Chapter 2: Duel of Affections

Love Heart sat nervously in the living room of Indy’s home, the hospital in the Kingdom of Caring that was ran by Take Care Bear, to whom he was married. Confidence Heart sat beside Love Heart on the couch while Take Care Bear, a red bear with a smiling apple for a tummy symbol who was the Kingdom of Caring’s doctor, stood next to her husband as Sage Heart explained the details about what had happened Indy was writing everything down on a clipboard. As he was the closest thing to a police officer the Kingdom of Caring had he knew he’d have to explain this to Readington’s police later.

“Alright, let’s make sure I have this right.” He took a deep breath, “All those bouncing toys were caused by a magical card that your son accidentally set loose because you,” he pointed to Keroberos who was hovering next to Love Heart’s head, “fell asleep on the job. And these ‘Clow Cards’ are going to be running around causing problems until Love Heart can capture and seal them. Do I have that right?”

“Hey!” Keroberos glared at Indy, but was ignored.

“Yes,” Sage Heart nodded.

Take Care sighed. “Well this is just great. I was hoping summer would be peaceful once school was out.”

“I’m sorry...” Love Heart was starting to regret not keeping this a secret.

Indy seemed to sense Love Heart’s thought. “It’s better we know so we can be prepared.” Seeing Love Heart’s shocked expression he continued, “I don’t need my psionics to know what you’re thinking, but based on what your father said I think cleaning up this mess is punishment enough.”

“It’s not a punishment,” Keroberos interjected, “Love Heart is going to become the master of the Clow Cards when this is done.”

“Oh and what if someone gets seriously hurt because of this, or worse?” Indy stared back at the guardian beast.

“That’s enough!” Sage Heart spoke up to stop the argument, “It’s a big responsibility but I know Love Heart can handle it.” He sighed, “I never thought this would happen back when I was human.”

“WHAT?!” Everyone else in the room shouted as they stared at the iridescent blue bear.

Sage Heart chuckled nervously, “Oh right, I guess I never got around to telling you about my past. I wasn’t born a bear, I was a human named Koran Terada from Japan. I won’t bore you with my family history but suffice to say the Book of Clow was entrusted to me by a man from China who taught me about Clow Reed and his magic. I brought it to the Kingdom of Caring after meeting Life Heart and we were changed into Care Bears. I honestly forgot about the book because we were so busy with all of this.”

Take Care sighed, “That makes sense but it doesn’t solve the problem.”

“I’ll deal with it, I promise,” Love Heart stood up and pulled out The Jump Card, holding it up to show them, “I already caught this.”

“Yes, you did,” Sage Heart ruffled his son’s hair which made him flinch away in embarrassment, reflexively smoothing the messed up hair, “But you will have to step up your training. I don’t want you caught unprepared.”

“Exactly, a Cardcaptor needs to be ready for anything and expect the unexpected,” Keroberos pounded his chest with a hand, “And I’ll be there to help every step of the way.”

“There goes my summer,” Love Heart sighed as they left the house.

“Don’t be like that,” Confidence clapped Love Heart on the shoulder as they emerged onto the clouds, “I’ll be there to help you every step of the way too.”

“No you won’t.”

Confidence Heart glared in annoyance at her brother, who had been waiting outside. “Butt out, Tori, this has nothing to do with you!”

“Yes it does, I’m not letting my kid sister run around fighting magical monsters,” Tori folded his arms, “Let’s get going, squirt. I already told dad we’re going to be late.”

“Stop calling me squirt!” Confidence stomped her foot, “And I’m not a kid, I’ll be 18 in a few months!”

“I’ll stop when you stop acting like a kid,” Tori shot back as he walked towards the portal, “Now let’s get going.”

Confidence stuck out her tongue at her brother’s back then sighed as she followed him, “See ya later, Love Heart.”

“See ya,” Love Heart waved half-heartedly.

“You ok, big brother?” Sweet Heart had been waiting outside with their mother too.

Love Heart sighed, “Yeah just... not exactly looking forwards to this summer now,” he was still holding The Jump Card in his right hand and he touched the Key of Clow, now hanging around his neck like an amulet.

“Don’t worry, you’ll do fine,” Keroberos patted Love Heart on his shoulder.

“Of course he will, Kero,” Sweet Heart brightened up.

“Kero?” Life Heart looked down at her daughter.

Sweet Heart became flustered for a moment, “Oh uh it’s just, Keroberos is a lot to say so why not just call him ‘Kero’ for short, heh heh heh,” her nervous laughter made her family members exchange odd looks.

“Well I think it’s a very cute name,” Life Heart Unicorn smiled down at her daughter.

“I’m not cute!” Kero protested, “I’m the guardian beast of the seal and I’m a powerful force of nature!”

“Don’t worry too much,” Life Heart took one of Kero’s tiny hands, “I saw you ate two of the dessert puddings I made for supper tonight,” she shot a mildly accusing glance at Sage Heart, who averted his eyes, “Do you like sweet food?”

“Oh yeah, that pudding was delicious!” Kero’s previous complaints were forgotten.

“Well why don’t you help me make some more and I’ll save some for you,” Life Heart started to walk home.

“All right! Pudding!” Kero grinned as he flew alongside her.

Sweet Heart and Sage Heart followed along with Love Heart trailing behind. The green bear stared at The Jump Card in his hand as he walked then finally sighed and stuck it in his pocket. He’d put it back in the book at home.

OoOoO

“So why can’t I help him!” Confidence Heart demanded over the supper table.

“Because it’s too dangerous for you to be fighting magical monsters,” Tori countered, keeping his calm a lot better. Their father, a brown haired bespectacled man named Aiden, just sat to the side, eating quietly as his children argued.

“But I helped! Love Heart wouldn’t have been able to capture that think if I didn’t grab it!” Confidence Heart countered, grabbing a fork full of food and stuffing it in her mouth.

“You just want to hang out with your crush while he’s on the rebound,” Tori’s reply nearly made Confidence Heart choke. She chugged a glass of water to force it through and stared at her brother as he continued, “I ran into Brave Heart and Harmony after you took off after Love Heart, I know what happened. You shouldn’t try to grab him right after he’s been through heartbreak just in case he latches on to you.”

“Like you’re some expert on relationships,” Confidence Heart grumbled.

“Julian and I have been steady for four years, I think I have some insight,” Tori snarked back.

“It’s not just that,” Confidence Heart lowered her voice and flattened her big ears, “I want to be there to help Love Heart through this. Yeah, I want to hang out with him but this is serious.”

“If you want to help him, Cassandra, then I don’t see why not.” Their dad’s voice cut through the conversation, “Just don’t do anything foolish.”

“Really?” Confidence perked up.

“Really...” Tori sounded exasperated.

“Even if we forbid her, Cassandra’s just going to sneak away to help him anyway, right?” he turned his serene but still serious smile to Confidence, who averted her gaze. He didn’t need her to answer, “At least this way we’ll know what she’s doing and who she’s with. Alright?”

“Yes! Thanks dad!” Confidence Heart jumped out of her chair to give Aiden a hug, “I gotta get started!” She wolfed down the rest of her food then took off to her room.

Tori just watched his kid sister then turned to his father, “Are you sure about this, dad?”

“I mean what I said,” Aiden sighed, “I’m worried too but I don’t want to ground her for this. She’s growing up, Tori, we can’t protect her forever especially since she’s a Care Bear Cousin. She’s going to have a lot more responsibility than we can imagine.”

“Right...” Tori grumbled and returned to his supper.

OoOoO

“Oh boy!” Kero flopped back onto one of Love Heart’s pillows, “Your mom sure can cook!”

“You just ate pudding and drank chocolate milk,” Love Heart rolled his eyes as he tossed his vest on the floor and flopped down on the bed, too tired for anything else that day.

“I don’t have to eat my vegetables,” Kero sounded proud of that fact, “So is she really your mom? I mean you’re not adopted?”

“She is,” Love Heart rolled over and pulled back his bangs to show the darker green eight-pointed star in the middle of his forehead, “See this? It’s my unicorn star, Sweet Heart has one too. It shows we’re ‘unicorn spawn’ or something like that.”

“Wow,” Kero touched it, “I can sense a lot of magical energy flowing around here.”

“Mom said it’s what we have instead of a horn, a magical focus or something.” Love Heart rolled over to look at the bedside table where he had set the Clow key and book. After lying in silence for a few minutes, Love Heart grabbed the book and pulled out The Jump Card then just lay there, staring at the winged rabbit on the card.

Kero floated up over Love Heart’s head, “Seeing your first success?” he asked proudly.

“No just...” Love Heart didn’t take his eyes from the card, “What’s it like being trapped in there?” He turned to look up at Kero, “What was it like for you?”

“Trapped in the Clow Book? It was kinda boring. I could hear everything but there was nothing to do.”

“No wonder they wanted out,” Love Heart stared at the card for a moment. “Jump, can you hear me?”

“What are you doing?” Kero floated over Love Heart’s shoulder.

“Trying to talk to it,” Love Heart didn’t turn to face Kero, “Jump, hello?”

Silence

“Jump. I bet you’re mad I shoved you back in there, you barely had an hour to yourself, but I had to or you could have hurt someone.”

Still silence.

“Love Heart, I don’t think that’s going to work,” Kero was skeptical.

Love Heart turned to face Kero, “I’m a Care Bear, this is kinda what I do,” he turned back to The Jump, “I don’t know if you can hear me but I want to talk.” Love Heart picked up the key from his desk, “I’m going to let you out ok?”

“Love Heart, I don’t think that’s a good idea!” Love Heart ignored Kero as he held up the key.

“Key of Clow! Release!” the shorter incantation produced a staff short enough to be called a wand as Love Heart struck the Jump Card, “Jump Card, appear before me as you are!”

There was a flash of light as the staff returned to its key form and the card vanished into beams of light that arced together to form a small winged pink rabbit that sat on Love Heart’s bedroom floor. They stared at each other for a full minute before Love Heart spoke.

“Hello, Jump.”

“I don’t think it’s going to talk,” Kero said.

“How would you know!?” The Jump’s voice was screechy, as it glared at Kero, “You just sat on top of us and never even tried to talk, Keroberos!” it pointed at the guardian beast with a quivering arm.

“Hey! I was just doing my job!” Kero shot back, not commenting on The Jump’s sudden voice.

“I guess I should be thankful you suck at it!” The Jump shot back.

“Stop it! Both of you!” Love Heart’s shout silenced both of them. “Kero, I don’t want to just be their ‘master’.” He turned to look at The Jump, “They’re clearly conscious and sentient. If I’m going to be working with them I want to be their friend.”

“Friend?” The Jump stared up incredulously at Love Heart, “But I’m stuck here.”

“I know, but... do they have to be sealed for me to use them?” Love Heart turned back to Kero.

“’fraid so,” Kero crossed his arms and nodded, “With Clow Reed dead their powers are unfocused so they need to be sealed if you want to call on them.”

“You see, I’m stuck with you,” The Jump sounded almost sad.

“I know,” Love Heart reached down to lift The Jump’s chin to look at him, “But I don’t want to force you. If I need to then I’ll capture the rest of the Clow Cards without using you.”

“Really?” The Jump sounded skeptical, “Prove it. Next time you fight, don’t call on me, but bring me along so I can witness it. I can see everything outside even when I’m in the book.”

“I can’t promise I’ll bring you along, but I won’t use you if that’s what you want.” Love Heart yawned, “Now I need to get some sleep, don’t destroy anything.”

“You’re not going to re-seal it!?” Kero was stunned, so was The Jump.

“You’re not going to re-seal me?”

Love Heart pulled the covers over him as he switched off the bedside light that had been on, “Nope, good night. Go to bed too Kero.”

“Fine,” Kero floated over to the other pillow and worked his way under the covers, “But I’ll be alert if jumpy over there smashes anything.”

The Jump just sat there and watched Love Heart sleep, unsure how to react. Eventually it lay down, head on its front paws, and fell asleep.

When Love Heart got up the next morning, he found the rabbit-like Jump still asleep in the middle of his bedroom floor. He just smiled at it and crouched down to pet it before going to shower. Kero was only just waking up when Love Heart returned, still damp as he grabbed his vest.

“Is it still asleep?” Kero peered suspiciously down at The Jump.

“Yeah,” Love Heart settled the vest more evenly around his shoulders, “Probably still tired from being captured yesterday. I gotta train with dad today, he said it was really important.”

Kero nodded, “Of course... he did?”

“You might have noticed if you weren’t busy stuffing pudding down your mouth.” Love Heart turned to leave.

“Wait, aren’t you going to re-seal The Jump?” Kero pointed aggressively at the sleeping rabbit-thing.

“It’s just sleeping, it’ll be fine.” Love Heart left before Kero could argue further. Kero eyed The Jump suspiciously before flying after Love Heart. The Jump opened one eye to watch them leave but didn’t get up.

Kero sat in Love Heart’s backyard to watch Love Heart and Sage Heart sparring with wooden sword while the guardian bear dug into watermelon slices Life Heart had prepared for him.

Sage Heart finally called for a halt and wiped the sweat from his brow, “Very good. How do you feel?”

“Alright, I guess,” Love Heart sighed and stared at his sword. He was a bit winded but his mind was elsewhere. In the excitement that had followed, Love Heart had stopped thinking about Harmony’s rejection.

“Love Heart, what’s wrong?” Sage Heart approached his son.

“Nothing, I just...” He took a shuddering breath and was about to reply when a shout cut him off.

“Love Heart!” Confidence Heart vaulted over the short fence in Love Heart’s back yard and landed with a huge grin on her face.

Love Heart almost jumped, “Confidence? What-”

“I need you to come over right now,” She was practically in the green bear’s face as she spoke, “I have to take your measurements.”

“For what?” Love Heart asked.

“Your battle costume, for when you’re fighting the Clow Cards,” Confidence grabbed Love Heart’s arm to try and drag him away.

Love Heart stopped her from dragging her away but didn’t force his hand away, “Why do I need a costume?”

“That’s not a bad idea,” Kero floated over to the three of them, “You want the Clow Cards to know your coming and to take your seriously. If they focus on you it will keep everyone else out of the fight and if they take you seriously they’ll come at you with everything they’ve got. You don’t want them to hold out on you and surprise you at the last second.”

“I agree with Kero,” Life Heart had exited the house to see what was going on.

“So do I, son,” Sage Heart nodded, “You should make sure you’re getting the best they have to offer and keep them from wanting to hurt anyone else.”

“Alright,” Love Heart sighed but smiled as he let Confidence drag him away, with Kero following after.

Up in Love Heart’s room, The Jump had woken up and was now sitting at the window. It watched as Love Heart and Kero left, along with the fennec that had grabbed it yesterday. They had left it to its own devices without even sealing it back into its card before leaving. It watched them go then started bouncing around the bedroom

OoOoO

Brave Heart Lion and Harmony Bear were at Twin Bells, looking over some brooches and ornamental pins on display. Brave Heart was thumbing through when a voice drew his attention.

“Find what you’re looking for?” Brave Heart turned to see Loyal Heart Dog standing there, wearing the apron that was part of the shop’s uniform.

“Hi, Loyal, and no,” Brave Heart sighed, “I just feel bad about what happened with Love Heart.”

“I heard,” Loyal Heart looked around the shop, seeing it wasn’t very busy he stayed to talk with Brave Heart, “Want to talk about it.”

“I mean... I’ve had feelings for Harmony Bear as long as he has and she asked me out first, but I still feel a bit guilty. Love Heart’s my best friend,” Brave Heart turned back to stare at the display.

Loyal Heart couldn’t help but smile, “Yeah, I remember how you always asked to see him when we were kids.” He looked up to see Harmony had approached the two, “How do you feel?”

“Bad I guess. I’m not wrong but it still sucks that I had to break his heart like that.” Harmony turned to look at the display is pins and brooches, “I wasn’t going to lie to him. I want to make it up to him somehow, a gift or something.”

Eager to do his job, Loyal Heart gestured to the display, “Well one of these pins would make a good gift, maybe something less obvious than a heart.”

Harmony chuckled, “Being a salesman, Loyal.”

“I am at work, what do you think?” He picked out a pin with music notes on it to show to Harmony.

“A bit on the nose, but it’s cute. Sure,” She took the pin from Loyal Heart.

“This one,” Brave Heart picked out a brooch shaped like an ornate fencing sword.

Loyal Heart eyed the brooch oddly, “That one huh...” He shook his head to dispel the odd feeling, “Alright, I’ll ring them up over here.”

Brave Heart and Harmony exited the store with their new purchases, “I hope we can still be friends with Love Heart after this.” Brave Heart said.

“We can, maybe this peace offering will help. Let’s go give it to him right now!” Harmony pointed to the portal and led her boyfriend through it.

However they had already missed Love Heart who was now at Confidence Heart’s house standing with his arms held up as Confidence took his measurements, wrapping green measuring tape around his middle then writing the length on some note paper

Love Heart looked around what Confidence called the sewing room. It fit the description with a large table that held up a sewing machine, several boxes of pins, thread and spools, an adjustable dressing mannequin, a folded up ironing board and several other pieces he wasn’t sure what to call.

“I didn’t know you liked to sew,” Love Heart was reaching for a conversation topic.

“Yeah,” Confidence Heart was still focused on taking his measurements, “Mom taught me when I was a kid and I kept up with it in secret... You helped inspire me to get back into this.”

“Really? You mean on that caring mission where I found you?” Love Heart sounded surprised.

Confidence smiled as she measured each of Love Heart’s arms, “Yeah. You remember what you helped me with right? I mean besides finding another lost Care Bear Cousin.”

Love Heart did remember the mission, “You were miserable because you felt like you had to act like a stereotypical tomboy so you wouldn’t get dragged into ‘super girly’ things.”

“I just wanted to be me,” Confidence finally stood away from Love Heart, “You can put your arms down, I’m done.” She went to the dressing mannequin and started adjusting it to fit Love Heart’s proportions.

Love Heart smiled, “Yeah, and I’m happy because I got to meet you.” Love Heart didn’t notice Confidence blushing as she finished adjusting the mannequin.

“What are you two talking about?” Kero had been sitting nearby, watching the process silently.

Love Heart turned to Kero, “Oh right. Well you saw the giant heart-shaped gate we passed through right?”

Kero nodded, “Hard to miss. What’s the deal with that thing anyway?”

“It’s connected to how I joined the Care Bear Family.” Confidence Heart had calmed down and was going over some design ideas, sketching them on looseleaf. “I’m adopted, by the Avalons. They found me as a cub on earth and raised me. Five years ago Love Heart found me on one of his caring missions.”

Love Heart continued, “It’s what we do, we go down to earth to find children who need help with something in their lives: bullies, loneliness, confidence issues, stuff like that. I came down to help Confidence Heart with dad’s help and we were both surprised when we found her. Long story short Confidence didn’t want to leave her family so after a lot of stuff they built that giant arc to act as a gate between our home and here, and also set up the school and... just ask mom and dad about it later. It helps us relate to humans and helps them trust us more.”

“Because if you want to see the best cross-section of humanity, go to high school,” Confidence burst out laughing for a moment, which elicited some laughter from Love Heart as well. “But yeah,” Confidence got her laughter under control, “If it wasn’t for you I’d probably be part of the wrestling team and I never would have had the courage to take home ec.”

“Really?” Love Heart smiled, “You’re welcome.”

“Sometimes Care Bears need help caring too,” Confidence Heart turned back to her work while smiling.

There was a knock on the front door. “I’ll get it,” Love Heart left the room with Kero in tow. Confidence Heart watched him go before she turned back to her design sheet.

Love Heart was surprised when he saw who was there. “Brave Heart? Harmony?” He just stood there, staring at the two.

“Sage Heart told us you were here,” Harmony said. “I just wanted to make sure you were alright.”

Love Heart took a deep breath, “I’m fine.” He forced himself to grin.

Harmony and Brave Heart shared a look then pulled out the pin and brooch they had bought, “Here, a gift.”

“Yeah, we just want to keep being friends,” Brave Heart held out the sword-like brooch.

Love Heart stared at them, down to their gifts then back up to their face. So many emotions churned inside his head that he wasn’t sure how to respond.

After a couple awkward minutes, Harmony finally spoke, “Um, Love Heart?”

“I don’t want these,” Love Heart’s voice was cold.

“Love Heart-” Brave Heart tried to speak up but Love Heart cut him off.

“No. I’m angry about this but I hate that I’m mad when I should be happy for you! I want to be alright with this but I can’t just shut off how I felt about you for years, Harmony, or that I feel betrayed because you dated my best friend behind my back!” Love Heart’s voice had risen to a shout, “And I know it’s wrong to feel jealous or to hate you for this but how am I just supposed to not feel anything!? I’m literally about the love others feel for each other so I feel sick about all of this! I just... I don’t want to see either of you right now!” His face screwed up as he grabbed his chest, “I just... I hate feeling like this but my heart’s still broken and I want to do anything else just... leave me alone!” Love Heart slammed the door on them and leaned back against it. He had started to cry and rubbed his eyes as he felt choked up.

Kero had watched the whole scene and floated over to Love Heart, “What was that about?”

Love Heart sniffed, “Brave Heart is... was... is... my best friend and I had a crush on Harmony Bear for years but I could never tell her, until yesterday when I found out they were dating,” Love Heart sucked in air with a sob, “That’s kinda how this mess started, after she broke my heart I ran home and... that’s when I found the Book of Clow.”

“You can have some pop if you want,” Confidence had come out to see what was happening.

Love Heart smiled despite the tears, “Thanks, Confidence,” he wiped his eyes and headed for her kitchen.

Confidence Heart followed him and sat down at the dining table as Love Heart took a can of root beer from the fridge. “Do you want to talk about it?”

Love Heart sat down, “No! Yes! I...” he cracked the can and chugged half of it, then burping. “Yes...” He sighed, “I feel so wrong, like I shouldn’t be mad because they’re happy and... they don’t owe me anything but... maybe I’d feel better if Harmony hadn’t said she knew how I felt.”

“What?!” Confidence’s eyes went wide.

“Yeah,” Love Heart stared at the table, “She said she knew I had a crush on her but hoped I’d just... move on. I mean I’d still hurt but... I wish she’d said something before that was sprung on me. Maybe I’m just an idiot for not realizing she was dating my best friend.”

“No!” Confidence stood up, startling Love Heart, “it’s not your business to find out who’s dating who! You’re not an idiot...” She sank back down to her chair and bit her lip. She so desperately wanted to tell Love Heart how she felt right here and now... but she didn’t want to take advantage of him when he was hurting.

She felt Love Heart take her hand from across the table and looked up at him. While he was still teary eyed, Love Heart was smiling, “Thanks, Confidence.”

Confidence smiled then stood up, “I’m gonna go finish your costume design, excuse me.”

Love Heart watched her go then returned to his drink, sipping more slowly now.

OoOoO

“That could have gone better...” Harmony Bear sighed, staring at the music note pin in her hand as she and Brave Heart walked along the sidewalk. She put it back in her pocket and turned to Brave Heart, “Now what?”

“We leave him alone, until he’s calmed down,” Brave Heart pinned the brooch to his jacket, “For now we should...” Brave Heart abruptly froze in place.

“Brave, we should what?” Harmony stopped and stared at Brave Heart. His eyes had dulled as he stared off into the distance, then there was a flash of light and the brooch was suddenly in Brave Heart’s right hand, but it was now a meter-long sword with a thin silver blade.

Brave Heart turned around then marched back towards Confidence’s house.

“Brave Heart!” Harmony grabbed his shoulder only for Brave Heart to whip around and swing the sword at her. Harmony only dodged by falling backwards and Brave Heart turned to continue back towards Confidence Heart’s house.

Harmony had to catch her breath before she pulled out her phone and dialed the only person she could think of, “Independent Bear, something’s happened to Brave Heart!”

OoOoO

Love Heart’s new sense flare up in his head right after he tossed the empty can in the recycling. “A Clow Card!”

“And it’s coming this way!” Kero piped up as Love Heart dashed for the door.

Confidence Heart heard the shout and emerged into the living room just in time to see the door slam shut.

Love Heart dashed towards the sensation with Kero flying by his head and they didn’t have to go far. Brave Heart stood at the end of a block with a large stone wall right up to the sidewalk, holding the brooch-turned sword in his right hand.

“It’s The Sword Card!” Kero pointed at Brave Heart right as he charged at Love Heart, who dodged backwards as the lion swung for his neck.

“It has control of him!” Love Heart guessed.

“It won’t release control until you get the sword out of his hand!” Kero flew up and out of Brave Heart’s reach. Brave Heart swung at Love Heart again, who dodged sideways as Brave Heart stabbed with The Sword and missed, getting it stuck in the wall.

As Brave Heart pulled hard to free The Sword, Love Heart took his chance.

“Key of Clow

Power of Magic

Power of Light

Surrender the Wand

The Force Ignite

Release!”

A moment later, Love Heart held the staff in both hands as Brave Heart freed the weapon and turned to face him again.

“Kero, how strong is this staff?” Love Heart held the staff like it was a sword as Brave Heart sidestepped, trying to find an opening in Love Heart’s defense.

“It won’t break easily but The Sword can cut through anything. Look out!”

Love Heart barely dodged, not wanting to risk the staff against the blade’s edge, and he swung out at Brave Heart, but stopped before the head could connect with Brave Heart’s arm.

“What are you doing! You have to get it away from him!” Kero shouted.

“I... I can’t!” Love Heart was shaking. Brave Heart seemed to hesitate, turning slowly to face Love Heart.

“What do you mean ‘you can’t’? You have to!” Kero shouted.

Love Heart pointed the staff at Brave Heart, shaking in his hands as he trembled. “I know but...” Love Heart was breathing so hard he barely had time to dodge back as Brave Heart advanced, swinging for his head. Love Heart turned and ran with Brave Heart giving chase.

“Love Heart!” Kero took off after the two.

OoOoO

In Love Heart’s bedroom, the Jump Card stopped its bouncing. It could sense one of its fellow cards awakening. Love Heart had kept his work and even left it to just sleep the day away. The door to Love Heart’s room was open a crack and the rabbit-like spirit exited and bounded for the door, catching it just as Sweet Heart was entering, leaving the pink Pegasus stunned as The Jump Card leapt through the air, heading for the portal.

OoOoO

Love Heart managed to get away to the park and climbed up a tree before Brave Heart could catch up to him. His lighter Care Bear body and green fur let him climb up high and hide in the branches, still shaking as he held onto the trunk with his left hand, the staff held loosely in his right.

“Love Heart? What happened?” Kero had found him while the Sword-possessed Brave Heart was searching the park.

“I can’t attack him,” Love Heart whispered, “I’m still too angry, I might actually hurt him and it’s wrong!” Love Heart’s whisper reached a fever pitch and he pounded the tree’s trunk, “But I just can’t help it.”

Brave Heart turned to the shaking tree and marched towards it, readying the sword as he marched.

“You can work things out once The Sword is captured.” Kero lowered his voice to a shouting whisper, “As long as it’s loose you’re going to be in danger.” As if to prove his point, Brave Heart sliced the tree’s trunk in half and it began to topple over.

“Whoa!” Love Heart barely managed to get out of the falling tree, sprawling on the ground as Brave Heart advanced around the fallen trunk.

“Love Heart!”

“Love Heart!”

The two voices came from The Jump Card and Indy. The Jump card bounced off Brave Heart’s shoulder, making him stumble, as Indy charged in and drew his katana. Brave Heart rounded on him and blocked Indy’s blade.

“You’re alive!” The Jump stopped in front of Love Heart as he stood up.

“Jump?” Love Heart ignored the clashing as Indy did his best to keep Brave Heart busy without hurting him.

“You let me stay alone in your room without sealing me, I didn’t think you would,” The Jump looked sheepish.

Love Heart managed a small smile as he stroked the rabbit-like creature’s head, “I promised I wouldn’t use you. Sorry I didn’t bring you along.”

The Jump looked up at Love Heart, “Use me now, to fight The Sword Card!”

“No.” Love Heart stood up, “I promised I wouldn’t. Even if I did I...” he watched Indy defending himself against Brave Heart with minimal effort while trying to keep his sword from being destroyed. “I’m afraid I’d hurt him,”

Harmony stood nearby hearing Love Heart’s every word but didn’t say anything as she watched Indy and Brave Heart fighting.

“HIII YA!” Confidence Heart hurtled out of the blue with a flying kick right to Brave Heart’s side, even Indy was stunned as Brave Heart got up and turned to face Confidence as she darted in and chopped Brave Heart’s hand, knocking The Sword free. Brave Heart collapsed and Indy caught him.

Confidence Heart whipped around, “Love Heart!”

“Seal it!” Kero jabbed his arm at The Sword.

Love Heart felt a rush of energy as he charged at The Sword as it floated in the air, point downwards. Love Heart swung the staff, “Sword Card! I command you to return to your power confined! Sword!” The rush of energy followed as the Sword was pulled into its card which flew into Love Heart’s hand.

Love Heart sighed in relief as he signed his name to the card then let the staff reseal as Kero floated over to him.

“Alright, one more captured card! Good work!” Kero grinned.

“I didn’t do anything...” Love Heart whispered.

“Huh?” Confidence had heard him and walked over to him as Harmony ran to make sure Brave Heart was alright.

“I just froze... all I did was run while everyone else fought my battle for me. Some cardcaptor I am,” He sighed, “I’m going home.”

“Love Heart...” Confidence reached for him, then stopped as he slunk away, holding the captured Sword Card in his hand. She turned to see Brave Heart and Harmony hugging as he came around, then turned and headed for home so she could focus on his battle costume.

Love Heart collapsed on his bed, not even having said hi to his parents or sister. Kero and The Jump had followed him all the way to his room, Kero had tried to placate him all the way home but had been unsuccessful and eventually quieted down.

Finally, The Jump hopped up on Love Heart’s bed and sat near his head. “You did it.”

“All I did was seal it, I couldn’t fight Brave Heart... and I wanted to hurt him...” Love Heart mumbled.

The Jump shook its head, “I mean you kept your promise, even when I said you could use me. You even let me stay here all day without sealing me back up.”

Love Heart turned his head and smiled at The Jump, “I promised. So now what?”

“Seal me, I need some rest.”

“OK,” Love Heart only had to focus his magic into his hand and The Jump returned to its card form.

“See, you did do something,” Kero floated up to Love Heart, “You made a friend.”

Love Heart smiled, “Yeah, I guess I did. Now how do I communicate with a sentient sword?” he held up The Sword Card in front of his face.