fire, “once the lobotomy is complete, I—” She paused as the thoroughly terrified Mamoru suddenly transformed into Tuxedo Mask for no apparent reason.

“This is the break I need to get into his mind!” Setsuna exclaimed, pausing to cackle insanely for 72.5 seconds. “Everyone knows Tuxedo Mask is completely vulnerable to any form of manipulation! ENGAGE the Mind PROBE!”

A whirring, clicking, gleaming instrument of torture lowered into Mamoru’s skull. Within moments, Tuxedo Mask had become Prince Endymion.

Then the unexpected happened.

“Setsuna-chan!!” Endymion said in a joyful tone, breaking free from his bonds (and the torture probe), raising to his feet and gathering Setsuna in a strong embrace.

*That was easier than I thought it would be,* Dark Setsuna thought. But for some odd reason, in the back of her mind, she was not too thrilled to have this man hugging her.

Suddenly the door to the lab burst open.

“What in heaven’s name is going on!?” Hotaru demanded as she took in the sight, a look of absolute rage in her eyes. On the verge of transforming into Sailor Saturn, she stopped when a hail of bloodied pink flesh rained

down from above and behind her, splattering the severed limbs and maimed face of Chibiusa on the ground in front of her.

## EARLIER, TEN’OU HOUSE

“Aww, come on, Michi! It’ll be fun to watch the fights on television! It’ll get your mind off losing all that money!”

Haruka ducked as the Aqua Mirror whizzed by her head, embedding itself in a rear wall.

“You know,” Haruka said slowly as she looked over at the morose, hardly-moving Michiru, who was sitting low in her chair nursing her violin, “it’s not nice to treat your Talisman that way—”

A fully-rosined bow whistled through the air, barely clipping Haruka’s left arm.

“Fine!” Haruka yelled, clutching her arm, and vastly exaggerating her pain, “so that’s how you treat the marvelous defender of the family honor—the woman who even went to JAIL for you!” She looked away, feigning disgust. “I’m going to go grab a beer and watch the Tenka-ichi Budokai with Jedite. She waved to him.

C’mon, Jedite.”

“Spare me your weak human bloodsport,” Jedite said, standing by Michiru’s chair. “What is the point of a competition where the inferior warriors are allowed to *live*?” He said the last word with disgust.

“Hmph.” Haruka made her way to the couch and idly flipped on the television, where the pre-bout festivities were getting underway.

Haruka raised her beer and toasted the set sadly. A hint of black caught her peripheral vision, and she saw Hotaru making her way down the stairs.

“Hey, Hotaru-chan!” Haruka called to her. “Isn’t this great? This is the best matchup in years! Krillyn v Yamuha, MaJunior vs. Son Goten, Trunks vs. #18, Vegita vs. Ubuu, and the winner gets to face Mister Satan!”

Hotaru looked over at the television screen, raised an eyebrow and sighed.

“As appealing as the undercard seems, you do realize that ultimately the entire tournament is a waste of time, don’t you?”

Haruka looked at her askance.

“Regardless of who eventually advances to the final bout, Mister Satan will *\*always\** win. It’s been that way for over a decade now, ever since the Cell Game. No one will risk the public’s wrath by demonstrating how utterly pathetic the ‘savior’ of humanity actually is.”

“Feh,” Haruka snorted, holding up a small, oddly adorable plush Mr. Satan doll, which had a plush hand holding up a “V” for victory sign.

“HOOOOOOOO!” it squealed in a tinny voice as Haruka squeezed it slightly.

“This man is the Earth’s greatest warrior. He’s even better than me. Maybe you just can’t handle that,” Haruka teased. “Maybe you’ve got an anti-Satan bias because you know he could kick your ass up one side of the arena and down the other.”

Hotaru gave a small “hmph.” “Fine, indulge yourself in this petty diversion. I’m off to—”

“I’m telling you, Kaioh, something wasn’t right about that punk.” Jedite’s voice was almost at a yell as he tried to penetrate Michiru’s self-centered funk. “Random gang members don’t have the capacity to just teleport into thin air like that!”

“He’s too short for that! Blind him with a Taiyouken!” Haruka screamed, as she watched Yamcha futilely try to use a grappling move on Kryllin. Her agitation was so intense that she lost her grip on the beer she was holding, and it launched into the air on a ballistic trajectory.

“We need to investigate—” Jedite began, halting as Haruka’s beer smashed him straight in the face, the cold frothy liquid dribbling all over his uniform jacket.

“—go check on something,” Hotaru finally concluded slowly, leaving the house before Jedite could explode.

“You’ll pay for that, Sailor Ur-Anus,” Jedite said darkly, advancing on an unsuspecting Haruka, who was engrossed in the Budokai. Dark energy began to surround him.

“Come.” Michiru had suddenly stood up, her hand firmly clamped on Jedite’s shoulder. “It’s time we taught those punks the meaning of pain.”

“Wha?” Jedite’s dark energy vanished instantly, replaced by a morbid curiosity. Michiru was usually the effete reserved type, not the kind who would mutter dark sayings about teaching people the meaning of pain.

“Let’s go,” Michiru said, her tone of voice hard and uncompromising. She sounded more like Haruka than anything else.

“Are you... all right?” Jedite asked in a semi-panic as Michiru began dragging him out of the house, pausing only to brusquely pull her Aqua Mirror from the wall.

“Haven’t you heard?” Michiru growled in a low voice. “I’m not Miss Perfect anymore.”

## OUTSIDE THE TOKYO ARTIST'S GUILD

"Well!?" Michiru demanded, her impatience growing by the second.

"I'm checking!" Jedite said, doing his best to not rouse her temper. Already on the way to the guild she had hit him several times and almost wrenched his arm off twice. He would have fought back, except that for some reason, she seemed far more powerful than usual. It was as if all the anger and violent tendencies she had so effectively controlled over the years were now boiling over. Jedite hoped he was nowhere in range when they finally exploded.

"It's hard to tell," Jedite began, getting distracted by the sound of a nearby alarm bell, "But I think—"

"Don't think!" Michiru snapped, her body now beginning to visibly tremble. "KNOW! After all I went through, everything I did, all the SACRIFICES I made— to let some... some... wandering, teleporting little PUNK rob me like that— There has to be payback." The last word came out of her throat like a primal growl.

Michiru stalked over to Jedite, who was on one knee examining the ground, and placed a leaden hand on his shoulder, pressing down with extreme force. "Don't disappoint me."

Wincing from the pain, Jedite frowned. "There is definitely the signature of a... Dark Kingdom teleport."

"A youma?" Michiru asked darkly, aqua ki beginning to surround her. Behind her, some police cars zoomed by.

"No," Jedite said flatly. "I know this signature all too well— it's Nephelite."

"Nephelite," Michiru said, a sick grin spreading across her face. Suddenly she let out a laugh that would have made Kodachi Kuno cringe. "Vengeance shall be mine!" She roughly yanked Jedite to his feet.



“I’m not some puerile lackey!” Jedite hissed, pulling himself away from Michiru. As he moved forward to confront her, he was almost knocked aside by a fast-moving Mamoru-clone, followed by a small white cat.

Jedite’s temper burst. “Watch where you’re going, you pathetic excuse for a Prince!” Jedite yelled, smoothly pivoting and firing a massive bolt of dark energy at the clone as it ran away. But the clone was too fast, and the bolt whizzed by.

“Damn, missed him!” Jedite fumed. He was having a rough enough day as it was. Turning away, he did not see the bolt impact a fleeing jewel thief, who screamed in mortal agony and exploded as his precious prize—a huge diamond—went sailing far up into the sky, curving downwards to fall some several blocks away.

## BACK AT THE HOUSE

Haruka dimly noted the front door of the house opening as Michiru stormed in, followed by a somewhat ragged Jedite.

“Haruka—” Michiru began angrily.

“DAMN!” Haruka yelled at the television, hurling her third beer can at it. “How could Piccolo let that blasted *Vegita* hit him out of the ring likethat!? Where’s the levitation, I ask you? Where’s the LEVITATION!?” She was completely oblivious to Michiru.

“Haruka—” Michiru continued. “Nephrite’s the one who stole my money—”

“RIDICULOUS!!” Haruka yelled with venom in her voice.

“Exactly,” Michiru said with vengeful relish.

“That damn *Vegita*!” Haruka yelled, pointing at the screen. “Absolutely ridiculous!”

“I want you to HELP ME GET REVENGE ON HIM!” Michiru yelled, going over to the sofa and shaking

Haruka from behind.

“Can’t avenge. Watching tournament,” Haruka mumbled, never taking her eyes off the TV set.

“There must be a way to get to Nephelite,” Michiru mused, running up the stairs and heading to Haruka’s room, where Haruka’s computer still displayed various spycam shots of Nephelite’s house.

“He seems to have lots of star charts,” Michiru mused, looking over the surveillance footage of Nephelite’s den.

“Nephelite virtually plans his entire life around astrology,” Jedita said, entering the room after a few moments. “He thinks ‘the stars know everything’. Rumor has it he even plotted battle strategy that way back during the war. He even gave advice to an Earth leader named Nancy Rea—”

“—So he likes to watch the stars, eh?” Michiru mused, chuckling. “Then I know just what to do.”

“HARUKA!” Michiru yelled from the upstairs. “Where’s Hotaru!?”

“Isn’t she with you?” Haruka yelled back distractedly, watching the pomp and circumstance as Mr. Satan made his way to the ring for his bout with Vegeta. A marvel, Haruka thought, how even at his advanced age, Mr. Satan could still rule the ring. She waved her Mr. Satan commemorative beer mug at the screen in giddy anticipation of his match.

“Come on!” Michiru yelled, shaking her Aqua Mirror violently. “Show me where she IS!”

Jedita slowly began to back out of the room. He wished the blasted Sakura petals of perfection would suddenly shower down and fix her, but they hadn’t shown up ever since she’d taken that job as an English writer.

## THE TSUKINO RESIDENCE

“WHY YOU—” Kenji freaked out at Mamoru. Then he paused and scratched his head. “HOW STUPID ARE

YOU?!” he freaked out at Usagi. How could his daughter possibly think a \*man\* could become pregnant! Ikuko had said she was doing poorly in science class, but this was—

Kenji paused as he finally registered the excessively swollen state of “Mamoru’s” belly.

“I LOVE YOU!” the clone screamed, it’s distended belly erupting in a cloud of flesh, blood, bone, and gristle as a demonic pink hellspawn issued forth.

“Oh... Kami-sama...” Kenji muttered, collapsing backwards in shock.

“SPORE!” The fanged, radioactively pink Chibiusa Daimon cackled, dancing on the rancid flesh of its dead parent like a berserker Evangelion unit.

Usagi looked over at the lifeless body of the Mamoru clone. “Mamo-chan! NOOOOO! I’m sorry I got you pregnant! It had to be me, because this is our baby!” She looked over at Chibiusa-D. “But HOW DARE YOU KILL YOUR FATHER! Now I know why he was a ghost in that future! Because you sprang out of his belly and KILLED HIM!”

“SPORE!” the daimon yelled, looking over at Kenji.

In its field of vision it saw the following display:

DNA MATCH CONFIRM - RELATED MALE.

ACTION?

1- KILL

2- MAIM

3- **GLOMP [OK!!]**

The Daimon launched itself at Kenji’s head face-hugger style, wrapping its legs around his neck and latching its hands on his ears as it gave him a suffocating kiss.

“CHIBIUSA!” Usagi screamed. “That’s your GRANDFATHER! What are you DOING to him!?” She

watched dimly as Kenji's face began to turn blue for lack of oxygen. Then he slowly begin to crumple...

"I can't believe this is happening," Usagi said sadly. "Chibi-usa chan... I really do love you, but I can't let you kill Papa— even if it is for love."

She raised her hand in the air.

"MOON ETERNAL POWER! MAKE-UP!"

In a flash, Usagi had transformed into Eternal Sailor Moon.

"How dare you try to suffocate your own grandfather in a sick glomp! Nice grandchildren should respect their elders, not make out with them! Is this what society's come down to?! Well I won't hear of it! In the name of the Moon, I will punish you!"

Eternal Sailor Moon took one last look at her "daughter", hoping against hope Chibiusa would release her figure four liplock on Kenji. But it wasn't happening.

"Silver Moon—" Moon began, sniffing as she swung her eternal tier into position, "CRYSTAL POWER KISS!"

A titanic blast of energy leapt forth and smashed into Chibiusa-D, forcibly ripping her away from Kenji, and slamming her into the sky.

"SPOOOOOOOOOORE!" she screamed out as her flesh and bones began to bubble and boil, skin peeling from her body as she attained low orbit and began the slow fiery descent back to Earth....

## THE SECRET LAB OF MEIOH SETSUNA

"Setsuna-chan!!" Endymion said in a joyful tone, breaking free from his bonds (and the torture probe), raising to his feet and gathering Setsuna in a strong embrace.

*That was easier than I thought it would be,* Dark Setsuna thought. But for some odd reason, in the back of her mind, she was not too thrilled to have that man hugging her.

Suddenly the door to the lab burst open.

“What in heaven’s name is going on!?” Hotaru demanded as she took in the sight, a look of absolute rage in her eyes. On the verge of transforming into Sailor Saturn, she stopped when a hail of bloodied pink flesh rained down from above and behind her, splattering the severed limbs and maimed face of Chibiusa on the ground in front of her.

As Hotaru gawked at the sight in bewildered shock, Endymion released his grip on Setsuna.

“It is good to see you again, my sister!”

Dark Setsuna staggered backwards. *“What did you say?”*

“Don’t you remember?” Endymion said, joy filling his mind. “Of course not! Your long solitude at the Gate must have caused you to forget! But thanks to your mental experiments, I remember it all now.”

Dark Setsuna frowned. “I remember that you would come visit me some nights when I was very lonely...” She paused, realizing how dim the memories actually were. “I always thought you came because you loved me.”

“Of course I love you,” Endymion said smiling brightly, “we are the same, you and I!”

“I am a child of Pluto,” Setsuna began darkly. “You are a child of Earth. The two lines never crossed.”

“The Time Gate is property of the Lunar Royal family,” Endymion explained. “No outsider could be trusted to guard it, even a denizen of Pluto, who have a special relationship to time. So it was decided that Princess Pluto would not take on the powers of a Sailor Soldier.”

“So I am your blood sister?” Setsuna asked in a semi-panic. She remembered something that had happened one drunken night in the Palace... something that had led to an

an emergency Blatomere transplant into Neo-Princess Serenity...

For her own sanity, her brain suppressed the memory.

“We are as one,” Endymion replied, dertailing her train of thought. “I have no natural sister.”

Setsuna scratched her head in confusion. The door to the lab burst open again.

“HOTARU!” Michiru yelled. “We need your power to get revenge on Nephelite!”

“You see,” Endymion explained. “Only females can hold the power of Sailor Senshi, and so it was decided that I would be cloned, the clones’ ‘Y’ chromosomes switched to ‘X’, and—”

“I don’t want to hear anymore!” Setsuna yelled. Suddenly it all made sense. Why she had the same red eyes as Chibiusa. Why her face was so similar in shape to Endymion’s. The feelings of closeness to the prince.

“See?” Endymion said, holding up two transparencies, each with their various genetic codes. Overlaying them, he showed they were virtually identical. “You were cloned in the Mizunomics labs of Crystal Tokyo and set to guard the gate. For some reason after Small Lady was born you were sent back in time to the Silver Millennium to guard the gate, never to enter the palace again—”

“NOOOO!” Setsuna yelled, her mind crashing. Suddenly, her persona vanished completely, subducted by the new force that had driven her to torture Mamoru.

“Hotaru,” came the voice of Professor Tomoe from outside of the lab. “I have something to tell you.”

Hotaru turned to look at her father.

“I am—” he began.

“I AM YOUR FATHER!” Setsuna yelled out, cutting him off. “And Endymion’s Sister!” Setsuna’s repressed persona appended.

“Then she must be... my cousin,” Hotaru calculated weakly, looking at the Chibiusa bits. None of this made any

sense to her anymore. But she would make the best of it. “If you’re my father,” Hotaru said to Setsuna, “tell me where the money Setsuna embezzled is.”

“OK—” Dark Setsuna began, cut off when her own arms rose to her throat and began strangling her.

“I AM PEGASUS!” the body of Professor Tomoe suddenly yelled. “And none of you punks are leaving this lab ALIVE!” He cackled insanely, the moment ruined by his subsequent neigh.

Setsuna’s body dropped to the floor and began rolling around, trying to strangle itself as everyone sweatdropped.

## BACK AT TEN’OU HOUSE

“HOOOOOOOOOO!” Haruka yelled in unison with Mr. Satan as he celebrated his hard fought Budokai victory. Who would have thought Vegeta could slip on a piece of tile and fly out of the ring like that?

Knocking back the last of her current beer, she looked around and dimly wondered where everyone had gone.

“Oh well,” she muttered, tossing the old can aside and cracking open another. Wherever they were, it was probably pretty boring.

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## PREVIEW OF NEXT EPISODE

*(sniff) Well, this is it! Next week is the last episode of season one! What? Don't cry too much, because we'll have special surprises in store for you! Schizophrenia! Paranoia! Vendetta! Dissection! Repentance and more, all next week, on the Season Finale of Suburban Senshi! You better get ready!*





SUBURBAN SENSHI  WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

SUBURBAN  
SENSHI  
オーバーハブ 戦士

SEASON ONE  
Episode 6



***SUPER SENSHI SMACKDOWN!***

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## THE SECRET LAB OF MEIOH SETSUNA

“So here all you punk biatches all are at last,” Professor “Pegasus” Tomoe declared with an air of undisguised contempt. “Now that I gots myself this primo piece of human meat for a body, I don’t need to pretend to be the polite little altar boy of Elysion anymore! I’m the rough and ready dream mastah of disastah, and I’m gonna frag each and every one of you bastiches into next week! Prepare for all your dreams to become nightmares!” He crossed his arms authoritatively and laughed a maniacal neighing laugh.

Lightning began to pour down all around him, and for a moment the Senshi knew fear.

“Is that my golden crystal?” Endymion asked curiously, absently pulling it from Tomoe’s forehead.

“Son of a bi—!” Pegasus yelled, his new body slumping forward limply as the crystal, his persona and his power left with it.

“Yup,” Endymion chirped, tossing it in his hand. “My family had this thing for years, until we left it in the keeping of some young kid who said he was a priest. That was—” He checked his watch, “—about ten thousand years ago.”

“Father?” Hotaru asked worriedly as she watched his inert form slide down against a wall.

“Your father’s right HERE!” Dark Setsuna screeched in a high-pitched yet gravelly voice, cackling. Her head rotated 360 degrees, and rabid green foam leaked from the corner of her mouth. “I have him now, and you’ll never get him back! MUHAHAHAHA! REDRUM! REYKAK! DARMOK AND JALAD AT TANAGRA!”

Hotaru instantly transformed, pointing the Silence Glaive at Dark Setsuna’s throat. “Corrupted scion of Chronos! Release your demonic hold on my father’s mind immediately!”

“Up yours. goth girl!” Dark Setsuna screamed, laughing and hissing. She cursed in a variety of dead languages.

“You’ll never find out where the money is! If my happiness has been destroyed, then so will everyone else’s! MUHAHAHAHA—”

“The power of Saturn compels you!” Saturn yelled, swinging her glaive around and smashing Setsuna over the head with the flat side of its blade.

“Your overgrown tin opener means nothing to me!” Dark Setsuna cackled.

“The power of Saturn *COMPELS YOU!*” Saturn repeated more loudly, using the heavy, ornate butt end of the Glaive to smash Dark Setsuna in the stomach.

“Gha!” Dark Setsuna burred, choking a bit, spitting up a small Daimon pod along with some pea soup. Her features immediately cleared, and she passed out. Professor Tomoe began to get up slowly, rubbing his head.

The daimon pod rolled close to the smashed, pulverized remains of Chibiusa-D, eventually tumbling into her vast, wide-open maw...

“Poor Chibiusa-chan,” Sailor Saturn mourned, de-transforming and looking at the bloody, fetid remains of Chibiusa-D.

“Oh *that?*” Professor Tomoe laughed manically. “That’s just the Daimon I made to power that clone of... that guy?” Tomoe looked over at Endymion confused.

“Activate!” Endymion said to the Golden Crystal, shaking it vigorously. A small rattling noise could be heard coming from inside it. “That kid must have broken it,” he muttered.

“A Daimon?” Hotaru chuckled. “Well that’s different, then.” She turned her back on the rancid pink sugary corpse.

“Goings always will we join?!” Michiru asked roughly, pulling Hotaru towards her. “Seriously is the kicking of assets to be accomplished!”

Hotaru looked at Michiru askance, noting her trembling body and coruscated veins. “Michiru-momma, are you all

right? Have you started drinking coffee again? You know caffeine doesn't really agree with—"

"—Deadly beginnings happily sent to Nephrite will make me smile with the full of joyousness!" Michiru yelled, seemingly unable to keep her body from jumping up and down slightly.

"Is she speaking *English*?" Hotaru asked incredulously. It certainly wasn't the Queen's English.

"I think overcoming her own perfection has finally gotten to her," Jedite explained as he struggled to keep Michiru from launching forward and throttling Hotaru. "She's building pressure fast. We need to get that money back from Nephrite before she explodes."

"Speaking of which," Hotaru realized, "I can get Setsuna-momma's bank account numbers from father."

"Why won't you work?!" Prince Endymion yelled, tossing the Golden Crystal against a wall. The anguished screams of Pegasus could be heard coming from within.

"Here," Professor Tomoe said, handing her a slip of paper. "That should do it. From Switzerland to Sealand, it's all there." He laughed insanely.

"What about your non-disclosure agreement?" Hotaru asked, a small grin playing across her features.

"Bah. She tried to imprison me in her mind, she gets what she deserves!

Contract... terminated!" Tomoe made a cutthroat gesture and laughed for sixty point zero-seven five seconds. "I'm off to build this fascinating new device I saw in the collective unconsciousness. I think they called it a 'TiVo'. Fame and fortune will soon be mine!" He cackled insanely.

Before Hotaru could inform her father that it had already been invented, he had run off.

"Busy him wide open!" Michiru yelled, shaking her fist at the sky. "Personally violating interior safety of the Nephrite is exclusively permitted!"

“We’d better go,” Hotaru said to Jedite. The two of them pulled a frothing Michiru out of the lab.

“Piece of junk,” Prince Endymion exclaimed, tossing the Golden Crystal aside. “Complement to the Silver Crystal indeed. Those ancient Earth scientists couldn’t carve their way out of a paper bag.”

As Endymion reverted back to Chiba Mamoru and walked out of the now deserted lab, the golden crystal rolled a few feet and lodged itself in the bloody severed head of Chibiusa-D.

## A CONVENT SOMEWHERE IN TOKYO

Chibiusa knelt in prayer. She was confused. First she had desired her own father, then a horse. Then her father again, albeit just his duplicate. She needed guidance from a higher power.

“Please,” she prayed, closing her eyes, “guide me.”

“There was a time you’d be on your knees prayin’ to me, baybee,” came a suave, eerily familiar older voice from somewhere behind her.

“Elios?” Chibiusa asked, opening her eyes and turning around, only to be confronted with a hideous parody of herself—a radioactive pink, drooling fanged copy—with a golden crystal sticking out of her head.

“Stay away from me!” Chibiusa said darkly, hand reaching for her transformation brooch.

“That’s right, suga baybee,” the Pegasus-Possessed Daimon said smoothly, “do dat transformation thang.”

As Chibiusa began her transformation, the Daimon jumped forward, and in the microsecond’s time it was taking Chibiusa to transform, the creature reached in with one hand and pulled away her transformation brooch.

Chibiusa fell to the ground, stunned.

“Now I’ve got the Silver Crystal of the future thanks to you, kiddo.”

Pegasus laughed the horsey neigh-laugh of equine triumph.

“You can’t use it!” Chibiusa exclaimed, getting to her feet. “Only I can!”

“Heh,” Pegasus snorted, laughing, waving his little arms in front of his Daimon body. “But I’ve got ya babe—literally. You’re lookin’ at No Limit Pegasus... body of a princess, soul of a devil. Both the Golden and Silver Crystals are in the house. Yeah! SPORE!”

Pegasus paused. Where the heck did “SPORE!” come from? He dismissed the thought. “Now, the world is mine, baybee! So you gots yerself a choice. Hook up wit da main man, or get stepped on like a peon.”

“We’ll see about that!” Chibiusa an out of the convent towards home.

“Hey, baybee...” Pegasus said smoothly, turning to a passing nun, “Wanna go for a ride on the Horse with the Force? You know you do!”

WHAM! For all his power, Pegasus failed to see the nun’s ruler coming down on his skull.

“Wicked girl!” the nun exclaimed. “Really!” She stalked off in a huff.

“They all want what the lord of illusion has to offer,” Pegasus said weakly as he got up. “SPORE!”

Pegasus shook his head. He knew he needed to change bodies soon, before this Daimon-thing got any stronger. But first he had vengeance to dispense... ohh yeah. Dark, delicious, syrupy sugar coated vengeance.

Wings sprouting from her back, the Chibiusa-Daimon donned a black parody of Princess Small Lady Serenity’s dress and flew off like a dark harpy towards the blood-soaked future.

## TEN’OU HOUSE

“What’s that idiot doing?” Haruka mumbled, yawning,

driven to consciousness by a loud banging noise from the outside. Dressed only in her rumpled sleeping clothes, Haruka ambled to the window and slammed it shut, drawing the blinds down. Damn sun was too bright at one o' clock in the afternoon.

Nearly tripping over the multitude of beer cans that littered the living room, Haruka moved slowly to the comfortable nest she had created on the sofa opposite the television.

Ensnconcing herself within the myriad soft pillows and blankets, Haruka belched and pressed the "ON" button on the TV remote. With only her head poking out of the cloth cocoon, Haruka re-entered her half-asleep trance as WWE Smackdown! came on. The sound of crackling plastic could be heard from within the mass of cloth as she pulled out some potato chips from a bag buried under the sheets and struggled to bring them up to her mouth.

"Thif id thu lif," Haruka muttered to herself as she ate some chips and watched the triumphant return of The Rock to pro wrestling. No Michiru to tell her how uncultured she was, no Hotaru to accuse her of being a psycho murderess, and no Setsuna to confuse her with insane riddles. Just beer, chips, a sofa and the TV. Truly, this was the way life was meant to be.

## OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

"Neffy, hun, is dat sucha good ideah?" Osaka Naru watched from her side of the property line as Nephelite worked studiously on embedding something in the front of Haruka's driveway.

"Of course it is," Nephelite replied darkly. "You know something has to be done to teach that Ten'ou manners. Dropping a ton of manure on our house was simply going too far!" Under his breath, Nephelite muttered, "I wish I'd thought of it first."

“Yah but,” Naru protested, looking over at the spring-loaded sharpened spikes Nephrite was burying in the asphalt, “tiah strips? Haruka doesn’t haff a cah anymore, remembah? She blew it up in dat chase wit El Demonico.”

“Who says these are for her *car*?” Nephrite asked darkly, picturing a groggy Haruka going out for the morning paper and placing her *feet* in the path of the spring-loaded steel spikes.

“An’ wat about dat udda stuff?” Naru pressed. “Da Gas, Da Rocks and Dah giant—”

“Quiet!” Nephrite commanded. “You want her to hear?!” He looked over to the window. “Somehow she seems to know everything I do. Why I bet she’s spying on me this very minute.”

## INSIDE

Haruka nearly spat out her beer as Rey Mysterio Jr. made his surprise WWE Debut. Not that the incessant commercials with his face on them hadn’t given the secret away weeks before. She was just easily agitated.

Upstairs, Haruka’s war computer screen pulsed a bloody red, the katakana on screen reading “DEFCON-1”

## THE TSUKINO RESIDENCE

“All dead,” Usagi said weakly, kneeling before the half-exploded body of the Mamo-clone. She sobbed as she thought of the thought of blasting her daughter into billions of smithereens.

Usagi didn’t know which was worse— having done the deed or realizing that (an admittedly very small) part of her actually enjoyed watching Chibiusa explode into a billion flaming bits.



She looked over at her still unconscious father, who was passed out on the ground. At least he was safe.

“I’d give almost anything to see them alive again,” Usagi said to no one in particular. “I’d even give up—”

“Usagi-chan!” Chibiusa yelled, running into the front yard in a state of complete panic.

“Whew!” Usagi said to herself. She’d almost vowed to give up sweets back there. One second more and Kami-sama would have had her dead to rights.

“How come you’re alive?!” Usagi asked happily. “And why are you dressed like a nun?” she appended confusedly.

“Huh?” Chibiusa paused. “I don’t remember getting killed.”

“It’s a miracle!” Usagi exclaimed. “Too bad about Mamo-chan, though.”

Chibiusa looked over at the exploded clone. “Papa,” she mumbled sadly.

At that moment, the sky went from clear blue to pitch black.

“Hmm. Looks like someone’s summoned the Eternal Dragon again,” Usagi mused.

Chibiusa started, broken out of her grief-filled reverie. “You don’t understand! Pegasus stole my silver crystal! He’s gone completely evil!!”

Usagi shook her head. “No way! There’s no way Pegasus is evil!” She pressed a finger to her forehead in deep thought. “A pervert, maybe, but not evil.”

“LISTEN UP ALL YOU PUNK BIATCHES! DYIN’ TIME’S COME AT LAST!” boomed the seemingly omnipresent voice of Pegasus.

Usagi instantly got serious. “We’d better call the others before this gets any worse!” She looked at the screen. “And why is Pegasus talking like a hood all of a sudden, anyway?”

## THE SECRET LAB OF SETSUNA MEIOH

*Beepbeepbeep. Beepbeepbeep. Beepbeepbeep.*

Groggily, Setsuna began to regain consciousness, face-down in a puddle of green pea soup.

*Beepbeepbeep. Beepbeepbeep. Beepbeepbeep.*

“Wha...?” Setsuna unsteadily pushed herself up, barely registering the increasingly urgent beeping sound.

*Beepbeepbeep!! Beepbeepbeep!! Beepbeepbeep!!*

Getting to her feet and still somewhat dizzy, Setsuna realized the sound was coming from her watch.

Looking at it, she frowned. Her ultra-fancy digital chronometer was giving off an urgent beep. She knew that she only used that alarm tone for extreme emergencies, but since she had lost the ability to see the currents of time, she had no idea what the alarm meant.

“It means, my dear Setsuna-chan, that the end is here.”

Setsuna turned around to see the almost ethereal form of Neo-Queen Serenity standing behind her.

“What is the meaning of this!?” Setsuna demanded archly, feeling completely intimidated by the serene presence of Neo-Queen Serenity.

“That’s what I should be asking you!” Serenity snapped, suddenly sounding a lot more like the childish Usagi of the present. “Is there any particular reason you decided to quit your job at the Time Gate and decided to go after a man? MY man?!”

Setsuna scowled and held out the note from the future. “Because of this note. YOU fired me!”

Serenity scowled and snatched the note from Setsuna. Not bad for an ethereal projection from the future, Setsuna mused.

“Look!” Serenity said sternly, thrusting the note back in Setsuna’s face irately.

“Umm,” Setsuna began slowly, “it’s upside down.”

Serenity scowled and flipped the paper around so it was right side up.

“See here!” Serenity half-yelled. “It says ““Setsuna, because of your inability to wield the Garnet Orb, and your consequent inability to control the Time Gate, you are relieved of duty until further notice”” That *means until I tell you otherwise*, not that you’re fired *forever!* Your little master plan didn’t slip by me!”

Setsuna looked at the future form of Usagi uncomprehendingly.

“OK, so it slipped past me,” Serenity defiantly admitted. “But Ami-chan caught it soon enough!” Serenity stretched forth her hand and produced a holographic projection.

#### TIME GATE, 30th CENTURY (CRYSTAL TOKYO RELATIVE TIME)

“Thanks, Puu! I’ll be back later!” Small Lady Tsukino Usagi bounded off towards the upper world to be with her numerous friends and family, abandoning Sailor Pluto to her solitude.

Once the girl was gone, Sailor Pluto looked around to make sure no one was watching. Pulling out a picture of King Endymion from hyperspace, Pluto looked at it longingly. “Soon, my love. Soon, we will be together, I’ll be free from this accursed gate, and there won’t be any annoying Chibiusa. It will be a perfect world!”

Donning a ridiculously bulky protective suit, Pluto stepped through the time gate. It was a desperate gamble,

but she was sure it would pay off.

TIME GATE, A THOUSAND YEARS EARLIER

Future Sailor Pluto emerged from the gate very quietly. As expected, it was late at night, and her past self was barely paying attention to her surroundings.

Silently, she made sure her protective gear was airtight, and then began re-tuning the destination co-ordinates of the Time Gate. Then she left it open a crack, and stepped back to watch her plan unfold.

Surrounded by the wafting mists of eternity and standing solitary guard at the gate of time underneath the Crystal Palace, Present Pluto absently watched the howling coruscations of the Time Vortex, picking out odd events to examine and contemplate, but otherwise bored out of her mind. The red light of the Garnet orb pulsed eerily in the twilight.

Standing impassive, with her hands squarely on her staff like a Guard at Buckingham Palace, she narrowed her eyes and focused on an image of a tall blonde girl bringing down a massive gate at the edge of Tairon Space with one punch, but before she could make out any details, her concentration was broken by a light touch on her shoulder.

Eyebrow twitching, she tried to ignore the sensation. But she couldn't. Its radius was growing. A new sensation, lower now. It was like a thousand small fingers ticking her legs.

Looking down, she saw HUNDREDS of large cockroaches crawling on the floor and up her legs. Internally panicking—because if there is one thing the mighty Senshi of Time cannot stand, it is cockroaches—she swung her staff around deftly, aiming the Garnet Orb at the sea of disgusting insects.

“*dead scream*” she whispered, and a mighty arc of Plutonic energy lashed forth from the Talisman into the

vermin, incinerating them.

Seeing the vermin vaporize, Pluto sighed in relief and dropped her defensive pose, but the moment's respite did not last. She quickly resumed her stance as another wave of roaches appeared.

"Where are they coming from?!" Pluto asked herself in a panic as she fired volley after volley of energy at the creatures, sweat forming on her brow. Her power levels were much lower than they used to be at her prime, thanks to the meddlesome International Astronomical Union, whose decision to relegate Pluto to non-planet status some thousand years earlier had significantly eroded her power base, and she couldn't maintain the pace of her defense.

Frantically trying to track the source of the infestation, Pluto finally realized the Time Gate was slightly ajar— and the co-ordinates on the other side specified the early Paleozoic Era. The creatures were coming from Earth's distant past.

Moving quickly, she attempted to close the door, but noted something *else* coming though. Apparently the cockroaches of that era could grow to be several feet long. She knew this because several of them were now looking her in the eye, hissing and flapping their wing sheaths.

*"dead scream. dead scream. dead scream deadscreams deadscreamDeadScreamDeadScreamDEADscreamDEADSCREAM!"*

Amidst the sound of titanic energy blasts, pus-filled explosions and glass shattering, Pluto found her energy spent, her transformation dissolving away. Now just Meioh Setsuna, she stumbled backwards, falling into the Time Vortex, just barely managing to will herself to the year 2002. As she fell, Future Pluto smirked and leapt forward, collapsing her timeline into that of her past self. They became one. Now that she had ended her use to the line of Serenity, and she could build a proper life for herself, with the man she loved!

The hologram vanished.

“Damn you,” Setsuna hissed to Serenity, her memories now unlocked from her subconscious. “I didn’t think you had a camera at the gate.”

Serenity chuckled. “I have many powers.”

“A camera is not a power,” Setsuna said flatly.

“Shut up,” Serenity pouted. “You belong to *me*, now and forever, and like it or not, I’m going to make sure your pathetic attempt to destroy the future of Crystal Tokyo will fail. I *like* ruling the world— I can eat *whatever* I want whenever I want and no one dares call me fat! Not to mention that Mamo-chan is *mine*, and you’ll have to guard the gate down in the super-secret sub-basement for all eternity.”

“Hmph,” Setsuna said. “Not likely, since I don’t have the Garnet Orb anymore. And don’t think that pathetic ruse of Endymion’s— claiming he’s my brother via cloning— is going to work.”

“It’s not a ruse,” Serenity replied sincerely.

“Bah,” Setsuna scoffed. “He said ‘only a member of the Lunar Family’ could be trusted with the guardianship of the Gate. But he’s a Human from Earth.”

“But he married into the family when he married me,” Serenity protested. “The gate you were cloned to guard was built in the 31st century. Ami-chan did it. She worked out how to create your cloned body too.”

A look of genuine shock registered across Setsuna’s face, recalling what Endymion had told her. “I come from—the future?”

“That’s right,” Serenity said smugly, crossing her arms. “They didn’t even know about Pluto in the old Silver Millennium until you showed up and said you were ‘Sailor Pluto’. Why do you think people keep arguing about whether or not it’s really a planet? Because it *isn’t!*”

“So—” Setsuna began almost timidly. She gasped. Those fools in the International Astronomical Union who would demote her guardian planet to non-planet status in four years’ time... *they must have known the truth.*

Neo Queen Serenity giggled. “—Yup. Blow up my timeline and yours goes with it too.” She made a “pow!” spitting noise and waved her hands around to simulate a really, really big explosion.

“Lies,” Setsuna said weakly, not wanting to believe.

“I only sent you ten thousand years into the past to keep you away from Mamo-chan when I realized the pervert gene that he obviously passed to Chibiusa was dominant in you too. *Going after your own brother!*” She tutted.

Setsuna scowled. “I’ll stop you,” she hissed. “There will be no Crystal Tokyo! *No Chibiusa! No Time Gate!*”

“You haven’t got the power,” Serenity snapped, whipping out her Silver Crystal. “Check this out. It’s a neat trick I learned last week.”

“Dead,” Queen Serenity chuckled, waving her arm.

Setsuna instantly collapsed in a pile of bubbling, hissing flesh.

“Alive.” Setsuna stood before her once again, jaw agape.

“Dead,” Serenity chortled as Setsuna exploded into chunks of meat.

“Alive,” Serenity intoned as Setsuna again stood before her, pissed now.

“Dead,” Serenity muttered as Setsuna imploded into a quantum singularity.

“Alive,” Serenity said tiredly, waving her hand dismissively.

“Now look here—” Setsuna snapped.

“*Dead,*” Serenity said curtly, wrinkling her nose in disdain.

SOMEWHERE IN TOKYO

“RAHHH! AHHHHH! GRAHHHHHHH!” Chibiusa Daimon Pegasus stood in the middle of a conveniently deserted city street, her body hunched slightly, arms off to her sides, fists and teeth clenched. Lightning coruscated all around her, and the street underneath her began to crack, ripping itself apart, the chunks levitating upwards as she amassed a frightening level of battle power.

“RAHHHHHHHHH!” She screamed as she began to levitate, power rushing into her body courtesy of both the Silver and Golden Crystals. Her radioactive pink hair began to alternate between hot pink and a glowing gold, and her blood red eyes began to turn bright green.

“*Such ki*,” Sailor Mercury noted, fear obviously heavy in her voice. “I’ve never seen anything this powerful before.”

“She’s building up ki? I thought she was having bowel problems,” Sailor Jupiter said in surprise.

“Is that because she’s got the Silver and Golden Crystals?” Sailor Venus asked, watching in fear as muscles began to bulge in Chibiusa-D’s arms, legs and chest.

“Well, if you had those stuck in the wrong place they would give you bowel—” Jupiter began, stopping when the true seriousness of the situation dawned on her. “She’s getting larger! And more like... a man?”

“RAUGHHHHHHHHHHHH!” There was a primal scream as Chibiusa-D’s body erupted in golden light. There was a persistent golden glow around her body, which was now the size of a teenager’s. Her hair was pure gold, sticking up in the air in a somewhat spiked formation. Her green eyes flashed darkly. The air whished around her in a steady hiss.

“I’m not done yet, girls,” the voice of Pegasus proclaimed from deep within the supercharged body of Chibiusa-D. “SPORE!”

With another fierce yell, Chibiusa D stretched out her arms, drawing more and more energy into her body. Her



already pumped muscles grew stronger and harder. Freakish blue lightning began to streak around her aura, and her hair became golden-white and even more spiky.

“What the hell is she doing?” Sailor Venus asked in a semi panic, noting that the ground all over the city was beginning to shake and buckle as its energy was transferred to Chibiusa-D’s aura.

“I think,” Sailor Mars noted dryly, “she’s trying to reach Super Saiyan 3”.

Eternal Sailor Moon jumped forward, holding up her Eternal Tier.

“Making bad parodies of other people’s powers is reserved only for authors of doujinshi and really good fanfiction! You’re mocking the work of chroniclers like Akira Toriyama and I won’t permit it! In the name of Dragonball fans everywhere and for the honor of Son Goku, I will PUNISH YOU!”

“I THINK NOT!” Pegasus’ voice roared, as Chibiusa-D’s hair suddenly tripled in length, and a cranial ridge emerged on the top of her head, her eyebrows vanishing. With a smash, the body slammed down into the ground, sending forth a powerful tremor so strong that several nearby high rises simply toppled. “NOW I HAVE UNIFIED THE GOLDEN AND SILVER CRYSTALS! I WILL RAIN DEATH UPON THE WORLD! I AM SUPER PEGASUS III! SPORE!!!!”

Super Pegasus III shook his head. He really had to work on suppressing the Daimon half of himself.

“CRYSTAL POWER KISS!” Usagi yelled, not even waiting for the inners to use their attacks. The titanic force of her attack boiled the air around it as the raw energy coursed towards Super Pegasus III.

With a deft sideways motion of his arm, Pegasus deflected the energy into high orbit, where it smashed the Hubble telescope into fine atoms and blew a sizeable chunk out of the moon.

“IS THAT ALL YOU PUNKS HAVE?” Pegasus mocked, the electricity from his aura pounding the ground around him. In a flash, he had levitated up into the air. “TIME TO PUT THIS WORLD... ON ICE!”

Screaming, Super Pegasus manipulated the Golden Crystal, the crystal of Earth, willing massive sheets of ice to come forth from the polar regions.

“The Earth is freezing!” Ami exclaimed, her new Mercury computer frantically feeding her visor information.

Luna and Artemis raced towards the inner senshi, walls of ice nipping at their heels.

“VENUS LOVE AND BEAUTY SHOCK!”

“MARS FLAME SNIPER!”

“JUPITER OAK EVOLUTION!”

“MERCURY AQUA RHAPSODY!”

The inner Senshi frantically used their attacks to keep the ice from enveloping them.

## TEN'OU HOUSE

“Damn, it’s cold in here!” Haruka exclaimed, snuggling deeper into her cocoon. Her instinct told her something was wrong, but she attributed it to that pesky Nephrite. Her hangover wasn’t helping her intuition any, either. There was also this stupid beeping in her ears. Funny, she pondered, most times she got plastered it was a ringing. Oh well.

## THE NEPHRITE HOUSEHOLD

Nephrite stood immobile, frozen in a chunk of ice, his hands held out in complete shock, his jaw agape.

## ACROSS TOWN NEAR ICHINOHASHI PARK

“Not again! Not again!” Jedite yelled, suddenly babbling

like an incoherent madman as walls of ice approached him.

“SILENT WALL!” Sailor Saturn yelled, using the limits of her power just to keep the ice from advancing on either her, Jeditte, or Sailor Neptune any further. As she struggled to maintain the crackling black force field, she watched with growing anger as Sailor Neptune launched wave after wave of “Submarine Reflection” attacks at the ice. Of course, since the attacks were water based, they just *added* to the ice.

“YOU KNOW WHAT YOU DOING!” Neptune yelled, her anger rising and rising, with no sign of abatement evident. “YOU HAVE NO CHANCE TO SURVIVE, MAKE YOUR TIME!” She launched progressively stronger attacks at the ice.

“Will you please STOP HER?” Saturn yelled to Jeditte. “The more ice she makes, the more unlikely it is that I can hold up this barrier!”

“The ice...” Jeditte mumbled rabidly. “The ICE!” He dropped and curled up into a small ball, flashbacks of his last moments in Beryl’s court flooding his mind.

The struggle for survival was so intense no one heard the tinny beep of the Saturn n or Neptune’s Senshi communicator chimes.

## THE BATTLE SITE

“The others aren’t answering their communicators!” Sailor Venus yelled as she moved at almost insane speed, dodging the hail of blazing electric ki blasts Pegasus was hurling from the sky.

“DAMN!” Eternal Sailor Moon yelled as a stray blast vaporized the wings on the back of her costume. “Haruka and the others sure are taking their time getting here!”

“RAH!” Pegasus launched a blast at Eternal Sailor Moon.

At the last possible second, with the sound of a ricocheting bullet, a rose

flew from seemingly nowhere and into the path of the blast...

...and was vaporized by the roiling ki.

As Eternal Sailor Moon tumbled off to one side, badly hit, Tuxedo Mask stepped into the fray.

“Demonically Possessed little girls shouldn’t try to freeze the Earth,” Tuxedo Mask announced suavely. “It just isn’t polite.”

“FOR THE RECORD,” Pegasus boomed. “I’m a Pegasus possessing a Daimon, who looks like a girl but is actually a guy, and thanks to the power of both the Silver and Gold Crystals, a Super Saiyan 3 guy at that!”

“You need psychiatric help, little girl,” Tuxedo Mask continued. “Allow me to release your ka.”

Tuxedo Mask hurled a rose at Super Pegasus’ head, where it drilled a tiny hole in the side of his cranium.

“ENOUGH OF THIS HORSEPLAY!” Pegasus yelled, absently batting Tuxedo Mask aside with enough force to put him through several sub layers of the street.

“THIS WORLD... IS MINE! THE REST OF YOU... DISSAPPEAR!!”

Levitating up further, Pegasus began making a series of complicated hand

movements. “10 TIMES... KA... ME... HA... ME...”

“Oh no!” Sailor Mercury exclaimed. “He’s concentrating all his power into one focused blast! If he hits us with it, we’ll be vaporized!”

“Combine powers!” Usagi yelled. “EVERYONE!” She pulled out her Silver Crystal, transforming into Neo-Princess Serenity. Sailors Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter channeled their energies into hers.

“SAILOR... PLANET...” they yelled in unison.

“—HAA!” Pegasus yelled, unleashing a horrific lance of energy towards the Senshi.

“—ATTACK!” the Senshi yelled as their energies combined and lashed forth, intercepting Pegasus’ beam.

“It’s not enough!” Sailor Jupiter yelled, as all five Senshi began to be pushed back by the force of the Pegasus 10x Kamehameha.

“It’s because we don’t have Chibimoon or the outers while Pegasus has both the Silver AND Golden Crystals!” Sailor Mars realized.

“I can’t hold off the power!” Neo-Princess Serenity yelled. “He’s going to win! There’s nothing I can do! I’m not strong enough! Even if I sacrifice my life, I’m not going to be strong enough!”

“There is a way,” Sailor Mercury snapped tersely, hundreds of calculations going through her head, “If we give up our Super transformations forever, the quantum wave burst will be greater than any single effort we could ever provide via simple energy transfer!”

“That’s a pretty permanent step!” Sailor Venus exclaimed, doing her best to stay her ground under the crushing press of Pegasus’ beam.

“Well from where I stand being vaporized is pretty damn permanent too!”

Sailor Jupiter yelled. “I say we do it!”

## THE SECRET LAB OF MEIOH SETSUNA

“—Alive,” Neo-Queen Serenity said dismissively, resurrecting Setsuna once more.

“I won’t let your plan succeed!” Setsuna yelled. “Crystal Tokyo will never come to pass!”

The ethereal form of Neo-Queen Serenity grew solid. “Too late, Setsuna-chan. The car is die cast—”

“I think you mean ‘the die is cast’”.

“—Dead,” Serenity snapped as Setsuna was devoured by a giant roach.

## BATTLE ZONE

Golden light. Blue Light. Red Light. Green Light. Spheres of energy flew from the inner senshi, whose uniforms devolved to their pre-Super forms, and into Neo-Princess Serenity.

“She’s transforming!” Sailor Venus yelled. “How?!” Sailor Jupiter exclaimed. “Sailor Saturn once said this was the final form of Sailor Moon!”

“She was right,” Sailor Mars said breathlessly as Neo-Princess Serenity transformed in a blast of white light, becoming the winged form of Neo *Queen* Serenity.

“Enough!” Neo Queen Serenity said, pressing her right hand forward, pushing Pegasus’ attack backwards and doubling it onto him.

“The energy pressure—” Sailor Mercury began, almost in a panic, “—it’s too much! Between Serenity and Pegasus, the power is causing a warp in the fabric of space-time!”

As Pegasus’ energy doubled back onto itself, a blinding nuclear explosion rocked the Earth’s upper atmosphere. When the light cleared, the Senshi, Serenity, Tuxedo Mask, Chibiusa, Luna and Artemis were gone.

## THE SECRET LAB OF SETSUNA MEIOH

“And now they’ve made it through the rift to the 31st Century,” the projection of Neo Queen Serenity said almost absently, like she was checking things off of a list.

“They’ve found themselves in a post-atomic wasteland, which I will easily pacify with the power of peace and love. In a few years, Ami-chan will work out how to build a Time Gate back to the past, but by then they will be so happy in the future they will decide to stay.”

“Happy?” Setsuna snorted. “How could they be happy a thousand years in the

future away from everything they know?”

“They rule the world,” Serenity answered like it was the most obvious thing in the world. “They have legions of adoring fans who love them... or else. We are spectacle to behold, a great mecca for tourism, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.”

“But what about their duty to defend *this* world!?” Setsuna asked incredulously.

“That’s what Haruka, Michiru and Hotaru are for.” Serenity shrugged. “They never really wanted to work with us anyway, so now they get to be on their own. They can struggle in the primitive capitalist Earth Society of the past while we rule the monarchy of the Perfect 31st century Future. Serves them right for being such maleficent mother—”

Serenity frowned as she noted a point on her list and snapped her fingers.

“There. So much for that pesky ice thing that was covering the Earth. That should cross all the I’s and dot the T’s.”

“What about me?” Setsuna asked darkly.

With a WHAM! Setsuna was down for the count, a victim of blunt force trauma as Neo Queen Serenity slammed her on the back of the head with the repaired Time Staff, shiny new Garnet Orb and all.

As Neo Queen Serenity dragged Setsuna into the future, Setsuna dimly thought to herself, *Funny... I’ve never been hit on the head by my own Big Assed Key before... it really, really, hurts.*

## NEAR ICHINOHASI PARK

“SUBMARINE REFLECTION!” Sailor Neptune yelled, hurling a titanic blast of supercharged water into the air.

“Will someone *kindly* tell her the crisis has past?” Hotaru asked archly as a strong drizzle fell upon her.

“The ice is gone?!” Jedite exclaimed nervously, looking around frantically. “Right? Right?”

“Yes,” Hotaru nodded. “The ice is gone. Now what was Michiru-momma’s genius plan?”

“She told me you have some kind of special ability...” Jedite began slowly.

### THE NEPHLITE HOUSEHOLD

Deep in his darkened den, Nephrite called forth a holographic projection of the night sky. He looked at the configuration of the stars.

“The stars know *everything*,” Nephrite began slowly. “Show me the next move in my war against Ten’ou.”

He paused as the stars shimmered for a moment, moving into odd positions.

“What?” he asked out loud, dumbfounded. “Go inside... no, outside? Down the sheet? Ahh... street? Then turn right? left? Right? left... ok. Go to a Spock... oh, a *spot* across town near Ichinohashi Park... and bring the five million dollars I stole? For a crate? Oh, *bait*. Only then will I have complete vengeance?”

Nephrite shrugged. “If you say so.” He began to think that maybe the stars were getting senile in their old age.

### NEAR ICHINOHASHI PARK

Jedite laughed as Hotaru gave the final set of instructions to Nephrite via her projection of the night sky.

“He should be here shortly,” Hotaru said slowly as she terminated the projection. “It was difficult moving the star projection into any kind of meaningful pattern for him. I can’t believe he would be so gullible as to



do anything they recommend.”

“Believe it,” Jedithe declared with relish. “That’s a pretty handy trick you’ve got there.”

“Much better than a telescope,” Hotaru nodded. “Hopefully this strategy will help Michiru-momma as well.” She looked over at Michiru.

“FOR GREAT JUSTICE!” Michiru bawled, struggling against the ropes which bound her to one of the trees in the park. “TAKE OFF EVERY ZIG!” She trembled and frothed at the mouth, Aqua mirror clutched in her vise-like grip of insane rage.

## THE TEN’OU HOUSEHOLD

“Too hot in here,” a groggy Haruka mumbled, turning and twisting on the couch. Half-asleep, she began to daydream about her battles with Nephelite. Unconsciously, she transformed into Sailor Uranus, imagining multiple sadistic uses for the Space Sword as applied to Nephelite’s hide.

## ICHINOHASHI PARK

Nephelite confidently walked into the park, a briefcase loaded with money in his left hand. His gait was confident, his gaze secure. The stars had told him he’d get his ultimate revenge of Ten’ou Haruka, and the stars were never wrong.

“NOW!” Jedithe yelled from somewhere in the trees.

“GIVING TO ME MONEY THAT IS TO MY BELONGING NOW!” Michiru yelled insanely, running from somewhere in the park, transforming into Sailor Neptune.

“Huh?” Nephelite asked simply, too stunned by trying to parse the insane grammar to actually move. Besides, Neptune was an effete weakling, with no real power—

## STORY AND ART BY DOCTOR XADIUM

The next moment, Neptune had tackled Nephrite, slamming him into the ground with incredible force.

“OH my god,” Hotaru said, covering her face to try and avoid the grisly scene.

“You can’t fit that mirror in—” Jedite began, checking himself when he realized it had been.

Nephrite screamed in unholy agony.

DEEP SUBMERGE!

DEEP SUBMERGE!

DEEP SUBMERGE!

SUBMARINE REFLECTION!

SUBMARINE REFLECTION!

SUBMARINE REFLECTION!

*NEPTUNE TITAN TSUNAMI!!*

With a nuclear blast of aquatic energy, Neptune blasted Nephrite into low orbit.

“YES!” Michiru yelled as she detransformed, the aggressive energy finally purged from her system. She held up the briefcase with her hard earned five million US dollars to the sky in supreme triumph. Sakura petals wafted down, cleansing Michiru in a bath of Absolute Perfection once more.

His body roaring through the atmosphere, Nephrite frantically tried to assemble a barrier strong enough to prevent him from incinerating. Focusing all his power, he began moving back down through the atmosphere.

### THE TEN’OU HOUSEHOLD

In her sleep, Haruka shifted back and forth between herself and Sailor Uranus as her dreams about mauling Nephrite got more and more intense.

### OUTSIDE

Hotaru, a now beatific Michiru, and Jedite walked towards their house in a state of absolute victory.

“Between the money I got from Setsuna-momma’s bank accounts, and the five million US that Michiru-momma earned from the sale of her painting, we’ve finally managed to make our way back to our proper place in the world.”

Hotaru smiled as she said those words. It had been a long, hard struggle.

At that moment, streaking from orbit, the red-hot form of Nephrite screamed towards the ground, slamming headfirst into the front driveway—and right onto the spring-loaded steel spikes he had buried there some hours ago.

“AUGGH!” Nephrite yelled, jumping to his feet, clutching his bleeding skull. Staggering back, he triggered a hidden catapult which launched several heavy rocks in his direction.

Disoriented, Nephrite spun around, triggering his last trap—a flamethrower aimed at a hidden propane gas tank. His last conscious thought was that the stars were going to be right after all.

As a giant Nephrite-shaped dummy dropped down from the rafters of Nephrite’s house, playing a pre-recorded message of “I WIN! I WIN! I WIN!”, Hotaru and the others watched their house—and everything in it—explode into a mushroom cloud composed of a billion pieces of flaming debris.



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PREVIEW OF SEASON 2 PREMIERE

*WHAT?! What do you mean we said this was the last episode of Suburban Senshi!? We said it was the last episode of Season \*ONE\*! Reading between the lines is crucial! Did we blow up Haruka and Nephelite, or was it all a dream? Or is it something else entirely? What do we have planned for the all-insane season TWO of Suburban Senshi? Here's a hint!*

Deep in the smoke-filled crater of the Tokyo Street, Chibiusa-D's hands twitched, sparks of raw ki energy crackling around her fists. The Silver crystal had vanished thanks to Neo Queen Serenity, but the Golden Crystal was still in her possession... and soon, so would the dreams of everyone on—

—and then she was run over by the neighborhood Ice Cream Truck.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For 14 years Doctor Xadium has been the creator and mad steward of the ever-growing Suburban Senshi metaverse, including its [OC-only spinoff universe](#). He is also the co-author of *[Warriors of Legend: Reflections of Japan in Sailormoon](#)*, and the guy who came up with the idea for Wikimoon, the original Sailor Moon wiki. He lives with his two cats and soon-to-be Waifu, who all have knives in their hands apparently.