

# A Kiss Goodnight! Ami's Gift to Mako

A Sailor Moon fanfiction

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With assistance from ChatGPT

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Sailor Moon created by Naoko Takeuchi

## Author's Note

I think the idea for this story came to me about halfway through writing *The Sailor Guardians vs. Hypnosia*. I'd even argue this is the *real* story I wanted to tell all along. This is a direct sequel to the *Hypnosia* story, so definitely [give that a read first](#). It sets up the core conflict of this story.

This story takes place a few weeks after the events of *Hypnosia*. Ami Mizuno struggles with her feelings for Mako, while Zoisite is out for revenge. Zoisite sets in motion a series of events that will put Ami on a collision course with Mako. The plan is cruel, but will the Dark Kingdom succeed?

Ami is the protagonist of this story, and all centered italic sentences represent a short thought in her mind. This story follows the same writing style of my previous works—fast paced, easy to read and fun. If you liked the *Hypnosia* story, you are going to love this one. This is the best story I've written yet. It is seriously epic. I included lots of action, romance, sleepy peril and—

Anyway, I'll stop talking now, and just let you board the train. Once you're on, there's no stopping.

Thank you for reading, and enjoy the ride everyone.

# Chapter 1

The bedroom window slid open as she slept, letting in a gentle breeze and a flurry of rose petals. A gloved hand pushed the window upward, and a pair of black military boots stepped through. An alarm clock on the girl's nightstand read *3:32 AM*.

Zoisite tiptoed toward the bed, stepping over books and clothing. A street lamp outside provided ambient lighting in the room, casting a cool shadow on the Dark Kingdom general. Zoisite stopped when he reached the bedside, letting his boot heels rest slowly on the carpet. He pulled out a brown glass bottle, and spent a few seconds admiring the sleeping, vulnerable girl.

The girl's black hair was tied into a ponytail with a cute little ribbon. She laid sideways under an expensive silky duvet, with her hand curled next to her face. A framed photograph on her nightstand showed the girl in a slim cheerleading outfit, embracing a handsome boy with red hair.

Zoisite reached into his pocket and pulled out a clean white handkerchief. He began unscrewing the cap on his bottle. The girl sighed suddenly and turned over, causing her blanket to slip off. The girl's bare shoulders and bosom were plainly visible, showing off her black laced brassiere—purchased from the city's trendiest sleepwear shop.

Zoisite waited for the girl to stop moving. He carefully poured some chloroform over the handkerchief, then screwed the bottle's cap back on. He leaned forward over the bed, causing the mattress springs to

creak. The girl breathed in and parted her lips, as Zoisite moved his handkerchief closer to her mouth.

“Sorry cutie, but I can’t have you waking up for this next part,” Zoisite whispered to her. He pressed the handkerchief over the girl’s mouth, slowly lowering the cloth until it covered her nose—which wrinkled from the sweet fumes. He placed his other hand behind the girl’s head, gently pushing it further into the chloroform-soaked cloth.

“There we go. Just a couple breaths, cutie.”

“...mm...”

The girl breathed through the cloth several times, then furrowed her eyebrows and moaned quietly. She shook her head and bent her arm up, touching Zoisite’s glove.

Her eyes shot open suddenly.

“HRMMMMPHH!!” She screamed, grabbing Zoisite’s hand. He responded by pressing the cloth harder over her mouth.

“Shhhh! Shhhh! Go back to sleep!” Zoisite yelled, with rising urgency in his voice. The girl panicked and flailed her arms, hitting Zoisite in the face and chest. She twisted her upper body, escaping from the handkerchief with a loud gasp. She leaned back and kicked Zoisite hard in the stomach.

“Oooooof!” He yelled, dropping the cloth and grunting as he tumbled to the floor.

The girl scrambled off the bed and flicked the switch on a lamp. The room lit up, allowing her to see Zoisite’s distinct blonde curls and gray military uniform. The girl was wearing a pair of black laced panties, from the same trendy sleepwear set as her bra. She stumbled as she tried to stand straight, her head still woozy from the chloroform.

“OH MY GOD! YOU CREEP!!!” She shrieked at Zoisite. Before Zoisite could respond, the girl picked up the alarm clock and chucked it violently at his head.

*WHAM!!*

“OWWWWW!!!” Zoisite yelled, grabbing his nose as it throbbed in pain. The alarm clock ricocheted into the wall.

The girl held her forehead and turned toward her door, looking to escape. “Ohhhhh, what’d you do to me, creep?!”

Zoisite scrambled over—right as she grabbed the doorknob—and clamped his hand over her mouth, yanking the girl back. “Aghhh! That *hurts*, you know!”

“Mmmmmmphhh!!” She screamed, trying to break free from Zoisite’s grip. She kicked the nightstand over, causing the lamp to fall on the carpet. Zoisite dragged the girl back toward the bed, with her legs thrashing. He then wrapped his other arm around her neck, and began applying pressure for his sleeper hold.

“Ugh! Looks like I’m going to have to knock you out the hard way.”

The girl struggled profusely and—in a move she learned from self-defense class—sent her elbow crashing into Zoisite’s ribs.

*WHAM!*

“OWWW!” He screamed in agony, letting the girl go. She fell face first onto the bed, rolled over and stepped off. She shook her head, trying to fight off her dizziness, and staggered over to the door again.

“Ohhhh...get away from me,” she groaned.

Zoisite fought through his pain and leaped to the door, his right hand in a firm karate chop position. He struck—right as the girl opened her mouth to scream for help.

“HEL—”

*WHACK!!*

With a swift strike, the blade of his hand impacted the girl's neck, sending a shockwave through her nervous system. She gasped and fainted, her eyes rolling up as she fell backward. Zoisite caught the girl by her waist, and placed his other gloved hand over her bare belly. He let her down to the ground gently, brushing away some of her black hair bangs.

“Didn't expect that to actually work,” Zoisite mused, looking at his hand. The girl was lying motionless on the carpet, completely unconscious.

Zoisite gathered his handkerchief and bottle, inserting them back into his pocket. He then took out a marble-sized youma seed, gazing at it between his thumb and index finger. The youma seed emitted a sinister purple glow, with small vapors of dark energy whirling around it.

“Sorry cutie, but I have a job for you.”

He knelt down next to the unconscious girl and placed the youma seed on her chest, slightly above her cleavage. The girl opened her mouth and convulsed as the seed took hold, absorbing into her body. A dark purple aura filled the room as her transformation began.

Zoisite stood back and admired his handiwork, satisfied that the first stage of his plan was nearing completion.

“The Dark Kingdom needs your expertise,” he said, as the dark aura intensified.



Ami Mizuno pointed her gel pen on a sheet of fancy pink stationery, and pondered hard about the words she was about to write. A thought came to her, and she began writing across the paper, the gel pen producing her words in a dark green ink. She wrote several sentences, then stopped suddenly, shaking her head. She crumpled the paper into a ball and tossed it into a trash can near her desk. She took out a blank sheet of stationery from a folder, and started writing again from scratch. Her hand hesitated, then wrote several more words—then stopped again. Ami let out a frustrated sigh, crumpled the letter into a ball and tossed it in the trash.

Ami set the gel pen down, brushed away some of her short blue hair, and leaned back in her chair.

*Penning this one letter is harder than all my college essays—combined!*

Her Sailor Mercury transformation pen rested atop a stack of exam papers on her desk, its gold metal shimmering in the afternoon sunlight. The exam papers had the letter grades *A*, *A-* and—in an uncharacteristic first for the bright young girl—a *B+*, written in red ink.

Ami picked up a framed photograph on her desk and looked at it fondly. The photo captured her Sailor Guardian friends—Usagi, Makoto, Minako and Rei—smiling during a fun outing at the local park. The girls in the photo all had their arms around each other and big grins. Ami herself was in the photo's edge, smiling adorably with her hands clasped behind her.

A sudden sadness stung Ami's heart, when she remembered how few friends she had before becoming a Sailor Guardian. Their sacred mission to protect Sailor Moon from the Dark Kingdom—and the perilous adventures that came with it—forged a friendship bond that Ami cherished.

She focused on Mako, admiring how kind and brave the Guardian of Thunder was. Mako's kindness was exhibited each time she cheered Ami up, or defended Ami from the other girls' light teasing. Ami thought about the many times Mako saved her life, and the courage Mako displayed against Hypnosia's relentless sleep gas attacks. The shared experience had brought the two friends particularly close to each other.

*If only I had Mako's courage.*

Ami set the photo frame down and took out another sheet of pink stationery. She began writing again, jotting down her prose in a beautiful cursive. She paused to dry her eyes, and continued writing for several minutes.

She finished penning her deepest thoughts and signed the letter, adding some hearts, stars and a Mercury symbol at the bottom. Setting the letter aside, she picked up a small pink gift bag and took out a glass vial of Rose Amor perfume. The perfume bottle was decorated with a tiny pink bow—which itself was embellished with delicate green and white ribbons. Ami, having memorized Mako's rose fragrance, found the perfume at the city's most upscale department store. She put the perfume bottle back in the bag and looked at her letter again. A frown formed on her face, as doubts began sinking into her mind.

*What's gotten into you?!*

*This is so stupid and pathetic!*

*You're going to ruin everything!*

Ami picked up the letter and held it over the trash can, her hand trembling as she prepared to crumple it. Her grip on the paper tightened, and she hesitated, taking a deep introspective breath. The

decision she was about to make agonized her, torturing her mind with all the different ways events could play out.

*Have courage, Ami.*

She decided that fate was outside of her control—the same way destiny led her to become Sailor Mercury. Ami folded the letter perfectly in half, and inserted it into a light-blue envelope. She picked up the gel pen and wrote on the back of the envelope—in her charming cursive handwriting—*Mako*.

Ami dropped the envelope inside the gift bag, and decided to let fate handle the rest.



A dark energy portal materialized inside the Dark Kingdom lair, sending a rush of rose petals onto the twisted rock formations. Zoisite stepped out, still rubbing a massive red bruise on his nose. He was joined by a petite female youma. Their footsteps echoed eerily through the cavern, as they walked toward Queen Beryl's throne.

Queen Beryl was waiting, wearing her tight-fitting regal purple dress that flowed to the ground. The dress was sleeveless, curving around her breasts with sharp pointy ornaments. Her deep red hair cascaded downward in fiery waves—a mesmerizing symbol of her power and beauty.

“Zoisite,” the queen acknowledged her general. The dark energy orb on her long staff pulsed with an eerie purple glow.

“My queen,” Zoisite replied, bowing respectfully. “Our plan will be set in motion tonight.” He looked intently into Beryl's red eyes. “I will be needing the dark spirit crystal that you promised me.”

Beryl paused for a moment, stunned by Zoisite's swagger. "Watch it, Zoisite. You know how costly dark spirit crystals are." She pointed her staff at the dark energy clouds floating high above. "We will be consuming a good portion of our energy reserve to make one. Are you certain this will work?"

Zoisite smiled confidently. "It will be worth it, my queen. Dark spirit crystals are known for their inescapable ability to corrupt. We just need to find one Sailor Guardian, preferably their most foolish, impulsive member—"

"Be careful, Zoisite. Dark energy is *not* an exact science," Beryl interrupted.

Zoisite exchanged a devious look with his petite youma, who smiled back silently. "Rest assured, my queen. I've learned a lot from my last encounter with the Sailor Guardians." Zoisite made a fist. "I know how to exploit their weaknesses."

Queen Beryl, while still infuriated at Zoisite's repeated failures, admired the general's unyielding and cunning nature. She knew that his unwavering loyalty would bring great benefits to the Dark Kingdom's cause.

"Hm. Very well. See to it that this opportunity does not go to waste. Whatever weakens the Sailor Guardians, will buy us more time to collect life-force energy—to awaken the Evil One." The queen raised her staff and pointed it at the ground in front of Zoisite. A stream of malevolent dark energy flowed from the staff's orb, coalescing into a dark spirit crystal. The crystal was crafted from an exquisite specimen of purple quartz, and had swirls of dark energy vapors floating around it. Zoisite knelt down and picked up the crystal, appreciating the raw power it possessed.

“Thank you my queen. I won't fail you this time,” Zoisite said, bowing again.

Beryl pounded her staff. “Don't hold back Zoisite! Your replacement is on deck, hungry for action.”

Zoisite nodded his head silently, and walked over to a stone surface to collect some items—a small metal canister, a silk handkerchief and some hypodermic needles. He reached into his pocket to retrieve the brown glass bottle.

“Oh, one more favor to ask, my queen.” He held the bottle in the air. “Going to need a refill.”

Beryl raised an eyebrow and smirked. She pointed her staff at the bottle and sent a bolt of dark energy into it. “You and your dirty little tricks, Zoisite.”



“And then, I launched that metal tank into the air—and *BAM!*” Mako raised her arm, pointing her finger to the sky. “Shot a bolt of lightning at it! A *massive* purple explosion in the sky!”

The five girls—Usagi, Ami, Mako, Minako and Rei—all laughed, as Mako waved her hands wildly, mimicking the blast radius of an explosion. Mako's brown ponytail bobbed up and down as she laughed.

They were spending the warm evening strolling through the city's trendy shopping district—near their university campus—wearing their favorite casual outfits. The girls all tended to choose outfits that matched their associated Sailor Guardian color scheme. Mako sported a fashionable short-sleeved green blouse, with light colored casual leggings.

Ami wore a stylish light-blue summer dress, with a flowy skirt that extended past her knees. Ami walked alongside her friends, holding a small pink gift bag between her hands.

“Is that *true*, Ami?” Minako asked, munching on an ice cream cone. Her long blonde hair was tied with a cute red bow.

Ami replied, sharing a cute smile with Mako. “Oh Mako was extraordinary. She did the impossible and channeled enough energy to beat Hypnosia’s sleep gas attack. And then we...”

*We held hands.*

Ami paused and looked down at her hands clutching the pink gift bag. “...we launched a powerful joint attack that took Hypnosia down.”

“Too bad we were napping while all this happened!” Rei replied, holding shopping bags filled with trendy clothing.

“Yeah that purple gas made me sooooo sleepy!” Minako said, pretending to fall asleep.

Usagi bounced up and down with stars in her eyes. “It was the coolest thing I’ve ever seen!”

It had been several weeks since Zoisite sent Hypnosia to battle the Sailor Guardians—the toughest opponent they had faced up to that point. The girls were glad to have a respite from Dark Kingdom attacks, but a quiet unease fell upon them as they wondered what would come next.

“Pretty sure I scared Zoisite away with that punch. He won’t be messing with us anytime soon,” Mako said, swinging her fist through the air.

“Hey don’t steal all the fun. I still need to send a fireball into his face,” Rei replied.

Ami remained quiet, remembering the flippant cruelty Zoisite displayed while she was his captive. She knew Zoisite—and the Dark Kingdom—would retaliate with much more force.

“Luna says we can’t underestimate the Dark Kingdom. We need to remain vigilant,” Ami said with seriousness.

“Where is Luna anyway?” Minako asked.

“Oh she’s been on high alert, prowling the area for signs of Dark Kingdom activity,” Ami replied.

Usagi sighed. “That cat never rests, does she?”

The girls turned a corner on the walkway, strolling past food trucks and clothing storefronts. The area was buzzing with students and families enjoying the weekend evening.

“Hey what’s in the bag, Ami?” Minako piped up suddenly, pointing to Ami’s pink gift bag.

Ami’s eyes opened wide. “I...I...It’s—”

“Yeah, is that a gift for someone *special*?” Usagi chimed in, her eyes turning to hearts.

Ami stammered. “Um...I—”

Rei grinned and grabbed the bag from Ami’s hand. “Let’s see what you got here—”

“Oh my gosh!” Ami scrambled to grab her pink gift bag, but Rei yanked it away. “W...w...wait!” Ami said, panicking and trembling.

“I knew it! It’s for your secret crush, Ami!” Usagi said with a huge grin on her face.

“Awwwww! Is he cute? When are we going to meet him, Ami?” Minako giggled. She made loud smooching noises.

When the girls weren't busy fighting evil, their attention often turned to boys, kisses and romance. Ami was teased relentlessly—especially by Rei and Minako—when they found out she had never been kissed before.

Ami's cheeks flushed red, her deep embarrassment drowning out all her friends' words. She went to grab the bag from Rei, but the raven-haired girl yanked it away again.

*That's so mean, Rei!*

Rei began opening the bag. "Ohh! What do we have here—"

"Give that back to her!" Mako snapped, grabbing the bag from Rei and handing it back to Ami. "She's clearly uncomfortable with you all snooping in her stuff."

"Awwww, okay. Sorry Ami," Rei said despondently.

"Sorry," Usagi and Minako said quietly in unison.

Ami clutched the bag awkwardly to her chest, her entire body warm with embarrassment at the exchange. "No worries! But I...I think I'll get going now." She looked up and smiled at Mako.

"Awww, did we do something wrong?" Minako asked.

"No it's fine...I just want to get some extra studying in—"

"Come on Ami, it's the weekend!" Usagi interjected.

"Really, I'm just super busy these days..."

Ami started walking away from the group when Mako stepped forward. "Come on, I'll walk you back."

Ami perked up and blushed again.

"See you all tomorrow!" Mako called out, joining Ami's side. Usagi, Rei and Minako stared silently as the pair walked in the direction of the campus.

"What's up with those two?" Rei whispered to Minako.



*SHWWOMMM!* A dark energy portal materialized in a quiet corner of the school campus, spewing out a flurry of rose petals. Zoisite stepped out and scanned the area. The campus saw limited activity on weekend evenings, with just a few students walking about.

Zoisite noticed a charming young lady walking alone, and decided she'd be his first target for the night. The girl had blonde curly hair—about shoulder length—and wore a pair of glasses, along with a t-shirt and jeans. He walked up to the girl, startling her.

“Oh! You scared me! Can I...” The girl gave a perplexed look at Zoisite's appearance. “...help you?”

“Apologies for startling you, Miss. I'm looking for the school gymnasium. Can you point me in the right direction?” Zoisite replied, bowing. He applied his charm to help ease the girl.

The girl smiled and turned around, pointing her finger at a large building. “Um, that should be it. You'll need a badge to get in though.”

She began turning back. “Do you need me to help—”

*FSSSSSSSSSSSS.*

Zoisite had pointed a small metal canister at her, spraying a purple gas into her face.

“Ohhh...” the girl moaned, as she fainted from the sleeping gas. Her eyes fluttered shut under her glasses and she collapsed into Zoisite's arms.

“Pleasant dreams, Miss! I'll be needing that.” Zoisite reached into the girl's pocket and pulled out a student badge. He set the unconscious girl down and began walking toward the gymnasium.

A petite female youma appeared behind Zoisite suddenly. “Should have just used that gas on me. Would have saved you all the trouble earlier,” the youma said in a high-pitched voice.

Zoisite rubbed his bruised nose again. “Oh you remember that, Chiarida? It still hurts!” Zoisite turned around and looked at the youma.

The female youma was shorter than Zoisite, and had a curvy, slender frame. She had blue-gray skin—as most youma did—and dark blue hair, tied into two pigtails. She wore a white long-sleeved bodysuit, with a navy blue vest and miniskirt over it. Both of her ankles had a pair of flashy wings on them. A pair of tennis shoes completed her look. The youma had a seductive, sexy nature to her that was hard to ignore.

“So what’s the plan, master?” Chiarida asked, placing her arm sensually over Zoisite’s chest.

Zoisite paused uncomfortably. “Ahem. Youma and Dark Kingdom generals don’t mingle like this. I suggest you—mmmm!”

Chiarida interrupted Zoisite’s speech by placing her lips over his mouth. She kissed the Dark Kingdom general tenderly, grabbing some of his curly blonde hair and closing her eyes. She broke the kiss, and looked Zoisite in the eyes devilishly. “Suggest I...what?”

Zoisite liked Chiarida’s audacity, and he wished there was a way to recruit youma permanently into his ranks. He knew, however, that her time would be limited. Once Sailor Moon used her healing magic, the youma would transform back into the cute cheerleader from earlier. It was imperative that he stick with the plan.

“Follow me, Chiarida.”

They walked over to the gymnasium building and Zoisite used the stolen student badge to open the door. As they entered, a small black cat observed them a short distance away.

“Zoisite! He’s back!” Luna said quietly to herself. The cat jumped out of some bushes and raced to find the Sailor Guardians.



“Don’t worry too much about it, Ami. None of the other girls have very interesting romantic lives at the moment either,” Mako said as she walked alongside Ami. The walkway had fewer people on it as they left the shopping district. Ami looked to one side, and saw a boy happily holding hands with a girl. She looked in another direction and saw a boy peck a girl on the lips. Ami decided then, to press forward and resolve her burning question. She spoke up timidly.

“Um, Mako...is there anyone...special in your—”

Mako burst out laughing, her long ponytail bouncing up and down. Ami wasn’t sure if Mako was laughing at her, or at the question. Mako calmed down and stared longingly into the distance. “Me?! Oh no, no. My heart’s been broken way too many times by guys I thought were *the one*.”

Ami listened as Mako relayed her romantic stories.

“My first crush—my Senpai—broke my heart when he chose another girl. I dated a few other guys, but they all ended—usually because the guys were intimidated by me.”

“Intimidated? But Mako, you’re so friendly and kind—”

“Well that’s not what they see. They see a girl who’s strong-willed, independent—willing to stand up for herself.” Mako flexed her arms playfully. She then gave Ami a solemn look. “Not a lot of guys...like that I suppose...”

The girls often poked fun at Mako's romantic misadventures, as she tended to fall hard for any guy who reminded her of her first crush. Mako liked guys and Ami would only ever be a close friend—romance was out of the question. Doubts began forming in Ami's mind again.

*She's not into you, Ami.*

“Well, I don't think you should change, Mako. You'll find the right guy, and he'll be very lucky to have you.”

Mako winked at Ami and gave her a flirty smile. “Or girl.”

Ami's eyes widened and she opened her mouth to reply—but she choked instead. Mako laughed and gave Ami a gentle smack on the back. Determination replaced doubt in Ami's mind—Mako was flirting with her!

*That's your cue!*

Ami's heart started pounding, her fingers tightening around the pink gift bag as she worked up the courage to make a move. She felt like she was having a heart attack. She dipped her head down and began trembling, overcome by a sudden surge of emotion.

Mako looked concerned. “What's wrong, Ami?”

Ami closed her eyes and pursed her lips, unsure how to proceed. Her cheeks flushed red.

*I can't do it. Oh, why can't I do it?*

“What's on your mind? You can talk to me, Ami.”

A ringing began in Ami's ears, as her entire body shivered with fear and anxiety. Her heart pounded faster and faster; her palms dripped with perspiration.

*Fate, Ami. Just do it!*

Ami closed her eyes and lifted the pink gift bag, pushing it toward Mako. “I...it...it's for you, Mako.” Ami's voice came out as a near

whisper. Mako paused for a moment, with a look of surprise, and then took the bag.

“Oh, Ami...you didn't need to—”

“It's for saving me. My...way of saying thank you...I guess...”

Mako smiled politely and opened the bag. Her eyes lit up. “Oh my gosh! Ami, this is so awesome! It's my absolute favorite!” Mako's face gleamed as she took out the glass vial of rose perfume. “Thank you so much!”

Mako rotated the perfume vial in her hands, admiring the cute pink bow and ribbons. “Wow, this is so cute. You have an eye for detail, Ami. Hope this didn't cost too much!”

Ami was about to reply with some joke about the price, but Mako interrupted, giving Ami a friendly hug. “I love it, Ami. Now I owe *you* a gift!”

*You're too kind Mako—really.*

Mako opened the gift bag again, and her expression grew serious. “Oh. There's a note in here...for me.”

Ami couldn't keep her emotions in check, and she began gazing at Mako—tears welling up in her blue eyes. She tightened her quivering lips, trying to hold the tears back in, but the tears fell anyway.

Mako didn't seem to notice, as she took out the light-blue envelope. “Awww, Ami, you didn't have to.” Mako opened the envelope and took out the folded letter.

Ami turned away and blinked hard, tears streaming down her cheeks. The two of them were very close friends, and Ami knew that Mako would find a gentle way to let her down. She imagined Mako politely explaining that the two of them were better off friends.

Romance couldn't trump their duty as Sailor Guardians—or some other excuse.

Mako unfolded the letter, completely focused on it—still oblivious to Ami's emotional distress.

“By the way!” Mako piped up suddenly. “Ami, your handwriting is amazing. You need to show me how you do it sometime—“

*Oh, Mako...*

Mako turned her attention to Ami and noticed her distress. “Oh my gosh, Ami!”

“M...M...Mako, I—” Ami sobbed, covering her entire face with her hands.

Mako folded the letter and wrapped her arm around Ami. “Hey, hey, hey—”

The moment was deeply embarrassing. Ami was crying in front of Mako, unable to muster anything more than a pitiful apology.

“I...I...I'm sorry—”

“Hey listen, I know things have been hard lately, but—*WHOA!*”

Luna jumped on top of Ami's shoulder, seemingly out of nowhere, startling the two girls. “*THERE YOU ARE!*”

“Wha—Luna! What's going on?” Ami looked up, wiping away her tears. The surprise event seemed to reset Ami's emotions.

“It's Zoisite! I saw him teleport into the school grounds, and he was making his way inside the gymnasium. He's up to no good!”

Mako's eyes narrowed. “Zoisite, huh? Must be coming back to settle the score.”

“We'll...go check things out, Luna,” Ami replied, her voice still shaky.

“Ami, are you alright?” Luna asked.

“We’re fine, Luna. You should go alert the other girls,” Mako replied.

Luna jumped off Ami’s shoulder and started running toward the shopping district. “Sounds good. Hurry!”

Mako placed a hand on Ami’s shoulder. “Hey, are you going to be okay?”

Ami smiled back, drying her eyes. “...yes.”

“Looks like we get to be superheroes tonight,” Mako said.

Ami nodded, collected her emotions, and took out her transformation pen. She glanced briefly at the folded letter in Mako’s hand.

“Don’t worry Ami, I’ll read it when we’re done. Let’s go!”

## Chapter 2

Zoisite and Chiarida walked through a dimly lit hallway in the gymnasium facility. Zoisite observed his surroundings carefully, memorizing the various doorways and turns. They approached the basketball court, hearing the sounds of girls jumping and cheering.

“Ohhh, looks like they’re doing some late night cheerleading practice,” Chiarida remarked. Zoisite nodded, and then shifted his attention to an office nearby. Inside the office was a lady, wearing a white polo t-shirt and a pair of athletic shorts. The woman—who appeared to be a coach in her 30’s—had shoulder-length black hair and a trim, fit figure.

“We’re going to need to clear the area of witnesses,” Zoisite said, walking toward the office.

The coach looked up in surprise as her office door opened.

Zoisite entered the room.

“Oh! Who are you?!” The coach asked, with a look of concern on her face.

“Sorry, Miss, but I have the basketball court booked for the evening,” Zoisite replied, bowing.

The coach eyed him suspiciously. “You’re not a student here.”

“Sorry, Miss, I—”

“I’m calling security.” She picked up a phone on her desk and pressed a button, looking away from Zoisite momentarily. “...Hello? Campus security? I—”

Zoisite stepped over and grabbed the phone's handset, staring directly into the coach's terrified eyes. He set the handset back down slowly, hanging up the call.

"That won't be necessary." He reached into his pocket to retrieve the small metal canister.

The coach froze, stunned by Zoisite's brazen behavior. "Sir...what are you—"

*FSSSSSSSSSSSS.*

Zoisite pointed the canister at the coach and sprayed a puff of sleeping gas in her face.

"Ohhhhh..." the coach moaned, coughing a few times. She closed her eyes and fainted, falling forward into Zoisite's arms.

Chiarida entered the office clapping her hands. "Wow, two for two, master! Mind if I get in on the action?"

Zoisite grinned, and began lowering the unconscious woman to the ground. The woman's head tipped to the side, and her mouth opened slightly.

"Hungry, Chiarida?"

The youma walked over and laid on top of the sleeping woman. She gently caressed the woman's forehead, brushing away some hair, and then proceeded to kiss her—on the lips. Chiarida's lips started glowing ominously, along with the woman's body. The glow cast an eerie purple light in the room. She continued holding the kiss, until a substantial portion of the woman's energy had been drained.

Chiarida stood back up and licked her lips with satisfaction. "Yum!"

The entire scene amused Zoisite, who decided—in his head of course—that female youma would be par for the course moving forward.

Zoisite and Chiarida made their way to the basketball court, where three cheerleaders were wrapping up their routine. The three girls all wore matching uniforms—white long-sleeved shirts, navy blue vests, light pantyhose, and stretchy miniskirts. One of the girls ran and performed a forward handspring, posing at the end.

“Want to show them some of your moves?” Zoisite asked his youma servant.

“Absolutely!” Chiarida’s ankle wings fluttered and she somersaulted into the air. When she reached her apex, she produced three yellow pom-poms and launched them at the cheerleaders.

*BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!*

The cheerleaders screamed and covered their ears, as the pom-poms created mini-explosions around them. They looked around, gripped with a mixture of confusion and fear.

*“Hub?!?”*

*“What was that?!?”*

*“What—AHHH!!”*

Chiarida pounced on one of the cheerleaders, embracing the frightened girl tightly. “Hi there!”

“AH—Mmmmm!”

Before the girl could react, Chiarida kissed her over the lips. The girl’s body began to glow, and her arms dropped. Chiarida made tiny sucking motions with her lips, occasionally releasing the kiss to adjust her position. The girl’s eyes started drooping, and she whimpered

through her soft lips. Chiarida drained the girl's energy methodically, making her body weak and limp.

“Mmmm...” the girl moaned—her eyes closing slowly.

The two remaining cheerleaders stood frozen in fear, watching as Chiarida kissed their unconscious companion. Chiarida broke the kiss, then looked up devilishly. “Who's next?”

The two girls looked at each other with terrified eyes.

“Run?!”

“Yep—run!!”

They bolted for the doors.

The doors slammed open, and the two cheerleaders bumped into Zoisite.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa! Where are you ladies running off to?” He placed his hands gently around their shoulders.

One of the girls responded frantically. “Th...There's a...a...demon—” She looked suspiciously at Zoisite. “Hey, you're not—”

Zoisite pulled out his small metal canister and pointed it at the two cheerleaders.

“Bedtime, ladies.”

*FSSSSSSS. FSSSSSSSS.*

He sprayed them with sleeping gas, pressing the nozzle twice and waving it across their faces. One after the other, each girl coughed, moaned and then fell to the floor.

“*Obbbbbb...*”

*THUMP. THUMP.*

One of the girls happened to fall on top of the other; her head rested on the other girl's chest. The two girls closed their eyes and fell into a deep sleep.

"Awwww, it's no fun when they're already asleep!" Chiarida remarked as she observed the two vulnerable girls.

Zoisite giggled. "Oh, the real fun hasn't arrived yet."

Chiarida smiled devilishly and sauntered over to Zoisite, licking her lips. "Might as well enjoy a snack then."



"Be careful," Ami said, as she and Mako arrived at the gymnasium facility. "Zoisite may be setting a trap for us. Just keep an eye out—"

"Don't worry. The rest of the team will be here soon, and we can help weaken the enemy," Mako replied. "Besides—Zoisite's a coward."

"Okay, then let's just stick together—"

*BEEP!*

Mako used her student badge to open the door. Before Mako could run inside, Ami stepped in front of her, giving her a serious look.

"Mako! Please, can you not be so...impulsive, all the time."

"Whoa, sorry. It's just who I am. I want to help and protect people—"

Ami stepped closer to Mako. "It scares me sometimes. Don't you get scared?"

Mako looked down, brushed some brown hair away, and stayed silent for several seconds. "All the time, Ami. All the time."

Ami grabbed Mako's hand and led her inside. "Okay. Let's go."

The pair raced through the hallways, occasionally stopping to check for Dark Kingdom activity. They made their way to the basketball court, and slowed down as they approached the entrance doors. Ami could see the arm of one of the sleeping cheerleaders.

“Over here!” Ami whispered, beckoning Mako to follow. Ami knelt down and checked one of the sleeping girls. “Her energy’s been drained, but she’ll recover, thankfully.”

The Dark Kingdom, while ruthless in their methods, never seemed to go all the way to killing their victims. They appeared to have some semblance of a moral code, only stealing enough life-force energy for their needs.

Mako peered inside the basketball court and pointed. “Hey, there’s another cheerleader over there!”

Ami stood up and joined Mako. “She seems...wait a second—”

Chiardia noticed them suddenly and jumped over, somersaulting in the air. The petite youma landed softly on her shoes, her ankle wings providing a sort of air cushion. “Hello! Who do we have here?”

*Dark Kingdom!*

Ami and Mako faced the youma with unyielding determination, gripping their transformation pens. They exchanged a brief nod, both fully understanding their next course of action.

They lifted their transformation pens and shouted:

“MERCURY POWER!”

“JUPITER POWER!”

The girls finished their incantation in unison. “MAKE! UP!!”

Chiardia recoiled, covering her eyes as a blinding light filled the arena.

A radiant glow enveloped Ami and Mako, as magical ribbons encircled their sparkling bodies. The ribbons flashed and transformed into white form-fitting leotards. A blue miniskirt materialized around Ami's hips, while a dark-green skirt appeared around Mako's. The girls spun around, as their Sailor Guardian uniforms were magically constructed—bows, gloves, collars, earrings and tiaras, all falling into place.

Ami had transformed into Sailor Mercury—the Guardian of Water—and completed her look with a stylish pair of knee-high blue boots. Mako stood confidently as Sailor Jupiter—the Guardian of Thunder—and sported a pair of ankle-high green boots.

“Ohhh, Zoisite was right! The fun *is* just getting started!” Chiarida giggled. She wasted no time, and jumped high toward the ceiling. She spun around at the apex and launched a flurry of yellow pom-poms at the two Sailor Guardians.

“Watch out!!”

*BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!*

Ami covered her ears as the pom-poms exploded around them; Mako jumped to avoid one of the blasts. Smoke filled the air.

“Supreme Thunder!” Mako directed an electrical beam up to the ceiling. Chiarida flapped her ankle wings, and pivoted swiftly in mid-air, dodging the attack.

“This one's fast!” Ami yelled.

Chiarida landed in front of Mako, and grabbed her in a bear hug. “Pucker up!” The youma leaned in for a kiss, but Mako recoiled immediately.

“Gross!”

“Shine Aqua Illusion!” Ami launched an icy-cold stream of water at Chiarida. The youma saw the attack, and jumped away, releasing Mako. The water blast barely missed hitting Mako.

“Ew! I think she just tried to kiss me,” Mako yelled, wiping some water off her face.

“That’s got to be her energy stealing move!” Ami responded.

Chiarida smirked and jumped back into the air. “Ohhhh, you’re way too smart, water girl!”

The acrobatic youma pivoted in the air with a forward flip, and began descending. She landed her feet on Mako’s shoulders, then kicked off toward Ami’s position.

“Owww!” Mako shouted as she fell to the ground.

Chiarida pounced on Ami, grabbing her tightly around the waist. The youma pushed up against Ami’s chest, squeezing her breasts. Chiarida stared into Ami’s stunned eyes, and licked her lips. “How about a kiss, water girl?”

*You are NOT going to be my first kiss!*

Ami pursed her lips tightly and twisted her head away, as Chiarida made quick pecking motions. “Hold still, water girl!” Chiarida then grabbed Ami’s hair and began tilting her head upward. Ami closed her eyes tightly and struggled to break free.

“Get away from her!”

Mako ran over and grabbed Chiarida’s vest from behind, causing her to release Ami. Mako then—in a stunning demonstration of strength—lifted the youma with two hands, and threw her several feet away. Chiarida crashed to the ground, and rolled a few times.

“Supreme Thunder!” Mako launched another electrical attack. Chiarida saw the flash of lightning in time, and leapt out of the way.

*BOOM!*

“Yoooo, that was a close one!” Chiarida shouted, as she looked at one of her burnt sneakers.

Ami regrouped with Mako, and they watched intently for Chiarida's next move.

“Okay Ami, what's the plan?”

“I'm thinking!”

Chiarida regained her composure, and rocketed back into the air. Ami watched the youma's trajectory closely, counting each somersault in her head.

*There's always a pattern.*

“Shine Aqua Illusion!” Ami chanted suddenly, shooting a stream of icy water upward at Chiarida. The water attack hit Chiarida's ankles, causing the youma to scream and spin out of control.

*“ARGGHHHH!”*

“Whoa! Nice shot, Ami!”

Ami looked at Mako and held up three fingers. “Three flips in the air, then she's at her peak—zero speed. But you have to time it.”

“You're a genius! Let's see if we can time our attacks together.”

Chiarida landed back on the ground and stumbled, her face now filled with anger. “I'll get you for that, water girl!”

With a game plan in place, Ami and Mako prepared for another round of attacks, confident they had the advantage. That feeling didn't last long, as another player entered the field.

“Did you girls *really* start the fun without me?” Zoisite announced, appearing suddenly behind Chiarida.

Mako gritted her teeth and balled her hands into fists. “Zoisite!”

“Miss me, thunder girl?”

Ami trembled under a new wave of fear and anxiety. Zoisite liked to fight dirty, and his appearance shifted the playing field. A vivid memory of Zoisite's chloroform assault flashed through Ami's mind.

He looked at Ami and smirked. "Still recovering from your little *chloro-nap*, water girl?"

"Don't call me that," Ami replied indignantly. She summoned her powers and droplets of water swirled around her hands.

Mako stared fiercely at Zoisite, and electrical sparks formed around her shaking fists.

*SLAM!*

The doors to the arena slammed open suddenly. Ami and Mako turned to look.

"THIS ENDS NOW, ZOISITE!"

Standing at the doorway were Sailor Moon and her companions—Sailor Mars and Sailor Venus. Luna jumped next to Sailor Moon's red boots.

"Cheerleaders are for raising team spirits and being cute! Not for evil!" Venus shouted, her orange skirt and long blonde hair flowing in the breeze.

"They don't look so tough," Mars said smiling, a fireball already in her hand.

"On behalf of the Moon, we will punish you!" Sailor Moon shouted, pointing her finger at Zoisite.

Zoisite smiled menacingly and exchanged a glance with Chiarida. "Remember the plan. Keep them busy."

“Yes, master!” Chiarida replied, licking her lips.



“Mars Fire—Ignite!” Rei launched a furious flame attack in Chiarida’s direction. The wind from the attack blew her red miniskirt up and down.

Chiarida flapped her ankle wings and jumped into the air, dodging the flames. “Wow, that’s hot!”

“Venus Crescent Beam!” Minako pointed her finger in the air and fired a bright beam of light, missing Chiarida by several feet.

The youma reached the peak of her trajectory, and showered about twenty yellow pom-poms in every direction.

*“Oh no!”*

*“Watch out!!”*

The pom-poms exploded like firecrackers, filling the court with smoke and loud noise. All five guardians covered their ears and tried to dodge the attack.

*BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM!*

Luna ran for cover and bumped unexpectedly into Zoisite’s leg.

“Hi kitty!” Zoisite pointed his small canister at the cat, and sprayed a cloud of sleeping gas in her face. Luna yawned and curled up into a ball.

Chiarida looked down, and decided Sailor Venus’ bright yellow colors were an inviting target. She pivoted in mid-air, and dived toward the Guardian of Love.

“Hey gorgeous!”

Chiarida landed in front of Minako and wrapped her in a tight embrace. The youma then grabbed Minako's red hair bow and brought her face close.

“Owww, hey—mmmmph!”

Minako's eyes opened in shock, as her cute pink lips made contact with Chiarida's mouth. Chiarida closed her eyes, and kissed Minako passionately, their lips glowing. The youma's hand moved down the smooth fabric of Minako's white leotard, and grabbed a chunk of her orange skirt. Minako's bare legs rubbed against Chiarida's blue-gray skin.

“Mmmmmm!”

A sudden feeling of weakness coursed through Minako's body. She tried pushing away, but Chiarida held on tight, pressing up against Minako's breasts. Minako sighed, with a mixture of fear and pleasure. Chiarida smiled through her kisses, while Minako's eyelids began to fall.

“Shine Aqua Illusion!” Ami chanted.

Chiarida broke the kiss. “Gotta run gorgeous!” She touched Minako's lips playfully with a finger, then leaped away to avoid Mercury's water attack.

Minako struggled to stand straight, her mind woozy from the sudden loss of energy. “Wha—what just happened—“

“Don't let her kiss you!” Mako shouted, running over to help Minako.

Minako shook her head several times and blinked. “Can I have the kiss *without* the energy draining?”

Ami approached Rei, right as the Guardian of Fire was preparing another attack. “Rei, try timing your attack when she reaches the top. It’s three flips—“

“Uh huh, got it Ami,” Rei replied, completely focused on Chiarida.

The youma leaped into the air again, and Rei launched her flame attack. The attack missed by a mile.

“Watch for the pom-poms!” Ami yelled.

*BOOM BOOM BOOM!*

The girls all ran in different directions for cover. Usagi bounced around in her red boots and blue skirt, making small yelping noises. She looked up and decided it was time for *Sailor Moon* to make a move.

“Okay my turn! Moon Tiara—Action!” She lifted her magical tiara and tossed it up toward Chiarida like a frisbee. The youma had already started descending, and the tiara flew by harmlessly.

Chiarida decided her next target, and flew directly down to Usagi. She used her ankle wings to slow her descent, and snagged Usagi in a tight bear hug.

“Ew, ew, ewwww!” Usagi squealed, as Chiarida leaned in for a kiss. “Come on Sailor Moon, you know you want it!”

“Ew, ew—mmmmph!” Chiarida sealed her mouth over Usagi’s. The youma kissed Usagi playfully, using one hand to toy with Usagi’s pigtails. With each sensual breath she took, Chiarida absorbed some of Usagi’s energy. Usagi’s shocked eyes began to close as she grew weaker.

Rei was the first to react, instinctively fulfilling her sacred mission to protect Sailor Moon. She ran over and yanked Chiarida off.

The petite youma jumped away quickly, putting some distance between herself and Sailor Mars.

Zoisite stood arms-crossed a good distance away, satisfied with Chiarida's performance so far.

Mako was still providing cover for Minako. "You doing alright Minako?"

"Yeah...I...I think I'm good now," Minako said, her voice still wobbly.

Ami ran over to check on Usagi, who was struggling to stand.

Rei faced off against Chiarida, and readied another fire attack. "MARS...FIRE..." Rei channeled all her celestial energy, forming her biggest fireball yet. The fireball created an air current that caused her collar, bows and skirt to thrash in the wind. Rei concentrated sharply on her target. Chiarida smiled calmly back at Rei, fluttering her ankle wings.

*You're telegraphing your attack too early, Rei!*

*"...IGNITE!"*

Chiarida rocketed into the air like a missile, timing her jump perfectly to dodge Sailor Mars' attack.

*BOOOOOM!*

Rei's powerful attack exploded harmlessly into the arena's bleacher stands—wasted. Rei cursed herself in frustration, and then looked around in search of Chiarida. She saw a pom-pom flying toward her face instead.

*"WHOA—"*

*BOOM BOOM BOOM!*

Rei jumped out of the way, but the explosion disoriented her, causing a ringing in her ears. Chiarida landed directly behind Rei, and wrapped an arm around her neck.

“Come here you!”

“Hrnnnnn...let me go—mmmmmf!”

Chiarida clamped her hand over Rei's mouth, and slowly rotated around to face her.

Anger flashed in Rei's eyes, and she shook her head.

“Mmmmmph!”

“Fiery passion. I love it.”

Chiarida unclamped her hand, and Rei opened her mouth to shout. Before she could make a sound, Chiarida kissed Rei's ruby-red lips.

“Hrrmmmm!!”

Rei felt her body weaken immediately, as if she had been hit with a strong sedative. Chiarida lowered her arm from Rei's neck, and began seductively curving her hand around Rei's plump breasts. The youma lowered her arm further, gently caressing Rei's belly-button through her bodysuit's soft white fabric. Rei closed her eyes and sighed, subdued by exhaustion.

Chiarida finished the kiss, and brushed away some of Rei's black hair. “Awww, too tired?” Chiarida saw Ami running over with a water attack ready. The youma leapt out of the way and Rei began to fall. Ami caught Rei before she hit the ground.

“Rei! Wake up!”

“Uhhh...huh...I'm so tired...” Rei replied weakly, her mind in a daze and her body limp.

Chiarida floated away and gave Rei a flirty wink. "Let's do that again, fire girl!"

She flapped her ankle wings and landed softly next to Zoisite. "Yummy!" She said, smacking her lips.

Zoisite looked at the weakened Sailor Guardians, and then at the dark spirit crystal in his hand. "With the way things are going, I might not need phase two."

He watched as Mako ran over to help support her weakened friends.

"But—" Zoisite paused for dramatic effect. "I'm feeling extra cruel today."



The arrival of the full Sailor Guardian team left Ami dealing with crisis after crisis. Rei, Usagi and Minako all had some portion of their energy drained, leaving them sitting ducks for Chiarida's attacks. The energy Chiarida absorbed increased her speed and agility. Zoisite had yet to make a move, and Ami worried about his dangerous dark energy attacks.

"Minako, do you think you can fire a Crescent Beam now?" Ami asked.

"Yeah, I think I got enough juice left in me," Minako replied.

Mako raised her fist. "Come on, let's fry this thing!"

Chiarida giggled and took out two pom-poms. "Go Dark Kingdom, go!" She cheered, hopping up and down like she was at a football game. She then somersaulted into the air, attempting to strike the Sailor Guardians again.

Particles of light began forming around Minako's hand, and she pointed her finger in the air.

"Wait!" Ami said, watching Chiarida's trajectory closely. She counted three flips. "Okay, fire away!"

Minako fired a beam of golden light at Chiarida, and Mako sent a bolt of lightning. The attacks hit right as the youma reached the apex in her arc.

*ZZZZAP! BOOM!*

"ARGHHH!" Chiarida yelled, spinning out of control. The youma crashed to the ground.

Ami ran over to Sailor Moon. "Usagi, get your Moon Wand ready!"

Usagi nodded and produced her magic wand, complete with a golden crescent moon and shiny crystal in the center.

Zoisite's eyes narrowed. "You're too clever, water girl."

He formed a dark energy sphere between his hands and aimed it at Sailor Mercury's back.

"Bye-bye!" He said, launching his sneak attack.

Usagi looked up and saw the attack coming. She let out a high-pitched scream and jumped out of the way, leaving Ami by herself.

*"Watch out!"*

Ami turned around and saw Mako sprinting over. Mako dived, grabbing Ami and pushing her away from the impending blast.

*BOOOOOM!!*

The two girls landed hard on the ground, with Mako cushioning the fall somewhat. Ami found herself hugging Mako tightly, her face pressed into Mako's buxom chest. Mako's green skirt was

scrunched up, and her long toned legs rubbed against Ami's. Their eyes met, inches away from each other, and Ami blushed.

"That was close! You alright?" Mako asked.

Ami brushed away some blue hair and smiled. "A little shook, but I'm okay. Thank you." She smelled Mako's rose fragrance. "You saved me again, Mako."

Mako stood up and glared at Sailor Moon. "Usagi!"

Usagi looked back sheepishly. "I'm sorry Mako, I got scared."

Mako then glared angrily at Zoisite, with electrical sparks forming in her hands. "That was a cheap shot!"

"Sorry, I don't fight fair, thunder girl!"

*BOOM!*

The girls all turned, and saw Chiarida had recovered, with remnants of an exploded pom-pom nearby. The youma fluttered her ankle wings and jumped into the air. This time, Chiarida didn't wait until she reached the peak; she threw her pom-poms in a continuous stream toward the ground.

Mako ran toward the pom-poms and wildly fired several electrical beams. They all missed.

"Shine Aqua Illusion!" Ami reacted quickly, and tried a move she had been thinking about since the last assault. She waved her arms in a giant circle and spread the water wide, creating a sort of thin umbrella in the air. The pom-poms splashed through the water shield, and landed on the ground a wet sloppy mess.

*SPLASH SPLASH SPLASH!*

"Whoa! Smart move Ami!" Minako yelled, pumping her fist in the air.

Rei started picking herself up off the ground, her energy levels slowly recovering. “Ughhh...I could have done that.”

Ami rolled her eyes.

*Yeah, and it would have lit the entire roof on fire.*

Chiarida landed next to Zoisite and yelled in frustration at her soaking-wet pom-poms. “Argghhhh! They’re ruined!”

Zoisite was not amused by the spectacle. The Sailor Guardians were slowly gaining the advantage again, mostly thanks to Sailor Mercury’s quick thinking. He needed to act fast before they caught on to his plan.

“Keep them distracted as long as possible,” he muttered to Chiarida. The youma nodded, and flew back in the air.

Zoisite prepared another dark energy sphere and aimed it again at Sailor Mercury’s back.

*“HEADS UP AMI!!”*

Mako couldn’t get to Ami in time. Ami turned just in time to see the dark energy ball coming right at her. She jumped out of the way, but the dark energy ball clipped her boot’s heel.

*BOOOOM!*

The explosion knocked Ami to the ground, and she rolled several times. She heard a loud ringing in her ears, and her body ached everywhere. Mako sprinted over.

Elsewhere, the sounds of fire, light beams, and tiaras echoed as the other girls tried to attack Chiarida. The youma simply darted from side to side, seemingly uninterested in retaliating.

“Ami! Are you hurt?” Mako asked.

Ami clutched her shoulder. Her blue hair was a frazzled mess. “Owww...it hurts, but I think I got away in time,” Ami replied, wincing. Small wisps of smoke floated off her blue boots.

Mako looked up and saw Zoisite smirking—giggling like a schoolgirl.

“I *hate* bullies,” Mako said, cursing under her breath. She glared at Zoisite, who simply laughed in response.

“Don’t let him get under your skin, Mako,” Ami said, slowly standing up.

Mako started marching toward Zoisite. “Too late.” She was consumed with rage.

Ami grabbed Mako’s arm. “Hey! Stick together!”

Zoisite put his hand out and beckoned Mako to come over. “Come on. You take orders from *water girl* now?”

Electrical sparks began forming around Mako’s fists. She shook in anger.

“Stay here and help the rest of the girls,” Mako said, her eyes fixated on Zoisite as she walked.

Ami pulled Mako’s arm, jerking it hard. “No!! Get back here.”

Mako yanked her arm away and snapped, scowling directly in Ami’s face. “**AMI, LISTEN TO ME FOR ONCE!!**”

Ami froze suddenly, stunned by Mako’s hostile, angry tone. It was the first time Mako had ever yelled at her—and it hurt. Ami stepped away from Mako gingerly.

*I know you didn’t mean that, Mako.*

“Please,” Ami whispered to herself. She felt a sharp pain in her heart.

Zoisite laughed. “Awww, poor *water girl*.”

Mako lunged forward with a fierce yell and raised her arms. "SUPREME THUNDER!" Electrical energy surged toward Zoisite.

Zoisite formed a dark energy sphere in response and absorbed the attack. In a surprise move, Zoisite threw the energy sphere upward, allowing it to dissipate in the air harmlessly. He then ran toward the exit doors, taunting and laughing at Mako. She chased him, preparing another thunder attack in her hands.

Ami checked the status of the other girls. Chiarida was still darting back and forth, dodging fire and light beam attacks. The girls were running out of steam. She looked back and saw Mako exchanging punches with Zoisite near the exit doors. Ami paused and thought hard about her next decision.

*Help the girls, then help Mako.*

Ami turned around and started running toward Minako, Usagi, and Rei. She briefly glanced back at the exit doors, but Mako and Zoisite were gone.

## Chapter 3

Mako slammed open one of the exit doors, following Zoisite into the dimly lit gymnasium hallways. She heard Zoisite's running footsteps and sprinted toward the sound. Mako's powerful legs had no trouble carrying her through the long hallways, and she displayed her athleticism proudly.

When Mako first transformed into Sailor Jupiter—after being discovered by Luna—she was astounded and embarrassed by the skimpiness of her uniform. The green miniskirt barely covered a third of her thighs, and her leotard curved tightly around her buxom breasts. Mako had grown since then to appreciate the superheroic look and flexibility the uniform gave her. She loved being Sailor Jupiter.

*SLAM!*

Mako rounded a corner and saw a door slam shut. She ran toward the door and checked her surroundings. It was dead quiet.

“Women's locker room?” Mako chuckled reading the sign on the door. “That perv.”

She pushed the door open slowly and peered inside. “Zoisite!” She yelled. Her voice echoed in the empty locker room. Mako stepped inside, looking left and right. The heels on her ankle-high boots clacked on the tile floor.

Fluorescent lights illuminated the locker room, which contained neat arrays of benches and metal lockers. A couple of loose bags and t-shirts were scattered around.

“Stop hiding, coward!” Mako yelled. She took a step forward and looked around one row of lockers.

Empty.

“*Over here, thunder girl.*” Zoisite’s voice echoed suddenly from a corner of the room.

Mako’s heart jumped. She walked across a row of lockers and peered around another corner.

Empty.

“Come and face me, you little rat,” Mako yelled. She summoned her energy, producing sparks around her fists.

“*I can see you, but you can’t see me.*” Zoisite’s voice taunted.

Mako’s muscles tensed up, and her breathing quickened. She walked past another row of lockers. The room was dead quiet, except for the slow clacking of Mako’s boots. She heard the sound of a bag drop, and bolted around the corner, raising her arm to attack.

Nothing.

She breathed outward and looked behind her. There was a person’s shadow on the wall. Mako smiled and walked toward the shadow. “Got’cha now.”

Her green miniskirt brushed along her long legs as she quickened her pace. She adjusted her elbow-length gloves, pulling them tight over her fists. She approached the wall and then pivoted swiftly around the corner.

“SUPREME—” Mako stopped suddenly and lowered her arm. She was staring at a football helmet and a set of shoulder pads, hanging from a hook. Her heart pounded and her face blushed red. The rookie mistake filled Mako with deep embarrassment.

“*Heheheheeeee.*” Zoisite’s voice giggled.

Mako checked her surroundings frantically, trying to find the source of the wicked laugh. It appeared to be coming from all sides.

She looked down suddenly and noticed something shiny resting on a bench. Mako focused on the object and walked carefully toward it. The object appeared to be a purple crystal, with small wisps of energy swirling around it. The crystal had a hypnotic effect on Mako, drawing her closer with its power. She stared intensely at it.

“What the—HHNNN!”

Mako's thought was interrupted by a hand grabbing her suddenly from behind. She opened her mouth to yell, but a damp handkerchief quickly smothered her nose and mouth.



“Have you girls been able to hit the youma yet?” Ami asked.

“Not much. She's just flying back and forth, wearing us down,” Minako replied, out of breath.

“My fireballs aren't packing any punch,” Rei said, grabbing her knees and breathing hard.

“Got any ideas?” Usagi asked.

Ami looked up, and saw Chiarida land on top of the bleacher stands. The youma appeared to be resting, uninterested in fighting anymore. Ami waved the other girls over, and they huddled in a circle.

Chiarida eyed the girls suspiciously.

“It's a stalemate,” Ami whispered to the other girls.

“Huh?” Usagi asked.

“A stalemate. It means we can't hit the enemy, but the enemy is also not attacking us.”

“So what do we do?” Minako asked.

“We need a game changer.”

“What does that mean?” Rei asked.  
“When’s the last time the youma had a kiss?”  
“Ew, ewww! No way!”  
“Ohhh, I get it. Okay I volunteer.”  
“No, it can’t be you Minako. We need your special attack.”  
“Why don’t *you* do it, Ami?”  
“You *know* why, Rei.”  
“Wait, so it’s me then?”  
“Yep, you’re the bait.”  
“Awwwww...”  
“She was clearly most into you.”  
“Ugh, okay but you girls owe me big.”  
“Go team!”

Curiosity got the best of Chiarida, and she flew to the ground floor. “What are you girls up to now?”

The four Sailor Guardians broke away from their huddle and looked at Chiarida.

Rei took a step forward.

Chiarida raised an eyebrow.

Rei crossed her legs as she walked, her red pleated miniskirt swishing across her alluring upper thighs. Her red stiletto high-heels clacked on the hardwood floor, creating a hypnotic echo that reverberated in the large room. She tilted her head to the side and blushed, flirting at Chiarida seductively with her deep violet eyes.

“Ready when you are.” Rei licked her ruby-red lips.

Chiarida shook her head. “Oh no. It’s a trap.”

Rei sauntered forward. “Does it matter?”

Chiarida smiled. “Can’t. Zoisite’s orders.”

Rei swepted her raven-hair back. "You know the battle's over anyway. Why not..." She stood inches away from Chiarida. "...have a little fun?"

Usagi gawked at the scene with her mouth wide open.

Minako sighed and gulped hard. She leaned in and whispered in Ami's ear. "I'm like, *so* turned on right now."

"Stay focused," Ami whispered back.

Rei's soft floral fragrance wafted over to Chiarida's nose, tickling her senses. Chiarida gave in to temptation, and wrapped her arm around Rei's waist. Rei's long lush legs rubbed generously against Chiarida's skin. Rei gently caressed the youma's cheek and then leaned in, pressing her lips over Chiarida's mouth. Chiarida closed her eyes and kissed Rei in return, starting with small pecks. She then increased the intensity, giving Rei a steamier, more passionate kiss.

Rei felt a sudden weakness in her, and broke the kiss. She gave Chiarida a naughty look. "That won't be necessary," she whispered in the youma's ear. Rei lifted a finger, and touched Chiarida's lips flirtatiously.

Chiarida nodded, then kissed Rei's moist lips lusciously, without absorbing her energy. Rei's gloved hand stroked Chiarida's skin, touching her shoulders and back. Chiarida reached under Rei's skirt from behind, and fondled her curvy rear. The lecherous move astounded Rei at first, but she soon appreciated Chiarida's gentleness.

Rei was an experienced kisser, and knew the exact pace needed to hold someone's attention. She embraced Chiarida, and slowly began guiding the youma to the ground. Chiarida followed, kneeling down while Rei sat on her skirt. The two found comfortable sitting positions,

and resumed their sensual kissing session. Rei opened one eye and looked at Usagi.

Usagi gave Minako a nudge. "Oh! Nearly forgot!"

Chiarida didn't notice and continued kissing, completely infatuated by Sailor Mars' exotic beauty. She finished a kiss and whispered seductively to Rei. "Just a little more."

Rei smiled and kissed Chiarida one more time, stroking the youma's dark-blue hair. Their tongues made light contact, tickling each other. Chiarida let out a loud, sensuous sigh. "Perfect," she whispered.

Minako stepped forward. "Venus! Love me! Chain!"

*SCHHHHHLINK!*

"Huh—oh."

Chiarida opened her eyes, and saw a gold chain made of small hearts, wrapped around her body. Minako waved her arm, creating a ripple in the chain that looped around Chiarida again.

*SCHHHLINK!*

"Awwwww. So it was a trap after all," Chiarida said, with a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

Rei stood up and glared at Minako. "You let that go on for way too long!"

"Hey, I wanted to make sure she was completely distracted."

"Sure—alright Sailor Moon, you're up."

Usagi picked up her Crescent Moon Wand and faced Chiarida. "Time to turn you back."

Chiarida smiled one last time. "It was fun, girls."

Rei touched her own lips, and for a brief moment, looked crestfallen.

Sailor Moon raised the wand and twirled it around her body in a big circle. Stars and hearts began materializing around her in a magical pink aura. She then recited her magical incantation:

“MOON...HEALING—ESCALATION!”

She pointed the wand at Chiarida, sending forth a beam of pink light. Chiarida shrieked as the light enveloped her, evaporating her dark energy away. The magical aura dissipated. Lying on the ground was a girl with a black ponytail, tied with a cute ribbon.

Rei knelt down to check the sleeping girl. “Hey, I think I know her. She’s in the cheerleading squad.”

“Pretty sure I have the same bra and panty set she’s wearing,” Minako replied.

Usagi looked around her. “Hey, where did Ami and Mako go?”



“HRMMMMMPHH!” The surprise attack stunned Mako, and she raised her arms to rip the handkerchief off her face. She was furious at herself for not seeing the ambush. She smelled a sickly sweet odor, and knew her time was limited.

“Nighty night, thunder girl!” Zoisite said from behind her. He clamped his hand as tight as he could over Mako’s mouth. He wrapped his other arm around Mako’s bosom, pressing his hand into her breast.

“Hmmmnnnn!”

Mako took deep hard breaths, and felt her mind spinning. She was growing sleepier, each breath filling her lungs with the anesthetic from Zoisite’s silk handkerchief. Keeping her eyes open became an arduous struggle. Her arms—once strong and tough—felt like mush.

“Mmmmmph!”

“I can feel you getting sleepier, thunder girl.”

Mako continued breathing through the chloroform-soaked handkerchief—unable to stop—adding fresh waves of drowsiness to her body. As her vision faded away, Mako decided to try one last hail-mary move. She focused all her remaining strength on her legs, and bent her knees. She closed her eyes, summoned all her energy, and jumped backwards with a yell.

“HRMMMPHH!”

*CRASH!!* “ARGHHH!!”

The powerful jump sent Zoisite crashing backward into a metal locker. He released his grip, and Mako twisted her body away. She ran forward gasping for air, and leaned heavily against a locker. She fought hard to stay awake, taking quick deep breaths to fill her lungs with fresh oxygen. It was a technique Ami had taught her—a way to have the body metabolize the anesthetic away.

Zoisite stood back up, rubbing the back of his aching head. He reached into his pocket and found the small metal canister. “Wow! You’re one tough girl.”

Mako slowly straightened her back and brought her fists up in a fighting position. Her strength returned to her slowly, but she still wobbled a bit. She expanded her chest, and stared at Zoisite with a look of resolve in her eyes. “That...all you got?”

Zoisite smirked, seeing right through Mako’s bluff. He raised his hand and beckoned Mako to come over. “Hit me, if you can.”

Mako clenched her jaw and lunged forward, swinging her fist at Zoisite. Her speed was slower than usual, and Zoisite dodged the punch easily. Mako tried summoning her powers, managing to create some

sparks around her fist. Zoisite responded by diving headfirst into Mako, grabbing her and shoving her to the ground.

*CRASH!*

Mako and Zoisite struggled on the floor, rolling and twisting side to side. Zoisite eventually gained the advantage, and used all his body weight to pin Mako down. He grabbed her throat and squeezed. Mako shook her head and swung her arms at Zoisite. He held firm, the chloroform having sapped much of Mako's natural strength. Zoisite's easy win hurt Mako's pride enormously.

“Hnnnnngg!”

“Let's try this again, shall we?” Zoisite said, as he brought the canister toward Mako's face.

Mako held her breath right as Zoisite pressed the nozzle.

*FSSSSSSSSSSSSS*. He sprayed a thick cloud of sleeping gas into Mako's face, holding the nozzle a second longer than usual. The purple fumes engulfed Mako's head; she pursed her lips tightly, fighting hard to avoid an accidental breath.

The gas began to dissipate, and Zoisite raised the canister again. Electric sparks materialized around Mako's fist, and she swung hard into the side of Zoisite's head.

*ZZZZZAPPPP!!*

“ARGHHHHH!” The punch sent a shock through Zoisite's body, and he loosened his grip on Mako.

Mako pushed Zoisite off her body and rolled to the side, avoiding the gas. She immediately took quick deep breaths again, and stood up. She smiled and chuckled at Zoisite. “Held my breath this time, idiot.”

Zoisite snarled at her. He had anticipated the chloroform and sleeping gas combo would be enough to knock out Sailor Jupiter for good. The plan was off track, and he was losing the advantage fast. In an act of desperation, he pointed the small canister at Mako's face again.

She grabbed Zoisite's wrist and twisted hard.

"AGHHHH!" Zoisite yelled in agony. He dropped the canister to the ground, and Mako kicked it away.

Mako swung her right fist, hitting Zoisite square in the cheek. He recoiled back with a loud grunt. She jabbed him hard in the chest with her left fist, sending him further back. Mako then turned to her side, lifted her knee and delivered a powerful roundhouse kick to Zoisite's bruised nose.

*WHACK!!!*

"OWWWWWWWWWW!!!" Zoisite screamed in pain as he crouched down, grabbing his nose.

"That's for what you did to Sailor Mercury," Mako said, as she lowered her leg back down.

Zoisite didn't respond, continuing to groan in agony. Mako walked over and grabbed his jacket collar. The Dark Kingdom general looked up weakly, blood and bruises on his face. Mako put her hand in Zoisite's pocket, removing the bottle of chloroform and an extra sleeping gas canister. She tossed them to the ground.

*CLINK CLINK*

"So that was your whole plan, Zoisite? Lure me here and then *chloroform* me?"

Zoisite frowned, cursing at Mako. She raised her fist to punch him again, but stopped herself. While Mako was furious, it wasn't in her

nature to strike opponents when they were already beaten, even if they deserved it. She released Zoisite and stepped away from him.

“You lost, Zoisite. Now scurry back to the Dark Kingdom.”

Zoisite smirked, and then bent down to retrieve his glass bottle and crystal.

Mako expanded her curvy chest. She crossed her arms, showing off her toned biceps and forearms. “Leave the stuff. Those belong to us now.” She straightened her back, causing her abdominal muscles to flex under her leotard.

Zoisite groaned and left the dark spirit crystal on the bench. He turned his back to Mako and limped away. As he did so, he pretended to grab his ribs and groan in pain. He sneaked his hand inside a secret pocket, and located one of his hypodermic needles. He popped off the safety cap, and palmed the needle in his hand.

Mako watched as Zoisite lifted his hand to create the dark energy portal. He stopped suddenly and giggled.

“What’s so funny?” Mako yelled, with a burst of annoyance.

Zoisite giggled some more, then spoke up. “It’s too bad about—*water girl*,” he said derisively.

“What?”

“She’s your best friend right?”

“...”

“Wouldn’t want her in my ranks. She’s *awful*.”

“...”

“Weak bubble attack. Stupid blue costume—”

“Shut it, Zoisite.”

“Did she ever tell you what happened after I kidnapped her?”

“...”

“No? Oh she *cried*.”

Mako uncrossed her arms.

“She sobbed like a *pathetic* child.”

Mako glared at Zoisite and stomped over.

“She cried and *begged* for her life, over and over—“

“ARGHHHH!” Mako grabbed Zoisite’s collar and yelled, inches away from his face.

“Haha, whoa,” Zoisite chuckled.

“You’re wrong! Mercury is the most courageous person I know.”

Mako tightened her grip, flexing her upper arm muscles. “So I suggest you take those words back, or else.”

“Or else...what?” Zoisite replied, raising his hand slowly.

Mako paused to think of an appropriate response, then smiled.

“Or I’ll smash that little crystal of yours.”

Zoisite lifted his arm higher and flipped the hidden needle out.

He gave Mako an evil grin—then thrust the needle ruthlessly into her neck.

*FFFT!*

“AH—” Mako gasped at the sudden prick, feeling the cold sharp needle inch deep into her neck. Zoisite pressed the needle’s plunger, sending a powerful sedative into Mako’s veins.

Mako’s eyes opened wide. “What—did you...”

Zoisite held the needle up. “You can’t fight this, thunder girl.”

He pointed to his head. “It goes straight to the brain.”

Feelings of disbelief and shame washed over Mako. She had fallen stupidly for Zoisite’s ruse, and paid dearly for it.

“Huh...ohhhh...Zoisite...you *dirty*...”

A tsunami of sleepiness crushed Mako's mind and body. Her vision instantly blurred and her knees crumpled, causing her to collapse into Zoisite's arms. He dropped his arms, and she clutched his jacket, trying to hold herself up. She fought with all her power to stay awake, as the sedative methodically shut off her brain cells. She hated Zoisite's despicable, unfair move, and wanted retribution.

Mako gritted her teeth, and squeezed her fists hard, causing her arms to quiver. Her eyelids fluttered, and her grip gradually weakened. She lost all sensation in her muscular legs and slid down Zoisite's body, moaning as she collapsed to the ground.

“Uhhnnnn...”

*THUMP.*

“Awwwwww, too sleepy to talk back?”

The proud, athletic girl had been reduced to a defenseless, drugged damsel. Mako's curvy buxom chest heaved up and down; her head nodded side to side. She watched helplessly as Zoisite smiled, casually tossing the needle away. She felt her mind drifting further and further to sleep, like an airplane on autopilot. Her eyes fluttered shut, and she stopped moving. An image of *Ami* flashed through her mind—her last fleeting thought—before her consciousness totally evaporated.

Zoisite nudged Mako's body with his boot but she didn't respond. He retrieved the dark spirit crystal and marveled at the purple vapors in it. He then looked at Mako's sleeping face. Mako's once fierce, determined expression was replaced with that of a peaceful, beautiful angel.

Zoisite knelt down and whispered in Mako's ear. "Not sure if you can still hear me or not, but savor your last few moments. Because you...won't be *you* for much longer."

Mako's left eye twitched.

Zoisite took the dark spirit crystal and placed it directly over Mako's chest—right over the round brooch inside her pink bow. Large tendrils of dark energy wrapped around Mako's body, covering her in an eerie, sinister purple glow. Mako opened her mouth and gasped, convulsing as her body absorbed the powerful dark energy. The dark spirit crystal slowly absorbed inside Mako's brooch. She twisted and winced as if she was subconsciously resisting.

The purple glow illuminated Zoisite's awestruck face, as he watched the transformation proceed to completion. He smiled and crossed his arms. "Welcome to the world—Dark Jupiter."

## Chapter 4

Ami had snuck out of the basketball court the moment Rei kissed Chiarida. She had no interest in watching the tantalizing scene, and knew the girls would figure out the rest. She jogged through the large facility, searching for Mako.

*Are you okay, Mako?*

She peered behind a concession stand counter, hoping she would find Mako standing triumphantly over Zoisite. She checked inside a multi-purpose room, and a weight room. Nothing. She paused to listen for the sounds of shouting, or fighting.

It was all quiet.

Ami's heart raced as she jogged through the hallways. "Mako?" She called out. No answer.

*Mako is strong. She doesn't lose.*

She looked around, her anxiety rising. "Mako?"

Ami ran over to the locker room entrance and stopped. She noticed a faint purple glow coming from under the doors of the women's locker room. The sight filled Ami with dread, and she took a deep breath. She pushed open the door slowly, and peered inside.

"Mako?" Ami whispered. She felt a disturbing presence in the room, and trembled. The heels on her blue boots clacked as she tiptoed through the quiet room. A cold breeze ruffled her blue miniskirt. She cautiously approached the source of the eerie purple glow.

"Hello?" Ami said, louder this time. No reply. She worried about being ambushed, and glanced behind her several times.

The purple glow flickered, like a flame billowing in the wind. Ami approached the final row of lockers, and swallowed hard. She turned a corner, and gasped at what she saw.

*Oh my god.*

“Mako!!!”

Mako stood perfectly still, with her head dipped down and her eyes closed. She was still transformed as Sailor Jupiter, but her outfit had strange black markings over it. The round brooch in her pink bow was replaced by a purple crystal. Dark purple tendrils surrounded her body, giving off a sinister aura.

Ami rushed over and grabbed Mako's arms. Mako's body was cold. She shook Mako several times.

“Hey! Mako! Wake up! *Wake up!*”

Mako remained motionless, like her mind was in a trance. The dark tendrils flowed into Mako's bow, and she swelled her chest, convulsing.

“What did they do to you Mako?” Ami's voice shook, and tears welled up in her eyes.

*I shouldn't have let her go!*

“This is my fault.” Ami hugged Mako, the cold sending a shiver down her spine. “I'm going to figure this out—I'm going to save you.” Tears streamed down Ami's face.

“She's gone, water girl.”

Ami's heart jumped, and she turned to see Zoisite leaning against a locker. She tightened her fists, a mixture of anger and fear filling her mind.

“What did you do to her, Zoisite!”

“Oh she’s perfectly fine. She just won’t be on your side once she wakes up.”

Ami took a step toward him. “What. Did you *do*.”

“It’s a dark spirit crystal. Completely corrupts the mind.”

“Reverse it now.”

“It’s irreversible.”

*Liar.*

Ami felt a sudden surge of fury. Water droplets swirled around Ami’s arms as she summoned her Sailor Mercury powers. Zoisite formed a dark energy sphere in response.

“SHINE AQUA ILLUSION!” She shouted fiercely.

Ami held her palm forward, launching her water attack into Zoisite’s energy sphere. He spread his arms wide and dissipated the attack harmlessly into the air.

She ran over and swung her fist at Zoisite. He caught the weak punch with his hand, and lowered her arm, smiling as he did so. He opened his palm, and slapped Ami remorselessly across the face.

*SLAP!*

“*God*, you’re such a weakling,” he said pitifully.

*Don’t cry, Ami. Don’t cry.*

Ami held her stinging cheek in shock, unable to think straight. Ideas raced through her mind, clouded by feelings of rage, humiliation and sadness. She turned to the only person in the room who could help her.

“Mako!!” She pleaded with Mako, shaking her body.

Mako opened her eyes suddenly. Her eyes were lifeless, lacking Mako’s usual vibrant glint. She walked toward Zoisite, never making eye contact with Ami. Ami watched in silence, completely shell-shocked.

Zoisite crossed his arms as Mako stood next to him. “Ladies and gentlemen, I give you—”

He paused for dramatic effect. “Dark Jupiter.”

Mako's eyes narrowed and she smirked, showing off her new dark personality. She placed one hand over her skirt, and leaned on one leg, giving Zoisite a seductive look.

“Tell me. Who do you work for?” Zoisite asked, placing one hand around Mako's waist.

Mako placed her hand under Zoisite's chin. “I serve the Dark Kingdom, master.” It was Mako's strident voice, but it wasn't *Mako*.

*What if Mako is faking it?*

*That's it. Mako's pretending.*

*And she's going to turn around, and punch Zoisite—*

“Let's put this to the test shall we? Dark energy's not an exact science after all,” Zoisite said, interrupting Ami's desperate fantasy. He nodded at Mako, and she walked over to Ami. The temperature around Ami dropped as Mako approached her back. Mako grabbed Ami's arms, holding her tightly. Zoisite adjusted his gloves, wrapping them snug around his fists. He strode over and stood inches away from Ami.

She glared back at him, her body trembling uncontrollably. “Please don't,” she cried, her voice shaking.

*Be strong Ami.*

*WHAM!!*

“HHNNNNN!!!”

Zoisite punched Ami in the stomach—hard—sending shockwaves of pain rippling through her body. She let out a loud, agonizing gasp. Her vision briefly went black, and she saw bright stars.

Ami collapsed to her knees, clutching her abdomen. She nearly fainted from the excruciating pain.

Zoisite looked Mako in the eyes, and she smirked back. Zoisite then looked down grimly at Ami. "Looks like your friend isn't helping you. Want to try again?"

Sweat poured down Ami's forehead. Ami knew she couldn't survive another punch like that. Zoisite was torturing her.

Mako lifted Ami up again. Ami's knees quaked, and she breathed hard, unable to hold her head up. She was suffering. Zoisite made another fist, aiming it at her stomach. "This will probably send you to the hospital." He pulled his arm back.

Ami flinched and let out a tortured cry. "Please!"

"*Ami! Mako!*" A voice called from far away. Zoisite turned around suddenly.

"Oh, no. I think your friends are looking for you." Zoisite stepped away from Ami mercifully and went to pick up his small metal canister. Mako released her grip and Ami crumpled to the floor. She clutched her belly, whimpering in pain.

"Keep an eye on her, Dark Jupiter," Zoisite said. He opened the locker room door and walked out.



Usagi, Rei, and Minako stepped into the hallway, calling their friends' names. Luna slept, cradled in Usagi's arms.

"You didn't see Ami leave?" Usagi asked.

"Hey, I was busy smooching," Rei replied.

"And I couldn't stop watching her smooch," Minako said.

Usagi looked around. "I think Mako went after Zoisite."

"Ami probably went to look for them."

"I think I saw Ami and Mako arguing."

"Okay, this place is huge. What's the plan?"

"Split up. Usagi and Minako, you go one way, I'll go another."

"Okay, just be careful Rei. Shout if you find them."

"Don't worry, if I see Zoisite I'm blasting him."

The girls split up and headed in different directions. Rei spent a few seconds looking around the hallway and saw a sign pointing to the locker rooms. She decided that would be a good place to start, and ran down the hall.



"Ami! Mako!" Rei called out. The sounds from Usagi and Minako faded, leaving Rei alone in the hallway.

When Rei joined the team, her hot temper clashed with Ami's shy demeanor. As Sailor Mars, she was arrogant, dangerous—and sexy. Her flame attacks were formidable, giving the Sailor Guardians powerful offensive firepower. Rei felt confident in her Sailor Mars outfit since day one, never shy to show off her elegant, curvaceous figure.

Rei walked confidently through the halls, not bothering to check her surroundings. She assured herself that she could handle any threat that appeared.

The door to the women's locker room opened suddenly, startling Rei.

"Mars Fire..." she chanted quietly, summoning her fire attack.

Zoisite popped out from behind the door. "Hey! Fire girl," he called out.

Rei looked at him with daggers in her eyes. "Zoisite!" Flames swirled around her fists.

"Love the heels, by the way." Zoisite waved his hand flippantly. "Hey, how was Chiarida?"

Zoisite's taunts appeared to be working as intended—Rei didn't stop her advance. She formed a fireball and threw it over Zoisite's head.

*WHOOSH!*

"Whoa!" He yelled, ducking, pretending to be scared.

The flames increased in vigor around Rei's hands. The raven-haired girl strutted over to Zoisite, like a teacher about to discipline a naughty student. Her hips and red pleated miniskirt swayed alluringly as she walked.

"Get over here, Zoisite!"

"Whoa, easy there." Zoisite put a hand up.

Rei quickened her pace, leaving trails of fiery embers behind her.

Zoisite took a few steps back, then stopped, allowing Sailor Mars to approach him. He put his hand in his pocket and palmed the metal canister. He grinned menacingly at her, ready to douse her flames.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ami's pain subsided gradually, and she managed to sit on a bench. She massaged the muscles on her abdomen, rocking back and forth to help comfort herself.

Mako leaned against a locker, guarding Ami attentively—as Zoisite ordered her to do. Ami looked up and gazed into Mako's lifeless eyes.

“Mako, I know you can hear me.”

“Sorry, I serve the Dark Kingdom now.”

“Don't you remember me? We're friends.”

“I know you. We're not friends.”

“We're Sailor Guardians. Sworn protectors of Sailor Moon—the Moon Princess—”

“I don't serve that whiny little crybaby anymore.” Mako's voice grew increasingly irritated.

“Mako...please...”

“I'm Dark Jupiter now.”

“Mako...”

Mako pushed off the locker and walked over to Ami. Her Sailor Jupiter outfit had transformed, with sharp black patterns zigzagging across her collar and boots. Her once golden tiara was now black, with little pointy petals sticking out of it. Her pink bow was more ornate, and looked like a pink butterfly with black trim. A dark purple crystal sat at the center of her bow.

Ami flinched when Mako got close, unsure what her next move would be. Mako sat down next to Ami, and wrapped a cold arm around her shoulder. She brought Ami closer, giving her a comforting embrace. Ami smelled Mako's rose perfume and relaxed, closing her eyes.

“There is a way out of this, Mercury.”

Mako stroked Ami's blue hair, in a slow, methodical pattern. “Join the Dark Kingdom,” she continued, in a soft soothing voice.

“No. I...I can't betray my friends,” Ami replied weakly.

"They're not your friends." The purple crystal in Mako's bow started glowing. Ami opened her eyes, staring at it hypnotically. Mako continued stroking Ami's hair.

"But...they *are* my friends...we hang out..."

"None of them like you."

"But..."

"I know you, Ami. You had no friends before you met us."

"...I had no friends..."

"And you've never been kissed."

"...I've...never been kissed..."

"You're so sad."

"...I'm sad..."

"You're so weak."

"...I...I'm weak..."

Mako's velvety voice soothed Ami. The purple crystal reflected off Ami's blue eyes. Mako continued stroking Ami's hair, keeping her in a hypnotic trance.

"Join us Ami."

"I..."

"We can make you strong."

"...strong..."

"We can make you powerful."

"...powerful..."

"You'll be our leader."

"...powerful..."

"You'll be with me."

"...you..."

"We can be together."

“...together...”

Ami gazed into the dark spirit crystal on Mako's chest, entranced by its eerie, ominous beauty. Dark intrusive thoughts flashed across her mind. For a moment, Ami considered betraying her friends. Happy memories clashed with sinister ideas in Ami's head. She blinked, and a tear rolled down her cheek.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rei grabbed Zoisite's jacket and raised her flaming fist to his face. Sweat poured down Zoisite's forehead from the intense heat.

“Where are my friends?” Rei yelled.

Zoisite laughed. “Put the fire away, Mars, let's talk.”

Rei turned the heat up on her flames. “What'd you do?”

“They're totally fine, relax.”

“Stop playing Zoisite. *Where* are they?”

Zoisite shrugged. “They're in there.” He pointed to the locker room door.

Rei turned to look, taking her eyes off Zoisite momentarily.

He grinned and pointed the metal canister at her face. “Made you look!”

“Wha—“

*FSSSSSSSSSSS. COUGH COUGH!*

Zoisite pressed the nozzle, sending a thick plume of sleeping gas into Sailor Mars' face. He timed the spray perfectly, right as she took a breath. She inhaled a lungful of the purple gas and coughed. The gas had a sweet fruity aroma that Rei initially found quite pleasant. A wave of sleepiness soon hit her like a ton of bricks. Her legs started wobbling.

She struggled to keep her eyes open, clutching Zoisite's shoulder to steady herself.

"Getting sleepy, fire girl?" Zoisite cooed, as he brushed some of Rei's hair away. Rei's cheeks turned crimson red, as feelings of anger and humiliation filled her mind. She fought hard to stay conscious, wanting revenge for Zoisite's dirty trickery.

"Uhhnnn...Zoisite...you...ohhhh..."

Zoisite waved the canister, mocking her. "What's the matter? Can't handle a little sleeping gas?"

The flames around Rei's fist vanished. She tried summoning more flames, but they kept fading. Her knees buckled and she leaned harder into Zoisite's body, trying to hold herself up. Her hands trembled hard as she battled the sleepiness. She glared at Zoisite with half-open, groggy eyes.

"...will...stop...you—" She moaned, her voice full of exhaustion.

Zoisite admired Mars' ability to fight off the gas. He would need to give her another dose. "Still got some fight left in you, huh?" Zoisite pointed the canister at Rei's nose and tapped the nozzle.

*FSSS.* A small puff of purple gas wafted over her nose and ruby-red lips. Rei inhaled the sweet aromatic fumes, kicking off a pleasurable round of sleepiness in her body. Her eyelids fluttered shut, and her head nodded to the side. The second dose of sleeping gas pushed Rei over the edge, and she passed out, collapsing in Zoisite's arms with a sigh.

"Sweet dreams."

*FSSS.* He sprayed another puff, for good measure. The purple fumes floated off Rei's beautiful sleeping face.

Zoisite wasted no time, sweeping Rei's legs up with his arm. He cradled Rei's limp body like she was an exotic sleeping bride. Her red miniskirt scrunched up around her hips, revealing her dainty white panties. Her legs and arms dangled helplessly as Zoisite carried her. He kicked open the locker room door and brought her inside.

\* \* \* \* \*

*SLAM!* The doors to the locker room slammed open, jolting Ami awake from her hypnotic trance. She heard a pair of boots shuffling along the floor. Zoisite rounded a corner, and Ami stood up straight.

"Rei!"

"Look what I found!" Zoisite said, as he carried in the limp, unconscious Sailor Mars. Rei's chin tilted upward, her mouth was open, and strands of hair covered her face. Zoisite's fingers pressed firmly into the soft skin of her thighs. Sailor Mars, once proud and fearless, was now a helpless damsel at Zoisite's mercy. Zoisite set Rei on the floor gently.

"What did you do to her?" Ami knelt down immediately to check on her friend. She placed two fingers on Rei's neck, and checked the breathing around her airways. Ami breathed a sigh of relief, having determined that Rei's vitals were fine.

*Looks like he gave her an anesthetic.*

*She should wake up soon.*

"Turns out Mars couldn't handle the heat," Zoisite giggled.  
"Just two more left."

*That's right—Sailor Moon!*

*Her healing powers!*

Ami's eyes lit up when she realized there might be a way to save Mako.

"I know what you're thinking," Zoisite said. "You want to use Sailor Moon's healing power to save your friend."

Ami frowned, discouraged by Zoisite's coincidental mind-reading.

Zoisite continued talking. "The spell is irreversible as far as I know. But—I don't know about Sailor Moon's power. It *might be* just enough to break it."

He beckoned at Mako and she walked over to his side. "So here's the plan, Dark Jupiter. We need to take Sailor Moon's magic wand."

He took out his small metal canister and brown glass bottle. "They'll be here any second, looking for you two. Dark Jupiter, I need you to—"

*"Ami! Mako!"*

Ami's eyes opened wide as she heard her friends' voices. She glanced nervously at Zoisite, who put a finger to his mouth, making a shushing sound. Ami looked back at the door, and expanded her chest to scream. Mako reacted quickly, clamping her hand over Ami's mouth.

"Mmmmmmmphh!!" Ami screamed through Mako's hand. Mako tightened her grip, and wrapped the other arm around Ami's torso. Ami squirmed, unable to fight against Mako's strong grasp.

"Quiet, *water girl!*" Zoisite snapped. He pulled out a hypodermic needle and held it over Rei's neck. "Quiet, or I'll give her a dose of this sleeping drug *so big*, she'll *never* wake up again."

The threat caused Ami to back down and stop screaming. Mako continued holding Ami, keeping her mouth covered. She dragged Ami

to a far corner of the locker room, away from the doors. Zoisite hid behind a row of lockers, gripping his canister of sleeping gas.

Usagi and Minako's voices called out again, closer this time.

"Don't worry, it'll all be over soon," Mako whispered to Ami.

"Mm...m...m...mmph..." Ami trembled all over.

The locker room doors opened. Usagi and Minako's voices spoke up.

*"Hello?"*

*"You think they're in here?"*

*"Put Luna down and let's check things out real quick."*

*"Do you feel cold all of a sudden?"*

Usagi and Minako stepped inside, the large room echoing with the sounds of their heels clacking. They continued bantering.

*"I can't believe Rei kissed the youma like that!"*

*"Yeah, oh my gosh, I swear, it was like the hottest thing I've ever seen."*

Zoisite looked down at Sailor Mars' sleeping face and raised his eyebrows.

"Mmmmm..." Rei's lips parted, and she moaned suddenly.

Ami began squirming under Mako's grip.

Usagi's voice panicked. *"What was that sound?"*

*"Hello?!"*

*"This better not be a joke, Mako!"*

Usagi and Minako quickened their pace. Zoisite leaned back against the locker, raising his metal canister. Mako gripped Ami's mouth tighter. Ami closed her eyes and decided to make a bold move.

*Now or never Ami!*

Ami jerked her head forward suddenly, and with a ferocious yell, chomped hard on Mako's fingers.

*Sorry, Mako!*

Mako yelped, letting Ami go and recoiling from the pain.

"SAILOR MOON!! TRAP!!" Ami yelled at the top of her lungs.

Shouting erupted in the locker room. Mako grabbed Ami again, and Zoisite panicked. He rounded the corner without looking, and sprayed the sleeping gas wildly in the air. A golden tiara flew into his chest, knocking him backward into a locker.

*WHAM! "OOOOOFFF!!" CRASH!*

Sailor Moon and Venus ran over, making eye contact with Ami.

"Ami! Mako! What's going on?!"

Usagi noticed Rei on the ground and knelt down to check on her. "Rei! Wake up!"

"Mako, why are you holding Ami like that?"

Mako remained silent, staring menacingly at the girls. Ami tried to explain the situation but stopped when she saw Zoisite standing up. She jerked her body away from Mako's grip and summoned her Sailor Mercury powers.

"SHINE AQUA ILLUSION!" She raised her hand and shot a stream of icy-cold water at Zoisite, knocking him back down. She turned around swiftly and sent a small burst of water into Mako's face. Mako stumbled backward, covering her face with two hands.

Ami ran over to Usagi and Minako, explaining the situation frantically. "Mako's being mind-controlled. Sailor Moon, you need to use your healing powers!"

Zoisite grunted and stood up again.

“Venus! Love me! Chain!” Minako threw her golden chain, ensnaring Zoisite.

*SCHHHLINK!* “Argghh!”

“It’s over Zoisite. Turn her back.”

“Sorry gorgeous, can’t.”

Minako waved her arms and wrapped another loop around Zoisite.

*SCHHHLINK!*

He fell to his knees.

“TURN HER BACK!!” Minako yelled.

Mako regained her composure and faced the girls, wiping water away from her brown hair bangs.

Ami grabbed Usagi’s shoulders and shook her frantically.

“Moon healing—NOW!”

Usagi hesitated, her expression filled with uncertainty. “But...it’s Mako!”

*GOOD LORD, USAGI.*

“Hit them, Dark Jupiter!” Zoisite yelled.

Electrical sparks materialized around Mako’s fists. Ami shook Usagi again and yelled in her face. “USAGI! MOON HEALING!”

“Come on Usagi!” Minako yelled, holding Zoisite tight with her chain.

“But...” Usagi froze, fear and doubt racing through her mind. She gingerly took out her Crescent Moon Wand.

Zoisite sneered at Dark Jupiter. “HIT THEM!!”

Ami stepped away from the cowardly Usagi and faced down Mako, with a look of fierce determination in her eyes. She summoned

her celestial water powers, creating swirls of blue energy around her hands. A massive ball of energy surrounded Mako's fist, sizzling with dark purple tendrils of electricity.

"Don't...make me do this Mako," Ami said, her voice shaking. The blue energy orb around her hands grew brighter.

"Stand down, Mercury," Mako replied. She increased the intensity of her dark electrical energy.

The showdown felt like an eternity. Ami knew she was at a disadvantage. She subconsciously held back her attack, unable to hurt her friend. Mako, her mind corrupted by darkness, had no such reservations. The two girls stared intensely at each other—then fired their attacks simultaneously.

"DARK THUNDER!"

"SHINE AQUA ILLUSION!"



Ami launched a powerful water attack directly into Mako's dark thunder energy ball. The two attacks collided spectacularly in the middle, producing an explosion of sparks and water droplets. The room illuminated in a brilliant white glow, as the two streams of energy pushed against each other.

Mako furrowed her eyebrows, focusing hard on winning the battle. She lifted her other hand and summoned an additional stream of dark energy.

Ami gritted her teeth, struggling hard to hold on. She lacked the physical stamina to sustain herself, the powerful attack having drained all her energy. Mako's dark thunder attack inched closer to Ami, slowly

overcoming the stream of water energy. Ami's arms slowly dropped against her will, her body completely exhausted. She closed her eyes, preparing herself for the dark energy onslaught.

*She's too strong! I can't hold on.*

*I'm so sorry everyone.*

*ZZZZZAP!! BOOOOOOOOOOOM!!*

The force of the blast pummeled Ami's chest, sending her flying backward. She collided with Sailor Moon, and the two girls crashed into a wall of lockers.

*CRASH!*

"NOOOO!" Minako screamed. She darted her eyes back and forth between Zoisite and Mako.

"Nice work. Now get me out of these chains, Dark Jupiter," Zoisite said, smiling.

Minako gripped her golden chain tightly and faced Mako.

"Mako, wait!"

Mako raised her hand and callously shot a bolt of electricity into Minako's navy-blue bow.

*ZZZZZAPPPP! "HNNNNNNN!!"* Minako spasmed uncontrollably as electricity coursed through her lithe body. She fell to her knees and passed out, collapsing onto her side. She rolled her head and parted her lips, with one hand curled next to her peaceful face.

The chain burst into gold dust around Zoisite, and he strolled over to Dark Jupiter's side.

Ami and Usagi helped each other off the ground. Their bodies ached with bruises and scratches.

“Minako! No!” Usagi cried out. She took out her Crescent Moon Wand and pointed it at Mako. “I...I’m sorry for not listening, Ami...”

Ami held Usagi’s shoulders, supporting her friend. Usagi’s teary eyes narrowed, filled with newfound determination. The wand began glowing with a pink magical aura.

Zoisite pointed to Sailor Moon. “Take care of her, Dark Jupiter.”

Mako wasted no time and raised her hand, sending a powerful bolt of electricity into Usagi’s chest.

*ZZZZAPPPP!!* “AHHHHNNNNN!” Usagi convulsed uncontrollably as electrical energy surged through her body. She dropped her wand and collapsed to the ground unconscious.

“NOOO!!” Ami yelled. She fell to her knees and cradled Usagi’s unconscious body in her lap. She checked Usagi’s heartbeat and held her hand tightly. Usagi’s eyes remained closed, her expression peaceful.

Zoisite sauntered over and picked up the Crescent Moon Wand. “Mine now!”

Ami jumped up and grabbed Zoisite’s arm. “Give that back!”

He placed his hand over Ami’s chest and shoved her hard to the ground. “Don’t think so. Let’s go Dark Jupiter.” Zoisite waved his hand and opened a dark energy portal.

Zoisite took one step inside the portal, then stopped suddenly, glancing at Ami. She was still awake, and he couldn’t have her formulating plans or making moves—she was too clever. He smiled at Dark Jupiter and took out his brown glass bottle.

“Actually, I have one more job for you, Dark Jupiter.” He tossed the bottle to her and pointed to Ami. “Knock her out.”

Mako studied the glass bottle in her hand for a few seconds, then walked over to Ami. She sat down and cradled Ami's upper body. Ami felt her head resting over Mako's skirt and thighs.

"Mako...please..." Ami pleaded.

"Shhhhh," Mako stroked Ami's hair gently. Mako placed her hand over Ami's skirt and slowly moved it behind Ami's lower back. She located Ami's light-blue bow and began unfurling it. She rested the bow over Ami's chest and took out Zoisite's bottle of chloroform. Ami watched as Mako unscrewed the cap, and soaked the bow's fabric with the liquid.

"Mako...please don't," Ami pleaded again, her voice shaking.

"Shhhhhhh," Mako soothed Ami, stroking her blue hair again. She moved her hand behind Ami's head and tilted it toward the light-blue cloth. Ami could smell the sweet fumes.

"Please, Mako I—mmmmphhhh..."

Mako clamped the blue silky fabric over Ami's nose and mouth. Ami gazed up at Mako, whimpering quietly. Mako pressed the cloth further into Ami's nose.

"*Breeathe,*" Mako whispered, stroking Ami's hair. Mako's hypnotic voice comforted Ami, sending her back into a trance. Ami took a long deep breath through the damp cloth, delivering a rush of chloroform to her lungs. Her entire body relaxed, as a flood of sleepiness consumed her mind. She nodded her head, causing the cloth to slip downward. Mako repositioned it in her hand, crinkling the fabric snug over Ami's nose. Ami took another relaxed breath.

*So sleepy...so...sleepy...*

"Hmmmmphh..."

"Shhhhhh. Relax."

Mako moved her free hand over Ami's chest, curving it seductively around her breasts. She squeezed and massaged Ami's soft flesh. Ami bent her legs, rubbing her blue knee-high boots against each other. Mako's fingers then moved gently down Ami's leotard, stroking the sleek white fabric around Ami's lower belly. Ami took another deep breath, fluttering her sleepy eyes as she exhaled.

*You're so gentle, Mako...*

"Hmmmphhh..."

"Deep breaths, Mercury. Sleep."

Ami felt Mako's hand reach under her blue miniskirt. Mako's hand massaged the sensitive skin around Ami's hips and thighs, sending a rush of pleasure through her body. Ami expanded her chest and blushed, gasping salaciously through the silk cloth. The arousing breath delivered another dose of chloroform to her lungs, sending her consciousness over the brink. Ami gazed up at Mako one last time, rolled her groggy eyes back, and fluttered them shut. She drifted off to sleep, grateful for Mako's merciful compassion.

*Thank you Mako, for not hurting me...*

"...mmm..."

"Sweet dreams, Mercury."

Mako held the cloth over Ami's nose for several more seconds, then removed it slowly. Ami slept peacefully in Mako's lap, her expression comfortable and relaxed. Mako stroked some of Ami's blue hair, brushing them away from Ami's closed eyes. For a brief moment, the glint in Mako's eyes returned. She shook her head and looked at Ami with concern.

"*Ahem.* Ready to go, Dark Jupiter?" Zoisite's voice jolted Mako, and the glint in her eyes vanished.

Mako laid Ami on the floor and stood up to leave. She followed Zoisite into the dark energy portal, glancing back one last time at the sleeping blue-haired girl.

## Chapter 5

The dark energy portal opened inside the dreadful, foreboding lair. Zoisite stepped out with a smile, followed by Dark Jupiter. They marched toward Queen Beryl's throne, Zoisite leading the way with swagger in his step.

“Quite the...ahem...*show*, you put on back there, Dark Jupiter.”

Mako smirked. “I just did what you asked me to do, Zoisite.”

“Yes indeed. So you're pretty close to...*water girl*?”

“...Nah, I just have a thing for being dominant.”

“Well, remind me never to get on your bad side.”

The two exchanged sly grins.

“So this is the Dark Kingdom, huh?” Mako remarked, looking around at the twisted rock formations.

“Pretty, isn't it?” Zoisite giggled.

Queen Beryl waited patiently for Zoisite, eager to hear an update on his plan. Her eyes lit up when she saw Dark Jupiter enter the cavernous room.

“Zoisite! I see you brought a guest with you.”

Zoisite bowed, then put his arm around Mako. “My queen, the plan went off without a hitch. This is Dark Jupiter, formerly Sailor Jupiter—or *thunder girl*, as I liked to call her.”

Mako poked her elbow into Zoisite. “Don't call me that.”

Zoisite gave her a nervous side-eye, then looked straight ahead.

Mako lifted the edges of her green miniskirt and bent a knee, curtsying for Queen Beryl. “Honored to meet you, Queen Beryl.”

“Such a well-mannered young lady! Zoisite, I’m impressed.”

Queen Beryl’s regal voice echoed in the cavern.

Zoisite smiled politely, bowing again for Beryl.

Beryl looked at Mako and gave her a quick orientation.

“Welcome to the Dark Kingdom, Jupiter. Our mission is to awaken the Evil One—our ruler, Queen Metalia. Long ago, there was a war between the Dark Kingdom and the Moon Kingdom. We nearly won, but Queen Serenity—Sailor Moon’s mother—sealed us away, along with Queen Metalia.”

“It’s a lot to take in, I know,” Zoisite whispered to Mako.

“Shut it, Zoisite,” Beryl shouted.

Mako looked at Zoisite and chuckled.

Beryl continued. “We collect life-force energy to feed Queen Metalia, who then produces dark energy in return. That’s where we get our power. Once Queen Metalia has enough energy, she will awaken along with our army.”

“And that’s how we will conquer Earth,” Zoisite added.

Mako stared blankly for a few seconds, then looked at Zoisite.

“Makes a lot of sense.”

“Yep.”

“The Sailor Guardians are the only ones standing in our way. Your job, Jupiter, is to help us defeat them,” Beryl said.

“Understood my queen,” Mako replied.

Queen Beryl stood up suddenly from her throne and walked down the steps toward Mako. Her dark purple dress trailed behind her, along with a red curtain of wavy hair. While Mako herself stood taller than the other Sailor Guardians, Queen Beryl was even taller, standing a

full head higher than Mako. Beryl placed her hand under Mako's chin and stared ominously into her eyes.

"You sure she's fully turned, Zoisite?"

Zoisite nodded his head. "Yes. I had Dark Jupiter attack her friends. She didn't flinch."

Beryl gazed into Mako's eyes. "You sure she won't have a change of heart?"

"Pretty sure, my queen."

Mako stood firmly at attention, unfazed by Beryl's intimidating presence.

Beryl raised her staff. "Good. Then I'm sure she won't mind this." She pointed it at Mako. The orb on Beryl's staff started glowing, and a bolt of dark energy shot forward into Mako's chest. Mako gasped and tensed her body, as the dark energy flowed inside her. Beryl stopped the flow of energy, and Mako relaxed. The purple crystal in Mako's bow pulsed with an eerie glow. Mako looked down and touched the crystal gingerly.

Beryl smiled at Zoisite. "She should be good. Make sure she follows our orders."

Zoisite bowed. "Of course, my queen." He looked up. "I'd like to propose the next phase of my plan."

"Go on."

"I'll need another dark spirit crystal."

"Haha, oh Zoisite, don't get too greedy now."

"There are still four Sailor Guardians. If we can turn one more, we'll be evenly matched."

Beryl paused for a moment and pondered Zoisite's proposal. The plan did in fact work, despite dark energy not being an exact

science. Sailor Jupiter appeared to be fully under Dark Kingdom control.

“Alright, Zoisite. But first I need you to bring me fresh life-force energy. We are running low. Deal?”

Zoisite exchanged a glance with Mako. “Deal.”

Zoisite led Mako to another chamber in the lair. He set the Crescent Moon Wand on a stone table. He then went to another stone surface and collected more items—metal canisters, handkerchiefs, and hypodermic needles. Mako gave Zoisite a puzzled look.

Zoisite smiled at Mako and put the items in his pocket. “Oh, these? Managed to salvage them from Hypnosia. We use dark energy to replenish them. As you can see, these items have been very useful.”

“Yes...I’m well aware of how effective these are.”

“Hm.”

“So what’s the plan to gather more energy, master?”

Zoisite held his chin and pondered. “Well, I think if we can lure the Sailor Guardians out, we can absorb their energy. They have much higher levels than normal humans. I’ll prepare a youma seed and then we can—“

He stopped suddenly and grinned at Mako. “Oh. That’s right. You know their secret identities.”



Ami opened her eyes in a dimly lit room, and saw the familiar architecture of a Japanese Shinto shrine. She blinked several times and realized she was at the *Hikawa Shrine*—Rei’s home. Ami was laying on a

soft futon mattress over a straw *tatami* mat. She got up slowly and saw that she was wearing a comfy blue cotton *jinbei*—a common style of nightwear.

Luna ran over and greeted her. “Thank goodness you’re finally awake! We were so worried, Ami.”

Ami smiled and tried to speak, but found her mouth dry like a desert. She rubbed her abdomen and sides; her body was sore everywhere. She saw Minako sitting nearby, reading a fashion magazine.

“Oh! Ami, let me get you some tea.” Minako said.

Minako handed Ami a ceramic *yunomi*, filled with warm sencha tea. Ami sipped the tea, filling her body with warm comfort and alertness.

“Thank you, Luna—Minako,” Ami said, her voice soft and hoarse from all the shouting.

Minako smiled and sat next to Ami. Minako was the fifth and last Sailor Guardian to join the team. She was friendly with Ami, but tended to prefer Rei’s company. The two of them often chit-chatted about boys, pop culture, and romance. When Minako transformed into Sailor Venus, she rocked the costume, often giving cute winks and crossing her perfect legs.

Ami looked at a clock on the wall—it was 5:34 PM. “How long...what happened...”

Luna gave Ami a summary. “You’re the last to wake up. Rei woke up several minutes after Zoisite escaped. She helped Usagi and Minako—and me—recover. You had been drugged, so we brought you back here.”

“Yeah, honestly, Ami you slept for so long, we thought you were...” Minako’s voice trailed off.

Ami gave Minako a warm smile. “It’s okay. I must have had a long, wonderful dream...that I didn’t want to end.”

Ami turned her head and looked around the room.

“Oh, Usagi was starving and just *had* to go get dumplings. Rei went with her,” Minako said.

Luna curled up next to Ami. “How are you feeling now, Ami?”

Ami looked down at her teacup with sad eyes. “Mako...she’s...”

“We’ll save her. Usagi and I chatted about it. We think the dark power is only corrupting Mako’s mind, and that her true self is still in there, fighting. We think Moon Healing can bring her back, but—”

“But Zoisite took the Crescent Moon Wand. Luna, it’s all my fault. I should have—”

Minako placed a hand on Ami’s shoulder. “Hey! You were under a ton of pressure and did fine! We *all* choked back there.”

Luna nodded. “That’s right. What’s done is done. Right now we need to regroup, and figure out a way to get the wand back from Zoisite.”

“And then we can bring back Mako,” Ami added.

Minako went to a cupboard and brought some snacks for Ami to eat. Ami munched on some chocolate-flavored biscuits and drank more tea. She stroked Luna’s soft black fur.

“Luna, you told us that we’re reincarnated Sailor Guardians—from the Moon Kingdom.”

“That’s correct. You four were protectors of Princess Serenity, Queen Serenity’s daughter—who you now know as Sailor Moon.”

“What do you remember about—Sailor Jupiter?”

“Hmmm. Well, she was fierce, loyal, and courageous. But also very kind, a good friend to Princess Serenity. She was a good cook too!”

“Sounds a lot like Mako.”

“Indeed. My memory’s fuzzy, but I can say for sure, Mercury and Jupiter were very close.”

“Really?”

Luna perked up. “Inseparable actually. They cared deeply for each other. The two were always together on the battlefield, launching joint attacks against demons and youma.” Luna turned sad and lowered her head. “When Queen Metalia attacked—”

Luna paused suddenly and choked, tears welling up in her eyes.

“...when Queen Metalia attacked, Mercury...Mercury sacrificed her life to save Jupiter.”

The story sent a wave of emotion through Ami, and she cried with Luna. Minako was listening as well, wiping tears from her eyes.

“Jupiter went on to protect Queen Serenity, buying her enough time to seal Metalia away. Queen Serenity then used her power to reincarnate you all—at the cost of her own life. The rest...is history.”

Ami dried her eyes and patted Luna’s back. “Thank you for sharing that story Luna. I just wish I had the same courage Sailor Mercury had back then.”

Luna looked up in surprise at Ami. “Ohhh...if you’re her reincarnated spirit, then for *sure* you do.”

The statement bewildered Ami. “What do you mean?”

“I don’t think I ever told you this...but Sailor Mercury wasn’t just courageous...she was the *leader* of the Sailor Guardians.”

Minako looked over suddenly. “I’m sorry, but...*leader*?”

“Yes, Sailor Mercury was the team leader. She led with strong guiding principles and had one of the most powerful attacks.” Luna gave Ami a wink. “It’s also why she gets the blue boots.”

Ami laughed. “But Luna, my attacks are *always* the weakest. They’re nothing compared to Mars Fire, or Supreme Thunder—”

“Or Crescent Beam,” Minako interrupted with a smile.

Luna jumped into Ami’s arms. “You haven’t awakened your full powers yet. With time, you’ll be able to summon *Mercury Aqua Rhapsody*—a beautiful, sensationally powerful attack.”

Ami smiled and patted Luna’s head.

“Thank you for the kind words, Luna. I think I’m feeling much better now.”

The three friends shared a sweet moment together.

*SHHHWOOMMMMM!*

*“Uh oh. Did you hear that?”*

*“No...it can’t be. It’s too soon!”*

*“We’ve barely had time to rest!”*

*“Usagi and Rei still haven’t returned!”*

Ami could feel the arrival of an evil presence, as a cold breeze blew through the room. She picked up her Sailor Mercury transformation pen and nodded at Minako. Ami closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and stepped forward to face their enemy.



Minako clutched her Sailor Venus transformation pen and peered out the shrine's window. She saw a flurry of rose petals where the portal opened—and their friend, Mako.

Mako was in her Dark Jupiter outfit, standing in the center of the shrine's entrance—an open area paved with flat granite stone.

“It's Mako. I don't see Zoisite though,” Minako whispered. “Maybe you can try triggering some memories, Ami. You two are pretty close.”

Ami shook her head warily. “I don't know, Minako. She didn't seem to care for me last night.”

“No, I think she's into you. She's always trying to look up your skirt, Ami.”

“...excuse me?”

“Seriously. Mako's always trying to sneak a peek. So obvious.”

Ami's eyes lit up and she blushed.

Mako checked her surroundings and walked toward the shrine's main building.

Minako exchanged a determined look with Ami. “Ready?”

“Ready!”

The two girls pulled the shrine doors open and stepped outside. Mako looked up at them and crossed her arms.

“Mercury and Venus, my two favorite girls. You ready to rumble?” Mako said.

“Where's Zoisite?” Minako yelled back.

Mako chuckled. “Just me right now. Looks like you two haven't transformed yet. I'll wait.”

Ami and Minako didn't hesitate any longer. They raised their transformation pens and shouted:

“MERCURY POWER!”

“VENUS POWER!”

“*MAKE! UP!!*”

A blinding light illuminated the stone and wood around the ancient shrine. The girls completed their transformation and stood in front of the shrine ready for battle. Minako had become Sailor Venus, standing in a pair of orange high-heels with a matching miniskirt. A cute red bow tied back Minako's golden blonde hair. Ami was Sailor Mercury, sporting her blue miniskirt and blue boots, which shimmered in the late evening sun.

“Looking cute, Venus!” Mako said, smirking. Her fists started glowing purple.

Minako smiled playfully and winked back.

“Please Mako, try to resist!” Ami said.

“Dark Thunder!” Mako struck first, firing thunderbolts of purple energy. Ami summoned a shield of water, blocking the attack. Minako and Ami then sprinted in different directions, surrounding Mako on both sides.

“Crescent Beam!” Minako crossed her legs and pointed her finger straight at Mako. A beam of bright golden light shot forward. Mako side-jumped the attack, landing on one hand and knee. She returned fire, sending a thunderbolt at Minako.

Minako leaped away from the attack, landing in a crouch and forward rolling. *BOOM!* The electrical attack blasted some branches on a tree.

“Shine Aqua Illusion!” Ami launched a water attack in response. The attack landed, hitting Mako in the chest. Mako held firm and glared at Ami, with water dripping from her brown ponytail.

“Nice shot, Mercury.”

“Mako, we don’t want to hurt you. We know you’re trying to fight the spell!”

*ZZAP!* “HNN!”

Mako shot a short thunderbolt into Ami’s gut, knocking her to the ground. The blast knocked the wind out of Ami, and she groaned as smoke billowed from her body.

Minako jumped into the air and summoned her golden chain, swinging it around in a big loop.

“Venus! Love me! Chain!” *SCHHLINK!*

Mako looked down to see herself ensnared in Venus’ golden chain of hearts. The two of them pulled in opposite directions—a magical *tug-of-war*. Minako dug her heels into the ground, but Mako’s strength won out. Mako grabbed the chain and yanked hard, throwing the Guardian of Love to the ground.

Minako stood up wincing and caught a glimpse of Mako, who raised her arm.

*ZZAP!* “WHOA—” Minako flew backward as a thunderbolt exploded in her chest. She landed hard on the ground, stunned.

Ami clutched her aching chest and slowly pushed herself off the ground. She saw Mako marching toward her, forming a strong dark energy sphere in her fist.

“Mako, wait!” Ami pleaded, putting her hand up.

Mako flailed her arms suddenly and yelped. “AGHHH!” Luna had leapt out of a tree and pounced onto Mako’s head. The cat covered Mako’s eyes with her paws and bit Mako’s ear. Her dark energy sphere dissipated in the chaos.

“OWW!” Mako bent down and yanked Luna off her. She then shot a small thunderbolt at the cat, causing her to spasm and puff up.

“No! Luna!” Ami used Luna’s brave distraction to steady herself. She focused hard and summoned a large celestial water attack. Splashes of blue water energy swirled around her hands.

*How dare you hurt Luna, Mako!*

Mako looked up and resumed her attack, producing another dark energy sphere with crackling purple tendrils.

Ami clicked her boots together and raised her arms, posing elegantly. Mako smirked and marched forward, increasing the size of her dark energy sphere.

“SHINE...AQUA!” Ami chanted her spell, staring intently at Mako. Her blue energy orb produced a light wind that ruffled her skirt and collar.

Mako was unfazed, ready to retaliate the moment Ami finished her predictable incantation. She continued strutting toward Ami, lifting her dark energy sphere in the air.

Ami paused and tiptoed on her boots suddenly, giving Mako a flirty smile. She spun around in a graceful pirouette, causing her blue miniskirt to twirl upward. Mako caught a glimpse of Ami’s cute white panties, and hesitated, blushing hard.

*Made you look.*

“ILLUSION!” Ami shouted, after completing her charming spin. Her blue water energy orb spiraled forward, obliterating Mako’s

dark energy sphere. The rush of water pushed Mako back, and she crashed to the ground. *CRASH! SPLASH SPLASH SPLASH!*

*Sorry, Mako.*

Ami formed another orb of water energy and stepped forward. Mako stood up slowly, her bodysuit and skirt dripping with water.

“Mako, please, stop,” Ami said sternly. Water droplets flew around her hands as she increased the energy’s intensity.

Mako held her hands up and smirked at Ami. “Go ahead, hit me.”

Ami hesitated, keeping her energy orb in a holding pattern. “No, Mako.”

If Mako wasn’t attacking, Ami had no interest in hitting back. Once Ami learned what her powers were capable of, she vowed to never use them out of cruelty or spite.

“Hit me!” Mako pounded her chest with a fist.

Ami lowered her hand and allowed her energy orb to dissipate. Mako laughed in disbelief at Ami’s naivety.

“See, this is why you will never beat the Dark Kingdom. You’re just not willing to go far enough.” Mako stepped closer to Ami and raised a fist, creating another dark energy sphere.

Minako opened her eyes slowly, wincing as she clutched her shoulder in pain. She saw Mako’s backside, and the dark energy ball sizzling in her fist. Minako sat up. She watched Mako aim the attack at Ami—point blank range.

“No...”

Minako summoned her Sailor Venus powers, forming an orb of golden light at her fingertips. She focused all her energy, making the orb grow bigger and bigger.

Mako grabbed Ami's collar. "Any last words, *water girl*."

The dark energy tendrils crackled inches from Ami's face. She blinked hard, sending a stream of tears down her cheek. She pleaded with Mako one last time, hoping the deep emotional punch would break the dark spell.

"Mako, I know you're fighting hard to break free."

Mako's eyes remained focused—and lifeless.

Ami lifted her gloved hand and gently touched Mako's cheek. "I care so much about you Mako..."

Mako's left eye twitched slightly, and she shook her head. The dark energy sphere shrunk slightly.

Ami's voice shook as the emotion overwhelmed her. "I...I—" Ami's eyes opened wide suddenly, as she noticed a bright golden light from behind Mako.

Mako turned her head and saw the glimmer.

*Minako, no!!*

"CRESCENT BEAM!!!!" Minako fired her powerful light attack directly at Mako. The broad beam of golden light illuminated the entire shrine, creating long, moving shadows.

Mako dived out of the way, sending her dark energy ball flying harmlessly into the sky.

*BOOOOOOOOOOM!!!!*

Ami didn't react in time. Venus' powerful attack exploded in Ami's chest, showering her in golden beams of light particles. The force

blasted the slender girl backward into the air, and she crashed hard onto the pavement. Ami rolled around and groaned in pain for a few seconds, then stopped moving.

“OH MY GOD!” Minako screamed in horror at her blunder.

“Amateurs,” Mako said, as she got up off the ground.

“Ami, I’m so sorry,” Minako cried out. Ami remained motionless on the ground.

“Alright, I’m ending this,” Mako said, walking toward the distraught Sailor Venus.

Minako took a trepid step backward and materialized a golden chain between her hands. “Get back!”

Mako marched forward. “You screwed up, Venus. Always a screw-up.”

Minako stepped backward, tightening her grip around the chain. “Get back, Mako!”

Ami coughed and opened her eyes gingerly. The consecutive energy blasts left Ami’s body aching in pain. Parts of her uniform’s fabric were torn. She lifted her head and saw a blurry Sailor Venus backing away from Mako. Ami tried to sit up, but she fell back down, her body too exhausted. Ami lifted her head again and waited for her blurry vision to stabilize. She saw movement behind Venus—a person. The person had distinct blonde curly hair and wore black military boots.

*Zoisite!*

Venus backed away from Mako, a look of fear in her eyes. She wasn’t looking behind her.

Ami tried to shout but let out a dry cough instead. She tried raising her arm, but it hurt too much and fell back down. She saw Zoisite reach into his pocket.

*Minako! Turn around! Turn around!*

Ami opened her mouth to scream again. Her voice came out as a whisper. “M...M...Minako...chan...”

Minako kept her eyes focused on Mako. She took another step back, her orange heels shuffling nervously. A light wind blew back some of her long blonde hair and billowed her orange miniskirt.

Zoisite took out his brown glass bottle and soaked a white handkerchief in it. He quietly put the bottle back in his jacket and stepped closer to Minako. He stood only a few feet away.

Mako closed in on Sailor Venus, smiling as she guided her into Zoisite. “How about it, Venus? Join us?”

“Never! You’re sick, Mako!” Venus replied, inadvertently taking a step closer to Zoisite. She lifted her golden chain, ready to lasso Mako in its magic. She hesitated suddenly, looking in shock over Mako’s shoulder.

Ami was flailing her arms wildly in the air.

“AMI! YOU’RE—HHMMPHHH!!!”

Zoisite grabbed Minako from behind, pressing the chloroform-soaked handkerchief over her soft pink lips. He wrapped his other arm around her waist and adjusted the handkerchief to cover her nose. Minako screamed and released the golden chain, allowing it to shatter into gold dust. She brought her arms up and clawed at Zoisite’s sleeves. He leaned back and lifted Minako a few inches off the ground.

She thrashed her nubile legs in response, flipping her orange miniskirt up. She squealed through the cloth.

“Nice work, Dark Jupiter. Looks like *gorgeous* here, is about to get her beauty sleep!”

“MMMMPHH!!” Minako panicked, taking rapid deep breaths through the cloth. Her glamorous breasts expanded and contracted with each breath. The intense feeling of drowsiness hit her, reminding her of the time she was gassed to sleep by Hypnosia. She hyperventilated, breathing in copious lungfuls of chloroform in a short period of time. Her mind raced with thoughts of how foolish she was. The trap was so obvious.

“Come on gorgeous, close those pretty blue eyes of yours.”

“Hmmmphhh...”

The anesthetic sapped all her strength and she stopped thrashing. Her arms fell to her side, and her eyes flickered shut. Minako gave up the fight, and allowed herself to drift to sleep.

“Wow, she gave up quick,” Zoisite remarked, as he held the limp girl in his grasp. He removed the cloth from her mouth, allowing her to breathe fresh air. Minako parted her pink lips and tilted her head back, whimpering quietly.

“Your turn, Dark Jupiter. Remember what I showed you.”

Zoisite dragged the drowsy girl over and handed her to Mako.

Mako embraced her, allowing Minako's droopy head to rest on her chest. Minako opened her groggy eyes and looked up. Mako brushed away some golden blonde hair and gently caressed Minako's cheek.

“Wh...what...what are you—” Minako whispered.

“Shhhhhh. Just relax.” Mako wrapped one hand around Minako's thin waist, gently stroking her bodysuit's silky fabric. She used

her other hand to bring Minako's face closer. Mako then shut her eyes and kissed Minako's supple pink lips.

The sensation aroused Minako. She felt a rush of pleasure as her lips met Mako's, and in her daze, kissed Mako back passionately. Minako lifted her arm, and touched Mako's curvaceous breasts, stroking them tenderly. A warm sensation began in Minako's body, and she felt her strength melting away. She dropped her arm and fell limp again.

Mako's lips glowed as she absorbed Sailor Venus' energy. She held the kiss for half a minute longer, then gently released it. Mako laid the angelic girl on the ground, allowing her to sleep peacefully.

*Minako!*

Ami had watched helplessly as Zoisite chloroformed Sailor Venus, then let Mako steal her energy. Ami pushed herself up on one knee, and tried to stand, but collapsed. The blast had taken a heavy toll on her.

Zoisite and Mako strolled over. They towered over Ami, like two parents hovering over a child.

“Should we take her energy?” Zoisite asked.

“I don't know. She's probably not a very good kisser.” Mako replied, in a mocking tone.

Zoisite giggled. “Ohhhh...don't tell me—”

“Yep. Never been kissed.”

Zoisite bent over laughing. “Wow! That's awful, *water girl*.”

Ami hung her head in humiliation as the two joked cruelly over her. Mako's words stung especially hard, sending Ami's heart into a downward spiral of despair.

*Don't cry, Ami. Don't cry.*

Zoisite bent down and grabbed Ami's arms. He lifted her up, forcing her to stand on her wobbly legs. He then nodded to Mako, who took Ami and embraced her.

"Guess there's a first time for everything." Mako brushed some of Ami's blue hair and leaned in. Ami surrendered mentally, staring blankly ahead with no emotion. Mako's lips hovered over Ami's mouth—then moved away suddenly. Mako focused her attention on the shrine's entrance. "Looks like this will have to wait."

Ami turned her head and looked at the far end of the shrine's entranceway. Usagi and Rei stood there, mouths agape in complete astonishment. Usagi relaxed her grip and dropped a bag of takeout dumplings.



"Ami! Minako!" Usagi cried out, as she saw the peril her friends were in.

Rei gave Zoisite a death stare, her mind replaying the sleeping gas trick he pulled on her. "Get away from them, Zoisite!"

Usagi pointed her finger at Zoisite. "Where's my Moon Wand, jerk?"

"Sorry, moon girl, didn't bring it." Zoisite put his hands on Mako's shoulders. "They're all yours."

Rei turned to Usagi. "I'll take the lead Usagi. Go help Ami and Minako."

Usagi nodded and took out her transformation brooch.

The two girls shouted their transformation phrases.

"MARS POWER!"

“MOON PRISM POWER!”

“*MAKE! UP!!*”

A blinding light enveloped their bodies as they transformed into celestial warriors. Rei transformed into Sailor Mars, and posed alluringly in her red high-heels and fiery red miniskirt. Usagi became Sailor Moon, outfitted in her iconic red boots and blue skirt.

Rei raised her arms, and summoned two massive fireballs in her fists, creating a loud whooshing sound. She strutted toward Zoisite and Mako, giving them a lethal stare. Mako stepped forward, and produced a purple sphere of dark energy, popping with tendrils of electricity. The two of them faced off in the center of the shrine's open square.

“I don't give a damn if you're possessed, Mako. You hurt our friends. I'm not holding back.”

The two girls prowled in a slow circle around each other.

“Let's see what you're made of, Rei.”

Zoisite backed off, biding his time until the opportune moment.

Usagi ran over to check on Minako, then hopped over to Ami.

“Ami! I'm sorry I couldn't be here sooner. Are you okay?”

“No worries, Usagi. I think I'm okay. I need to go help—” Ami tried standing up, but groaned when a sharp pain hit her ribs. She sat back down and dipped her head.

Usagi gave Ami a cordial hug. “You've done enough, Ami. Let us handle this!”

Ami smiled back half-heartedly.

*I'm so weak and useless.*

“Mars Fire...” Rei increased her attack’s intensity by chanting her spell, sending flames and embers swirling all around her. She bent her knees in a fighting stance, then lunged forward. “IGNITE!” She swung her arm and threw one fireball directly at Mako. The fireball propelled forward like a bullet.

*WHOOSH!*

Mako retaliated immediately, throwing her dark energy ball at Rei. Mako then bent her knees, and jumped to the side, dodging Rei’s fireball. She softened her landing with a forward roll and stopped on one knee.

Rei anticipated the attack, and jumped forward swiftly, arcing her body over the dark energy ball. Her hands touched the ground, and she pushed off, performing a graceful forward handspring. Her legs flipped over her head, and she threw her second fireball the moment she landed upright.

*BOOM BOOM BOOM!!*

The second fireball exploded near Mako’s boots, blasting her to the ground.

“Wow, you got some moves, fire girl,” Zoisite said, clapping his hands. He stepped into the arena and created a dark energy sphere. “Can you handle two against one?”

Rei didn’t respond, focusing all her attention on the next attack. “MARS FIRE!” Two more intense fireballs ignited around her fists. She sprinted forward and threw one fireball at Zoisite. *WHOOSH!* He responded immediately, launching his dark energy ball. The two energy balls collided, exploding spectacularly in the center. *BOOOOOOOM!*

Rei then spun around on her heels, twirling her red miniskirt. She stopped and faced Zoisite, throwing her second fireball at him. The

extra spin propelled the fireball faster, and Zoisite didn't react in time. He screamed as the fireball made impact. His chest exploded in a shower of orange hot flames, and he flew back, crashing to the ground.

Mako stood up, and sprinted toward Rei. The raven-haired girl spread her legs in a fighting stance and lifted her fists. Mako swung a fist; Rei blocked it with her forearm. Mako twisted her torso and swung again; Rei ducked, bending her knees.

“Didn't know you were this fast, Rei.”

Rei swiveled her head quickly to sweep away some long hair. “Nah, you're just too slow.”

Rei sprang forward and jabbed Mako in the abdomen. She then swung her fist at Mako's head, but Mako blocked it. Mako retaliated, and landed a punch across Rei's face, stunning her. Rei recoiled back, and staggered slightly, shaking her head.

Mako lifted her fists up in a fighting stance. “I'm still stronger, Rei.” Mako leaned back and lifted her knee. She sent a roundhouse kick directly at Rei's head. Rei blocked it in time, catching Mako's green ankle-high boot and shoving it away. Mako lost her balance.

Rei lowered into a fighting stance and placed pressure on her back heel. She spun her body around and delivered a spinning wheel karate kick straight into the side of Mako's head. *WHAM!*

The blow sent Mako reeling onto the ground.

“Wow! Rei!” Usagi watched in awe.

Ami's expression turned serious. “What's she going to do now?”

Rei summoned another fireball in her fist and stood over Mako.

“Rei! Wait!” Mako called out suddenly, holding her hands up. Mako slowly got up from the ground. “Rei, what are you doing? It’s me!”

“Mako?” Rei held firm but hesitated slightly.

Mako held her palms forward and cowered. “Put the flames down Rei, please! I don’t want to fight.”

Usagi perked up. “Oh my gosh, is Mako back?”

Ami sat up straight and listened intently to Mako’s voice.

*That’s not Mako.*

Mako took a step forward. “Come on Rei, you have to believe me. Please.” The purple crystal in Mako’s bow glowed.

Rei swallowed hard and lowered her fist. Her flames disappeared. She gazed hypnotically into Mako’s eyes.

*She’s faking it!*

Ami shouted at the top of her lungs: “SHE’S LYING!”

The scream jolted Rei from her trance. She summoned a fireball. Mako grabbed Rei’s waist and hugged her.

“MARS—MMMMPH!”

Mako pressed her mouth over Rei’s ruby-red lips. Mako activated her energy-stealing powers and began draining Rei. The raven-haired beauty tried pushing away, but Mako held on tight with all her strength. Mako closed her eyes and breathed through her nose. She kissed Rei forcefully and passionately, digging her fingers into Rei’s body. Rei’s fireball faded.

The surprise move shocked Rei; her mind filled with feelings of fear and pleasure. Her eyelids drooped as the energy drained from her body. She felt exhausted and desperately wanted to sleep.

Mako broke the kiss briefly and gazed into Rei's groggy eyes. "Who's in charge now?"

"I've...had better." Rei sighed and flickered her eyelids. She felt Mako's hand reach under her red miniskirt, squeezing her hips and touching her panties. The obscene behavior appalled Rei. She lifted a weak arm and pushed against Mako's belly.

Mako leaned in again and kissed Rei's moist lips, but Rei pushed back harder. Mako broke the kiss, and let Rei go.

"Fine, have it your way. I got what I needed."

Rei staggered backward as she tried to stand straight. Everything around her was in a blurry daze. She faced Mako and tried summoning her fire powers. Nothing worked. Her drowsy mind was unable to focus.

Mako smiled. "You better watch your back, Rei."

Behind Rei's back, Zoisite had recovered. He got up off the ground and walked quietly toward her.

Rei shook her head and got into a drunk fighting stance. "Not...falling for that."

Zoisite quickened his pace.

Usagi jumped up. "MOON TIARA ACTION!" She removed her golden tiara and threw it in Zoisite's direction like a frisbee.

Mako saw the attack in time and shot a thunderbolt at it.

*ZZAP!* The tiara fell to the ground.

"REI!" Ami shouted.

Mako turned and fired a thunderbolt near Ami's boots, blasting her back down. *BOOM!*

Rei was slow to react. She turned her head right as Zoisite reached her backside.

"Huh—" *WHACK!*

Zoisite wasted no time. He ruthlessly struck Rei's neck, swinging the blade of his hand hard in a karate chop move. The impact cut off the blood supply to Rei's brain, causing her to black out instantly. She gasped and rolled her eyes back. She crumpled to the ground—*THUMP*—lying there motionless. The once dazzling and powerful Sailor Mars had been reduced to a tranquil, sleeping damsel.

"NOOO!" Ami cried out.

A distraught Usagi ran over to check on Rei. Ami forced herself off the ground and limped over to Usagi. Ami checked Rei's pulse and breathing.

"What do we do, Ami?" Usagi asked with tears in her eyes.

Ami dipped her head.

*We lost, Usagi.*

Zoisite marveled at his hand. "Wow, I'm getting better at this!"

Mako walked over to Zoisite's side. "I think we need one more girl to satisfy Beryl's request."

Zoisite nodded, surveying the scene around him. "More importantly, we need to decide who to corrupt next."

He walked over and pushed Ami away from Rei's body. "I want her—*fire girl.*"

Ami grabbed Zoisite's arm. "Get away from her, creep!"

Zoisite yanked his arm away in disgust. "Don't touch me, *water girl*."

"Don't call her that!" Usagi yelled indignantly.

Zoisite grabbed Sailor Moon's arm. "You look like you're full of fresh energy." He nodded to Mako.

Mako stepped over and embraced Usagi tightly. "Sorry, Princess."

"No!" Ami lunged forward desperately.

Zoisite caught her. He wrapped his arm around her neck, holding her tight. "Looks like you get to watch."

Ami squirmed under Zoisite's grasp, gritting her teeth as she watched helplessly.

Mako pressed her lips over Usagi's mouth. She held the kiss with no passion or emotion, simply draining Usagi's energy as if it were a job. Usagi gazed fiercely into Mako's eyes, never looking away. Her eyes gradually closed, and her body relaxed.

Mako released the kiss and laid Usagi gently on the ground. Usagi laid flat on her back, with her hands clasped over her chest. She slept peacefully, as if she were a princess awaiting a kiss from a prince.



"Alright, let's go make that dark spirit crystal," Zoisite said. He shoved Ami away and knelt down to pick up Rei. He lifted Rei up in a bridal carry and opened up a dark energy portal. *SHHWOMMM!*

Ami began panicking as Zoisite walked toward the portal.

*No! He's kidnapping Rei!*

As the last remaining Guardian, Ami had no choice but to act—it was her sacred duty to protect her friends. With Rei's life on the line, Ami decided to make a desperate play.

Ami jumped up and sprinted in front of Zoisite. "Wait!"

Mako grabbed Ami and pulled her aside.

Zoisite looked at Ami impatiently. "Our decision is made. Out of the way, or I'll have Dark Jupiter blast you."

Ami squirmed free from Mako's grasp and stepped in front of Zoisite again. "Take me instead!"

Zoisite paused and started giggling. "No, you're awful. We're taking Mars."

Ami turned to Mako and pleaded. "I'm ready to serve the Dark Kingdom. Please. Leave my friend alone, and take me."

Mako appeared to ignore her plea.

With a sense of urgency, Ami gazed at Rei, her expression filled with deep concern. Rei was sleeping in Zoisite's arms, unaware of the negotiations being done to save her.

Zoisite shook his head. "Absolutely ridiculous. If we get Mars, we win. I watched her fight. She's a force of nature."

Ami stood firm and held her arms wide open. "Then you'll have to blast me."

Zoisite rolled his eyes and nodded at Mako.

Ami closed her eyes and took a deep breath, prepared for whatever fate had in store for her.

*Have courage, Ami.*

Ami felt a pair of strong hands grip her shoulder. She opened her eyes and noticed Mako standing behind her.

"I think she's right, Zoisite. We should take her," Mako said.

“Are you out of your mind, Dark Jupiter?”

“I know these girls the best. You don't want Mars.”

“Elaborate. Please.”

“Mars has a fiery temper. There's no telling how the dark spirit crystal will affect her.”

Zoisite held his chin. “Hmm. But she's strong.”

“And that's not necessarily in our best interest. What if she's so full of herself, that she decides to take your place Zoisite? What then?”

Zoisite pondered hard. Dark Jupiter made a very good point.

Mako continued. “Mercury and I can also combine our attacks. We'd be unstoppable. I think it's a good move.”

Ami stood motionless, surprised at Mako's clever reasoning. Ami wondered if Mako's subconscious was surfacing at this moment.

Zoisite stared blankly at the two girls for what felt like an eternity. Nobody made a sound. The dark energy portal buzzed quietly in the background. He looked at Mako, then at Ami, and nodded his head imperceptibly.

“...okay.”

Zoisite laid Sailor Mars back on the ground. He stood up and walked over to Ami, standing inches from her. Zoisite exchanged a glance with Mako, then snuck something into her hand.

“So you're ready to serve the Dark Kingdom, huh, water girl.”

Ami stared back fiercely at Zoisite, breathing fast and trembling uncontrollably. Ami usually thought through her plans, weighing pros, cons and alternatives. The bright young girl had never walked into a situation unprepared, with stakes this high. The decision she was about to make placed her in uncharted territory—and it terrified her.

*Now or never Ami.*

“I’m ready.”

Zoisite nodded to Mako.

*FFFT!*

Ami gasped suddenly as she felt a cold sharp needle prick her neck. Mako pushed the needle’s plunger, sending a powerful sedative into Ami’s bloodstream. Ami saw Zoisite smirk, and then her vision blurred. Her mind fell off a cliff, and into an ocean of sleepiness. A feeling of terror jolted her when she realized her fate now rested in Zoisite’s hands. If he proceeded with his plan, she would never wake up as herself again.

The drug coursed through her brain, shutting off her neurons one by one. The pain in her body disappeared, replaced with a pleasant, numbing sensation. She fluttered her eyes and collapsed into Mako’s arms with a soft whimper.

“Shhhhhh, relax. You’ll be joining us soon.” Mako soothed Ami, stroking her blue hair.

*Mako...I’m so sleepy...*

Mako lowered Ami’s waist gently and slipped her hands under Ami’s thighs. She swept Ami up, carrying her like a sleeping princess. Ami’s blue boots and gloved arms dangled; her head tilted back, exposing her soft neck. Her blue miniskirt scrunched up over her hips, giving Mako a peek at a cute pair of panties.

Ami looked up with groggy eyes at Mako, one last time. She parted her lips as if she wanted to speak. A soft, imperceptible moan came out instead.

*I’m going to save you Mako...*

*I swear on my life...*

The sedative pulled Ami under and she closed her eyes, losing all consciousness. She rested in Mako's arms, breathing steadily.

Zoisite stepped through the portal and Mako followed. Ami's body passed through the barrier and the portal snapped shut, leaving behind a flurry of beautiful rose petals.

## Chapter 6

Ami woke up and felt herself laying on a cold, rough, stone surface. Droplets of water dripped onto her cheek at regular intervals. She heard distant echoes and an eerie humming noise—but nothing else. She opened her eyes and saw faint red orbs of energy floating in ethereal darkness. Her body shivered, as she felt surrounded by an evil, malignant presence.

“Hmmp.”

Ami tried to talk but found her mouth gagged tightly with a soft handkerchief. She tried moving her arms but found her wrists tied behind her back. The sedative had worn off, and she felt an aching discomfort return to her body. Her neck throbbed in pain, where Mako had injected her.

“Hrmmph!”

She wiggled and squirmed on the ground, creating a shuffling noise with her boots. She felt another set of ropes winding around her chest, encircling her arms. She twisted her head to look around. She was surrounded by walls made of twisted rocks. She was alone.

“HRMMMMPHH!!” Her muffled screams echoed through the dark cavern. A feeling of dreadful horror descended upon her.

*I'm in Hell, aren't I?*

Ami squirmed her body and rolled to her side. She lifted her head and caught a glimmer of something bright in the corner. She focused her eyes and noticed that it was a glowing purple crystal. The crystal had dark tendrils of energy flowing around it, orbiting it like storm clouds. Ami stared at the crystal, entranced by its hypnotic power.

The sound of footsteps jolted Ami from her trance. The footsteps echoed through the cavern and got closer. She heard voices.

*Mako!*

“Hey, looks like the dark spirit crystal is almost ready,” Zoisite said, as he entered the chamber. “This one’s filled with all your former friends.”

Zoisite was spinning the Crescent Moon Wand in his hand. He set it down on a stone surface.

Mako knelt down next to Ami. “Looks like our guest is finally awake.”

“Oh, poor thing. Sorry about the ropes,” Zoisite said.

Ami squirmed and muffled through her gag.

“We couldn’t have you running around this place. You’d get lost pretty quick,” Mako said.

Zoisite picked up the dark spirit crystal and marveled at it. “It’s beautiful. Taking its sweet time to absorb all that dark energy.”

Ami watched as Zoisite walked over with the crystal. She panicked and shouted through her gag.

“HRMMMMPH!!”

“Normally, I make sure my victims are asleep during this part.”

“Mmmmph!”

“Because—unfortunately—it hurts like hell.”

Ami’s eyes went wide. She kicked her boots and shuffled along the floor, desperately trying to get away.

*Don't you dare put that thing in me!*

Zoisite towered over Ami, and used his boot to flip her over. He knelt down and lowered the crystal to her chest. Ami felt the cold

tendrils of dark energy tickling her face. Ami twisted her head and squirmed under her ropes, trying her hardest to delay Zoisite.

“HHMMMMKOOOCHNNN!!” Ami turned her head and looked Mako in the eyes. She cried through her gag, pleading to Mako with whatever body language she could muster.

Mako walked over and put a hand on Zoisite's shoulder. “What's the rush, Zoisite?”

Zoisite paused and stood back up. “Dark Jupiter, do I need to remind you who's in charge here?”

Mako smiled and yanked the crystal from Zoisite's hand playfully. “We're a team. Besides, I'm dying to know—what *water girl's* last words are going to be.”

Zoisite raised an eyebrow at Mako, then smiled back shrewdly. “Sure. Let's hear what she has to say.” He knelt down and yanked Ami's gag off.

Ami gasped and took a few deep breaths. She gazed at Mako again, with a flash of anger.

“Mako! This isn't like you.”

“...”

“Even if you've been corrupted by dark power, I know you'd never—ever—serve this cowardly, evil, creep.”

Zoisite recoiled at the words. “Ouch.”

Mako crossed her arms and smirked. “Whatever. I don't serve him. I serve the Dark Kingdom.”

Zoisite furrowed his brows.

Ami smiled sarcastically at Mako. “Okay then, tough girl. Go ahead and serve them—and live forever in this dreadful place.”

Mako didn't respond.

Zoisite piped in. "I'll have you know—this is *why* we want to conquer Earth. To get away from this awful place."

Ami replied without skipping a beat. "You could walk away anytime you wanted. But you serve that wicked queen—"

"Hey! Watch it."

Mako continued staring ahead blankly.

Ami directed her words at Mako. "Show them who's in charge, Mako. You're stronger than them—"

"Alright that's enough," Zoisite said.

"Or are you, Mako?"

"..."

"Maybe you don't have it in you. I nearly beat you back at the shrine after all."

"No, you didn't."

"I held back because I didn't want to hurt you."

"No, you're just weak."

"Fine. I challenge you to a duel."

Zoisite laughed. "Ha! No way."

"Me and you Mako."

"You're insane."

"You're afraid."

"..."

"Afraid you'll lose to me—*water girl*."

Mako uncrossed her arms.

"Come on, Mako."

Mako stepped toward Ami.

"Let's fight, Mako."

“Alright, alright ladies.” Zoisite put his hands up. “I let this go on for way too long. Dark Jupiter, give me that dark spirit crystal.”

Mako knelt down to Ami's face and smiled.

“I accept.”

“Are you *kidding* me?” Zoisite yelled incredulously.

Mako stood up and faced Zoisite, giving him attitude. “What do you have to lose? I'm going to beat her.” She tossed the dark spirit crystal back to Zoisite. “Besides—I need some sparring practice.”

Zoisite watched as Mako knelt down and untied Ami. He leaned back against the stone surface and picked up a small metal canister.

Ami stood up, brushing some dust off her miniskirt and rubbing her wrists. She then strode over to Zoisite. Her blue boots clacked with purpose, echoing in the cavern.

He pointed the canister at her. “Hey, no funny business. Or else it's back to dreamland.”

Ami ignored the warning and walked right up to Zoisite's face. She straightened her back and inflated her chest. “If I win, you give me the Moon Wand and let us go. Deal?”

Zoisite laughed with disbelief. “Ha. You're not going to win.”

“Then you don't have anything to worry about. Deal?”

Zoisite looked at Mako's muscular frame and compared it to Ami's slender body. The intrigue between the two girls piqued his curiosity. He had no doubt which girl held the advantage. Backing down now would have made him look weak in front of Dark Jupiter. Besides—adding some stakes to the match would make it more thrilling to watch. He was in.

“Deal.”



Ami's blue miniskirt bounced around her hips, as she hopped on her blue boots. She shook her arms, reducing the tension in her muscles. She stretched her arms upward and bounced a few more times like a dancer.

Mako stood at the opposite end of the chamber. She rotated her shoulders and scrunched her neck, popping some joints. She bent her forearms, and twisted her torso, flexing her back muscles through her skin-tight leotard.

Zoisite leaned against a stone wall, observing the match with enthusiasm. “Round one,” he muttered to himself, making a small *ping* with his voice.

Water droplets swirled around Ami's hands as she summoned her Sailor Mercury powers. She splashed some water in her mouth to hydrate herself. She replayed Mako's past fights in her head, deconstructing Mako's offensive fighting tactics. Ami knew she couldn't match Mako's firepower, so she decided to try a defensive strategy.

*Conserve your energy. Wear her down.*

Mako summoned her dark energy powers, producing purple electrical flares in her fists. She crouched into a fighting stance like she was in a Bruce Lee movie. Her eyes narrowed and she began advancing toward Ami.

Ami tensed up and focused on Mako's next move.

*You can beat her, Ami.*

“Dark Thunder!!!” Mako fired first, sending forth a flurry of thunderbolts in Ami’s direction. A thunderclap boomed in the large chamber, shaking the pebbles on the ground.

“Shine Aqua Illusion!” Ami shouted, waving her arms in a massive circle. A sphere of brilliant blue water surrounded her body. Ami held her arms up and increased the sphere’s radius. The thunderbolts crashed into the water shield, producing a spectacular display of water and sparks. Ami dropped her arms, and the water sphere evaporated into tiny blue particles.

“Clever move!” Mako yelled. She summoned a larger dark energy sphere and hurled it in Ami’s direction. The sphere barreled forward with incredible speed, expanding in size as it approached Ami.

Ami sprinted out of the way, looking over her shoulder in alarm as the energy ball approached the ground.

*BOOOOOOOM!!!!*

The powerful dark energy ball exploded, sending a shockwave that blasted Ami high up into the air. Her legs and arms flailed wildly as she flew through the air. Her eyes opened wide and she saw the ground approaching fast. She pushed her palms forward and launched a gush of water straight into the ground. The force of her water attack counteracted gravity, and Ami landed on her boots, rolling forward. She got up on one knee, completely stunned the hail-mary move worked.

*Wow, that was close!!*

*Thank you Newton's Third Law.*

“Keep your distance,” Ami said to herself. She got to her feet and sprinted to a far corner of the arena. She couldn’t afford another close call like that again and needed enough time to react.

“Come here weakling!” Mako yelled. She hurled another dark energy ball at Ami.

Ami saw the attack coming and fired a blue ball of water energy. It collided with Mako's attack, exploding in the center. The wind from the blast billowed through Ami's skirt and collar. Ami materialized a splash of water and drank it. She was breathing hard, already exhausted from the running.

*You need to start exercising more Ami!*

Mako sprinted toward Ami, her powerful legs covering the distance with long strides. Ami tried sprinting away but stopped when she realized she'd lose the race. She summoned a water shield as Mako approached.

*ZZAP! ZZAP! ZZAP!* Mako fired repeated thunderbolts into the water shield, like bullets from a gun. Ami held firm as her water shield absorbed the attacks. The sound of loud booms and zaps echoed around her.

Mako ran straight into the water shield and blasted a hole in it. Ami tried increasing the shield's thickness, but Mako was too fast. Mako penetrated the barrier and lunged at Ami with a fist.

Ami crossed her forearms and crouched her head behind them. Mako hit Ami's slender arms, sending a shockwave of pain through her bones. “OWWW!” Ami ducked another punch, missing it by inches. Mako swept her strong legs under Ami's ankles, sending her crashing to the ground.

“You lose,” Mako said as she towered over Ami. Mako produced a dark energy ball, preparing to blast Ami into submission.

Ami lifted her head from the ground suddenly and grabbed Mako's ankles. She twisted her body hard, yanking Mako off balance.

Mako stumbled and accidentally released the energy ball into the air. Ami rolled away and got back up, stepping away from Mako.

“This is not over yet!” Ami shouted, breathing hard.

Mako lunged toward Ami with a yell and grabbed her by the collar. The brazen move shocked Ami, and she flinched, closing her eyes tight. She opened a single eye and saw Mako’s fist inches from her face.

“Submit, *water girl*,” Mako said, gritting her teeth. “Or I will blast the living daylights out of you.”

Ami glared straight into Mako’s eyes. “Hit me, Mako.”

Mako’s left eye twitched and her fist trembled.

*She’s fighting the spell!*

Zoisite shouted from his corner of the arena. “Come on, Dark Jupiter!”

The words appeared to jostle Mako back into focus. She furrowed her eyebrows and pulled her fist back.

Ami raised her thigh suddenly. She pinched the edge of her blue miniskirt and hiked it up her hips alluringly, giving Mako a flirty smile. Mako looked down—blushing, as expected—and let her guard down.

Ami opened her palm—**SLAP!!!!** And slapped Mako hard across the face.

Mako let go of Ami and recoiled in surprise at the move. Her face burned red. Ami seized the opportunity and bolted to a far corner of the arena.

*You and I are going to have a little chat after this is all over, Mako.*

“Finish this, Dark Jupiter!” Zoisite yelled impatiently.

Mako held her cheek and shook her head hard several times. She looked back up and stared at Ami with cold, lifeless eyes.

*I’m so close. I’m not giving up Mako!*

The dark spirit crystal in Mako's bow began shining. A column of air around Mako glowed with sinister dark energy. The black and purple vortex grew bigger, causing Mako's hair to flail in the wind. Mako raised her arms and channeled a beam of dark energy from the ether.

Ami trembled in fear as she watched the nightmarish attack take shape. She summoned her own water energy, generating a tiny blue light in the ever-increasing cloud of darkness.

Flashes of lightning crackled inside the massive dark clouds spinning above Mako. Thunderclaps boomed in the chamber.

*I'm going to need something stronger.*

Zoisite straightened his back and marveled at the awesome sight. Dark Jupiter appeared to be concentrating all the ambient energy into a single attack. The move was unexpected—and dangerous. Zoisite took a worried step backward.

Ami clicked her boots together and closed her eyes, concentrating hard. She blocked out the loud noise and searched inward for her reincarnated Sailor Mercury spirit. Faint memories flickered through her mind—filled with happiness, courage, and tears. A divine warm light materialized in her mind, seemingly out of nowhere. She reached out to touch the light, and a flood of celestial energy flowed through her.

*Thank you.*

Ami opened her eyes and the loud thunderclaps filled her senses again. She took a deep breath, and with newfound courage, summoned her celestial powers.

“MERCURY!”

She raised her arms and a column of blue light beamed down on her from the heavens. A torrent of water encircled her, extending to the sky.

“AQUA!”

The vortex of blue energy burst into the sky, illuminating the chamber with a breathtaking ocean of water waves.

The brilliant blue display reflected off Zoisite's eyes. He gazed up, transfixed. “So beautiful...”

The dark spirit crystal on Mako's chest burned with more intensity. Mako yelled ferociously and threw her arms forward.

“DARK THUNDER DRAGON!!!”

*ROAR!!* A colossal dragon head made of thunderbolts emerged from the dark energy clouds. The dragon rocketed upward, revealing a long segmented body. The dragon snaked and slithered, leaving long trails of purple electrical tendrils in its wake. Mako directed the malevolent thunder dragon toward Ami.

The appearance of the thunder dragon momentarily shook Ami's concentration. The noise in the chamber was deafening. She refocused and closed her eyes, channeling every remaining drop of her spiritual energy. Ami's blue hair thrashed wildly in the stormy wind. Her entire body surged with energy, as the water waves in the sky coalesced into an elegant formation. Ami opened her eyes and shouted the incantation's final word, her voice booming with emotion.

“**RHAPSODY!!!!!!**”

The thunder dragon roared and bolted downward—into the wings of a gigantic, majestic blue crane. The brilliant blue crane flapped

its large wings, sending forth an explosive tsunami of water energy. The enormous blast sent the thunder dragon reeling backward.

*SWOOOOOOSH! ZZZAP! BOOOOOOOOOM!!*

*You were right Luna. It's so beautiful.*

Ami moved her arms, and the massive shimmering crane responded. It soared gracefully across the chamber, its wings beating in a rhythmic motion. As it flew, droplets of water dripped from its wings, falling like a gentle rain below. Its body glowed with an otherworldly blue radiance, as if powered by the celestial gods themselves.

Ami opened her arms wide, then swept them inward as if she was a bird. The blue crane flapped its wings, obliterating a segment of the thunder dragon, in an explosion of light and sound. The dragon lunged forward, but the crane drifted nimbly around it. Energy sparks floated downward, as the two celestial apparitions danced and weaved around each other.

The dark spirit crystal on Mako's bow erupted in a barrage of purple energy tendrils. Mako's irises disappeared, and her eyes turned completely white. She screamed as the sinister power consumed her entire soul. The thunder dragon dived into the crane, destroying one of its beautiful wings.

*No!*

Ami fell to her knees, her mind and body struggling to sustain the attack. She pushed her arms forward, and the crane followed, thrusting its beak into the dragon. A segment of the dragon exploded into a dazzling display of blue water droplets.

*You got this!*

The thunder dragon opened its mouth and viciously attacked the crane's body. A shower of tiny blue orbs exploded from the crane,

like blood from a wound. “NOOO!” Ami screamed. She pushed her hands forward with a yell, stretching her powers to its limit. The magnificent crane flapped its remaining wing into the dragon, destroying another segment. The crane’s last wing then vaporized, raining icy cold water droplets to the ground. Ami bowed her head and quietly thanked the majestic bird for its bravery.

*Thank you for protecting me, friend.*

Thick dark energy clouds swirled rapidly in a vortex around Mako’s body. She raised her arms and screamed viciously, sending a barrage of dark energy into the thunder dragon. The dark spirit crystal on Mako’s chest flashed a blinding brilliant purple light—and then cracked suddenly. Mako threw her arms forward, launching the thunder dragon directly toward Ami.

**CRACK!!!!** The dark spirit crystal exploded into tiny purple grains of dust. The explosion knocked Mako back, and she staggered, shaking her head. She looked at her hands, as the glint returned to her eyes. She then tilted her head up and gasped in horror at what she unleashed.

Ami watched helplessly as the thunder dragon devoured the rest of the blue crane’s body. Blue orbs of water scattered in the sky, and rained to the ground in big splashes. Ami tried with all her might to summon another water attack. Her hands glowed, and droplets of water began swirling around them. Dark clouds whirled around Ami as the thunder dragon made its approach. Her bright blue light looked like a tiny star in a cold dark galaxy. The dragon opened its mouth above Ami, sending a barrage of electrical tendrils downward. Ami held firm, holding her water energy orb as a deafening tornado of wind blew around her.

*Have courage, Ami.*

The dragon snapped its mouth shut, and the world around Ami went black.

*KABOOOOOOM!!!*

Her blue orb disappeared in an immense explosion of dark clouds and electrical sparks. The dragon's head vaporized into the ground, obliterating itself over Ami. An earth-shattering boom echoed endlessly through the large cavern. Dark clouds expanded outward and rose into the air slowly. The echoes stopped, and an eerie quiet settled on the cavern.

Zoisite was crouching on the ground. He lifted his head gingerly and surveyed the scene. The dark clouds began clearing, revealing a delicate white-gloved hand. More clouds wafted away, revealing a pair of blue boots and blue hair. Zoisite stood up and started walking toward the body, furrowing his eyebrows. His usual smirk was replaced with a dour frown.

*"AMI!!!!!!!"*

The horrific, blood-curdling scream pierced the silence suddenly, causing Zoisite to cover his ears. He turned his head and saw Mako sprinting toward Ami's lifeless body.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mako landed on her knees and collapsed over Ami's shoulders. She looked up with tears streaming down her face and shook Ami's body hard. "Ami! Ami, wake up! We gotta get out of here!"

Ami laid motionless on her back, with her uniform scratched and torn. Her face had a serene, tranquil expression. Ami's lips were parted slightly—and she wasn't breathing.

“No, no, no...Ami, please...” Mako's voice cracked as more tears welled up in her eyes.

*Mako, you're back...*

“Please...I...I—”

*You're crying...*

Ami had never heard Mako cry like this before. Mako's sobs were beyond heartbreaking, almost indescribable. Ami tried to respond, but couldn't move any part of her body. Her entire world was black. Mako's crying voice sounded like a distant echo—drifting further and further away.

*Mako, I can't feel my heartbeat...*

Mako clutched Ami's lifeless hand. “Ami, I'm so sorry...”

*I forgive you...*

*Don't cry, Mako...*

Ami felt her awareness fading slowly. Without a heartbeat, Ami knew her precious time was limited. Poignant memories of Usagi, Rei, Minako—and Mako—flashed through Ami's dying mind. Ami remembered the day she met Mako and how nervous she was when they had lunch. They became immediate best friends. Mako was so excited—jumping into the air—when she learned Ami was a superhero. The memories all came back to Ami—the laughs, the tears, and the hugs. Most of all the hugs.

Mako pressed her face into Ami's chest and cried inconsolably. “Ami...please don't go...”

*There's so much I want to say Mako...*

*I wish we could share one more hug...*

*Or share one more laugh...*

Ami tried to talk, but her lips refused to budge. She yearned to wrap her arms around Mako—to console and provide comfort to her grieving friend. Just one more hug—it was all she wanted.

Mako sobbed, as she clung onto Ami's collar, drenching it with tears. "Please, Ami...come back..."

*I'll never get to say goodbye...*

*Please be strong Mako...*

"Ami..." Mako's voice trailed off, her once booming voice reduced to a whisper filled with grief. Her lips quivered, and she lost her ability to speak.

*Please be strong for the rest of the girls...I'm...*

*I'm going to be gone for a while...*

The pain of losing her closest friend was unbearable, and Mako lost all control of her emotions. A gut-wrenching wail escaped from her throat, filling the cavern with thunderous sounds of anguish.

*Thank you for being my friend Mako...*

*I'm going to miss you so much...*

Teardrops rained down on Ami's face. Mako's entire body trembled under a mountain of heartache and sorrow.

A final thought echoed in Ami's mind, a tiny sad whisper in a sea of darkness.

*I'll see you again someday...Mako...*

Mako looked up to the heavens and screamed, tears twinkling as they flew from her eyes. Thunderclouds coalesced above her, filling the sky with flashes of lightning and thunderclaps. The air around her glowed with a beautiful green aura.

*BOOM BOOM BOOM*

A lightning bolt zapped the ground, blowing some small stones away. Another bolt zapped the ground near Ami's boots.

*ZZAP ZZAP ZZAP*

Zoisite stood up, watching the scene, mouth agape. A thunderbolt streamed toward the ground, zapping Zoisite's feet. *ZZZAPPPP!* He jumped backward and landed on the ground.

Mako let out another heartbreaking scream, and the thunderstorm grew to a ferocious strength. The cavern filled with the deafening sounds of thunderclaps and zaps. Thunderbolts surged down one by one, striking the ground with brilliant white sparks.

Mako closed her teary eyes and took a deep breath. She dipped her head down in despair and collapsed. Mako clutched Ami's lifeless hand and cried next to her on the ground. The thunderclouds above her began clearing away. The lightning bolts faded away, bringing calm back to the skies.

The last thunderbolt materialized in one of the fading clouds, beginning its life as a tiny bright spark. It glowed brighter, then shot forth, streaking toward the ground. The thunderbolt darted randomly left and right, without a care in the world as to its destination. The tip of the bolt aimed itself to an innocuous spot on the ground near Ami's arm. The bolt darted to the left suddenly—as if guided by a divine force—and touched the brooch on Ami's blue bow. The bolt of electricity then surged into Ami's chest, touching her lifeless heart.

*ZAP!*

Had the amperage of the thunderbolt been any higher, it would have wounded Ami's heart. Had the amperage been any smaller, it would have absorbed innocently into the muscles. Today, however—it was just right. The electrical energy sent a jolt through Ami's heart—restarting it.

*COUGH!*

A glimmer of hope returned. Mako wiped her tears away and gazed at Ami's face. "...Ami?" she whispered.

Ami gasped suddenly, expanding her chest and tensing her muscles. She opened her mouth and took a deep voluntary breath. The sudden movements sent a jolt down Mako's spine.

"Oh my god! Ami!" Mako sat up and cradled Ami's head delicately. A small smile formed on Mako's face, as she bawled and sniffled.

Ami opened her vibrant blue eyes tenderly, gazing back at Mako with wonder. Mako brushed away some of Ami's blue hair, sobbing uncontrollably as she did so.

"M...Mako..." Ami sat up slowly as her awareness returned. She looked down incredulously at her chest and clutched it, feeling her own heartbeat. Her heart pounded harder and harder with each passing second. She then gazed at Mako, with a look of absolute astonishment. Mako was speechless; tears were pouring out of her eyes.

*I'm alive.*

It was a miracle. Ami didn't hesitate any longer—she threw herself into Mako and gave her friend a strong, impassioned embrace.

Tears streamed down Ami's face, blurring her vision, as she clung to her best friend with all her strength. "*Mako!*"

Mako wrapped her arms around Ami, hugging her with intense emotion. The two friends clung onto each other in a tight embrace, crying uncontrollably. At that moment, nothing else mattered to them, as they poured every ounce of their affection into this embrace. Neither girl wanted to let go—their bond had become inseparable.

"We stick together, okay, Mako," Ami said, crying into Mako's shoulders.

"I...I promise," Mako replied, nodding her head as more tears fell.

The two friends hugged for several moments longer, then gradually released their arms. They tried to dry their eyes, but gave up as their gloves had become drenched. Ami looked into Mako's eyes and smiled with relief. Mako dipped her head down and laughed softly.

Mako was no longer in her Dark Jupiter outfit. She was proudly wearing the vibrant pink and green colors of Sailor Jupiter. Her tiara shined with brilliant golden light again.

Ami touched the center of Mako's pink bow. "The dark crystal. How did it—"

Mako shrugged. "I...I think it overheated or something." Mako then turned despondent. "Oh Ami, it was awful."

Ami gripped Mako's shoulder. "You fought hard. I know."

"I could see what was happening, but I had no control. It felt so dark, so evil..."

"It wasn't your fault, Mako."

Ami tried to stand, but fell back down, her legs still too weak. Mako helped Ami off the ground and supported her. Ami summoned a

small blue orb of water and took a refreshing sip from it. She handed it to Mako. "Here, drink this. We need to stay hydrated."

"Sorry, I cried too much back there." Mako took the orb of water and drank the entire thing. "Wow! That's the best water I've ever tasted."

Ami created another orb of water and handed it to Mako with a smile.

*"Abem.* Quite the show you girls put on back there."

Ami turned to look, and saw Zoisite leaning against a stone wall. He tossed the dark spirit crystal in his hand, and stepped toward the two girls. "So you broke the spell, huh, *thunder girl.*"

Mako sneered at Zoisite and stepped in front of Ami. "You're finished, Zoisite."

Ami stepped forward and stood next to Mako. "Let us go, Zoisite. We had a deal."

Zoisite rubbed the back of his head nervously. "Yeah, um, I kind of promised a certain someone—"

"We won fair and square. Let us go."

"Yeah, see, there's a big problem with that—"

*"ZOISITE!"*

The shrill voice sent a shiver down their spines and echoed endlessly through the room. They turned their heads to look at the cavern entrance. Nobody made a sound.

*Oh. Dear. God.*

Ami grabbed Mako's hand. The two friends tensed up, as a stark, terrifying realization set in.

*CLACK. CLACK. CLACK.*

The sounds of slow, methodical footsteps reverberated through the cavern. The footsteps stopped—and Queen Beryl's voice roared.

## Chapter 7

Zoisite bolted toward the cavern entrance, bumping into Queen Beryl in the narrow passageway. He fell to his knees and bowed to her feet.

“Beryl-sama! I can explain—”

Queen Beryl pounded her staff on the ground and stared into the chamber with her deadly eyes.

“Zoisite. Would you mind explaining to me, why there are two Sailor Guardians standing side by side here—in our Dark Kingdom?”

Zoisite lifted his head and stammered. “Dark Jupiter...*water girl*...fought...dark crystal...shattered—”

She pounded her staff again, shaking the ground. “So the two of them—are *not* on our side?”

Zoisite shook his head, then bowed again.

Queen Beryl looked down in disgust at Zoisite. “Pathetic.” She then looked up with scorn, and marched into the chamber.

Ami and Mako backed away to the furthest corner of the chamber.

“Okay, Ami. What’s the plan?” Mako whispered urgently.

Ami’s breathing quickened and she trembled, as feelings of absolute dread consumed her. She looked around, gauging the size of the large rocky chamber. She then observed Queen Beryl’s staff—and the bright purple orb glowing on it. A crazy idea popped into Ami’s head.

Mako began proposing a plan. “I’ll try Supreme Thunder on her. Maybe I can—”

“Mako. I’m going to leave your side for a moment,” Ami interrupted, giving Mako an anguished look.

“No...no, no,” Mako replied, shaking her head.

“I’m going to need you to trust me, and stay put.” Ami’s voice quivered as she spoke.

“I’m not...no, Ami I’m *not* leaving your side.” Mako stared intently at Ami, gripping her hand.

Ami looked down at the ground. “*Let go, Mako,*” she said sternly, as tears welled up in her eyes. She had no idea if she would ever see Mako again.

“Ami—”

Ami turned around suddenly and gave Mako a strong, emotional hug. She then yanked her hand away and sprinted as fast as she could away from Mako—toward Queen Beryl.

“*AMI!!!!*” Mako screamed.

The heartbreaking scream caused unimaginable pain for Ami. She forced herself to ignore it. This was a task only Ami could do. She wiped away her tears and sprinted bravely—toward what appeared to be certain death.

*I’m so sorry Mako!! I’m so sorry!!*

Queen Beryl smirked menacingly as she stood near the cavern’s entrance. Her eyes glowed bright red and narrowed as she saw the blue-haired Sailor Guardian running. For Beryl, the decision to kill a Sailor Guardian was an easy one. Her mind was consumed by evil, with a zealous desire to fulfill her mission. Beryl raised her staff without mercy or hesitation.

**“LONG LIVE QUEEN METALIA!”**

Beryl's regal voice roared across the cavern. The orb on Beryl's staff glowed brighter as she glorified her evil ruler. Sinister dark energy tendrils swirled rapidly around it. She lowered the staff and aimed it directly at Sailor Mercury.

Ami stopped in the center of the chamber and faced Queen Beryl. She raised her arms and crossed them in front of her face. With awe-inspiring courage, Ami summoned her celestial energy, glaring directly into Beryl's sinister red eyes. A blue energy orb materialized between her trembling wrists.

*Here goes nothing.*

"MERCURY BUBBLES!"

Beryl's staff crackled with dark energy, growing even more intense. She tilted the staff back.

"**BLAST!!!**" Ami shouted. She fired her blue energy orb toward Queen Beryl. She then bolted as fast as she could to the side.

Beryl fired her dark energy beam mercilessly—right as a million icy bubbles flowed into her field of vision. The dark energy beam surged forward with immense power, creating a hurricane of wind in the chamber. Ami jumped, diving hard onto the ground.

*KABOOOOOOOM!!!*

The dark energy blast missed Ami, forming a deep crater in the ground. Small rocks rained down on Ami, as she scrambled to her feet. She sprinted frantically back toward Mako, cheating death by mere inches.

Mercury's icy bubbles expanded to fill the entire chamber. The bubbles began condensing into a thick fog, reducing the visibility in the dark chamber to near zero. Ami reached Mako in time and the two girls exchanged a dramatic embrace.

“Ami, what was *that?!?*” Mako whispered, as she gripped Ami tightly.

“I’m so sorry for making you worry,” Ami whispered back, breathing heavily.

Mako cried and gently pounded Ami’s back. “Don’t you *ever* do that to me again!”

Ami clutched Mako’s shoulders, cherishing the fleeting moment. She recognized just how lucky she was.

Mako lifted her head. “We can’t see anything!” she whispered.

“Don’t let go of my hand, or we won’t find each other again.”

Ami was still panting hard.

“Deal. So what’s the plan?”

Ami pulled Mako’s arm and the two sprinted to a different corner of the chamber.

“*WHERE ARE YOU?!?*” Beryl’s voice boomed. The thick fog concealed everything in the chamber, leaving Beryl completely blind. She raised her staff and blindly fired a dark energy blast in a random direction.

*BOOOM!*

Mako’s eyes lit up. “She can’t see us—”

“But we can see her,” Ami replied. She pointed her finger at the bright orb on Beryl’s staff. The orb moved ominously through the fog, like a beacon.

*“STOP HIDING!”*

*BOOOOM!*

Ami and Mako sprinted quietly to another corner of the chamber.

“I can distract her, Ami. And then you run for safety—”

“No! You can't beat her by yourself.”

“The fog won't stay forever. We need to do something!”

Mako was correct but there were no good options. Decisions and scenarios flashed through Ami's brilliant mind. She weighed all the pros and cons with lightning speed. Nothing would work. Ami knew without a doubt that Queen Beryl would never allow them to escape alive. They had only one option.

Ami embraced Mako again and held on tight. “Listen to me Mako.” Tears rolled down her cheeks. “We're going to need to launch a joint attack.”

*More powerful than anything we've ever done before.*

Mako took a deep breath and swallowed hard. “Okay, but—”

“But once we fire, she'll know where we are.”

Mako nodded her head and tears started streaming down her face. Their lives were on the line and the two friends understood what needed to be done.

“We have one shot at this,” Ami said, her voice cracking with emotion.

“*ARGHHHHH!*” Beryl screamed. She fired another random attack.

*BOOOOOM!*

Ami and Mako ducked as a shower of small rocks landed on them. Ami grabbed Mako's hand, and the two stood up straight. They

looked with fierce determination at Beryl's glowing orb. Mako tightened her grip around Ami's hand.

“Ami...if we don't make it out of this—“

“We're going to make it out. Together, okay?”

“Okay. Together.”

“Ready?”

A bright light began shining around their clasped hands. Electrical sparks whirled around their hands, joining streams of blue water in a beautiful dance. The two friends closed their eyes and focused, summoning every last drop of their celestial energy. Memories of their friendship raced through their minds, invigorating them with courageous spirit. The brilliant ball of light radiated through the dense fog, like a bright star.

Queen Beryl noticed the glimmer of light and smirked. “There you are.” She turned and pointed her staff at the bright blue light.

The energy between their hands grew stronger, creating a vortex of wind around the two Sailor Guardians. Their hair and skirts thrashed wildly in the wind, as the fog around them dissipated. They opened their eyes, teardrops sparkling through the air.

The orb in Beryl's staff glowed brighter, bursting with immense streams of dark energy.

Ami looked Mako in the eyes and nodded. The two friends then recited their celestial incantations in harmony, their voices booming with profound emotion.

“SHINE!!!!”

“SUPREME!!!!”

Beryl pulled her staff back. Her mouth curled into a demonic, evil grin.

“AQUA!!!!”

“THUNDER!!!!”

Ami embraced Mako and the two girls pointed their arms toward Beryl. Water and electrical energy swirled around them in a magical hurricane. Their bright energy ball grew bigger, reaching its powerful crescendo.

Beryl thrust her staff forward viciously and roared.

Ami shut her eyes, took a deep breath, and shouted the final word.

“***ILLUSION!!!!!!!!!***”

***BOOOOOOM!!!!!***

The air crackled with tension as a menacing dark purple stream of energy collided in mid-air with a dazzling blue beam of light, made of water and electricity. Sparks flew and water energy rippled outwards, sending shockwaves through the ground. The sound was deafening as the two forces pushed against each other, neither side willing to give an inch.

Beryl sneered and laughed with malicious glee. Mako gritted her teeth, pouring every ounce of her energy into the attack. Powerful emotions filled Ami as she pushed forward, the fate of their lives hanging in the balance.

“DIE!!” Beryl shrieked, her demonic face twisting in diabolical rage. She raised her other arm and shot a beam of dark energy, combining it with the energy from her staff. The extra surge pushed Ami and Mako’s joint attack backward, causing the two girls to scream. Intense hurricane-force winds blew over them.

“I can’t hold on much longer!” Ami shouted.

“Aghhhhhhhh, we got this!” Mako shouted back. Mako summoned another round of thunder energy, giving their combined attack a boost. They pushed back Beryl’s dark energy stream, making progress inches at a time.

Ami’s legs crumpled, her body exhausted of energy. Ami nearly let go of Mako’s hand, but Mako used her strength to hold Ami up. “ONE MORE PUSH!” Mako screamed.

With her body stretched to its limit, Ami felt herself fading fast. The edges of her vision began darkening and her grip weakened. She thought about Mako and the grief her friend suffered just minutes ago. Ami wanted so badly to survive, to share another tender moment with Mako.

*I’m not saying goodbye. Not like this.*

Ami knew she would pass out if she pushed herself any further. She saw that their brilliant joint attack had passed the halfway point. With how things looked, they might never get another chance. Ami cried and pushed herself over the edge. She summoned her last round of water energy and launched it forward with an exhausted shout. Her world then went dark. Ami’s powerful blue sphere of water energy surged past the halfway point, obliterating the last remaining beam of dark energy. Their joint attack rocketed into Beryl’s dark energy orb like a missile, shattering it into a million pieces.

*KABOOOOOOOOOM!!*

“NOOOOOOOOO!!!” The explosion blasted Queen Beryl into the air, showering her in an enthralling display of water and electrical energy. She crashed violently into a stone wall, cracking the wall's rocky foundation. She fell to the ground, along with a pile of massive boulders.

*CRASH CRASH CRASH!*

Mako gasped loudly as the energy beam vanished from her hand. A silence fell upon the chamber. She staggered forward and collapsed to her knees. “Oh my god! Ami! We did it! Ami—”

Mako turned around and scrambled to her feet suddenly. “Ami!!”

Ami was lying face down on the ground, having fainted from exhaustion. The last surge of energy she summoned cost her immensely, and she passed out right after releasing it. She never saw the awe-inspiring result of her bravery.

Mako quickly knelt down and cradled Ami's limp body. Tears welled up in her eyes again as she begged, “Please be okay, Ami!”

Mako checked that Ami's heart rate and breathing were okay, and sighed with relief. Ami's chest rose and fell steadily, and her eyes were closed peacefully. Mako gave Ami a proud pat on the shoulder. “You were so brave. I'm so proud of you, Ami.”

Mako surveyed the scene. She saw Beryl's twisted arm under a pile of rocks. Beryl's evil staff lay on the ground in pieces. The pathway to the exit was clear. Mako, having remembered some of the pathways inside the Dark Kingdom, knew where to find Zoisite. She sprinted over to a stone surface and found the Crescent Moon Wand. Mako pulled

down her leotard's collar and shoved the wand between her breasts. She then sprinted back toward the unconscious Ami and knelt down to pick her up.

Mako placed one arm under Ami's waist and slid her other arm under Ami's thighs. She lifted Ami up effortlessly and carried her out of the chamber.



Mako made her way through the narrow passageway and entered the Dark Kingdom's antechamber. If her memory was correct, this was the room where Zoisite opened his dark energy portals. Mako set Ami on the ground gently and took a heavy breather. Her throat was dry, her lungs were sapped and her legs were sore.

Ami moved her head and opened her mouth to speak.

"M...Mako—"

Mako perked up and held Ami's hand. "Hey, hey, take it easy."

"Mako...did we beat her?" Ami opened her eyes, then closed them again.

Mako coughed and replied with exhaustion in her voice, "We did Ami. It was all thanks to you."

Ami smiled weakly, then lifted her hand. She summoned a tiny orb of blue water and handed it to Mako. "Drink."

Mako took a refreshing sip from the droplet and then helped Ami drink the rest. The two sat in silence for several minutes, drinking water and resting their weary bodies. Ami's head rested comfortably in Mako's lap.

"So how do we get out of here?" Mako asked.

"I...guess we need to ask Zoisite to open a portal—nicely?"

"Ugh. We can't trust him."

"We need to convince him somehow."

"Yeah, I could hold him down and beat the daylights out of him."

"No. No torture."

"Well got any better ideas?"

Ami shook her head. "I...I don't know..."

Ami heard footsteps approach them from behind. Her eyes opened wide. "Mako behind you!!"

"No torture, huh?" Zoisite said, standing inches behind Mako. He had concealed himself in a dark corner of the antechamber, and had apparently listened to the entire conversation. "I guess I have the upper hand then."

Mako turned around and saw a small metal canister pointed directly at her face. "NO!" Mako bent down and covered Ami's mouth with her hand. Mako then closed her eyes and held her breath, in preparation for Zoisite's sleeping gas attack. A few uneventful seconds passed, and Mako opened her eyes. Zoisite had stepped away.

"Mmmph!" Ami muffled through Mako's hand.

Mako slowly lifted her hand from Ami's mouth and watched as Zoisite leaned against the wall. He tossed the dark spirit crystal casually in his hand.

Mako opened her mouth to talk, but Ami motioned her to stop.

"Zoisite...we had a deal." Ami made her plea again, hoping Zoisite had some honor in him.

"Yeah." Zoisite nodded his head. He tossed the crystal again.

The room remained silent for about a minute as Zoisite pondered his next decision.

“Beryl’s lying in a pile of rubble. When she wakes up, she’s going to execute me. Doesn’t matter what I do now—” He looked at the two girls. “I’m dead.”

Mako stood up and helped Ami to her feet. The two weary girls leaned against each other, holding hands. Ami closed her eyes and pressed her forehead into Mako’s shoulder.

“So you two are pretty close, huh?” Zoisite continued.

The Dark Kingdom general was a ruthless bully, and caused much torment for the Sailor Guardians. But his cruelty had limits. He had watched Ami’s battle with Mako, and the dramatic aftermath. And if Zoisite was honest with himself—the emotional scene moved him. He decided right then and there, to leave the truly evil acts for those above him.

*SHHHWOOMMMM!* Zoisite waved his hand, summoning a dark energy portal. Ami looked through the portal and saw a blurry mirage of the Hikawa Shrine.

“Deal’s a deal. Nice work, *water girl*.”

Ami held Mako’s hand and led her to the portal. Mako glared at Zoisite, then stepped through the barrier. Ami put one foot through the portal, then glanced back and gave Zoisite a warm smile. “Thank you.”

“See you soon, *water girl*.”

While the battle against Queen Beryl had been extraordinarily grueling, Ami knew that her own emotional struggle wasn’t over. Mako was waiting, and Ami had something important to tell her. The anticipation caused a wave of anxiety in Ami.

Ami took a deep breath and calmed herself. She stepped through the barrier with conviction, joining Mako on the other side.

\* \* \* \* \*

*SHHWOOMMM!* The dark energy portal opened at the Hikawa Shrine's outdoor entrance square. Mako stepped out, followed closely by Ami. The two Sailor Guardians crumpled the moment they stepped onto the granite pavement. They had experienced a roller coaster of emotions, and the shrine's nighttime tranquility brought them great relief. They sat on the ground as the portal closed. A gust of rose petals blew over them.

"You think the girls will believe us?" Mako asked.

Ami leaned in close and smiled. "It doesn't matter."

The two shared a laugh and put their arms around each other. They shared a few moments in silence, gazing up at the beautiful night sky.

The main shrine doors opened, and Luna popped out. "There they are!"

"Uh oh, looks like they found us," Mako said, as she and Ami turned their heads.

Usagi, Rei and Minako stepped through the doors, wearing casual nightwear clothing. When the three of them woke up after the battle, they assumed the worst had happened to Ami. Seeing her and Mako return, brought immense relief to the group. They all had smiles and tears in their eyes.

"Mako! Ami! You're back!" Usagi cried out.

Mako took out the Moon Wand from between her breasts.

“Usagi! Catch!” Mako flung the wand toward the group.

“Got it!” Rei said, catching the wand in front of Usagi.

“Hey, give me that!” Usagi yelled. Rei yanked the wand away jokingly.

Mako turned back and exchanged a smile with Ami.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” Minako said, holding her arms out. She pushed the rest of the girls and Luna back up the shrine’s stairs.

“What’s up with those two?” Rei asked.

Minako gave Rei a flirty wink. “Give ‘em some space. Trust me.”

Ami and Mako sat in silence for a few seconds, then spoke up simultaneously.

“Ami—”

“Mako I—”

The two girls blushed and laughed. “You go first,” Mako said.

Ami’s heart pounded as she struggled to find the right words. Emotions were running high, and there would never be another moment like this. Tears welled up in her vibrant blue eyes and Ami stammered a bit as she spoke.

“Mako. There’s something...I need to tell you.”

Mako sat up straight. “I’m listening.”

Ami swallowed nervously. “Since the day we first met I...I’ve felt...” She choked on the last word and stopped to collect her emotions.

Mako appeared to be holding her breath, pursing her lips together tightly. She blinked and a tear rolled down her cheek.

Ami lowered her head awkwardly.

*You’re blowing it, Ami.*

“S...sorry...let me start over. Mako...I—”

Mako leaned forward suddenly and kissed Ami tenderly over the lips, causing the bright young girl to gasp in surprise. Ami felt a comforting warmth over her lips, as Mako kissed her affectionately. Intense feelings of love, admiration, and passion, coursed through Ami's mind. Ami closed her eyes and relaxed, wishing the romantic moment would last forever.

*I love you so much, Mako.*

Ami opened her eyes as Mako released the kiss gingerly. They gazed lovingly at each other for a moment.

“I love you too, Ami.” Mako looked aside and used her forearm to wipe tears away.

A rush of intense emotions surged through Ami and she dipped her head down to cry. Mako mirrored Ami, lowering her head down as well. The two girls leaned in and gently touched their heads together. The air around them began to glow in a mixture of blue and green light. Small orbs of water floated upward, dancing with sparks of electricity toward the night sky.

“Mako...why didn't you—”

“Because I was afraid...afraid you'd say no.”

“But you're so strong—”

“And you're so smart, kind, and hard-working. I didn't think you'd like...someone like me.”

“I admire you so much, Mako. Your courage, bravery—kindness.”

The magical aura around the two girls glowed brighter with each passing moment. The swirls of water and electricity grew in density, extending further into the night sky.

Mako laughed softly. "Ami...you inspired *me* today. What you did, against Beryl—"

"I was terrified, Mako."

"Me too." Mako's face turned sorrowful. "Ami, I thought I lost you for good today."

"Mako—"

"I was so sad...I couldn't go on anymore." Mako started sobbing quietly.

Ami clasped Mako's hands. "I heard you cry. I was so afraid that I'd never get to say goodbye."

Mako became despondent. "And in our last conversation together, I yelled at you. I'm so sorry—"

Ami put her finger to Mako's lips. She wiped some tears away from Mako's cheek and gave her a warm embrace. "No more apologies, okay?"

The magical aura grew in intensity, creating a vortex of wind around the two girls. Ami's blue hair fluttered in the wind; Mako's brown ponytail billowed. They spent a few moments drying their eyes, absorbing their deep confessions for each other. Mako had poured her heart out and her face was solemn. Ami saw the emotional turmoil consuming Mako and decided to help her friend.

*I've never seen you so vulnerable before, Mako.*

Ami placed her hand on Mako's chest, gliding through the pink bow's silky fabric. She stroked Mako's skin, moving her hand gently down Mako's bicep and forearm. Ami then touched Mako's abdominal muscles, caressing them tenderly through Mako's skin-tight leotard. Mako blushed in response, smiling adorably and shying away.

Ami placed her gloved hand on Mako's warm cheek and gazed affectionately into her eyes. *"I love you so much, Mako,"* Ami whispered.

*Go for it, Ami.*

Ami leaned in and kissed Mako, exploding with emotion as their lips touched. She clutched Mako's brown hair, locking into her soft warm lips with deep devotion. Mako embraced Ami and gripped her blue miniskirt, massaging the soft skin around Ami's hips. They broke the kiss briefly to catch their breath, then locked lips again, growing ever more passionate with each passing moment.

Above the two lovers, water droplets and sparks danced, weaving around each other like celestial sweethearts. One particular droplet floated higher than the others, gliding alone above the magical aura. The blue water droplet found an electrical spark and swirled playfully around it. The droplet paused—then dashed into the spark, producing a bright star that sailed delicately into the night sky.

## Epilogue

Zoisite sat alone on a stone surface, tossing the dark spirit crystal in his hand. His expression was downcast and desolate. He had been responsible for bringing Dark Jupiter in, and the resulting chaos that ensued. His failure was a massive setback for the Dark Kingdom, and he was ready for his judgment.

He heard footsteps approach him. A man wearing a distinguished military uniform, sat down next to Zoisite, flapping his large cape over the stone surface. The man had a chiseled clean face, with long silvery white hair. He stood taller than Zoisite, his broad shoulders commanding a presence as he entered.

“Should have gone with Sailor Mars,” he said, with a deep, charismatic voice.

Zoisite smiled and nodded. “Good to see you too, Kunzite. How’s Queen Beryl doing?”

“She’s recovering. Enraged, of course. But she’ll be back. I’m in charge for the time being.” He put his arm around Zoisite’s shoulder.

“What about me?” Zoisite asked.

Kunzite gripped Zoisite’s shoulder tightly. “Beryl-sama wanted to execute you, of course. But I convinced her otherwise.”

“I...I’m grateful. I owe you.”

“Indeed.” Kunzite took the dark spirit crystal from Zoisite’s hand. “It’s beautiful.”

Zoisite chuckled. “Too bad dark energy’s not much of an exact science.”

Kunzite stood up and paced around, marveling at the crystal.

“Oh don't worry. I have some ideas for what we could do.”

Zoisite clutched his brown glass bottle and grinned.



“Okay, so, you girls remember that cute cheerleader we fought against,” Minako said.

Rei nodded. “Oh, I *definitely* remember her.”

“Right. So her name is Suzuki, and she apparently just broke up with her boyfriend.”

“What? No way!” Usagi said.

Minako gave Rei a flirty smile. “Yeah. Rumor is, she had some kind of awakening and...just isn't really into guys anymore.”

Rei laughed. “Maybe she should join our team.”

All five girls sat in a booth at the Crown Arcade, enjoying a warm relaxing morning. Ami sat next to Mako, leaning her head against Mako's shoulder. The two of them hadn't spoken much, choosing instead to enjoy their morning in peace.

“You two love birds are the talk of the town,” Minako said, grinning at Ami and Mako.

Usagi wiped a small tear away. “I cried so much. I'm so happy for you two!”

Rei leaned in and fluttered her eyelashes. “So how was your first kiss, Ami?”

Ami closed her eyes and snuggled into Mako's neck with a cute smile. “It was...magical.”

Mako stroked Ami's blue hair and looked up at the rest of the girls. "I'm going to go on the record here. I kissed all of you girls, and Ami was the best. Hands down."

"Well Minako was *chloroformed*, so she doesn't really count," Rei said.

Minako gasped and looked at Rei. "How about I chloroform *you* right now?" Minako then picked up a napkin and pressed it playfully over Rei's mouth. The two girls giggled.

Rei looked up and gave Mako a competitive smile. "Sparring practice later?"

"You're on," Mako replied, without skipping a beat.

"On a more serious note, Luna is very interested to know how you were able to beat Queen Beryl," Usagi said, looking at Ami.

Ami scratched the back of her head. "Honestly, I think it was a combination of luck and determination."

"What Ami is really trying to say is that she kicked Queen Beryl's ass," Mako said, giving Ami a nudge.

Ami laughed and gave Mako a hug. She then took a deep breath and gave the girls a serious look.

"The Dark Kingdom's going to want revenge. We need to be strong."

The girls all looked at Ami and nodded.

"The Dark Kingdom is very powerful, but we have something they'll never have," Ami continued. "Friendship."

The girls all exchanged eye contact with each other.

“We’re going to prevail because we care about each other.” Ami made eye contact with Mako. “Because we’re willing to put our lives on the line, to save each other. That’s our advantage.”

Ami extended her arm and placed her hand in the center of the table. “Trust each other. Protect each other. That’s how we win.”

One by one each girl extended their arm, placing their hands over each other in the center. They all looked to Ami, inspired by her wisdom, bravery, and leadership. Ami gave the girls a warm smile and cherished the fond moment.



Mako opened the lid on a pot of boiling water. She dropped in some noodles, eggs, and vegetables. She picked up a jar of spices and spooned some aromatic flavoring into the soup. She walked over to a kitchen countertop and chopped up some cilantro leaves. Two empty bowls with chopsticks sat on her tiny dining table.

*DING DONG*

Mako set down her kitchen knife and glided over to her apartment door. She opened it and was greeted by Ami’s warm smile.

Mako leaned forward and gave Ami a big hug. “Ahh, you’re early Ami! The ramen’s still cooking!”

“And I’m sure it’ll be delightful, Mako,” Ami replied. She held a small pink gift bag in her hand.

“Come, come,” Mako said, leading Ami inside.

Ami stepped over a gym bag and some boxes near the door.

“Gahh! Sorry, my place is a mess,” Mako said, pushing a pile of laundry off her sofa.

Ami slipped her shoes off and walked inside. She saw a framed photograph on Mako's table, showing all five girls smiling. Ami sat down on Mako's couch, pushing aside some random exam papers. They had the letter grades *C*, *C-* and *D*, written in red ink.

Mako turned the stove off in the kitchen and raced back to her living room. “Ahhh, yeah, I'm failing that class. You interested in helping me with biology 101?”

Ami blushed. “Sure, if you'll give me a lesson in kissing.”

“Deal.”

Mako sat down on the couch and gave Ami a big kiss on the cheek. “How've you been?”

“Still sore everywhere, but—” She gazed into Mako's green eyes. “Never been better.”

Mako cuddled Ami like a teddy bear. “You're so cute, Ami.”

Ami handed the small pink gift bag to Mako. “I found it at the school's missing items office.”

“Awwww.”

“It's my gift to you. For being my good friend.”

“*Girl*-friend,” Mako replied, correcting Ami.

Mako opened the bag and took out the rose perfume, along with the light-blue envelope. She set the perfume vial aside and looked at the envelope. “Ami, you're going to make me cry again.”

“Oh. Please, don't read it in front of me, it's so corny—”

Mako opened the envelope and unfolded the letter. Ami went silent and leaned into Mako's shoulder. Mako's eyes scanned the letter left and right, filling up with tears as she read Ami's words. As she

reached the end of the letter, Mako's heart swelled with a mix of gratitude and sadness. Overwhelmed, she clasped a hand over her own mouth, tears streaming down her face. Mako leaned into Ami, finding solace in her friend's presence, and cried. "It's...it's so beautiful," she managed to choke out between sobs. "Thank you so much, Ami."

Ami had memorized the letter, pouring her heart and soul into each word. At that moment, Ami knew that nothing could ever come between her and Mako, no matter what the future held. She put her arm around Mako's shoulder, and cried as she recited the letter in her mind:

*Dear Mako,*

*Please accept this gift as a thank you,*

*for being such a good friend to me.*

*I'm not very good at this, so please bear with me.*

*Mako, I have feelings for you.*

*More than that though: I love you.*

*You inspire me.*

*I wish I had your courage, your determination, and your strength.*

*I cherish every moment we are together.*

*I realize you may not feel the same way about me. That's okay.*

*I will protect you no matter what.*

*I will move heaven and earth to save you.*

*And in our battle against evil, there is no doubt in my mind:*

*I will give my life for you.*

*I just wanted to let you know that, Mako.*

*Your friend, Ami — Sailor Mercury ♀*

## Afterword

Alright, have you finished drying your eyes yet? It's okay, I'll give you a moment.

This concludes my story. Thank you for reading everyone. I'd be interested in hearing your feedback, positive or negative. This, and the *Hypnosia* story, are true labors of love. I immersed myself in writing these stories. In my head, they play out like movies, and I hope that same experience happened with you. Chapters 6 and 7 were the hardest to write. There's almost no sleepy peril in those chapters, but—as I'm sure you'll agree—they are the best chapters. Even though I know what happens plotwise, I cried every time I edited this section. I then went through and picked words that would make it *even sadder*. Yeah I'm like that.

Anyway, I have a lot to say so bear with me. First, I want to talk about inspirations. My primary inspiration for this story was the Dark Mercury saga in *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*, which was the live-action series from 2003. This storyline was unique to the live-action series, and is a fan favorite. For several episodes, Ami was corrupted by the Dark Kingdom (Kunzite, to be precise), and transformed into Dark Sailor Mercury. She fought against Sailor Moon, and was actually a pretty big threat. The saga ended when Dark Mercury attacked Sailor Moon, and nearly killed her. The event shattered the spell, and brought Ami back.

I immediately thought of this storyline when I was brainstorming ideas. My first outline was called *Four versus One*, and involved each Sailor Guardian being kidnapped and corrupted. Only Ami would remain, and it'd be up to her to save the day. I had a lot of

great ideas from this story, and many of them ended up in *Ami's Gift to Mako*. As I sat down to write though, a big problem emerged—it wasn't the story I wanted to tell. The real story I wanted to tell was about Ami's love for Mako. And unfortunately, the plot of *Four versus One* didn't allow me to explore that. So I restructured the plot so that Sailor Jupiter was the only one corrupted. This way every scene would involve Ami trying to save Mako. It was perfect.

I'm now convinced Ami Mizuno is the best character from *Sailor Moon*. She was the perfect protagonist for my story. Ami has the right characteristics that make her fun to write for—shyness, insecurity, kindness, intelligence. Her flaws are very human, and allowed me to add strong emotions to the story. I tried to highlight each characteristic somehow. I thought of clever ways to incorporate Ami's intelligence into every scene. Every *Sailor Moon* guide says Ami is the smartest one, but the series does a poor job of actually highlighting it. She's a bookworm, plays chess and has a supercomputer—it's very stereotypical. I wish we got to see more of her strategizing and coming up with solutions. More importantly, it must come *from her*, not some supercomputer. At no point during my writing did I tell myself, "boy, it'd be helpful if Ami had her computer right now." Nope, everything came from her mind.

Insecurity versus courage was another theme I wanted to explore. Ami was perfect for that. I made sure to show her being terrified in every scene, because that was the best way to make her bravery stand out. She's terrified of Queen Beryl, but runs out and faces her anyway? Wow—that was my favorite scene from chapter 7, and I cry every time I read it. Everything in this story is about Ami finding courage, whether it's telling Mako her feelings, or standing against a

thunder dragon. I included a bit about Sailor Mercury sacrificing her life for Jupiter, in their past lives. Powerful stuff.

Ami's kindness was also really important to highlight. In most scenes, Ami is never the first one to attack. She is always defending herself or her friends. The only time she attacks first is when she's enraged at what Zoisite did to Mako—but she didn't end up hitting Zoisite anyway. Oh and she slaps Mako, but—let's be honest—that scene was awesome. Other than that, Ami never seriously hurts anyone in this story. She even tells Mako, “no torture”, when they're trying to figure out how to escape the Dark Kingdom. Instead, she used her wits to convince Zoisite to honor their deal. I had Ami provide water to Mako, a motif I took from *Hypnosia*. The water symbolizes life, and is supposed to represent Ami sustaining Mako's life. Ami is always thinking of ways to help others before herself. I like the scene where Ami's desperately trying to convince Zoisite to take her instead of Sailor Mars.

Now, let's talk about Ami's romance. I took some inspiration from the anime short, *Ami's First Love*. One of the things it deals with, is Ami's aversion to love letters. So what do I have Ami do in her first scene? Write a love letter. Funny story about *that* though—the epilogue contains the contents of Ami's love letter, which I had to write, obviously. I had to put myself in Ami's head, and think about what she would really write. It was surreal. I literally sat in my chair, deleting lines and starting from scratch—just like Ami. The anime showcases how inexperienced Ami is with romance. I think it's a safe assumption that Ami has never been kissed.

I debated heavily how I'd resolve Ami's romantic feelings for Mako. My initial outline had the story ending on a near cliffhanger, with

their lips only moving toward each other. Then I'm like, no, the lips have to touch. Then as I finished chapter 6, I'm like, no they need a full on confession. It would have been a huge slap in the face to my readers to leave such a large open question unresolved. But then as I wrote my final scene, I noticed a huge missing piece. It was a gaping hole. My last scene with Ami kissing Mako fell flat, and I couldn't figure out why. I stepped away to brainstorm, and it clicked—how does Mako feel? By the final scene we already know Ami loves Mako, and there was no need to show that anymore. What I needed instead, was to have Mako pour her heart out for Ami. So the final scene begins with Mako making the first move, revealing in a surprise twist that she too had feelings for Ami. It's a moment of huge vulnerability for Mako, and gives Ami the opportunity to help her friend one more time. It was the perfect way to end the story.

This story is basically proof for why MakoAmi is the best ship in *Sailor Moon*. They are perfect for each other. We know this to be true, we just need a story to solidify it. I could not imagine this story working with any other girl. Replace Mako with Rei, Usagi or Minako, and it just doesn't work. Ami might be strong friends with them, but I cannot see a romance.

Mako gets short changed a bit unfortunately, because she spends so much of the story as Dark Jupiter. It's okay though, as she plays a huge role in the finale anyway. She exists as a counterweight to Ami, to act as a foil and provide contrast. I spend a lot of time highlighting Mako's physicality. She's a fighter, and has no trouble punching, kicking, and throwing people. This worked really well for her kidnapping scene, because she's dominating Zoisite so hard at the end.

It's my favorite kind of kidnapping scene, to see a woman be so dominant, and then lose to someone weaker.

Another aspect about Mako that I highlight is her impulsiveness. In fact, it's her impulsiveness that gets her into trouble in the first place. She's totally enraged at Zoisite, that she doesn't realize the danger she's putting herself in. You see Mako change towards the end, when she's asking Ami "what's the plan", instead of running aimlessly.

I had Dark Jupiter briefly try to seduce Ami to "the dark side." This was one of those holdover ideas from *Four versus One*. In fact, I originally wanted Ami to *actually* turn dark. I was going to have Dark Ami chloroform Sailor Venus and tie her up. I cut this idea to tighten the plot, as it would have introduced an additional complication. Things were already hard enough. Plus, I wasn't sure how I'd get Ami out of this situation.

One of the absolute saddest scenes in the story is when Mako is crying over Ami's lifeless body. This was one of the most difficult scenes to write, and is essentially the climax of the story. This follows closely with how the live-action series resolves the Dark Mercury saga. My initial outline had Dark Jupiter firing her thunder dragon into Ami. I then had Dark Jupiter see Ami's lifeless body, causing her to scream and break the spell. This would have worked fine, but I had a huge issue with it. I wrote that Mako had a tendency to fight against the dark spell. It would have made no sense then, for her to go ahead and launch the thunder dragon into Ami. So I rewrote the scene, to have the dark spirit crystal take full control of Mako's body. Mako is not in control at that point, and it's all just pure evil. The crystal shatters, because all the darkness is going into the thunder dragon. That's how Mako is freed.

When the thunder dragon explodes over Ami, the blast sends her into cardiac arrest. I could not have Mako wasting any time during this, as Ami really only had minutes to live. So Mako immediately sprints to Ami's side, and cries her heart out. Ami's not brain dead, so she can hear what's going on. It's completely tragic. I *briefly* toyed with the idea of having Ami actually die, but I couldn't do it. No way. Ami's going to live, but she's on the brink and needs a miracle to survive. Luckily, Sailor Jupiter's thunder powers are the perfect solution for this moment. I considered having Mako do CPR (which would have involved a kissing scene), but it didn't feel right. This is *Sailor Moon*, not a medical drama. We are allowed to use magic to solve things, provided it's within the limits of the story. The spark that saves Ami doesn't come directly from Mako. Rather, it's a sort of miraculous event, triggered from Mako's thunderstorm of grief. It's kind of a *deus ex machina*, but I liked it. It created a powerful moment that shows sometimes you need a little fate to live.

Jupiter's thunder dragon attack is canon to the anime; it appeared in one episode of *Sailor Moon R*. Mercury's giant crane isn't unfortunately—that was 100% my imagination. In the anime, Mercury Aqua Rhapsody produces a beautiful harp that Ami uses to blast enemies with water. But I can't have a harp fight a dragon. So in my universe, Ami summons a giant bird. I explored different bird types—eagles, hawks, sparrows, doves. I settled on the crane, because of its symbolism. In Japan, cranes are a symbol of peace. So I went with that.

Zoisite gets a mini character arc. He went from an evil villain, to someone with a bit of a moral code. I myself did not see this coming. It's

a byproduct of the unpredictable nature of writing. After Ami's revival, I just couldn't see Zoisite doing bad things anymore. It didn't feel right, even if he was awful earlier. In my mind, Zoisite is not a cold-blooded savage. My initial outline had Zoisite dying in the end. He was either going to sacrifice his life to save Ami, in a last second change of heart. Or he was going to be executed by Beryl. I ended up sparing him, and choosing a middle ground. He's too good of a character. I toyed with the idea of him chloroforming Ami one more time, but again, it didn't make sense after all she went through. Things needed to be resolved.

Queen Beryl, on the other hand, did intend to kill Ami and Mako. She exists purely to serve Metalia, which is the incarnation of pure evil. Beryl's dark energy blast is a one hit kill. So when Ami ran toward Queen Beryl—yeah, that was insanelly brave. All versions of my outline had Ami battling Queen Beryl. One idea I explored was having Dark Jupiter team up with Beryl to fight Ami. An early outline had Queen Beryl kill Ami, which would have also broken Dark Jupiter's spell. Regardless, Ami standing up to Beryl is the ultimate "David vs. Goliath" moment. It needed to be there.

I introduce the last Dark Kingdom general, Kunzite, in the epilogue. Don't ask me what my plans are for him, I don't know yet. But it opens the door for me to include him in a possible sequel. He and Zoisite are a pair in the anime, so it should be interesting. Sailor Venus is also into Kunzite romantically, so there could be a triangle there.

Chiarida (the cheerleader youma) was another holdover idea from *Four versus One*. She was supposed to be the bait that lured the Sailor Guardians out, allowing Zoisite to kidnap them all. In the grand story, her arc feels like a completely different movie. But she was necessary for several storytelling reasons. She provided suspense during a

mostly expository section of the story. Without her, things would have moved at a snail's pace; it would have been boring. It also allowed me to put some space in front of the true inciting incident of the story: Sailor Jupiter's kidnapping. She provided room for Ami to show off some intelligence, and for Mako to show some impulsiveness. If I started the story with Mako getting kidnapped, it would have been too rushed. We needed time for Ami and Mako to develop a bit. We also get some sexy kissing scenes and sleep gas scenes as a bonus.

I let Rei and Minako shine in this story. They were shortchanged in *Hypnosia*, and I regret not giving them some better moments. I made up for that here.

Sailor Mars is very popular among fans, so I gave Rei some of the best scenes. It was really important for me to give each girl a distinct personality. I gave Rei a personality that was kind of a mix of her anime and manga personas. She's arrogant, dangerous and sexy. I even had Rei tease Ami a few times, something usually reserved for Usagi in the anime. I gave Rei one of the best kissing scenes, when she's making out with the sexy cheerleader youma. Then right when Rei's at the height of her arrogance, I have Zoisite gas her to sleep. I love that scene.

Rei's next big moment is when she faces off against Dark Jupiter. I play up the competition between the two. I see them as the two most powerful members of the Sailor Guardians. I can see them clashing, even in situations where Mako *isn't* corrupted. I did research into gymnastics and tumbling moves, to see how realistic they were to incorporate. I had Rei do a forward handspring, and then a spinning wheel karate kick. She's a young, athletic woman, so those seemed plausible to me. In my head, those play out as well choreographed,

cinematic scenes. I think Rei would beat Mako in a fair fight. Unfortunately, Mako's going to play dirty, and that's how Rei loses. She's knocked out with a neck chop from Zoisite, a huge fall from grace. I imperil Mars even more, by having Zoisite choose her to be the next victim of dark power.

Minako has a different role to play. She kind of serves as a romantic commentator throughout the story. I play up the Reinako ship heavily as well. I see her as a cute, bubbly girl, who has a mixture of fun and serious moments. She's very sensual, getting aroused by basically everything around her. Minako's the one that tells Ami about Mako's skirt peeking habits. Which is a throwback to an iconic scene from season one of *Sailor Moon*, that's become a meme at this point. I gave Minako a cute chloroform scene in chapter 5. It's right after she makes that huge blunder, so she's distraught and distracted. It was the perfect time for Zoisite to sneak up, and knock her out.

I still didn't use Luna that much, but I found a good moment for her in chapter 5. She plays an expository role, detailing some *Sailor Moon* lore for readers. It's a very very high-level summary, but mostly accurate I think. Having Sailor Mercury be the team leader, was the one major change I made to the canon. In the manga, Sailor Venus is the designated team lead. That's why Minako goes "HUH?" when Luna reveals the truth. It's supposed to be a funny inside joke.

After writing this story, I do now see Sailor Mercury as the true leader (in my own little headcanon at least). A leader isn't necessarily the strongest one. Their job is to inspire, to guide and to make decisions. In this story she really is a leader, making critical life-saving decisions at every junction. By the end, all the girls are looking to her for guidance.

What's amazing is how unforced this was. It just naturally happened in the story. So yeah, more proof of how awesome Ami is.

I had a lot of fun doing research for this story. I got to watch episodes of *Sailor Moon*, dive into the lore and read about the characters. It reinvigorated my interest a lot. While I do simplify many aspects of the original plot, I tried to make sure everything would make sense in a *Sailor Moon* universe. I made sure all the girls' celestial attacks were accurate (minus the giant crane). Yes, *Shine Aqua Illusion* doesn't appear until season two, but it was important for me to give Mercury an offensive attack. Many scenes would not have worked otherwise. I explored putting limitations on dark energy. I wrote that creating the dark spirit crystals requires energy consumption, forcing Zoisite to go out and get more. Adding these limitations prevents them from just making a million of those things. I try to make the youma plausible as well. Go look at some pictures of the female baddies from *Sailor Moon*, and you'll see that a sexy cheerleader is not really that far-fetched.

If you want to watch a quintessential episode of *Sailor Moon* that covers a lot of the ideas in this story, start with [episode 26](#). This episode introduces Sailor Jupiter, and includes a lot of basic elements of a *Sailor Moon* plot—Queen Beryl, Zoisite, dark crystals, monsters, Moon Healing. The episode doesn't feature Ami much, but she has a cute scene where she blushes at Mako—see if you can catch it! Mako also has an awesome fight scene with Zoisite, and Sailor Moon herself is captured briefly. It's an awesome episode.

I'm still debating whether this ends Ami's character arc or not. The events of this story will be hard to top. I do have some random ideas for a sequel, but they don't have anything close to the climactic battles in chapter 6 and 7. I think a good next story to write actually, would be

an origin story for how Ami met Mako. It would explore how their friendship formed. This helps fill the gaps, because the romance can feel a bit forced here. I also want to start exploring artwork for these stories. Some inline illustrations would really make this story pop.

Hope you all enjoyed this. Thank you for reading.

—Sleepy Comics