Sun and Moon Kings

by Darktragicangel

Summary

The Nameless Pharaoh travels to the Memory World. Something is amiss. Instead of gaining back his memories, it feels like he's reliving his past. Meanwhile, in the present day, Shaddi reveals the shocking truth about Yami's Destiny which is connected to a never-ending cycle, one that can only be broken if the Past is changed. Who are the mysterious Sun and Moon Kings of the city of Ishtar? What is their role in the Salvation of Ancient Egypt and the World? How will they help Yami defeat Bakura?

Notes

I'm using the original Japanese names.

Tea Gardner = Anzu Mazaki
Joey Wheeler = Jounouchi Katsuya
Tristan Tyaler = Honda Hiroto

This is a story I have had in mind for a very long time and have been finally working it out.
Although it's an Alternate Universe, it does follow the Canon to a certain extend. It's a Time-Travel Alternate Universe, which means, the moment events are changed, the plot will evolve differently from the Canon. No more will be said for now, you must read in order to understand what I mean :) 

Enjoy the reading...

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH AND ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS

See the end of the work for more notes.
So this was it. This was the moment the Nameless Pharaoh would finally unveil all the secrets of his past and discover what happened 5,000 years ago. Yami, the other Yugi, looked at the large ancient relief, the Tablet of Lost Memories. It showed an image of him, but his name had been erased from the stone and forgotten in time. He looked at the empty cartouche Anzu just gave him.

«I will remember.»

Yami took a deep breath. He looked one last time at Yugi. The short boy, who very much looked like him, nodded in encouragement. The Pharaoh’s lips drew a slight smile. He turned to the stone relief, full of determination and took the three Egyptians cards out of his pocked. He stretched his arm, presenting them to the ancient stele.

Yami looked expectantly at the wall before him. At first it seemed nothing would happen, but in a flash of a moment, Yami felt his spirit be ripped off the Millenium Puzzle and be sucked into the stone. He was falling. Falling down a crazy, dizzying and disorienting tunnel. He involuntarily screamed. He could not make out space. He could not make out time. The confusing travel was making him feel dizzy and nauseous. It seemed to last forever. And yet, as suddenly as it started, it ended abruptly.

His hand twitched, he opened his eyes and blinked. The light was bright, the air hot and dry. Yami stared at the sky. It was beautifully blue. He then looked to his hands and gasped of surprise. They were tanned, bronzed by endless days of summer. His ears heard a loud sound nearby, like millions of voices, singing and cheering as one.

“They want to see their new Pharaoh.” A small man with a cloth covering his face, except for his eyes, spoke.

Yami, confused, looked forward. He heard the man say something about the people have been waiting for him all day, but his voice sounded far away. Yami could not believe his eyes. They met his world. The pyramids rising far away in a desert landscape. Thousands of sand coloured square houses spread themselves as far as eyes can see. But it was the sight of a mass of people below his balcony that surprised him the most. They were surely thousands and thousands of men, women, children and elders. They called him in unison and looked expectantly at their new ruler. Not really knowing what to do, the young pharaoh raised his hand as a greeting, followed by a hesitant “hi”. The people dropped to their knees at once and cheered, calling “pharaoh” with great joy.

Yami, the King of Games, the Nameless Pharaoh, swallowed dry. He somehow had the feeling this...
was more than a mere memory. He had the strong feeling he was living this for the very first time, for no recollections came back to him. He wondered if he travelled in time. If he was actually reliving his past.

CHAPTER ONE

“He’s gone!” Yugi’s voice echoed in the large division. He had sensed Yami being ripped away. It had happened when that strange light filled the room. He held the Millennium Puzzle in his hands. It felt empty, lifeless, lonely. His friends didn’t really understand what he meant. How could Yami be gone, just like that?

“The boy is correct.” The four friends turned their heads to see a mysterious man wearing a long cream colored tunic with a matching turban. “The pharaoh’s soul has travelled to the Memory World.”

“Shaddi!” Yugi yelled.

The boy didn’t even feel surprised to see Shaddi. The Egyptian spirit always seemed to appear in decisive moments. Yugi knew that this mysterious man was about to tell them something important. And his expectation was indeed fulfilled. The friends listened horrified to the truth about the Memory World. Yami was to relive the past, confront a dark energy and fulfil the important task of saving mankind from evil. If the events wouldn’t repeat themselves the same way they did in the past, their future too was in stake. If Bakura was to defeat the Pharaoh, only the gods knew what would happen to the world. Cries of revolt echoed in the empty room.

“We need to help the Pharaoh!”

The four friends stared expectantly at Shaddi. He would know a way to help Yami, right? That was, after all, the reason he had come. The Egyptian opened his mouth to say something, but shut it again. He looked at the floor thoughtfully. Yugi could sense his hesitance. Shaddi shook his head slightly.

“This is most unfortunate.” Shaddi spoke more to himself. He turned around and was about to enter the wall he just came from.

“Wait! Shaddi, what were you going to say? We can help the Pharaoh, right?” Shaddi froze in his steps and sighed. He turned around.
“Yes, I was going to tell you how you could enter the Memory Realm and help the Nameless Pharaoh.”

“So why change your mind?”

“I apologize. It’s just… I know exactly how events will unfold. You’ll find the way to the past and help the Pharaoh defeat Bakura. But then again, both their spirits will be sealed in the Millennium Items, waiting millennia to be found again.” He sighed. “It will just start another endless cycle. Maybe I’m doing something wrong. Maybe, if I let events develop naturally, it will all finally end.”

The friends blinked and stared at one another not comprehending what the strange Egyptian was telling.

“What are you talking about?” Jounouchi demanded.

“The Pharaoh and Bakura will confront each other. Bakura will try to destroy the world. Many will die. In the end the Pharaoh must sacrifice his soul and be sealed in the Millennium Puzzle and wait millennia again until the day Yugi put the pieces back together. And then the whole cycle will restart, all over again.”

“You mean to say that we have lived this before?” Yugi asked, not believing what he was hearing.

“Yes. It is the curse of the Millennium Items. When they were made, they released a great dark force. The energies of the cosmos came out of balance. Since then, the events in the universe kept repeating themselves. I was chosen by the gods to be the guardian of the Millennium Items, with the mission to guide you in order to restore balance to the universe, and bring an end to this never-ending cycle.”

“What? You knew from the beginning how things were going to develop? Jounouchi yelled revolting, remembering the dangers he and his friends lived the last years. “You know, if you would have told us the whole thing from the beginning, it would have been really helpful!”

“It’s not the way it works. I have great limitations. I am not allowed to change the course of events that much. I must not change destiny. I’m only allowed to interfere in necessary moments. Like when I see you are in trouble.”

Shaddi paused and his gaze met Honda, recalling the moment he saved the teenager and Otogi from having a deadly fall. “I’m the only person carrying the memories of each of these cycles. I do try, every time, something new, in moments that can be significant for the course of events. I do try to correct where I might have gone wrong in the previous cycle. But every time, the
Pharaoh’s and Bakura’s souls end up in the Millennium Items and then the whole thing starts all over again. It’s hopeless.”

“Have you ever tried something completely different? Because, maybe, just maybe, you’ve been using the wrong method.” Anzu carefully asked.

“Well, I was about to let things develop by themselves.” He replied clearly offended.

“Yeah, and then the world would end! It would definitely be a great improvement!” Jounouchi angrily pointed out. Shaddi looked a bit taken aback.

“I am sorry. It’s just...I’ve tried already so many things...I just wish I could find the way to break this cursed cycle!”

There was a deep silence. The ancient reliefs seemed to watch expectantly, wondering if events would unfold differently this time.

“What happens if we break the cycle?” Anzu asked.

“The powers of darkness and light will become equal. The cosmos will regain its balance and the souls of both the Pharaoh and Bakura will finally be freed”.

“So, how were we going to enter the Memory World anyway?” Honda wondered.

“We would have to dwell in the labyrinths of the Pharaoh’s fragmented memories inside the Millennium Puzzle and...”

“Wait!” Yugi interrupted, sounding somehow excited. “I have an idea! The Millennium Puzzle is full of secrets and mysteries related to Yami’s past, right?” Shaddi nodded. “So, maybe the answer is to be founded in there! Or at least a clue!” The Egyptian ghost seemed to consider this for a while.

“I suppose it’s worth a try.” The guardian of the Millennium Items smiled hopefully.
They held their hands in a circle. Shaddi spoke some strange words and, thanks to the magic of the Millennium Key, the four friends were transported into the Millennium Puzzle. It was, beyond doubt, the most confusing place they ever been to. Jounouchi noticed that it had changed since his last visit and Shaddi explained this was a consequence of Yami’s transformations in his memory. The four friends stared at the many stone walls and countless staircases that developed everywhere in all different and impossible directions.

“Yami’s mind is completely messed up. No wonder he’s always so confused about his past.” Jounouchi commented.

“Let’s split ourselves. Like that we have more chances of finding something.” Yugi said.

And so everybody took a different path. Staircases would lead to doors. Doors would lead to new doors with new staircases. A false step would activate a trap. Dangers were to be found behind every corner. Often the friends would return to the start point without even knowing how. They wandered in galleries and corridors with empty walls finding nothing that would give any kind of clue. They finally all met in the beginning point for the countless time.

“Anybody found anything?” Yugi asked.

“Nothing except for that creepy Bakura.” Honda complained.

“Hey, did anybody try that gallery over there?” Anzu pointed out to a passage almost hidden by a staircase.

“How odd. I never saw it before. I must have missed it every time I came here!” Shaddi sounded truly surprised.

“What are we waiting for?” Jounouchi yelled, as he run to the new discovered passageway. This one had its walls covered with odd stripes, points and lines. “Nya…It’s full with scratches.” Jounouchi pointed out.

“Those aren’t scratches! It’s cuneiform writing from Mesopotamia!” Shaddi said surprised. He examined the wall from closer.

“Meso-what?”
“Mesopotamia. It was a culture that co-existed with Ancient Egypt.” Yugi explained. History had always been his strongest subject. “They developed in the region of actual Iraq and were formed by several cultures and kingdoms. The Sumerians, Babylonians, Persians...”

“Akkadians!” Shaddi exclaimed.

“Yes, Akkadians too.” Yugi confirmed perplexed. Shaddi looked at the wall with new enthusiasm.

“It’s Akkadian. Listen, I think this is important.”

_In the land beyond the sea_
_There lays a kingdom_
_Ruled by two, you see,_
_The lords of the Sun and the Moon_

_As one, they ruled_
_Together they were gods_
_Never to be divided_
_Alone they’ll lose by all odds_

_The friend became the enemy_
_The Sun King went to battle_
_The Moon gave him victory_
_Alas, the city of Ishtar was feeble_

_The golden beast attacked the city_
_The Moon King missed his brother_
_He was brave and fought mightily_
_Alas, the beast was stronger_
Too late was the Sun King
Walls were broken, the city burning
Death had taken the Moon King
And left the world mourning

Together the kings ruled as one
Together they were gods
Never to be divided
Alone they'll lose by all odds

And so the Sun King too vanished

“The city of Ishtar?” Anzu spoke petrified. “That’s Malik’s family name!”

“It’s Akkad, capital of the Akkadian Empire, hometown of Ishtar, the great goddess.” The Egyptian ghost said. “Egypt had back then a strong alliance with the Akkadians kings.”

“You mean Malik’s family descended from this Meso-thing?” Jounouchi asked confused.

“Mesopotamia.” Shaddi corrected irritated. “Yes. It is possible. The tomb keeper family’s origins are obscure to me.”

“Together the kings ruled as one, Together they were gods, Never to be divided, Alone they’ll lose by all odds…” All heads turned to Yugi as he muttered these words. “Shaddi!” Yugi spoke, his hands closed in fists, his eyes glimmering. “What if these two kings were supposed to help the Pharaoh?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, the text says that when these kings were together they were gods. They were probably very powerful. Never to be divided, Alone they’ll lose by all odds. This means that when the Moon king died, the other king was weak, perhaps even powerless.”
“You mean to say...”

“What if something went wrong already in the past? What if these two kings were supposed to play an important part in the battle against Bakura, but didn’t because the Moon King died? That would explain why you fail to break the cycle every time! Because this is a piece of information you never knew about! This is probably an episode in history that needs to be amended.”

“Perhaps you are right. In that case, you will have to be able to travel to the past instead to the Pharaoh’s Memory...There has to be a doorway somewhere that leads to the past of these two kings.”

“You mean like this one?” Honda pointed to a door a bit further. It had a picture of a moon and a sun on it.

“Yes. It is probably the gateway to the past.” Shaddi said and couldn’t help but think the door’s appearing was little too convenient. “My friends, I cannot guide you further than this. But first, I must warn. The moment you change the past, you interfere with history. Events will unfold with no destiny defined. Anything could happen. In the worst of all situations, you could all die there.” All four gulped. They stared one another, fear present in their eyes.

“What kind of friends are we, if we don’t try to change the events? We cannot leave Yami all alone with his tragic destiny!” Jounouchi spoke eloquently. “He would help us, he would sacrifice himself to make things better.” Yugi, Anzu and Honda looked at the blond with great awe. They missed the sweat drop on Shaddi’s temple. He found the whole speech kind of cheesy. “I’m in! I will travel to the past, save this moony king and help Yami defeat the evil Bakura!” Jounouchi spoke with great determination, his fist in the air. Another sweat drop appeared on Shaddi’s temple.

“Count with me!” Honda followed, imitating Jounouchi’s gestures.

“Me too!” Anzu and Yugi yelled in unison. Shaddi, having now a collection of sweet drops, took a deep breath.

“Remember this. You will be placed on the right place, at the right time. But I have no idea where and when it is. May the gods protect you.” Yugi and his friends nodded and walked silently to the door. There was nothing to see around. Nothing to hear. There was just darkness. It was as if nothing existed beyond that door.
“Are you sure about this, Yugi?” Anzu asked, unable to hide the fear in her voice.

The boy didn’t reply. His frown was replaced by a smile of determination and courage. Without any warning, Yugi jumped into darkness. The others gasped and called out his name, but silence was all they heard. The three friends switched hesitated looks and took a deep breath. One after the other, they jumped into this blackness and their hearts hoped this wasn’t their one-way ticket to death. And so they fell and fell and fell.

“Are those stars?” Honda asked at midway.

“Who cares?” Jounouchi yelled “Outch!”

The three friends landed, one after the other, on dry and dusty ground. It was still dark, but a dim pale light illuminated the nocturne world around them. Yugi stood there already, staring intently at the full moon.

“Where are we?” Anzu asked.

“In the right place and the right time.” Yugi’s voice sounded far and absent.

They all looked at the nocturne landscape and wondered what the right place and the right time were.
Yugi and his friends are in the right place, at the right time. But what they do not expect is to find familiar faces with whole new names. Yes, I am talking about reincarnation / past lives!

Yugi and his friends stared around. All four of them wondered why they landed 5,000 years ago in the middle of nowhere. The full moon’s pale light illuminated a word made from different shades of grey. They could make out a dry rocky landscape surrounded by mountains. But they could not see any houses, just rocks, some bushes and small trees growing here and there.

“Damn! Shaddi tricked us!” Jounouchi cursed under his breath, his hands in fists. “I don’t trust him! He’s so vague! Not to mention he’s a ghost.”

“Don’t go taking rushed conclusions, maybe we just have to explore a bit around…” Yugi tried to calm down his friend, although, he shared Jounouchi’s fear. They looked around and Honda decided to go on top of some rocks to get a better view. Nothing. There was no city, village nor even a small house to be seen anywhere near. He sighed.

“It’s helpless. There is absolutely nothing around here!” He shouted while he jumped back on the lower ground. Jounouchi murmured something illegible; Anzu held her arms protectively around her and Yugi stared at his now empty and lifeless Millennium Puz-

“My puzzle!!! It’s gone!” He shouted shocked. He then heard a sound and turned around suddenly, just like his friends. It sounded like horses running, followed by voices.
“It’s coming closer!” Anzu said.

“And it’s heading this way, really fast.” Yugi added.

Jounouchi decided to climb a rock like Honda had done earlier, in hope of seeing who was coming. He barely had time to react. His eyes grew as large as his face would allow and he let out a loud scream while he fell back with his arms and legs spread out. Yugi, Anzu and Honda yelled in unison both of shock and surprise as a horse jumped right above Jounouchi, not touching the teen by an inch. The horseman didn’t stop, but instead, continued galloping in a wild speed. Jounouchi got up and started shouting and cursing at the horseman, shaking his fists angrily in the air. He stopped to look down at his friends who were acting strangely. They were wide eyed, shouting one louder than the other, so Jounouchi couldn’t make out a word. It was the wild and frenzy arm shaking and pointing at his direction that made the blond slowly turn around. Once again, he barely had time to fall on the ground and survive to see this time, two horses jumping right above him.

“What the hell is going on here?!!” He hysterically shouted, after making sure that no other horses were coming his way.

“It looks like they were following the first one.” Honda noted.

“Maybe we should follow them.” Yugi spoke.

“Yeah!” Anzu cheered.

And the three of them started running in the horses’ direction, following the dust cloud that was left behind. Jounouchi stood still on the rock, staring with enormous unbelief at his friends.

“I’m unharmed, thank you.” Jounouchi murmured upset his friends forgot him. “Are you mad? Did you see the speed of those horses?” He shouted without receiving any reply. He was surprised to see how fast his friends could actually run. They never were this fast during sport class. “Wait! Do not leave me behind! I don’t want to be left alone in some strange place 5,000 years back!” He desperately screamed. “God knows what kind of stuff I could bump into.” He whispered scared with a shaky voice.

Jounouchi had just spoken when he startled. He heard a little sound coming from the ground. He looked down and his eyes met a small cricked standing right next to his shoe. It was staring curiously at him. Jounouchi let out a horrible scream and made an Olympic jump, running behind his friends
faster than any golden medal athlete could ever run. He reached his friends in no time. They were all panting exhaustively.

“I’m so tired.” Anzu confessed.

“Yeah, I don’t think I can take another step.” Yugi added.

“*Pant* pant*pant*(inhale really deeply)*pant*pant*” Jounouchi would swear his lungs were about to burst.

“Jezz Jounouchi, your condition is awful. Back to the gym when we are home again.” Honda mocked.

“(Guttural angry sound)*pant*pant*pant*” Jounouchi was about to release another wordless sound, when they all froze. They heard a scream. And then a cry for help. They run a few steps closer and looked down on the valley just below them. The soft moon light revealed the first horseman being caught by the other two. They threw him to the floor and Anzu covered a scream when a white blade shone under the pale moonlight. Without thinking (did they ever do?) Honda and Jounouchi jumped from where they stood and landed on the two chasers. They hit and beat and kicked and punched. The two men fell to the ground in no time seeing more stars than the sky actually had. Anzu and Yugi ran down to meet their friends.

“Those two aren’t going to harm anybody for a while.” Honda triumphantly spoke as he cleaned the dust of his clothes.

“Thank you very much. I’m really grateful!” A young man’s voice was heard behind them.

The four friends turned around to see who they just had rescued and gasped in great surprise. He was around 17 years old, had wavy long black hair, caught on a pony tail and even in the dim moonlight, they could see his eyes were light of colour. They all knew they were green.

“Otogi?” They asked simultaneously in great awe.

“What?” The black haired young man asked a bit confused.
“You are Otogi!” Yugi yelled.

“You must be confusing me with someone else. My name is Nigiku.” He said smilingly. The friends switched confused looks.

“Ehm, Nigiku. Who are these guys and why were they chasing you?” Yugi asked while he looked at the unconscious men, wearing dark hooded cloths.

“I have no idea, but I’m pretty sure they wanted to stop me from reaching King Dumuzi. He’s on battle and his brother gave me this letter. It must be handed to him as quickly as possible.” He spoke sternly, displaying a small clay box. “I wonder how they knew…” He murmured thoughtfully.

“What’s in the letter?” Jounouchi asked.

“I dunno. It’s for the king’s eyes only.” He looked at the box and the then at the moon. “I’m sorry, but I must haste.”

“Can we go with you? We are kind of lost.” Yugi asked. Only now did Nigiku take a better look at the four of them and thought their garments were rather peculiar.

“Yes, sure. Just take the enemies’ horses and follow me.”

“Ehm, maybe you didn’t notice but, we are four and there are only two horses.” Honda pointed out the obvious.

“You divide. You guys ride (he pointed at Honda and Jounouchi). One of you takes the girl and the other takes the child.” He cheerfully said, unaware of the reason for Yugi’s blushing and loud protesting.

Said and done. Nigiku leaded the way, while (after a very fast course of ‘how to ride a horse’) the others followed him, Jounouchi with Yugi and Honda with Anzu. The four of them found the journey extremely unpleasant, for both Honda and Jounouchi were fighting to maintain control of the horses, while both Yugi and Anzu had the feeling they were going to throw up at any moment. They all hoped that this king, wherever he was, wasn’t too far away.
The white disk on the sky shone brightly and illuminated a landscape belonging to everyman’s nightmare. The horrible display of a ferocious battle’s outcome. The blue pale light revealed what used to be a peaceful and solitary valley between some rocky hills. Just two hours ago this valley was filled with noises of battle. Men screamed, swords clashed. The moon witnessed the shedding of blood from both armies. Tonight, this place became a mass grave.

Lilac eyes stared at the dreadful scenario. Tears formed on the two beautiful orbs. They cried for the hundreds of men who died this night. They mourned for the many families who lost their sons, brothers and fathers. It had been a mighty battle and King Dumuzi was cheered as the glorious winner. He had battled magnificently proving to be a brilliant leader, a courageous warrior, a powerful king. The enemy had been a great challenge for it was both strong and fierce, but King Dumuzi’s army had the moon on their side, powering them. Their weapons were stronger, their strength greater. Tonight, the moon made King Dumuzi invincible. This was his very first important battle after his coronation and he passed all the ordeals to prove he is a worthy king. He felt happy and proud for his triumph, but it pained him that so many lives had to be sacrificed to achieve this victory.

King Dumuzi sighed. He watched comrades burying their friends, brothers paying their final goodbyes, sons mourning their father’s deaths, fathers weeping the loss of their boys. Dumuzi caressed his left lower arm. It was stinging from the pain, a wound he received during the heat of the battle. But he smiled relieved this was all he suffered. He survived. Soon he would be able to see his loving brother’s face again. But his smiled faded quickly when he heard a shouting behind him.

“Dumuzi! Dumuzi!” The king hurried as he recognized the voice. He immediately felt apprehensive. Nigiku’s presence could only mean something was really wrong. “Dumuzi, I’m so glad you’re alive and well!” The black-haired boy said while he dismounted the horse. They hugged happily, patting each other’s back warmly. Jounouchi and Honda managed to stop the horses just before they would break down the king’s tent.

“Who are they?” Dumuzi asked surprised as he watched the strange foursome come down the horses, one looking sicker than the other.

“Quite clumsy horsemen.” Nigiku commented more to himself. “They rescued me from two strangers. I think they wanted to stop me from bringing this to you.” He presented the clay box containing the letter. “It’s from your brother. He said it was urgent.” Dumuzi opened the little box and picked up a clay tablet with strange inscriptions on it. He read his brother’s handwriting and his eyes widened, shinning from concern. He suddenly flinched and quickly turned around, startled by a loud shriek. His eyes met a blond teen pointing at him with a trembling finger.
“W-What the Hell?” Jounouchi said with great unbeliev. “Malik is the king?”

“Jounouchi!” Yugi whispered between his teeth. Nigiku and Dumuzi were staring surprised and questionably at the blond boy.

“What strange outfits.” Dumuzi spoke.

“Yeah, I know. From what kingdom do you suppose they come from?” Nigiku asked. Dumuzi shrugged, obviously not having any answer for that.

“She barely has any clothes on. Do you think she’s a whore?” Dumuzi whispered, but loud enough for Anzu and the others to hear.

“I am not a whore! This is the latest fashion from where I come from!” She yelled undignified.

“You must come from a really strange place then. And which one is your husband?” Dumuzi continued, forgetting momentarily his brother’s letter.

“W-WHAT! I am not married to none of these losers!” She responded, crossing her arms and lifting her chin to the sky angrily. Her three friends fell back, insulted.

“Definitely a whore.” Nigiku said giggling. Dumuzi smiled but only for a short while. He looked serious again.

“I must return to the city immediately. And I will take the elite soldiers with me. You must stay here, take my place for now, but return as soon as possible. Let the soldiers rest the night. Best is to leave by day break.” Dumuzi spoke sternly.

“What does the letter say?” Nigiku asked, obviously worried.

“My brother has been having this recurring dream. He says here he fears this battle was a manoeuvre to lead the army far away from the city. A distraction. He thinks the city will be attacked while it’s vulnerable.” Dumuzi spoke while he stared at the letter. “It seems he just realized the danger this evening.” Nigiku nodded in understanding.
“Go, ride as fast as the wind. I will take over.” The black-haired boy said.

“Thank you.” Dumuzi gathered his general and ordered the elite group to depart as quickly as possible.

“We should go with them.” Yugi addressed his friends.

“Are you crazy? We barely survived our way here!” Jounouchi yelled, not at least happy with the thought of getting back on that horse. “I’m sure I’ll be sick when I’m on it again.”

“I don’t think it’s a coincidence that we met Nigiku. Think about it. He’s definitely Otogi’s past life, just like the king is Malik’s. They must have played an important role in the past and then reincarnated in our time, because of this whole cyclus thing. Besides, I think Dumuzi is the Sun king. Remember the inscriptions? It said the Sun king was at war. And the Moon king was killed in the city!”

“He’s right. Dumuzi said his brother thinks the city will be attacked. So his brother has to be the Moon king!” Anzu concluded.

“If we wouldn’t have followed those horsemen, Nigiku would certainly have been killed.” Yugi continued. “Meaning that Dumuzi would have never received his brother’s letter.”

“Wow, you guys! We just changed the course of history by saving Nigiku’s life!” Honda cheered.

“What are we waiting for? Let’s go!” Jounouchi stated determined, his fist high in the sky.

“In that case we must go now! They are already leaving!” Honda warned. In no time, the four friends were back on their two horses and only had time to say a fast goodbye to a very stunned and confused Nigiku.

“Those must be the weirdest club I’ve ever seen.” He concluded while he scratched the top of his head. “I sure hope Dumuzi arrives in time for whatever is coming to our city.” He added, sincerely concerned.
Came up with the whole past live thing and decided to give real Akkadian names (looked up in the net) to our new/old friends. I'll keep putting them in the beginning of each chapter, so you will not forget who is who:

Otoji Ryuji (Duke Devlin) past live is NIGIKU, which means Lord Bright-Eyed

Malik Ishtar past live is the Sun king DUMUZI, which means Son Who is Life
Dumuzi and his men rode fast under the full moon’s guidance. Jounouchi and Honda rode far behind them, following the clouds of dust. They still rode clumsily, but were progressively gaining more control of the horses. They galloped and galloped for what seemed ages. Slowly the moon descended on the sky and a soft light developed on the horizon. The first rays of sun rose behind the silhouettes of tall mountains. They travelled through isolated lands of barren soil made of dry rock. They only stopped once to drink water, nibble some dry bread and let the horses rest a bit.

The sun came up high and warm and the four friends were in no time battling the desert heat. It became progressively hot. But soon, they discovered the sun wasn’t the only heat’s source. There were tracks of fire in the landscape in front of them. Trees and small animals were black and carbonized. They travelled in a dead country consumed by fire. Dumuzi’s concern grew by the minute but his heart was rejoiced when he recognized the mountain broken by the middle, where a path opened itself to his home city. Dumuzi and his men stopped suddenly, at the edge of the road. Their eyes met the great city of Akkad.

Yugi and his friends looked down and saw an immense city built on a fertile and green valley, by a wide river and cultivations surrounding it. It was a magnificent oasis in the middle of a dry and dead land. Akkad had high walls, many little houses, green gardens, stair pyramids and majestic buildings. But the magnificence of the city was overshadowed by something absolutely terrifying. Yugi and his friends gasped of horror as they saw a gigantic monster, golden like the sun, spitting fire at the city walls.

“I-It cannot be…” Yugi could not believe his eyes.

Dumuzi and his men quickly rode down the mountain to confront the beast. But the four friends stared paralyzed with what they witnessed. Ishizu had once explained the card monsters were real in ancient times, but they never thought they were this real. This was a flesh and bone monster, no hologram! They gasped again when they saw a sand tornado hit the monster. A few more followed it.

“It doesn’t make sense!” Honda said. “The tornados are local and…”

“They seem to be aimed at the God of Sun Dragon!” Yugi completed Honda’s sentence. “If the card monsters are real…could it be?” Yugi paused thoughtfully. “Could it be that Magic Card Spells are also real?” In a normal situation, the others would have laughed at Yugi’s chain of thoughts, but watching the way those tornadoes attacked the monster, it seemed to be the only possible explanation.

“First Otogi and Malik, then the God of Sun Dragon and now Magic Spells…Where did we get ourselves into?” Jounouchi dejectedly said.

“It is all very odd indeed.” Yugi agreed.

“Maybe we should go down there, just in case. We might be able to help.” Honda said.

“What? And be burned by that thing?” Anzu yelled terrified at the thought.

“We will be shish kebab!” Jounouchi whined miserably.

“We have to help them. It’s the only way to break the cycle and help Yami!” Yugi reminded. With these words Anzu and Jounouchi seemed to regain a bit of their courage and downwards they rode, to meet the mystical God of Sun Dragon.

The heat was unbearable. The beast kept spitting flames of fire against the city walls. Yugi and his friends noticed the walls remained unaffected by the hot flames; they probably were protected by a magic shield. The monster moved around restlessly, releasing horrible grunts of fury. Dumuzi and his
men surrounded the God of Sun Dragon, each one holding a black sword.

“Special Hurricane!” The friends heard a voice yell.

A powerful wind circled the monster so it could not move for some brief moments. But the God of Sun Dragon proved to be resilient and quickly enough he shook his wings so madly that the wind was turned back to Dumuzi and his elite group, who were mercilessly thrown to the ground. Yugi and his friends advanced a bit more so they could see who was casting the spells. Once again, they were shocked to see this person, who too, was very familiar to them. Way too familiar.

“Ryou!” Anzu screamed with her hands on her face.

Ryou Bakura, or better, his past life, was dressed in a long white garment, similar to the one he had when he embodied the White Magician’s card, when they played their first game together, long ago. The material was stained by dust and ash. He stood with great effort, his body weight supported by a long white rod with a half-moon topping it. The boy looked pale and sweat drops ran down his face, gluing his long bangs to his temple. They could see he was breathing with difficulty, taking long deep breaths. He looked exhausted, like if he was about to pass out. But they recognized the same determination Ryou’s brown eyes showed the first time they confronted Yami Bakura. It had been the moment the boy was willing to sacrifice his soul to save his friends. Now, his past life was engaged in a fierce magical battle.

“Lightning Vortex!” He yelled. He raised his free arm to the air and it shook intensely, like if he was holding an immense power. Lightning hit several times the monster, hardly hurting him. But while the beast was startled by the nature’s force, Dumuzi and his men placed the black swords on the ground, around God of Sun Dragon. The white-haired teen gestured his arm. A sharp while light came out of his rod and sprung right into the swords.

“Swords of Revealing Light!”

Yugi and his friends stared in awe as they recognized the magic from the card that demonstrated to be very useful more than once. The golden beast roared madly at the realization it was trapped.

“Reinforcement of the Army!”

Suddenly Dumuzi and his men’s swords and shields grew stronger and bigger, but felt lighter and easier to move. A magical armour of impenetrable material protected now the warriors. They
attacked the monster, trying to wound and kill it. But after a while, the Swords of Revealing Light started flickering, like a lamp coming to its end. Yugi and his friends looked at the white-haired boy. He looked completely worn out. He barely could remain standing, his knees were bent; all his weight was resting on the rod.

“The spells are controlled by him. Could it be that he sacrifices his life energy to make the Magic Spells work?” Yugi wondered. Anzu, Jououchi and Honda held their breaths while they witnessed the white-haired boy almost stumble. The sword lights flicked more intensively this time.

“Immaru! Nooooo!” Dumuzi yelled from behind the monster. He came running desperate to aid the boy but the monster blocked his way with a sun blast. Dumuzi stopped and looked shocked at the beast. It shrunk its eyes threateningly.

“Dumuzi, I cannot hold it much longer!” Immaru shouted, his voice sounding weak. The white-haired boy was feeling dizzy; the world was becoming blurry before his eyes. He shook his head, he had to hold on. For the sake of his city, of his people, of his brother.

“Immaru’s eyes widened.

*God of Sun Dragon?*

*God of Sun?*

*Sun?*

He looked at Dumuzi. He looked just in time to see him protecting himself against a fire blast with the magical shield. He was doing everything in his power to reach Immaru.

*God of Sun Dragon... could it be the mystical Egyptian Winged Dragon of Ra?*

The white-haired boy took a deep breath and summoned all the little strength his broken body could still offer. Everything hurt. His muscles were burning, his head was spinning. And still, he managed in one last effort to stand straight.
“Oh-mighty God of Sun Dragon, loyal servant of Ra!” he eloquently called, his voice unexpectedly strong and determined.

Everybody turned to look at the boy. Dumuzi nearly had a heart attack when he saw the teen standing in front of the colossal beast, showing an uncharacteristic determination and willpower. Dumuzi recognized this kind of strength. He witnessed it before. It was when somebody was in the end of their life forces and desperately assembled all they still had left in them, to give one last fight, just before they would collapse dead. He turned around to look at the beast. Immaru had somehow captured its attention. Dumuzi swallowed dry when he realized he was standing exactly between the beast and Immaru.

“Behold! Standing before you, is the child born from the first sun rays, blessed with life by Ra’s will!!!” Immaru solemnly shouted.

The beast’s eyes twitched. Everybody gasped when they saw Immaru’s eyes roll back and his body fell on the ground like an old rag doll. The swords’ light surrounding the God of Sun Dragon vanished and returned to their original dark colour. Dumuzi and his men’s weapons shrunk and their armours dissipated. The soldiers stood paralyzed in fear. The beast too was motionless. There was a threatening pause, a deep silence.

“Nooooooo! IMMARU!!!!” Dumuzi desperately screamed. He ran fast to the white-haired boy and held his body close to his. “Please, be alive!” He begged. Dumuzi rested his ear on the boy’s chest. His heart was beating and he could feel him breathing too. He laughed of joy, while tears cascaded down his cheeks. He kissed the unconscious boy’s forehead. “You’re alive, you’re still alive!”

The God of Sun witnessed the scene silently and stared strangely at the two teens. It approached them slowly, its head close to the ground. Dumuzi shrugged when he felt the warm breath behind him. He turned around and realized in terror that the beast was only a few inches from him. The golden dragon stared observantly into his lilac eyes and made a small grunt, without releasing any fire. Dumuzi could feel all the blood leave his face.

I’m sorry Immaru. It will be all over soon.

He closed his eyes, pressed the other boy closer to him and prepared to receive the death blow. But then, the monster instead of attacking, laid down on the ground in a submissive way. Dumuzi slowly opened his eyes and blinked stunned, just like everybody else. The beast was lying in front of him inoffensively. Dumuzi suddenly remembered Immaru’s words before he fainted. He did not understand the meaning of them, but it clearly changed the monster’s behaviour. The young king with sandy hair took a deep breath. He could feel his blood pumping in his veins too rapidly, his heart beating in a mad rate. But he had to risk. He slowly stretched his trembling arm in the monster’s direction. Everybody held their breaths. Time moved very slowly. Dumuzi stretched his fingers and
very gently touched the God of Sun Dragon’s nose. The monster closed its eyes, looking satisfied. Nobody could believe what they just witnessed. The monster that had fought so aggressively became suddenly as mellow as a kitty.

“Please, do not harm us.” Dumuzi begged in a gasp. He had held his breath during the tense moment. The golden dragon opened his eyes for a moment and then closed them again with a soft grunt. “Will you be our ally?” The young king whispered.

The beast suddenly lifted up and spread out his wings, shaking them. The wind blew the remaining fire away. It then lifted itself in the air and flew to the mountain standing by the city’s foot. The God of Sun Dragon roared mightily. Dumuzi had the feeling it was trying to tell him it would protect the city from danger. The beast curled in a resting position and closed its eyes.

“It’s going to sleep! We must attack him now!” The general yelled.

“No!” Dumuzi shouted. The general and all the men stared in surprise. “I don’t think it wants to harm us anymore. I don’t know how, but my brother pulled that one off.” He explained. “Quickly, help me get him into the palace. He needs to rest, he’s exhausted.”

The general shouted out something and a pair of large iron doors opened themselves. Yugi and his friends noticed that there were guards standing on the wall. They had been witnessing the whole thing from the very beginning. The four friends watched in awe as the doors revealed the entrance of the magnificent city of Akkad. The first thing they saw were two colossal statues of men with the bodies of lions. They had stern faces, long curly hair and beards. The bodies were strong build, muscled with great claws demanding respect. The statues looked so real that Yugi and the others almost expected them breathe life and start talking. Behind the statues, a long passageway in shinny blue tiles, decorated with images lions and bulls, lead to the city.

“I’m heading to the palace. Send news of the happening to Nigiku.” Dumuzi’s voice awoke them from their awe as he further instructed his general. His gaze turned then to Yugi and his friends. They blinked surprised. “You, follow me.”

Chapter End Notes

God of Sun Dragon and the Winged Dragon of Ra are the same creature, the first is the original Japanese name while the second is the English version. I'll be using both names
in this story.

Immaru (Ryou's past life) means Light in Akkadian.
Jounouchi and Honda followed the two kings and found it even more difficult to keep the horses steady when they hastily rode in the streets of Akkad, between houses and shop tents. The Akkadians, seeing the kings pass by, kneeled with their heads bowed. They all looked concerned when they realized that young king Immaru was unconscious and all prayed he would recover fast.

They rode fast until they reached the palace. Yugi and his friends gasped marvelled when they saw the complex. It was like a city within another city. It had a massive gate and was surrounded by strong walls. They rode past several low houses belonging to the many king’s servants, and admired colourful hanging gardens surrounding the main building, the palace itself. It had a pyramidal shape and was made of stairs platforms. They saw many white balconies and galleries between the green gardens that hung in the several layers of the construction. Never in their lives had they seen such an impressive and beautiful place. They rode further inside the palace complex until they reached the main courtyard. Several bald men dressed in white linen garments came running to meet the kings.

“He fell into unconsciousness while we were fighting the monster.” Dumuzi explained.

“Our king survived the fury of the sun ray’s beast.” The eldest of these men spoke. “We will initiate the healing procedures immediately.”

“When shall I be able to see him again?”

“In about four hours. We will leave him in his royal chamber.” The man answered and bowed with
respect. The men took hold of the unconscious young king’s body and carried him inside with great care. Dumuzi looked heartbroken, his eyes shone of worry.

“I’m sure he will be alright.” Yugi said trying to console the young king. Dumuzi turned around and his expression changed completely. The four friends took a step behind and their blood ran cold. He gave them a dark look that reminded them of Malik when he was about to do something really bad.

“We need to speak.” He merely stated.

He gestured them to follow him. They stepped into the palace’s interior and it was magnificent. The roof was decorated with colourful shiny mosaics, made of thousands of little stones, forming geometric figures. The walls showed beautiful reliefs with images of mighty kings in fierce battles and exciting hunts. They noticed the several people working in the palace stopped their tasks to greet the king with a respectful bow as they passed by. They reached a large door and Dumuzi opened it.

“Akbishu, please leave us alone.” Dumuzi coldly ordered as he entered. Yugi and the others were surprised to see a man looking just like Pegasus, talking in the middle of the large chamber with some servants.

“Lord Dumuzi.” He gracefully bowed. “I am very pleased to see that you are well.”

“Yes, thank you. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about my brother.”

“Oh dear! Is he…?”

“Dead? No. Just very tired. The priests are taking care of him as we speak.”

“Such marvellous news!” Akbishu spoke with an overly enthusiastic voice.

“I need to be alone, can you please leave us. I will talk to you later.”

“Of course my Lord.” Akbishu bowed courteously and left the room. Yugi and his friends stared suspiciously at Akbishu as he walked away. He sounded overly kind and happy to hear the recent news, but they were sure they could trace the falsity in the sweetness of his speech. Dumuzi gestured
the servants to leave too. The young king walked to the centre of the room where two thrones stood at the same level, next to each other, one made of golden and the other of silver. They weren’t a bit surprised to watch Dumuzi sit on the golden one.

“Who are you?” he went straight to the point.

“My name is Yugi Mutou and these are Anzu Mazaki, Jounouchi Katsuya and Honda Hiroto.”

“Tell me what you know about the monster that almost killed my brother.” They sensed the anger and pain in his voice. It was clear Immaru meant a great deal to him.

“It’s the God of Sun Dragon, also known as Winged Dragon of Ra. It’s an Egyptian mystical God...monster”. (Yugi had almost said ‘card’).

“Egyptian, you say. But you don’t look Egyptian at all.”

“Oh no, we come from Japan.” Dumuzi looked perplexed at Yugi’s answer.

“I’ve never heard about that kingdom.”

“It’s very far away, actually it’s practically in the other side of the world.”

“I see. Does everybody wear such strange outfits there? What are your shoes made from, anyway?” Yugi smiled for Dumuzi’s curiosity.

“Yes, everybody dresses up like us. And these are sneakers...Ehm, I think they are mostly made of leather and rubber...” Yugi looked at his friends for help, but they looked as clueless as him.

“Rubber...” Dumuzi murmured at the new word, staring with wonder at Yugi’s feet. Then he seemed to remember the real reason he wanted to talk to them and looked stern again.

“I find it a big coincidence you accidently bumped into my cousin while he travelled to reach me. (They all made a mental memo that Nigiku was Dumuzi and Immaru’s cousin). The region he was
travelling is remote and far from any village. So what were you guys doing out there?” Yugi looked at his friends for backup. They nodded at him, encouraging him to tell the young king the truth.

“It’s going to sound really strange. You may not believe us.” Yugi warned.

“Try me.” Dumuzi challenged while he straightened his back against the throne.

“Well, ehm, where should I begin?” Yugi realized he hadn’t prepared for anything like this. “We are friends of the Pharaoh in Egypt. There is an enemy luring down there. His name is Bakura. He wants to start the Ultimate Shadow Game.”

“What does that have to do with the Akkadian Empire?”

“Well, the Shadow Game will decide not only the Fate of the Pharaoh, but also of Mankind. We don’t know how but Bakura wants to release a creature of ultimate darkness to dominate the world. We believe that, somehow you and your brother are supposed to play an important role fighting this dark power.”

“What makes you think that?”

“The God of Sun Dragon did come all the way from Egypt to attack the city while it was vulnerable.”

“Are you implying that this creature was sent to kill Immaru?” The young king sounded shocked.

“I don’t know. Maybe. Probably... Look, all I know for sure is that we had to find you and stop Immaru from being killed.”

“You speak as if you knew which events were about to take place beforehand. I still think it’s very strange you just happened to be in the right place and the right time to stop a chain reaction that would have led to my brother’s death. Are you spies?”

“No, we are - as I said before, we are the Pharaoh’s friends and- and, ehm...we were sent with the mission of, ehm...” Yugi had no idea how to explain the king without sounding crazy.
“It was Shaddi!” Jounouchi suddenly interrupted.

“And who may this Shaddi person be?” The young king was starting to feel annoyed.

“He’s some kind of weird Egyptian ghost! He helped us come here after we dwelled in the fragmented memories of the Pharaoh inside the Millennium Puzzle and in there we found an Mesothingy inscription about a Sun and a Moon king and it said the Moon king had died and we think you two are connected to the solution of breaking the always repeating cycle of events, so we followed the door to the past so we could stop the Moon king’s death and help us find a way of changing history!!!” Jounouchi madly ranted in one single breath, his voice echoing in the ample room.

Yugi, Anzu and Honda looked pale and outraged for their friend’s recklessness. Dumuzi looked sincerely astonished, paralyzed for moments, with the exception of the blinking of his eyes, which expressed his utter confusion. Suddenly he burst into laughter. Yugi hit his hand on his temple, Anzu crossed her arms and shook her head irritated, Honda hit Jounouchi’s head.

“It’s all true! We know this because we came from the future!” Jounouchi yelled, only aggravating the king’s laughter.

“Ha, ha, ha, ha!” Dumuzi was bent over, his arms wrapped around his belly. “You guys are hilarious! So, from when do you come from?”

“About 5,000 years from now.” Yugi spoke defeated, his head down. Jounouchi really screwed things this time.

“And you dwelled in the fragmented memories of the Egyptian king?” Yugi, Anzu and Honda sadly sighed and nodded. Dumuzi laughed the rest of his fit and slowly recomposed himself.

“Well, after what I just saw today, it might even believe it. Otherwise you are or liars or completely mad.” Dumuzi said, his tone suddenly changing to scarcely serious, his look on his face dark and grave. The four friends swallowed dry. “You’ll remain in the palace under my vigilance. Don’t even try to escape. When my brother recovers we will go to the bottom of this.” He stood up, indicating that their alone time with him had ended. “Whoever you may be or come from, is right now irrelevant for me. I’m just glad you appeared. Apparently, we owe our lives to you today. I will not forget that.” Dumuzi called some names out. “Please take these four to guest rooms and give them clean clothes.” He turned to face Yugi and his friends again. “I will see you during tonight’s
banquet.” At this he walked away and left the room. The servants bowed towards Yugi and his friends, gesturing to follow them.

“Well, at least he seems to be a good guy. Less crazy and hostile than our Malik.” Honda spoke as they walked down the corridors.

“Let’s not forget Malik was full of grudge and desire for revenge, not to mention he had a dark split personality possessing him.” Yugi reminded.

“True.” Honda agreed.

“I don’t know if I like very much the idea of being his guest-prisoner.” Jounouchi complained a bit, remembering the time Malik controlled his mind.

“I’m not upset at all with the thought of having to stay here. This palace is amazing!” Anzu cheerfully said.

“Let’s just hope Immaru will get better soon. We have no time to lose. Only the gods know if we’ll be on time to stop Bakura.” Yugi reminded. The four were silent for a while.

“Dumuzi probably went to see his brother.” Anzu broke the silence, wishing to change of subject. “It must be difficult for him.”

Jounouchi nodded quietly. It’s horrible. He thought. When the life of your sibling is in danger and you can do nothing but wait. He could fully understand Dumuzi’s worries. All his attention would go now to his ill brother.

The servants stopped and presented them to their rooms. Four doors, one room for each one of them. They agreed to meet in one hour to explore a bit more of the palace and discuss what to do next. As each of them entered their room, all their worries dissipated momentarily. The rooms were luxurious, decorated with beautiful colourful curtains and carpets, a large bed in the middle full of pillows with pretty patterns on it and a fantastic view over the gardens and the city. It was the perfect holiday resort. If only they weren’t there for an important mission.
Sorry for the short chapter, will try to develop more in the next one

So Akbishu is Pegasus past life. More about his character will be told and developed in the next chapters. The word BISHU means EVIL in Akkandian. I added the AK, it sounded better.
The tale of the Sun and Moon kings

Chapter Summary

Yugi and his friends learn about Dumuzi's real intentions. More is told about the Akkadian kings. And what are Akbishu's plans for the kings?

Chapter Notes

NIGIKU (Lord Bright-Eyed) = Otogi Ryuji (Duke Devlin)
DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
AKBISHU / Main Royal Advisor (Evil) = Pegasus
Enjoy the story
I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Please, get well soon.

Dumuzi thought while he looked at his sleeping brother. The priests gave him a ritualized healing procedure to restore his spiritual wounds and renew his bodily energies.

“This fight with the beast of sun rays almost killed your brother. He was already weakened by sending his energy to the battlefield. He sacrificed his energy for invincible strength. Not foreseeing what was to come, his energy transfer was quite a generous one. The creature appeared during the morning, when the sun was still halfway to noon. You understand he used all his energy reserves.”

The priest’s words echoed in his mind. Dumuzi was overwhelmed with the inner strength his brother possessed. It was an indescribable willpower that seemed to challenge all logic of human endurance. Immaru didn’t have his full strength when he faced the golden dragon, and yet he fought a good two to three hours against fire and wind. Sure the priests were backing him up and sending him spiritual energy and life-force from the Ishtar temple, but still, it was amazing. Dumuzi smiled proudly at his brother.

He looked outside and saw the stars and an almost full moon. He knew the fact the moon was starting it’s Waning Gibbous cicle, would diminish the benefits of his healing. He sighed worried. If
Immaru hadn’t said those words to the beast, he probably would have died. Dumuzi shivered. The thought that he could return home triumphant from war and come to the discovery that Immaru was dead made him feel desperate. He took Immaru’s hand on his. It felt warm. He looked lovingly at the face of his sleeping sibling, so peaceful and innocent.

“I swear I will never leave you alone again. Should you ever need protection, I will be there for you. With you. Always. This I swear.” Dumuzi whispered solemnly.

He wiped the tears off his face. The Sun King tried to imagine his life without his brother and concluded it would be too empty, too lonely. He’d rather die. He bent over his brother’s body, kissed softly his temple, and left the room, closing the door behind him gently. “Nobody, except for me, is authorized to enter this room. In no any kind of circumstance!” He ordered two guards standing by the door. “Nodoby.” He stressed and departed to the banquet hall.

* * *

The four friends could not believe their eyes. They were guided by servants to a huge hall, with three rows of very long tables, completely crammed with all kinds of food. Meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, sweets, you name it. All displayed artistically only to stimulate the appetite.

“I see you made it.” Dumuzi’s voice was heard behind them.

He looked really handsome now that he was cleaned and his hair fell in a silky manner. Yugi and his friends noticed he wasn’t wearing the black uniform he had before. He was dressed with a warm yellow long robe, open in a V manner till the waist and held by a golden wide band. It was a beautiful piece of clothing. Its whole texture and borders were decorated with embroideries made of golden dread, creating vegetative patterns. Underneath they could see a lighter yellow shirt and wide pants, closed by the ankles. He also wore jewels, pointy earrings, and golden plates in the same fashion as Malik, around the neck and wrists. “You all look much better.” He honestly said.

They all had garments according to the Akkadian fashion, a humbler version of Dumuzi’s costume. Yugi, Jounouchi and Honda felt rather uncomfortable and silly in these outfits, but Anzu loved them. She was also the only member of the group who didn’t feel ridiculous in them. She was dressed up in a lovely purple dress with silk ribbons and a transparent veil on the back of her head. Yugi thought she never looked so beautiful before.

“Please, come sit with me.” The young king invited.
They happily took a place next to the king and several people stared with admiration. The four friends noticed Akbishu looked quite discontented but gave an overly kind smile. How faker could this man be? They were invited to eat whatever they wanted and their table was crowded with all kinds of delicious stuff. Honda and Jounouchi stuffed their mouths like real barbarians, realizing they didn’t eat practically anything since lunch the day before. Musicians and dancers animated the banquet. People laughed and chatted cheerfully. Jounouchi and Honda truly believed they died and came to heaven. At the end of the banquet king Dumuzi stood up. Quickly enough, everybody silenced and the music and dancers stopped.

“Thank you so much for being present here tonight. We celebrate our glorious triumph from yesterday’s battle (men roared loudly) and for the combat we won this afternoon against the golden monster (everybody fell silent again). I have good news. My brother, Lord Immaru, king of Akkad, light of Nanna the moon god, will be fine. His health is improving as we speak; all he needs is a good rest (everybody cheered and applauded relieved). I want to make a toast in honour of these four strangers (people stared curiously at them wondering who they were). Dumuzi held his beaker in the air. Everybody else followed his example. “To Yugi, Anzu, Jounouchi and Honda, who saved Lord Nigiku yesterday night from an enemy attack, while he travelled to bring me an important message from my brother. It is thanks to them that the Moon King Immaru is still alive. A toast for these heroes! May they live a long and happy life!”

Everybody toasted, screaming words of good fortune at the four strangers. Dumuzi sat down with a grin on his lips. The members of the court understood clearly the message hidden under the cheerful tone. The king had stated there was a traitor among them.

“Yugi, I want to ask you guys a favour.” Dumuzi turned to the spiked haired boy. “Will you join me and guard my brother?” Yugi was surprised by Dumuzi’s request. “I have my reasons to believe somebody in my court wishes my brother dead. I cannot trust anybody, not even the guards. Do you understand?” Yugi nodded.

“Why do you trust us?” Yugi asked.

“Why do I have the feeling you did everything today to save my brother’s life?” Yugi smiled. He was starting to sympathize with the king.

…

They all sat in the dark room and looked at the sleeping king. It reminded them of the time Malik appeared under the alias Namu and brought them a wounded Ryou. The boy had been very sick, having lost quite some blood from the deep cut on his left arm. Dumuzi opened the curtains so the moonlight fell on Immaru.
"We must make sure that he receives as much moonlight as possible. It will help him recover faster."

"How is that?" Yugi asked. Anzu, Jounouchi and Honda were equally curious.

"When our mother was pregnant, the physicians failed to notice she was carrying two babies." Everyone gasped. "Yes, Immaru and I are twins. Mother went into delivery in a night of full moon. The delivery had some complications and the baby could die. So the priests gathered in the Isthar temple. There they prayed to the moon god Nanna for the birth of a healthy child. After a long night, my brother was born under the last light of the moon, just before the break of dawn. That’s why he was called Immaru, which means Light. The priests said therefore he was a gift from god Nanna and, believe it or not, he does get stronger as the moon becomes fuller."

Yugi and his friends stared at the sleeping figure with awe. "I think I understand now why he spoke those words today at the monster." Yugi and the others looked surprised at Dumuzi. "He said: Before you stands the child born from the first rays of sun. I think Immaru realized the creature was connected with the Sun god and understood that it wouldn’t harm me. When Immaru was born, everybody was surprised to see that another child was still in my mother’s womb. They say I was very small and weak. According to the physicians, I was born dead. But when they laid me down, the first sun rays touched me and I started breathing. That’s why my name is Dumuzi. It means Son who is Life. The priests agreed my life was a gift of sun god Shamash. The priests call me therefore the child of the Sun god, just like they call my brother the child of the Moon god."

"Wow, that’s quite an amazing story." Yugi spoke.

"Yeah, almost as amazing as yours." The king said almost giggling. "But I believe you, at least in certain things." They all gasped surprised but were contented and quite relieved to know they had earn the king’s trust. "You know by now that my brother is powerful. As a little child he was tormented by things he would see and feel, things he could not explain nor understand. It frightened him. But the priests quickly realized he was a special child and brought him under their training. He might be only 17 years old, but he’s the White Magician, the highest rank in the priest’s hierarchy. Even the High Priest must bow under his religious authority."

Yugi and his friends looked at the white-haired boy with great admiration. "Since about two years he’s been having these dreams about destruction. He calls them the rise of darkness. He keeps talking about a dark energy rising in the south and lately has sensed it growing and becoming more threatening. Your story about Bakura and the Egyptian pharaoh makes perfect sense now that I think about it." The four friends switched looks. Yugi felt relieved now that they had the king on their side.

"Ehm, Lord Dumuzi…” Yugi started.
“Oh please, no need of all that formality. Just call me Dumuzi.”

“Dumuzi, about Akblishu…”

“You don’t trust him either.” Dumuzi spoke darkly, his eyes fixed on his brother. Yugi blinked surprised. The young king let out a small laughter. “You guys are too transparent. I saw the way you all stared suspiciously at him when he left the room this afternoon and I was observing you during the banquet. You kept staring hatefully at him and switching accomplice looks. At least, between the pauses of your devour.” He gave a reproving look at Jounouchi and Honda. They both looked caught and embarrassed. “My brother hates Akblishu. And believe me, hating is something that doesn’t fit Immaru’s character.”

“What makes you suspect Akblishu?” Anzu asked. Dumuzi remained a moment silent, probably considering the answer.

“Akblishu has been the King’s main advisor for many years. He was our father’s right hand. But my brother and I believe he’s involved in our father’s death. Mother died short after our birth, so our father married again and Akkad got a new queen. Her name was Aiht-Nyc, a loving and caring lady. She was beyond doubt a perfect mother, wife and queen. Everybody loved and cherished her. Especially Akblishu. My brother and I suspect he and Aiht-Nyc had a secret love affair, but we always kept it between us. Alas, Aiht-Nyc suffered of an incurable illness. Despite everybody’s efforts in making her feel better, she passed away three years ago.” Dumuzi looked down, his face sad at the memory.

“I’m sorry.” Anzu spoke. Dumuzi nodded in understanding and continued.

“Akblishu has changed since then. He used to be a spontaneous and carefree man, but after Aiht-Nyc died, he seemed to gain a hatred for the royal family members. He started coming with strange stories to put us against each other and his behaviour became increasingly fake. I guess it became more and more difficult to pretend. Most of his advises were turn down. He became a man of extreme measures. I know our father was becoming discontented by Akblishu’s behaviour and I think he was considering in replacing him. But then, seven months ago, he died in a horrible accident while hunting.”

“You think Akblishu has something to do with your father’s death.” Yugi concluded and the king nodded in confirmation.
“But we don’t have any proof. And because we are kings only very recently, plus the fact of being so young, well let’s say we have to build up a reputation before we can displace him. He’s a very influential man in the court and plays an important role in our politics.” He sighed.

“I think you and your brother won many points with the winning of the battle and the fight against the God of Sun Dragon.” Yugi spoke.

“I guess.” Dumuzi said without any enthusiasm.

“Don’t worry Dumuzi! We will investigate Akbishu and if he’s up to something, we will discover.” Jounouchi spoke determinately. The young king looked a bit surprised but smiled.

“Thank you. I really appreciate it. I feel lucky to have met you. I never received so much spontaneous help from complete strangers.” He spoke with sincerity. “I’m tired. If you don’t mind, I’m going to sleep. Who will take the first watch?” Yugi and Anzu raised their hands in the air.

“We are going to sneak on Peg-Akbishu and try to discover what that scum is up to!” Jounouchi enthusiastically announced. He and Honda said they goodnights and exited the room. “We’ll come back in some hours so you can sleep.” Honda told Yugi and Anzu before leaving the room.

The two friends sat on the fluffy cushions with their backs to the door. They weren’t a bit amazed to see Dumuzi lay down next to his brother. They remained silent the rest of the night, staring at the stars shining next to the brilliant moon, listening to the kings’ soft breathing. Yugi couldn’t imagine how difficult it must be; being orphans and having to bear the weight of a whole Empire’s crown. He remembered the wall inscription inside the Millennium Puzzle. He understood now the reason for the Sun King’s disappearance. And he was glad they were able to stop Immaru’s death. Not just for the sake of Yami and the world, but because they managed to keep these siblings together. Yugi thought a long while about the events since their arrival, about Dumuzi’s story and about Bakura. In the mist of his thoughts, weariness swept over his mind and body and, just like Anzu, slowly succumbed into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I was not feeling so creative in searching for a name for Pegasus' past life's lover so I just called her Aiht-Nyc, which is actually Cynthia backwards.
What's up with Akbishu?

Chapter Summary

Jounouchi and Honda go in search of the suspicious Main Advisor Akbishu, who's nobody else but Pegasus' past live. What secrets is he hiding? And what will be consequences of his actions? Meanwhile, Yugi and Anzu spend some time with Nigiku (Otogi's past live) and discover some more things about the Sun and Moon kings.

Chapter Notes

NIGIKU (Lord Bright-Eyed) = Otogi Ryuji (Duke Devlin)
DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
AKBISHU / Main Royal Advisor (Evil) = Pegasus

Enjoy the story

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

Jounouchi and Honda explored the Akkadian palace in search of Akbishu. It was not an easy task, since the palace complex was enormous, leading to endless divisions, galleries, and court yards. The fact it was dark didn’t help much either. The building was like a labyrinth. Orientating at day light was already hard enough. And now, shadows played tricks under the torches’ lights, creating a whole new world. The two tough guys walked silently, staring at the wall reliefs. During day, they looked impressive and beautiful, displaying majestic images of glorious kings. But now, the shadows misshaped the sovereigns transforming them into demonic images. Both shivered and gulped hard. The palace was completely silent and, for the occasional presence of guards, it looked abandoned. Jounouchi and Honda walked for what felt like hours. Their legs were tired and they were slowly succumbing to the weariness of the past day.

“I’m sure we already passed here.” Jounouchi said as they took a new corner.

“No, it doesn’t feel familiar to me.” Honda looked around.

“I’m telling you! I recognize that…ugh, figure over there!” (more like a monster, he thought)
“I give up. We are definitely lost.” Honda admitted. “Maybe we should change shift with Yugi and Anzu and search for Akblishu another time.” He dejectedly suggested. He felt a hard blow on his face. Jounouchi punched him right on the eye. “Idiot! Why did you do that for? Now I’m going to have a black eye!”

“Suits you well.” Jounouchi said, his fist in the air. He shifted brusquely and grabbed on Honda’s collar. “You’re going to give up? Just like that? You forgot why we are here? If we don’t help the kings, we won’t be able to help Yami!” He hissed furiously.

“I guess you’re right. I’m sorry.” Honda took a deep breath and raised his arm in the air. “Let’s go!”

“Let’s go!” Jounouchi imitated Honda. They remained a few moments, standing in an attack position, with the creepy king’s relief behind them.

“Euh… which side?” Honda asked, without moving. Jounouchi had his eyes closed, his eyebrow twitching and a new vein appeared on his temple. He had no idea.

…

Meanwhile, Nigiku travelled back to the city of Akkad, leading an army of thousands of men under the starry sky. The moonlight illuminated their paths, facilitating their nocturne voyage. The soldiers had rested enough and made sure there were no survivors among the enemy’s corpses to live to tell their tale. Nigiku had followed his king’s instructions. He kept Immaru’s urgent message secret and departed already late in the morning. The soldiers had had time to mourn, heal their wounds and rest their bodies after the exhausting battle. Everybody was still tired and travelled in a slow pace. But they were ready to return home, to their families and friends. As for Nigiku, his heart was heavy. He was worried sick with his cousins and wished only for their wellbeing. His mind had many questions, all concerning their safety. He had only one answer to his many questions.

*There is a traitor among us.*

…

Jounouchi and Honda ran from gallery to courtyard, from garden to defensive walls, back to a gallery again. They stopped at the entrance of one of the many open areas with a magnificent garden and panted exhausted.
“It’s hopeless*pants* Akbishu is probably asleep and we are running like two total douches!” Honda moaned. Jounouchi didn’t reply. As bad as he felt about it, his friend was absolutely right. He was about to suggest and return to Immaru’s room, when both teenagers froze. They heard a sound outside. The boys waited expectantly in silence and heard again a soft rustling coming from the garden. They remained paralyzed for a while and their eyes caught a movement by the roses’ bushes. Both friends held their breaths, hoping it was no kind of ferocious animal hiding between the plants. They repressed a gasp when they recognized the figure appearing from behind the bushes. Akbishu!

Thanks to the blue light of the moon, they could see the man with silver hair holding a rose on his hand, bringing it to his nose and inhaling its scent.

“Aiht-Nyc...Oh my love...I am so sorry.” The man whispered. “Fate tricked me today.” He breathed the rose’s perfume again. “But don’t you worry Aiht-Nyc. I’m not giving up just yet. I know I can fix things.” At this he placed the flower in his robe and put a hood on his head. He moved on, taking a path in the garden.

Jounouchi and Honda stared at each other, barely believing their luck. They made a silent agreement and nodded. They quietly followed the man, hiding between the different exotic plants. Akbishu walked tranquil, unaware of his stalkers. He crossed the whole garden and followed a path along the palace’s defensive wall. At a certain point, he reached a small door, probably a minor exit of the complex. He left the palace’s domain to proceed his nocturne walk between the city’s houses. He walked a while and only stopped when he reached a temple, looking like a stair pyramid. It was much smaller in comparison with the city’s main temple they saw from the palace earlier today. Akbishu took the straight staircase upwards and entered a small building on the top of the temple.

Jounouchi and Honda looked at one and other. They carefully advanced to the entrance and peeked inside. It was dark as a pit, but they could hear the sound of footsteps inside, distancing from them. They ventured inside and followed the sound, their hands glued to the walls, guiding them in the total blackness. Eventually, they saw a dim light in the end of the division. As they walked closer, the light became brighter. They reached an ample division illuminated by many torches. Its walls were covered with scary reliefs showing demons, fantastic creatures eating and killing warriors. The boys shivered at the sight and hid behind a wall. From there, they saw Akbishu take his hood off and kneel before five hooded and faceless men. They sat behind a U-shaped table.

“Akbishu, main advisor of the twin kings. You have failed your part of the deal. Not only King Immaru still lives, he’s proving to become more powerful! If his mastery in magic continues growing like this, nothing will be able to defeat him.”

“I beg for your forgiveness, oh mighty ones, but highly unexpected occurrences happened and…” Akbishu’s words were cut by the man sitting in the middle of the table. He stood up and pointed at the kneeling man.
“We sent our men to kill the messenger and summoned the mighty God of Sun Dragon! You had everything on your hands to assure your victory.”

“I-I know but…” Akbishu started in a begging tone, but was interrupted by the man sitting on the right from the first one that had spoken. He too stood up.

“You had your chance and you spilled it up. The kings’ latest conquests shall result in the increase of their power!” A third man stood up, on the left side of the first one.

“It will be a matter of time and the kings will dispose you!” The two remaining men spoke as they stood up simultaneously.

“Akbishu! You failed the Order of the Black Priests. Your punishment will be a cursed long torturous and solitary life!” The five of them spoke simultaneously, all pointing accusingly at the silver haired man.

“No! You mustn’t! Aiht-Nyc! I must bring her back to life!!! Please, give me another chance! I beg you! All I need is just one more chance!”

“You are wrong Akbishu” The first man spoke. “You missed your chance!” At this the five men spoke an enchantment in a strange language and a wind with black clouds covered the room. Akbishu screamed and begged desperately but in no time the mysterious wind ceased. All that the torches illuminated now was an empty and stripped division. The five strange men were gone, the tables disappeared and the walls were barren. Akbishu succumbed in this misery and burst into a dramatic and sorrowful cry. Jounouchi and Honda, having seen enough, exited the building as quietly and unnoticed as they entered it.

Nigiku smiled when he saw entrance in the mountain leading to his city. He had met halfway the messenger sent by Dumuzi. The messenger told him succinctly the story of the Golden Dragon, how Immaru held it away of the city and how it became submissive to Dumuzi.

Nigiku galloped faster; the expectation and anxiety were still killing him. His heart rejoiced when his green eyes met an unharmed city under the break of dawn. For him, this was the most beautiful sight he ever saw.

The guards on the wall, seeing the arrival of the Akkadian army leaded by Nigiku, opened the great
city gates and the soldiers were greeted by the population with cheers of joy. They rode straight to the palace, followed by running children and a sound of great rejoice behind them.

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Dumuzi’s eyes opened tiredly and then blinked several times. He woke up from a sound that was growing closer. He sat up and looked down at his sleeping brother and listened more carefully. He realized the sound came from outside. He stood up and his eyes met the sound asleep Yugi and Anzu. So much for watching over us. He thought. Dumuzi quietly reached the balcony and couldn’t help but smile. He came just in time to see Nigiku leading his men into the palace’s main courtyard.

Shortly after, both cousins greeted merrily. Afterwards, Dumuzi spoke some praising and comforting words to the army of tired soldiers. Everybody was anxious about the well-being of young king Immaru and the Sun king guaranteed his brother was sure to recover quickly and would be happily walking around in no time. Yugi and Anzu watched it all from the background. When Dumuzi was finally ready he gestured them to follow him, accompanied by Nigiku. They didn’t switch one single word until they entered the Moon king’s room. Dumuzi was cautious and wanted to be sure that nobody overheard their conversation. The sand haired king was about to say something when they heard shouting and complaining sounds behind the door.

“I’m sure that was Jounouchi’s voice!” Yugi said as he pressed his ear against the door. The Sun king opened it. They were a bit surprised to see two boys with dark circles under the eyes, looking very, very tired, standing beside the guards.

“Morning Sun Lord!” Jounouchi spoke wearily. “They won’t let us in!” He moaned.

“Of course not, I ordered not to.” Dumuzi spoke casually. He gestured the guards to let them in and smirked as he noticed them eying Jounouchi and Honda suspiciously. “What happened to your eye?” The king asked Honda when he noticed a dark circle around his left eye. The tall teenager merely glanced upset at Jounouchi, causing an amused chuckle from both Dumuzi and Nigiku.

The young king closed the door, feeling reassured with the knowledge the guards were doing their work accordingly his will. He gestured the others to sit down and retold the happenings of the past day to his cousin. Jounouchi and Honda yawning from the lack of sleep, proceeded in recounting the strange meeting of Akbishu with the Order of Black Priests. Once they finished, everybody stared with some concern at the dark look Dumuzi had on his face.

“My father banished them ten years ago!” The Sun king explained, anger and bitterness staining his voice. “They were becoming dangerously powerful, poisoning people’s mind with superstitions,
curses and dark magic. My father was a great man and didn’t let himself be intimidated by them. So, he condemned the existence of the Black Order in our Empire. They were exiled from Akkadian territory. Of course, I’m not surprised they’ve been seeking revenge and waiting patiently to make their move. They obviously used Akbishu’s weakness to reach their goal.”

“Yeah, Akbishu buried himself in such a depression after aunt Aiht-Nyc died.” Nigiku spoke.

“I haven’t seen him today. He wasn’t present during the army’s arrival.” Dumuzi spoke thoughtfully. “I wonder if he will be present during the speech.”

“What speech?” Yugi asked.

“It’s my duty as king to talk to the people of Akkad. I have to bring them news about the war and my brother’s condition. And Akbishu, being the main advisor, is obliged to be present during the speech.”

“Well, if he doesn’t show up, then you have a good reason to question his loyalty to throne.” Nigiku spoke sternly. Dumuzi nodded in agreement. He looked at Immaru. The boy slept so peacefully, unaware of the intrigues that were revolving around them. *Rest while you can.* Dumuzi had a feeling difficult times were ahead of them.

...  

“People of Akkad. Today is a great day. Today we receive our sons and brothers as winners of a mighty battle!”

Dumuzi spoke from the palace’s balcony, directed to Akkad’s main square. People cheered and applauded of joy. “The enemy has been defeated!”

Thousands of voices became one, cheering in unison. “Yes, today is a great day. Just like yesterday. When my brother, your Lord, the Moon king, mastered his magic protecting our city from the great God of Sun. This same beast that wanted to destroy our city is now our ally and will listen to my commando.”

Dumuzi looked at the direction of the highest mountain top and saw the golden creature watch over him. It seemed to nod in agreement and Dumuzi sighed hoping the beast would truly answer to his orders. The cheers grew and the people of Akkad looked at their Sun king with great awe “The Moon king is now resting and regaining his strength. Soon he too will stand here to greet you, beautiful people of Akkad.”

People cheered ecstatic, relieved that the silver-haired king was out of danger. “Yes, today is a great
day. We won a great battle, but no battle is won without great loses.” Slowly a silence grew among
the population. “I mourn for the brave soldiers who gave their life to protect their beloved ones. They
died for you. They died to protect their parents, their children, their wives and their friends. Travel
safe my brave men.”

He bowed in respect and some sobs were heard. “We live on but must remember the dead. Today
we will celebrate and rejoice the return of our beloved ones. Tomorrow we will mourn and honour
the memory of those who passed on. May Ishtar always shine upon you, people of Akkad.”

At this, Dumuzi bowed respectfully and slowly paced away from the balcony. The High Priest took
his place and spoke a prayer that was repeated devotedly by the people down below. Dumuzi passed
by Nigiku. They switched looks. Akbishu had failed to be present during the speech.

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During the afternoon, king Dumuzi had to attend some matters, boring king’s duties as he himself
said. It was Jounouchi and Honda’s turn to watch over the young sleeping king and have some rest
themselves, after their long busy night. Yugi and Anzu stayed in the company of Nigiku.

The kings’ cousin toured Yugi and Anzu though the palace and brought them to the twins' favourite
garden. Anzu stared at him the whole time with shinny eyes (for much of Yugi’s displeasure) for he
looked absolutely stunning in his Akkadian garment of warm red and black tones.

“We used to play here often as children, me, Immaru and Dumuzi.” He smiled at the memories.

“They are really very close, aren’t them?” Yugi asked, trying to ignore Anzu’s obvious drooling over
Nigiku.

“Absolutely. Those two are impossible to separate. Where one is, the other is surely to be close by.
You should see when one of them is away for a day! They act like if they were apart for years.
Especially Dumuzi.”

“Really?”

“Yeah.” A hint of sadness was present in his voice. “I think Dumuzi is completely traumatized with
the deaths of his parents. He looks strong and fearless from outside, but I know better. He’s
possessive and overprotective around Immaru. Terribly scared to lose him too. Immaru was always
the weaker and frailer one. You see, the magic - well, let’s say it consumes a great deal of mental
and physical energy.” Nigiku paused and then grinned amused. “You know what’s funny? That
Dumuzi was the weak baby when they were born. He grew so strong, much to his brother’s irritation. He keeps rubbing it on Immaru.”

“How are they? I mean, their personalities. Are they alike?” Yugi asked, filled by curiosity. Anzu remained silent, too enchanted in following Nigiku’s gracious movements while he spoke.

“Oh, much by the contrary. There are more like complete opposites!” Yugi, and even Anzu, stared surprised. “Dumuzi is the warrior, dominant, hot headed and sometimes he can be quite imprudent. He’s not the Sun king for nothing. Fire is truly his element. Immaru, on the other side, has a very peaceful character. He’s patient, always caring and helpful. It’s impossible not to like him.”

“So I guess water would be his element.” Yugi concluded. Nigiku nodded.

“You know, it’s actually a perfect arrangement made by the gods.” Nigiku continued. “I’m sure they intended them to rule as a team, as One Sovereign. While one king has the power of strength and authority, the other one has the spiritual and diplomatic influence. Where one lacks in something, the other complements it. Together they form the perfect ruler, but separated they are a complete disaster. If Dumuzi was the sole ruler, he would be a tyrant and a war king. If Immaru was to be the king, we would be completely manipulated by others. They bring balance to each other and rule in perfect harmony.”

“Wow, that’s impressive. I’ve never heard about an empire or kingdom ruled by two sovereigns.”

“Well, actually, that’s the interesting part. Originally, Immaru was decreed as the throne’s heir, because of being the first born. But when he was five years old, the priests discovered his magic abilities. He was introduced to the spiritual life and started with his magic training. The court then declared Dumuzi to be the heir to the throne. So Dumuzi was trained since early to become a king, learning all about the politic system, the laws and economics of the empire. He also received an intensive military training. The court intended to have Immaru as Dumuzi’s main adviser, especially regarding religious matters. But also for more diplomatic matters. It became clear since early on; Immaru is the only person who knows how to deal with Dumuzi’s hot temper.

One day, when we were around ten or eleven, Dumuzi announced his brother would become king the same day he would. I remember that day. The members of the court laughed at him, uncle too and everybody put very little thought into his decision. Until the day uncle died and Dumuzi was named king. His first deed was to change the royal heritage law, allowing the ruling of two kings simultaneously, with the conditions that they were both male and children from the same father and mother. Dumuzi wouldn’t dream in ruling alone. He needs his brother by his side as a ruler and not as an advisor. He needs him as an equal.” Nigiku concluded.

Yugi found himself lost in his thoughts. The Akkadian inscription gained now a completely new
meaning. It all made sense now. The death of his twin would have killed Dumuzi from inside.

Together the kings ruled as one
Together they were gods
Never to be divided
Alone they’ll lose by all odds

And so the Sun King too vanished

Yugi wondered. Vanished. Could it be that Dumuzi left his Empire and travelled to Egypt, becoming the first Tomb Keeper? He asked himself why would the king would do such a thing. But he was happy this one question would never have to be answered. They succeeded in changing history by saving Immaru’s life, the White Magician. He had the strong feeling the boy was to play an important role in the fight against Bakura. It was no coincidence the Millennium Ring had come to Ryou Bakura. They are probably destined to confront each other. The dark and light forces battling each other. Yami and Hikari. He shivered.

Chapter End Notes

I know Akbishu is a traitor, but I kind of felt sorry for him after writing this chapter. Wasn't really my intention, it just happened.

Next chapter will be really interesting! I'll try to update as soon as possible :))
Immaru's awakening

Chapter Summary

Immaru, the Moon King, finally wakes up and the guys get to talk with him for the first time.

Chapter Notes

NIGIKU (Lord Bright-Eyed) = Otogi Ryuji (Duke Devlin)
DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
AKBISHU / Main Royal Advisor (Evil) = Pegasus

Enjoy the story

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

CHAPTER SEVEN

It was Jounouchi and Honda’s turn to stay for watch. They had a good nap in the morning, sleeping against the Moon king room’s door, each one holding a sharp weapon in case someone appeared. Now it was just after lunch and they were feeling rather drowsy with their overfilled belly.

Nevertheless, the two friends were determined not to fall asleep again and decided to duel (yes, they did bring their cards with them) to distract and kill time. After about one hour (Honda being disgracefully beaten by Jounouchi twice in a row) they noticed the young king started stirring in his bed for the first time. They switched looks and decided to ignore. After all, the boy had been lying in the same position the whole time. His body probably needed a change. They continued battling, mocking and insulting each other and became increasingly louder. Once again, Immaru moved in his bed, this time adding a painful moan. Jounouchi and Honda froze. They stared at each other and decided to approach the bed. They bent slightly over the sleeping king, each one taking one side of the bed. Immaru’s eyes were moving under his eyelids.

“This guy is a real creep.” Jounouchi murmured.

“Shhhh!” Honda protested. “He’s dreaming you idiot. That’s normal. You do that too when you are sleeping.” He whispered. Jounouchi gave an angry look, but kept his mouth shut. Immaru’s distress
seemed to disappear as quickly as it came and he slept quietly again. The boys stared a short while at the young king.

“Well, it must have just been a short bad dream.” Jounouchi commented while he looked one last time at the boy.

They decided to stop playing cards and instead started plotting against Akbishu, deciding all various kinds of punishment for his treason against the throne. Once again, Immaru started moving from one side to the other in his bed, this time moaning and protesting afflictively. Jounouchi and Honda rushed to the boy and shook him a bit in the hope of waking him up. But instead, the young king became mellow again.

“He’s starting to freak me out.” Jounouchi complained as he looked closer at the peaceful face. Suddenly, Immaru gasped and his eyes opened wide, revealing their big chocolate brown orbs. Jounouchi jumped backwards from the fright with a scream. Immaru sat strait, his face pale but with a very awaken expression. He looked very quickly around and after recognizing his bedroom he stared at the two boys who were, at their turn, looking back at him with great amazement.

“Who are you?” His voice sounded surprisingly high and clear, certainly for somebody who had been asleep for so long. “Who are you?!” He repeated, fear imprinted in his voice.

“We are friends of your brother Dumuzi.” Honda spoke softly, not wanting to scare the young king. He remembered the few times he hung out with the real-non-possessed-Bakura, the boy was very quickly frightened.

“My brother!” His voice came out hastily, in a gasp. “Where’s my brother?”

“Calm down, he’s fine. After you spoke to the Winged Dragon of Ra, it became all sweet and friendly. Your brother has been taking care of you the whole time and we’ve helping him.” Jounouchi spoke with a surprisingly calm tone (Honda was staring with great unbelief at his friend) and rested his hand of the boy’s shoulder. Immaru looked into Jounouchi’s eyes and seemed to calm down. He took a few deep breaths until his breathing normalized.

“How long have I been out? And what happened with the God of Sun?” The king asked with a more serene voice.

“You’ve been asleep for about a day and a half. The God of Sun became an ally and he is now
watching over the city from the top of the mountain.” Jounouchi explained. Immaru looked surprised but sighed relieved. Suddenly they heard a loud grumbling sound. Immaru’s eyes widened greatly, he blushed furiously and pressed his hand against his belly.

“I need food!” He spoke weakly. Both Jounouchi and Honda switched looks.

“We’ll send somebody to get you something to eat.” Honda said.

“No, I need food now!” Immaru insisted and out of nothing, he pushed Jounouchi to the side, jumped off his bed and ran to the door. The two friends stared in shock. The boy had been so fast and lean that they didn’t even have time to react.

“This guy is not normal! Where did he get that energy from?” Honda asked still stunned.

“I dunno, but I think we better follow him.” Was Jounouchi’s answer.

They passed the two guards who were staring surprised at the running king. They remained stunned as they watched the other two boys run down the gallery to catch up with the white-haired boy. People gasped and bowed hastily as they saw the king pass by them in haste. Everybody remained a while staring perplexed. Why was the king, who supposedly was ill, running in the palace in his nightclothes with two of king Dumuzi’s new friends chasing him down?

Honda and Jounouchi were taken aback by the boy’s speed. Nobody, who had been ill for so long, had eaten nothing the whole time, could run this fast, right? They gasped as they saw him go through a door and disappear behind it. They opened it, and for their great amazement, realized they stood in the middle of the palace’s huge kitchens. They looked around and everybody was working, busy with their tasks, as if nothing strange had just happened.

“Ehm, ma’dam. Did, by any change, king Immaru enter here?” Honda asked at a woman passing by.

“Oh yes, his majesty came in running as usual. You’ll find him at that end of the kitchen, by the left.” She merrily answered.

“…as usual?” Honda and Jounouchi repeated in unison, admired with the causality the woman had answered them. They shared surprised stares and walked to the place the woman had indicated. They stopped when they saw the boy, sitting at a wooden table, stuffing his face with an impressive collection of different kinds of food. A middle aged large man brought a tray with several kinds of fruit, smiling at the king. The white-haired boy smiled back and served himself without any
“If you desire anything, your Majesty, just let me know.” The man kindly said and bowed politely at the boy, who nodded in agreement, his mouth full of food and looking very contented. Jounouchi and Honda noticed the middle-aged man and some other members of the kitchen staff switched happy smiles with the young king as they went on with their tasks. They seemed to be completely at ease with the presence of their ruler. Suddenly the doors snapped open. Jounouchi and Honda turned around to see Dumuzi enter the division hastily, the two guards from Immaru’s room behind him. No doubt, they had called the king.

“Immaru!” Dumuzi yelled as he stepped in the kitchen. Everybody bowed solemnly as the king made his way to his brother.

“Dumuzi!” The white-haired boy wiped out his mouth and stood up from his place, his arms stretched out to meet his twin. They hugged in a warm fraternal embrace. Dumuzi and Immaru hugged, kissed and laughed of joy. The kitchen staff members looked at the scene with emotion and some women wiped tears of their eyes.

“I’m so glad that you are fine!” Dumuzi spoke as he cupped his brother’s face in his hands. “You really frightened me. I thought I was going to lose you.” He said teary.

Jounouchi and Honda could see the compassion in Immaru’s eyes. He whispered something only his brother heard and they hugged one more time before sitting together by the wooden table. The white-haired boy then resumed his meal with all naturally, while Dumuzi ordered the staff to continue their work. Jounouchi and Honda noticed the people weren’t as relaxed now as when Immaru was alone. They had the feeling that the Moon king was a humbler ruler while the Sun king was probably more of an authorial figure. “You shouldn’t eat here.” Dumuzi whispered. “It’s not fit for a king.”

“Why not? A king should be allowed to go anywhere he wishes for in his palace, whenever he wants, right?”

“Immaru, you know what I mean.”

“Look, I don’t care what people say or think or gossip around. I was starving and was not going to wait for somebody to fetch me something. I come here and I can eat whatever I want. I mean, what’s the better place to find food if not in the kitchen?”
“You do it every time.” Dumuzi was not about to give up. He had lost count of the times they argued about this. Their father had given up scolding Immaru when he was twelve, a time in which the boy’s appetite spoke mightier than any protocol, rule or royal command. But the Sun king had hope he could persuade his brother to change this bad habit of his.

“Do you have any idea what my magic does to my body?” Immaru questioned and gave a very serious look at his brother. “It consumes it. Every single part of my body sacrifices its energy to a magic spell. If I don’t refill my body quickly, I might as well die of hunger!” Dumuzi sighed. He knew that there was no sense in discussing further with him. No wonder their father gave up this fight. Nothing spoke mightier than Immaru’s demanding stomach. “Who are they by the way?” The silver haired boy asked while he gestured with his head at Jounouchi and Honda.

“I’ll explain once you are ready.” Dumuzi spoke gravely. Immaru looked a bit surprised at the serious tone and stared at the two boys for a moment, wondering.

“Ready!” He announced once he was satiated, stretching his arms contented.

“You’re changing clothes first. You guys gather the others and Nigiku. We’ll meet you at the Eastern Gardens’ entrance.” Jounouchi and Honda nodded and left the kitchen. Immaru still stared in wonder at his brother, understanding something serious was going on, but followed him without further questions out of the kitchens. He knew the gardens were the place they could speak at ease, for they were private and exclusively for the use of the kings. There was no safer place to discuss secrets than there.

“Thank you for the food. It was great!” He cheerfully thanked before leaving. The staff waved him goodbye happily as the young man left the room.

“Such a special child.” The middle-aged man murmured.

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Yugi and his friends waited by the entrance of the Eastern Gardens, which were extra guarded. Nigiku sat on a bench nearby looking quite expectant. It was obvious he too was anxious to see his cousin recovered. He smiled fully when he saw the young kings appear, descending the small staircase that gave access to the gardens.

“Immaru! It’s so great to see you well!” He merrily spoke. The cousins hugged each other laughed,
both happy to see each other.

“And I am so glad you made it to Dumuzi in time.” Nigiku smiled proudly, remembering how Immaru had stressed urgent when he gave him the letter. “And you must be Yugi and Anzu.”

Immaru was dressed in the same fashion as his brother, but instead of golden, his robe was light blue and the embroideries were made of silver dread. He wore identical jewellery as Dumuzi, but in the silver version. The youngsters passed the guards and walked deep into the centre of the gardens. On their way, they chatted about daily stuff. They stopped when they reached a beautiful clearing place surrounded by trees and colourful flowers. There they had all the needed privacy and could talk at ease.

Yugi and his friends told their story about the Millennium Puzzle, the Duel Cards, the City Battle and how they were sent to the past to change the set of events. Unlike Dumuzi, his brother Immaru listened with a patient and serious expression. Nigiku switched looks of incredibility with Dumuzi, who often limited himself in shaking his shoulders in response. They both had a hard time in believing the whole future thing and restrained from chuckling. But as Yugi’s account developed, the name Bakura and Evil Spirit were spoken more often, just like the connection of his person with Egypt became clearer. Their initial amusement was slowly being replaced by concern. Finally, Immaru was informed about Akbishu and the five members of the Order of Black Priests, which disturbed the young ruler greatly.

“The Order of Black Priests was not just exiled.” Immaru spoke apprehensively. “Father discovered the five Highest Priests were plotting against him and the Court. They were going to spread destruction and death through dark magic. Father wanted to make sure that they could not hurt anybody ever again so he sentenced them to soul wandering.”

“I thought that was forbidden!” Nigiku sounded exasperated.

“It is. That’s why we never told anybody. It’s a secret that never left the temple. Only the people that were present during the ritual know about this: the High Priest, father, Akbishu, Dumuzi and I.” There was a profound silence.

“So what is this soul wandering?” Yugi asked, already fearing for the answer.

“It’s a ritual condemned by our ancestors for its irreversible consequences. The soul of the victim is reaped. It’s not allowed to pass over, but it also doesn’t die. The soul is then trapped between two worlds, trapped in the Shadow Realm.” The friends shivered at the explanation. “The souls are condemned to wander around for all eternity and slowly become one of the shadows, losing all their
memories. Thanks to this ritual, the High Priests were weakened and their magic powers were sealed away. They cannot harm anybody directly. But I suspect, when they became wandering souls, they made an alliance with the darkness itself. They served the darkness all their lives, so it would be a logic choice.

They must have wandered immediately to Egypt to learn new secrets about dark magic. Egypt is known for its ancient knowledge and secrets of many great things, including dark magic. And from there they must have plotted and prepared their revenge against the Royal Family. Their first step was to control Akbishu of course. It must have been easy, since his mind was already corrupted by anger and sorrow. They used him to achieve their own selfish goals. Akbishu is actually nothing more than a pawn in their scheme.”

“What about the God of Sun Dragon?”

“Surely the five High Priests have a role in that one too, but I’m not sure how.”

“So resuming and concluding.” Nigiku stated. “The five High Priests of the Black Order became wandering souls. They departed to Egypt to learn more about dark magic and after ten years they allied with Akbishu. He created the right circumstances for a war between Akkad and Argo. Meanwhile the Five wandering High Priests found a way of getting God of Sun Dragon to attack Akkad. So tell me, now that they failed, what’s going to happen?”

“Akbishu will be punished and the White Priests will have to protect the city from the wandering soul’s attempts.” Immaru explained.

“The White Priests? What about you? After all you are the White Magician?” Nigiku inquired. Immaru released a sorrowful sigh and Dumuzi looked at him apprehensively, already foreseeing his brother’s will.

“I’m afraid my White Magician powers are more needed elsewhere.” Immaru spoke. “I’ve been having dreams and visions of this rise of Darkness coming from the south for a long time. This story about Bakura, as unreal as it might sound, fits perfectly in them. I must travel to Egypt.”

“I will go with you.” Dumuzi immediately spoke, while he majestically stood up. “No discussions.” He added before anybody could argue against him. He looked at the four time travellers. “We will prevent whatever Bakura wants to do, together.”

“We will have to leave as soon as possible.” Immaru agreed, glad his twin would come along. “Time is scarce and our departure is urgent.”
“Of course. We will go in a couple of days, as soon as all needed preparations are ready.” The Sun king reassured his brother.

“We cannot have both our kings away for an uncertain time! Who will rule the Empire?” Nigiku questioned exasperated.

“And that’s when you come in.” Dumuzi told, while he rested his hand on his cousin’s shoulder. “You’ll have to stay here and replace us. I don’t trust anybody else to be Akkad’s regent.” Nigiku looked truly shocked and became instantly pale.

“But – But I want to go with you!” He complained upset.

“Akkad needs you, Nigiku.” Immaru’s calm voice was heard. “Akbishu acted against himself and proved to be unworthy of his position. Tonight, he will be condemned by his actions and you will be named the new Throne’s Main Advisor. You have royal blood, enough experience and have what it takes to become a good regent. Please do understand that your part to play in this quest is not in Egypt but in Akkad.” Nigiku opened his mouth, but closed it again, not finding any words to go against his cousin. “I know it’s difficult, but believe me, this role is more important than you think.”

“But of course. I understand. I would love to go with you, but I will take care of Akkad until your return.” Nigiku bowed politely and the cousins smiled in a mix of contentment and sadness. Separation was going to be hard. “The priests and advisors will have a heart attack when they hear about this!” He added with a pained smile. The twins nodded in agreement, knowing this would be their next great political challenge.

“Dumuzi, I would like to try and see if it’s possible to strengthen our alliance with the God of Sun Dragon.” Immaru suddenly changed of subject. His brother blinked surprised. “I want to seal his soul into a tablet so we can travel with him unnoticed. But for this, I will need his acceptance and I have the feeling he will accept this easier from you than from me.”

“Seal him in a tablet?” Dumuzi asked astonished. His brother nodded with determination with a rare look that didn’t allow any further discussion. “Okay. I’ll do anything you ask for, but for Ishtar’s sake, do be careful.”

“You know I will.” Immaru cheerfully reinsured him. “Tomorrow, at day break.”
Dumuzi stared a bit warily at his overly optimistic twin but eventually let go. Magic was Immaru’s terrain and he knew his sibling would never take unnecessary risks. It did not mean he enjoyed the idea of approaching the beast, but his twin’s strategy made sense. He decided to focus on that matter tomorrow, for now they needed to request an urgent reunion with the court. He sensed a storm was coming.
The twin kings had insisted in the presence of the four time travellers during the urgent meeting with the Akkadian Court. The tensions were high and palpable. The Court members had been discussing during the last few days the strangeness of the last events.

First there was the out-of-character move from King Argo. He had been an old ally and a loyal friend of Akkad for many years. Yet, his most recent behaviour and decisions had been both rash and unprecedented. He declared war against the Empire for trivial reasons, mere pretexts to forge a conflict that ultimately led to the battle Duzumi and his troops fought just three days ago.

Then the strangest event was followed. A mystical monster attacked the city during the absence of the Sun king. The city had only a small fraction of the army, so it was vulnerable to any attack. The two events seemed to be linked, the battle and the monster, but all theories seemed too far-fetched. Fortunately, the Moon king had saved the city from total disaster. Afterwards, the monster went to the mountains and guarded the city, since then. Nobody could understand its sudden change of heart. Just like nobody could understand the reason for its attack in the first place.
The new friendship the kings demonstrated towards the four strangers was also unusual. Especially Dumuzi, who was by nature a wary person, seemed to deposit a great trust on these youngsters. It was confusing. But more worrisome was the absence of the main-adviser Akbishu today. Nobody missed the fact he didn’t appear during King Dumuzi’s speech or to the urgent Court meeting. Actually, nobody saw him since the previous day and wondered what this meant. Wondered how far all the last events were connected with him.

The Court members’ tension culminated with the shocking news and last-minute decision made by the Sun and Moon Kings to travel to Egypt. There was a lot of clamour and commotion, and many angered voices echoed in the ample hall.

“My Lords. You cannot leave the city of Akkad!” A high-ranked General protested.

“Surely the Egyptians can resolve their own matters.” These were the words of a Priest from the Ishtar Temple.

“The empire cannot risk losing any of its kings. This is a too dangerous travel!” Another voice rose in the room.

A confusion of mingled protests installed, filling the ample division with an unbearable noise of many revolted voices. Nigiku looked extremely uncomfortable, probably already imagining how ruling would be like. Immaru caressed his temple with his pale fingers, his brow knitted in an annoyed expression. He looked weary and obviously was upset with all the noise and commotion. As for Dumuzi, he looked appallingly furious. While the voices of protest grew louder, his eyes narrowed, more and more, until they were small and dangerous. Dumuzi looked truly scary.

When he finally could not stand it anymore, the Sun king got up and with a furious shout, ordered silence. All faces turned towards him and silence indeed fell in the room. He glared irate at the priests, militaries and advisors. He looked like a lion that was about to attack. And then he felt a soft weight on his right shoulder. Immaru pressed his fingers gently on his brother’s shoulder and gave him a reassuring look. Dumuzi stared at his brother bewildered for a few moments, but visibly relaxed short after. He took a deep sigh and nodded. The Moon king took a step forward. Yugi and his friends were surprised to see the frail-looking king demonstrate the same majestic and powerful aura as his brother. All eyes were on him and he showed no traces of fear, hesitation or shyness.

“This is not a matter of Egypt. This is something that involves the whole world.” Immaru’s clear and firm voice echoed in the room. The sound of his voice was calm and pleasant, yet it expressed authority and respect. “Priests of Isthar.” He addressed a group of bald men dressed in white woollen garments. “Have you forgotten I’ve been receiving warnings from the gods about a danger that is rising in the south, in the land of Egypt? Have you forgotten what the sacred waters have shown you?
A terrifying dark energy, slowly rising and growing stronger. A power once unleashed, it will become unstoppable. A power with only one will. That of destroying everything on its path. Including the lands of our Empire. Including our home, Akkad. Ignoring these warnings will be our doom.”

He turned to the group of militaries and advisors. “And you, faithful counsellors of the court. You too thought it strange when King Argo defied us so suddenly. You all witnessed the God of Sun Dragon attack the city. A creature from Egypt that only can be summoned by the mightiest priests! Do you truly believe this is just a coincidence? Akkad has been under attack already twice! Not by enemies of the Empire, but by the making of this dark force! It consumes and manipulates the hearts of people. Do not underestimate it.”

The young king lowered his voice in the last part, the warning being emphasized by the weight of its words. A heavy silence invaded the space. Priests, militaries and advisors looked distressed at the young king. His words seemed to sink into their minds, for none dared to reply. Dumuzi, who seemed to have cooled down during his brother’s speech, stepped forward so he stood next to his twin.

“My good people. It’s most unfortunate we must come to this decision but, - if Lord Immaru and I don’t travel to Egypt and find this source of dark power, find a way stop it, - then the world is lost and, Akkad too, will eventually fall. It’s inevitable. Our departure is necessary.”

Displeasure was written all over the men’s faces. A soft murmur started developing among them again. Yugi looked anxiously at the two young kings. They stood straight and powerful, determined and unwavering. But he knew, they too, were worried about the outcome of this meeting. What would happen if the Court of Akkad didn’t accept the kings’ decision.

“What about Lord Akbishu?” One asked. “And these four strangers? Who are they?”

“They are informers sent by the Pharaoh of Egypt himself.” Dumuzi answered. “Their mission was secret, their message exclusively reserved for the rulers of Akkad. Not only they brought the news about this danger rising in Egypt, but they also proved to be trustworthy and loyal to us. It were they who saved Lord Nigiku from hired assassins. It were they who revealed the golden monster’s identity, aiding Lord Immaru to save our city and all lives within the walls. It were they who discovered the treacherous plotting between the Order of Black Priests and Lord Akbishu.”

“My brother and I therefore declare that Akbishu is deposed from his position and titles due to his treachery.” Immaru followed.

“The Order of Black Priests?!” One of the Priests questioned appalled.
“Active within our empire?!” Another Priest spoke.

“How dare they return from their exile?” These were words spoken among the white priests of Ishtar.

“Akbishu a traitor?!” One militair commented shocked.

“Plotting with the enemy.” An advisor murmured dazed.

“The war was a setup.” These were words spoken among the militaries and advisors.

Everybody was outraged. The many interrogations from the past days were being answered with shocking revelations. Yet, it all made sense. The kings sat down on their golden and silver thrones, while the Court members processed the disturbing information and discussed loudly among themselves. The young kings whispered to each other.

“Sacred waters? What in Earth were you talking about?” Dumuzi asked his brother.

“It’s a ritual. When we assemble 20 priests and surround the temple’s pond, I can summon the gods and request them to show us an important message. Images form themselves on the water.” Immaru explained.

“So what did you see?”

“It didn’t have a shape. All we saw was a dark shadow in a desert land spreading its arms to all directions. The priests saw it as an important warning and were quite worried about it.” The Moon king said with a grimace. Dumuzi shifted uncomfortably on his throne. Why on Earth did his brother had to have all these weird and creepy visions was something he would never come to understand. After an awkward pause, he went on in satiating his curiosity.

“So why 20 priests?”
“Because with me included it gives the total of 21.”

“So???” Dumuzi asked clueless and Immaru fought the urge of rolling his eyes.

“So 21 is 3 times 7, the most perfect mystical number you can imagine, not to mention it’s a lot of people using their spiritual energy.”

“Interesting.”

“Not as interesting as “informers” sent by the pharaoh. When did you come up with that?”

“Yeah, that was a good one, if I may say so. I guess I was inspired.” Dumuzi proudly stated. He grinned mischievously and Immaru threw him a you-are-unbelievable look. “You didn’t expect me to tell them that they travelled in time, coming from the future, did you? They would think I’m crazy!”

“Jezz, and there I thought they had come to that conclusion long ago.”

The brothers quickly exchanged fake angry looks, which were followed by almost silent giggles. But then they quickly returned to their very serious and regal pose. The loud clamour was starting to diminish. When silence finally settled itself in the room, a tall and strong looking man took a step forward in the kings’ direction.

“This will be a dangerous travel.” The High-commander spoke. The four time travellers and the kings of Akkad stared at him with great expectation. “You will need an escort to Egypt.”

Yugi and his friends breathed of relieve, Jounouchi and Honda cheered silently, jumping and throwing fists into the air. Immaru and Dumuzi both smiled, for their initial concerns faded with the commander’s words.

“Of course. Preparations for the travel shall be made.” Immaru agreed with a nod, his silent command given. The high-commander bowed with great respect.

“My Lords. A regent will have to be named.” One of the advisors stated the obvious. Yugi and his friends witnessed the triumph in Dumuzi’s eyes.
“It shall be Lord Nigiku.” The Sun king spoke and gestured his cousin, who humbly bowed to the Court. It was clear the members were pleased with the choice as they respectfully bowed in return. “My brother and I hereby declare Lord Nigiku of the House of Ishtar, the new Main Advisor of the Sun and Moon kings.” Dumuzi eloquently spoke, initiating the official ceremony of transference to the kingdom’s regency.

“Lord Nigiku, your first task is one of great challenge and responsibility. Do you accept the regency of the Empire during the absence of the Sun and Moon kings?” Immaru solemnly asked his cousin, who grimaced before swallowing dry.

“I humbly accept, my Lords, my Kings. I will honour your trust in me and perform all demanded duties with great responsibility.”

“Behold! Lord Nigiku, Main Advisor of the twin kings and regent of Akkad!” Immaru and Dumuzi declared in unison. The words were repeated over and over by the different priests, militaries and advisors of the Court. “May the gods protect all the people of Akkad and the world where we live on.”

With these final words, the meeting had come to its end. The twin kings came out victorious with their goals. Yugi and his friends rejoiced noisily. They finally had a chance of stopping Bakura going forward with whatever evil plan he had in store. They finally could start their quest to help and save the Nameless Pharaoh. To help their friend Yami. Today fortune smiled at them, for it gave them the chance to change the history, to break the never-ending cycle.

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While the world was still asleep, a small group of horsemen rode towards the mountain towering the city of Akkad. The sky was dark but the horizon was becoming lighter. On the highest peak, slept the powerful God of Sun Dragon. It had stayed there since the Sun king pleaded for alliance. And now, this very same king rode side by side his twin to meet the mighty creature. Nigiku, Yugi and the others had insisted to accompany the kings in their secret and risky mission.

Dumuzi was reluctant about this plan and seriously wondered if it was a wise thing to do. Just before they departed, Immaru had failed to hide some hesitance and this worried him. Dumuzi knew the source of his brother’s uncertainty. The White Magician did not doubt his magical powers, by the contrary. The problem was the God of Sun Dragon. Immaru had explained earlier that the ritual was a simple one, despite requiring quite some magic. Alas, the ritual can only be performed if the creature consents it. And considering their last meeting, the God of Sun Dragon was probably not very keen in seeing Immaru, let alone, allow him to seal his soul into a tablet. Immaru had put all his
faith in the tiny connection between the monster and his brother through the Sun God. According to his own words, Dumuzi was the only person who had the slightest chance in persuading the powerful Egyptian monster in agreeing with the ritual. It was the word *slightest* that bothered Dumuzi the most.

The group arrived at the top of the mountain when night and day meet each other and become one during a brief moment. They could see the sky gaining a lighter shade of blue. Little by little, the stars faded away. Dawn was announcing itself. Immaru smiled. He had timed it perfectly. This was the moment of the Sun god’s daily rebirth. But this happy moment was short-lived. All at the sudden, the horses became restless and refused to advance.

“They sense the golden monster!” Nigiku yelled when the horses persisted in refusing to advance. “They won’t go further than here. We have to leave them behind and walk the last part.”

With no other choice, everybody unmounted, unhappy with the situation. A quick escape was out of question now, not that it would have made a great different. They were at the mercy of destiny. Dumuzi looked over at his brother. Immaru walked strait and firm, but he was paler and his eyes denounced fear. Dumuzi was about to ask him to give up his crazy idea when a fire was blasted just above their heads. It missed them by an inch.

“Oh my God! That was a close one!!” Jounochi yelled terrified.

A loud terrible groan filled the air, making the ground tremble. The friends watched in terror as large golden body grew taller and taller against a blue background. Fear paralyzed their bodies. The mighty monster eyed them with its ruby orbs. It didn’t look happy at all for being disturbed.

“Maybe we should go back, real slowly?” Honda whispered scared. The beast heard him and grunted of protest. It stared at the tall boy dangerously. Honda shuddered from fear and dared not to move another inch.

The God of Sun Dragon studied each of the members of the group. Jounouchi, Anzu, Yugi, Nigiku, Immaru. It froze. Its eyes widened at the sight of the White Magician. They shrunk threateningly. Memories of the fight returned to the monster’s mind. Memories of this human that dared to try to hurt him with his magic. The creature remembered how the boy had hurt him with spells. It remembered how scared it felt and fought for its life. In a mix of fury and self-defence desire, the fierce creature straitened its back, pushed its head behind and revealed a lump in its neck, filled with furious fire. It was about to spit a wave of fire when Dumuzi jumped right in front of his brother.

“No wait!” The mighty creature widened its eyes. It froze at the voice, blinked when it recognized
the child of the Sun and swallowed the fire trapped in its throat with a loud gulp. Its eyes were now fixed on Dumuzi.

“He is my brother. My twin! He is the child of the Moon, as I am the child of the Sun.” Ruby eyes flickered a moment and glanced over at the white-haired boy in surprise. “You cannot hurt him, I will not allow it!”

The great creature looked at the brothers, confusion marked in its eyes. It looked at the one who had dared to defy him a few days ago. The boy stared back with his big chocolate eyes filled with fear. The beast grunted upset and exhaled some hot air from its nostrils. It studied the powerful sorcerer with great suspicion. It was clear the creature was pondering what Dumuzi had just told him. Immaru, petrified at the way the monster eyed him, and fearing its rejection, softly elbowed his brother. But Dumuzi failed to react, his brave moment was apparently short-lived. Immaru elbowed again, but nothing.

“Dumuzi, for the love of the gods, say something!” Immaru whispered with his teeth clenched. The Sun king stared dazed at his brother but quickly redirected his gaze back to the monster, remembering he needed to convince the creature to accept his twin.

“Oh great God of Sun Dragon.” Dumuzi cursed internally for denouncing fear in his shaky voice. The ruby eyes slowly shifted from the White Magician to the Sun King. They softened a bit. “The reason I, my brother and my friends came here is to make you a request. My brother Immaru, the White Magician, wishes to become allies with you.”

The creature lifted its head, ever so slightly and bowed it to the side, staring in a mix of wariness and curiosity at the child of the Moon. “Please. Immaru is very important to me. He’s, my twin! Please, do accept his friendship.” Dumuzi’s pleaded and held his brother’s hand on his. The giant creature stared marvelled at the brotherly gesture and grunted softly. Immaru finally gained enough courage to verbalize anything.

“Oh mighty Winged Dragon of Ra.” Immaru bowed graciously before the golden beast, never leaving his brother’s hand. “I never wished to hurt you. I fought you as powerfully as I did, only to protect my city and my people. Please understand that. You would fight for those you love too, wouldn’t you?”

The monster blinked twice, hearing the boy’s words. It moved heavily and took a step forward, making the ground tremble under its weight. Everybody stepped back, terrified of what the creature might do next.

Dumuzi and Immaru held their hands tighter and waited for the worse. The golden beast came closer to look better at the silver haired boy. The boys dared not to budge. It exhaled hot air and grunted. Ruby eyes were locked on brown ones.
And then something amazing happened. The windows of their souls were opened. Immaru felt his mind, his spirit be sucked into the ruby orbs. He landed in a place where time and space didn’t exist. The godly creature and the son of the Moon faced each other as spiritual beings, as energy forces in an immaterial dimension. There they met each other’s soul, their essences, their being. Immaru witnessed the terrifying power of blinding light and burning fire. But he also saw the warmth of life that the sun emanates. The source of life to all living beings. Immaru also recognized loyalty and bravery in the creature’s soul. And some loneliness too, something he could understand and relate to.

The Sun Dragon saw the essence of pure white light in the boy’s soul. It was the first light born in the world, the guidance in the darkness of the night. The pale light irradiated by the moon, which grows and shrinks in an eternal earthly cycle of birth and death. The White Magician possessed a power given by the gods. The creature recognized the ancient power of creation and of destruction. Only the chosen ones received such a mighty, overwhelming and dangerous power. Only the ones with a pure soul, filled with innocence and unconditional love could receive these powers. A soul like Immaru’s. If the Winged Dragon of Ra could smile, it would have.

The connection was suddenly broken. It felt like ages, but Immaru knew it probably had taken only one second. He knew the others didn’t even notice what had just happened. The reason for their surprise when the golden beast grunted softly and rested his chin on the ground before Immaru. Everybody stared amazed, incredibility imprinted on their faces.

Immaru, still trembling from the recent out-of-body experience, lifted his fingers and touched the hard skin of the golden dragon. The creature breathed out of contentment and closed its eyes. The boy, seeing the dragon’s reaction felt a bit more confident and dared to give larger strokes. After a while he was hugging the dragon’s nose lovingly and the creature was grunting of happiness. Dumuzi breathed out of relieve and giggled at the sight. It was like his brother had found himself an oversized pet.

“Great God of Sun Dragon. We came here you ask you an important favour.” Immaru whispered. “There is a dark force emerging in Egypt. If this darkness develops, it will spread throughout the world and everything will be destroyed. We need your help. Will you help us?”

Immaru released the creature, which blinked softly. The boy concluded it was a yes. “My brother and I are travelling in disguise to Egypt to stop this force from rising. We will need your power to find and defeat a man called Bakura, but you cannot travel with us in your actual form. You would attract too much attention. That’s why I want to ask your permission to seal your soul into a clay tablet.”

The creature stared sternly the White Magician. “This is the only way we can travel with you unnoticed and be able to ask for your help in any occasion.” Immaru explained. “Dumuzi and I will be the only ones able to summon you. If the tablet falls in wrong hands, nobody else will be able to call you out. Also the tablet cannot be destroyed by any instrument or mighty force when your soul is resting in it. It will be like if you were asleep. Yet, you will not lose any of your powers once you are awakened.” The creature listened to Immaru’s words and looked again into the boy’s eyes. He recognized an endless determination in protecting the world and all its living beings.
The Winged Dragon of Ra groaned and grunted and roared so mightily that probably whole Akkad woke up. The friends thought it became angry and screamed of terror. The golden beast slapped its wings wildly, creating great currents of air. And then it did the one thing nobody expected. It shrunk its body and transformed into a perfect and round golden sphere.

Yugi and his friends recognized this form. They looked at Immaru expectantly. The boy only hesitated for a second and quickly kneeled and started writing symbols and drawing a magic spell on the ground. He murmured some words nobody understood and presented the clay tablet. A bright white light came out of the tablet and pulled the golden sphere into it. It resisted a bit at first but suddenly the light drew the sphere inside the tablet and all became quiet again.

Everybody stared with curiosity at the small clay tablet on Immaru’s hand. The image of the Winged Dragon of Ra was imprinted in it along with a text in cuneiform writing. The spell had worked. Now the twins could summon the creature whenever they needed.
The day to leave the beautiful city of Akkad came too swiftly. Men, women and children embraced in a last goodbye. Children cried, while their parents fought the tears back. The soldiers, bearing scars from past wars; were barely back home and were already leaving again. The worst part was that nobody knew when they would be returning home. Yugi watched the twin kings pay goodbye to their cousin. Their separation was as difficult as everybody’s else. The short teenager looked around and couldn’t help feel saddened by the emotional sight. He thought it was unfair so many people were dragged into this mess because of one madman. His hate for Bakura had no limits.

Yugi sighed heavily. On one side, he felt sorry for the Akkadians, who were unfairly being dragged into this situation. On the other side, he was becoming restless, because his desire to depart was growing more impatient by the minute. More than anybody else, Yugi had waited for this moment with great anticipation. The sooner they left, the sooner they would reach the Pharaoh and the sooner they could help him. Besides, he missed Yami terribly. Now and then, his hands would search for the ghost of the Millennium Puzzle hanging on his chest. He wondered how Yami was, if Bakura had already made his first move, if they would arrive in time. Shaddi’s words didn’t leave his head. *Every time the Pharaoh’s and Bakura’s souls end in the Millennium Items the whole thing starts all over again.* The never-ending cycle. Nobody’s soul could ever rest until this cycle was broken. Not Shaddi’s, not Yami’s, not even his.

He watched the escort of 500 strong men gather to start the march out of the city. Little did they know their mission would end at the border of the Akkadian Empire. From there on, the twin kings
would travel alone, only with the company of the time-travellers. They agreed it was better to travel unnoticed, in a low-profile. An official journey would only slow up their travel and they would lose the surprise element. This was the kings’ secret plan, one only Nigiku and the time travellers knew about.

“Promise you’ll come back.” The green-eyed teenager pled.

“Of course we’ll come back!” Dumuzi replied with a stained voice.

Immaru only nodded, unable to verbalize anything. Yugi felt a chill run down his spine. He knew the Sun king’s words were nothing but an empty promise. The outcome of this battle was unknown. History had already changed and events were developing in a new way. But hope must never dye. So everybody else pretended to believe in Dumuzi’s comforting words.

“Men! We leave!” The high commander shouted after the rulers’ consent.

Women and children watched the kings and the soldiers leave with resentment. The great city gates opened. Yugi switched glances with his friends. They nodded in encouragement. They were finally going to help Yami.

*I hope we’ll arrive in time.*

…

The first long day’s journey was finally reaching its end. Yugi and his friends had travelled for too many hours in an Akkadian carriage, which was an excruciating experience. The compartment was barely large enough for four people and it wobbled immensely the whole way. It was far from being comfortable. Every break was a blessing, allowing to stretch and relax the sore muscles.

The general’s experience guided the escort to a sheltered valley in the mountain range. A soldier informed the four friends they would stop for camp in less than an hour. This news lifted the 21st century friends’ spirits. They were still cheering and celebrating the prospect they soon could rest, when all at the sudden, the carriage halted. Yugi and his friends switched startled glances. Anzu pulled out the drape to look outside.

“*They are all still, but I don’t know why.*” The girl said. Then her eyes widened a bit. “Oh, Immaru just stepped outside. There comes Dumuzi too.*”
Yugi immediately opened the carriage’s door and exited it. Jounouchi and Honda followed him but, wanting to exit at the same time, got stuck in the carriage’s doorway. Anzu pushed them with a kick, making them fall on the floor with their faces on the ground.

“What happened?” Yugi asked Dumuzi, ignoring his friends’ revolted shouting and cursing.

“Immaru sensed danger.” The sandy-haired king explained.

They watched Immaru take a few cautious steps, while he scanned his surroundings. All the soldiers were tense and alert, their swords and spears ready for attack. Yugi and Anzu looked around apprehensively while Honda and Jounouchi swung hits in the air, warning they wouldn’t allow anybody to hurt them. The boys flinched and quickly hid behind Anzu for cover when some peddles fell from the mountain slide.

“Quite the brave ones.” Anzu mocked for the boys’ dismay.

More small stones fell down and the soldiers turned around. They pointed their spears angrily when they saw movement coming from above. Some soldiers were already preparing to attack, but Immaru stepped forward. He gestured them to wait. His brow furrowed uncharacteristically while he waited for a man to carefully descent the steep slope.

“Please, do not hurt me.” The man begged. The four friends from the future stared surprised when they recognized the voice, for the man was very much changed. “I only wish to speak to the kings, that’s all.”

“What could you possibly wish to tell us, Akbishu?” Immaru gravely questioned. Dumuzi stepped so he stood next to his sibling. He clenched his teeth at the sight of the traitor and took off his sword.

“I doubt you have anything relevant to tell us after the things you did, serpent!” The sandy-haired king threateningly said.

The former Main Adviser finally reached level ground. He immediately dropped to his knees and bowed till his head met the ground in a very submissive manner. Akbishu looked awful. His flawless hair was unkempt and dirty. His clothes were covered by a layer of the desert dust, the material was ripped on the edges of his sleeves and pants. His face and hands were red from too many hours of burning sun exposure. Small cuts and bruises were everywhere on his exposed skin. It was a truly
sad and degrading sight for somebody who had been, just a few days ago, so elegant and gracious.

“Forgive me! Please forgive me for my sins!” The men begged in a choked voice.

“Forgive you?! How dare you?!” Immarru’s voice sounded outraged, stained by emotion. Dumuzi glanced over from Akbishu to his brother a bit surprised, for normally the Moon king was compassionate and forgiving. But in Akbishu’s case, the man had simply crossed the line too many times. Everybody was silent and watched the anger and revolt swell up in the young king’s eyes. “You betrayed us! You betrayed father and killed him!”

“I was desperate!!!” Akbishu yelled in a begging tone, helplessly trying to defend himself from the boy’s accusations. “When Aht-Nyc died… All I wanted was to bring her back – back to life! I-I… I can’t live without her! The pain – is too great!!!” Tears cascaded down Immarru’s face while Dumuzi turned a shade paler. He looked appalled at the man, his grip around the sword strengthening.

“She was our mother!!!” The Sun king yelled infuriated. He let out a roaring scream while he lifted his sword in the air. Akbishu’s eyes widened of terror when he looked up and saw the sun rays reflect on the metal.

For a moment, it blinded him and the traitor shut his eyes painfully, releasing a startled yell. Immarru shouted his brother to stop. When Akbishu opened his eyes again, he was surprised to see Immarru gripping his brother’s arms, preventing him from slaying him. “What are you doing!? He deserves to die!!!” Dumuzi screamed revolted.

“Yes, he does. But he will not.” Immarru said and his voice had an unfamiliar coldness to it. Dazzled, Dumuzi let his sword drop and stared confused at his twin. The silver-haired boy turned to look at their former Main Advisor. “Because death would be a too soft punishment for him.”

Even the soldiers gasped at their king’s words. Immarru was a person who always gave second chances, who always believed in the best of people. He was compassionate and forgiving. To hear him speak such words was both strange and unsettling. Akbishu stared shocked at the boy he had seen grow up into a young tolerant and caring sovereign. He was shocked he had been able to pierce the boy’s heart so deeply and so badly, it reached a cold and hard place that was solely reserved for people like him.

“I-Immaru?”
“How dare you act like she loved you the most?” Immaru questioned with a shaky voice, anger and pain reflected in his eyes. “She was our mother, our light in the darkness, our guide and our protector! She loved us like if were her own! Her love for us was unconditional!”

The silver-haired boy took a step closer, his voice slowly rising. “You! You dare to act like you are the one to suffer the most with her death! You were so selfish in your grieving that you failed to see how others too suffered with Aiht-Nyc’s death!”

Fresh angry tears sprung from the chocolate brown eyes and Immaru’s voice rose more powerful, as his revolt grew stronger. “You joined the Darkness because of your egoism and betrayed everybody you loved and everybody who loved you back!!! You betrayed our father! Your king! Your friend! He was like a brother to you and you killed him!!! You betrayed us all! Sending Dumuzi to a war and sending a magical monster to kill me!!!”

By now the Moon king was towering Akbishu, who stared at him pale and scared. Immaru’s hands were in fists and a strange sudden wind blew around him. “But you know who you betrayed the most? By doing all of this? Aiht-Nyc! Yes, you betrayed her when you hurt the people she loved!”

Akbishu threw himself on the floor with a miserable howling. Like a desperate animal, he crawled and tried to grab Immaru’s feet. The boy took a step backwards in disgust, losing his balance but Dumuzi caught his brother in a quick reaction. The soldiers run to the former Main Advisor and pointed their spears and swords towards him in a warning manner. The man sobbed hysterically, screaming the kings’ names and begging them forgiveness.

“Only the gods can forgive your sins!” Immaru yelled back furious, his voice choked from the emotions.

“Shall we arrest him, my Lords?” One of the generals asked. Immaru couldn’t answer, too disturbed to talk anymore and choked in a sob. Dumuzi, held his brother close to support him, as his legs weakened from the emotions. The Sun king faced the general with watery eyes.

“No. Let him go. Let the desert take care of him. I doubt he’ll survive even a week.” The sand-haired boy spoke.

Dumuzi guided his weeping brother back to their carriage. Akbishu was still shouting out the twins’ names while he sprawled on the ground in a miserable display. Soldiers grabbed the maddened man under his arms and threw him down a hillside. He painfully rolled down between stones and dust, his skin becoming red from new cuts. The soldiers gave a last disgusted look when the man finally hit the base of the hill. He moved his limbs in pain, before he curled himself and sobbed sadly under the desert dust and a setting sun.

Yugi and his friends switched sorrowful glances. It had been quite shocking to witness Akbishu’s desperation. After all, the man was banished and condemned to a lonely existence. But then again, it
had been his actions that led him to his own demise. The 21st century friends felt bad for the twins. They had witnessed their pain in Immaru’s discourse, in Dumuzi’s murder attempt. Their hatred for Akbishu was more than justified. It was because of this man’s grieving they had lost their father and become orphans.

…

That night the four friends sat with Dumuzi’s company around a camp fire, cooking their meal in sticks. The Sun king had explained his brother had been very upset with the encounter of Akbishu. Dumuzi had only left the tent when his twin was finally sleeping. The sandy-haired king had confessed how life had become empty and sad since Aiht-Nyc died. He talked about her and they could sense the love he felt for her, they could hear how badly he missed her.

Aiht-Nyc had been, during her too short life, a beautiful person. Her smile was always an easy one and she was always optimistic and cheerful, even when she suffered of great pain in the last stage of her disease. The queen had a golden heart, always caring and ready to help others. She was well-known for her humanitarian side. Her elegance and joyful nature marvelled many, was much as it caused envy by those who wished to be like her or to have her life style. There was not one day Dumuzi wouldn’t think of his mother.

Dumuzi opened his heart by telling them how he and Immaru had to support each other when their father, too, passed over. Because his brother is the White Magician, Dumuzi was immediately named Ruler of the Akkadian Empire. He admitted being scared with the responsibilities he received in such a young age.

“I could not rule the Empire. Not alone.” The sandy-haired king admitted, while he cleaned some stubborn tears from his eyes. “It was too much pressure, too many demands. All my life, all my training, has been in preparing me to become king. But when the moment came – I wasn’t prepared at all. My freedom was suddenly gone, taken away, from one day to another. I needed Immaru by my side, because he gives me strength.” The Sun king sighed and then smiled sadly. “Sometimes I think I am really selfish. I mean, Immaru already has so many duties as the White Magician and then I go and throw my part of responsibilities to him too.”

“I don’t see it as something selfish.” Jounoushi said in a serious tone. “You chose your brother to be your equal. You chose to have him stand side by side in power and share the throne with you. I think that was very noble of you to.” Yugi, Anzu and Honda were positively surprised at the blond’s words and switched amazed looks. Dumuzi, by his turn, smiled and thanked the boy.

“Dumuzi…” Yugi started and paused before he continued. He simply couldn’t stop thinking about the text they found inside the Millennium Puzzle. “What do you think would have happened to you
if Immaru had not survived the Winged Dragon of Ra’s attack?” The Sun king’s face dropped, while Jounouchi’s eyes grew as large as two footballs.

“Wow Yugi! Real subtle!” The blond scolded. Yugi apologized while he scratched the back of his head uncomfortably, for Anzu and Honda were too sending him murderous glances.

“It’s okay.” Dumuzi said, his smile returning. “I guess I…” He shook his shoulders. “I guess I would have gone mad. Probably would have done the same thing as Akbishu.”

“You mean you would have joined the Order of the Black Priests?!” Anzu and Honda asked at the same time. Duzumi let out an amused giggle.

“No! I mean, I probably would have tried to bring Immaru back to life again. By all means.”

“Do you think you would have gone to Egypt?” Yugi asked and his friends stared at Duzumi expectant, understanding where their friend was heading to. He was trying to find out the connection between the Sun king and the Tomb Keepers from the Ishtar family.

“Probably.” The young king confessed. “Immaru is always telling me a great deal of knowledge and secrets of magic are hidden in Egypt. Yes, I suppose I would have done that.”

“And then Akbishu would have had what he wanted. He would have become Emperor. Your Pharaoh would have been defeated by Bakura and the world would have fallen into darkness.” All heads turned around when they heard a familiar voice. Immaru had appeared from nowhere in the darkness. Apparently, he managed to be as sneaky as their friend Ryou. “Good thing events are changing. We have a good chance in stopping Bakura.”

“Immaru! How long have you been standing there?” Dumuzi asked a bit startled. He hated when his brother did this kind of creepy entrances.

“I just arrived now.” He innocently said while he sat down. He picked up one of his brother’s spits with meat and stuck a piece into his mouth. Dumuzi pouted while his eyes shrunk, upset with his twin’s obvious lie and his bad table manners. “Akbishu will live much longer than one week.” The silver-haired boy added. Dumuzi stared at his brother confused. “Remember the Order of the Black Priest’s curse? He’s having a long live. In suffering.” Immaru spoke in an impassive tone, but they all knew it was the cold surface pain had created.
“A fit punishment for a traitor?” Dumuzi asked finally understanding what his brother meant.

“A fit punishment for a traitor indeed.” Was Immaru’s answer.

Nobody talked about Akbishu for the rest of the evening.
The travel to Egypt continues. More interaction between the twins. And what has just happened to the soldiers? Why are they acting so confused? Read the chapter and you'll have your answers :)

The four friends from the future had been travelling for 11 days since they left the city of Akkad. Never had they missed cars, trains and planes this much as during the past week. The travel through the desert landscapes of dry mountains and valleys was long and tedious. Being personal friends of the kings, protocol forbade them to travel on horse. So they were carried in the small uncomfortable carriage, which was horribly exhausting, leaving their backs and limbs sore from the many hours sitting in the same position. The only thing that alleviated their journey’s pain were the nights. When they camped, the tents were transformed briefly in miniature palaces, decorated with soft, silky and colourful carpets and pillows. All the cosiness of home was reproduced each evening, allowing their bodies and minds to have the perfect rest.

“We’ll reach the border tomorrow.” Duzumi whispered once they were gathered around their camp fire.

“So, we’ll proceed with the plan?” Yugi whispered back. The Sun king nodded.

“Immaru will make sure they won’t be able to follow us.” The four friends looked over at the Moon king. He was quiet and staring at the burning flames. His eyes looked distant, his thoughts far away. “Daydreaming again, brother dear?” Immaru’s eyes shifted from the fire to his brother. “You know Nigiku will be fine, don’t you?” The sandy-haired teenager asked, guessing the topic of his brother’s worries.
“Of course he will. I don’t expect any differently.” Immaru told in a fake nonchalant manner so his twin grinned amused. “He’ll just have a bit of a hard time explaining the high-commander what happened.”

“Oh-it will be the greatest prank ever!!! And then coming from you!” Dumuzi blurted amused while he giggled, imaging the soldiers’ faces.

“It is not a prank!” Immaru protested while Dumuzi laughed manically (reminding the four friends from the future of Malik when he was completely out of his mind). The Moon king sighed heavily and closed his eyes. A vein appeared on his temple and twitched under his white bangs. “Sweet innocent Immaru is going to engender the greatest scam ever!”

“Stop it! It is nothing like that and you know it!” The silver-haired teenager told in clenched teeth, but his brother only laughed louder and more uncontrolled, bending double, his arms around his belly. “Gods, you are impossible! Sometimes I really wonder if we are brothers.”

“Oh, come on, loosen a bit.” Dumuzi said while he playfully shoved his sibling to the side. “You are always so stern about these things.”

“Well, somebody has to be. Look at you!” Immaru said in a reproving tone. “You think everything is one great joke. Honestly, it’s time you grow up!”

“Time to grow up. Just because you were born twenty minutes before me…”

“Here we go again.” Jounouchi mumbled while he pinched a grape between his fingers.

Every evening Dumuzi and Immaru would have a fight. The four time travellers watched the siblings in silence wondering if this time things would end badly for one of the kings. Because every evening the Sun king would find a pretext to tease his brother. It was like a strange ritual that existed between the two. It was like if they did not have their little feud, their day was not complete.

Yugi and his friends had often the feeling Dumuzi was testing Immaru’s abysmal patience to see till where he could go. Because it was so obvious that Dumuzi wasn’t really making fun of his sibling. Just like was clear the Moon king wasn’t really angry with his twin, despite of what he said. Still, they would insult each other, calling names and accusing each other of all sort of stupid things. Despite his apparent irritation, Immaru would never lose his temper. Most of the times, the Moon
king would simply let the matter drop. Often, the boys ended giggling because of the absurdity of their discussing. However, there were times they would become physical and the friends had to struggle to separate them. The Akkadian rulers were beyond doubt unusual siblings. The love they shared was pure and unconditional, but their contrasting characters often led them to silly trivial fights. They were beyond doubt unpredictable. After a short session of scolding, shouting names at each other and sharing harmless hits, the twins finally calmed down and ended their senseless fight.

“How far before we reach Cairo?” Yugi asked the kings when they finally calmed down.

“Well, we are more than half way. Depending how fast we go, we should be there in around 5 days.” Duzumi answered while he counted his fingers.

“That means it will be about three weeks since we got here!” Yugi spoke in concern. “What if we arrive too late? What if Bakura already defeated the pharaoh!”

“He didn’t.” Immaru said in such an unwavering confidence that Yugi and his friends stared at him surprised. “I already would have known.”

“Have you picked up anything yet?” Dumuzi asked. He took a piece of meat from the spit and licked his fingers loudly afterwards.

“Manners, brother.” Immaru reprehended.

“Speak for yourself. You’re the one who forgets all about etiquette when your stomach rumbles.” The Sun king accused in a teasing tone and his sibling glared at him, not without blushing ferociously. “You didn’t answer my question, oh-lord of the occult forces.”

“No, I haven’t picked up anything. Things seem to be pretty calm in Egypt.” Immaru answered while he rolled his eyes at his given title.

“Maybe your supernatural senses are not working properly.” Dumuzi continued in his teasing mood, making a spooky voice and moving his fingers to reproduce the movement of spider legs. His brother gave him a look of unbelief.

“What is the matter with you tonight? And should you know, my supernatural senses are working perfectly fine.”
“How can you be so sure? All you do is sit down for a long time.” The sandy haired king mocked while he poked Immaru’s waist with his index, making his brother twitch at each poke. The Moon king’s eyebrow twitched. His brother was pushing his buttons this time.

“Stop it!” Immaru scolded, while he slapped his sibling’s hand. The sandy haired king grasped his smacked hand with a hiss. It was glowing. When he wanted, the Moon king had a quite heavy hand. But the small hit did not discourage Duzumi from his mischief.

“I bet you are sleeping the whole time, you sleepy-head!” Dumuzi say in a childish singing tone and the four friends saw a flash of irritation cross the chocolate eyes, although very briefly. “I wouldn’t mind to sit lazily long lovely hours under the shade of a tree dreaming with honey and milk while everybody else works hard building camp.”

“That’s enough!” Immaru shouted annoyed while both his hands hit the floor. In that very moment, Duzumi flew a few meters high, vertically, like if an invisible force had thrown him up on a chair, and then landed immediately after, right on his butt, on the same spot he had been sitting the whole time.

“Auch!” The sandy haired king groaned while he caressed his tingling buttocks.

“I’m so sorry!” Immaru apologized sincerely, looking guilty. “Are you hurt?”

“Oh, riding will be a pain in the ass tomorrow!” Dumuzi complained dramatically.

“Quite literally.” His silver haired sibling agreed while he hid a sigh. His brother was okay. “Well, it’s your own stupid fault.”

“I was only playing!”

“You were asking for it.”

“You’re no fun!”
“You’re childish!”

“You’re boring like a dried out senile old priest!” Duzumi yelled. Immaru stared at his brother with his eyes widened and started snickering after a few seconds. The Sun king chuckled amused. Then the siblings switched accomplice glances before they bust into a fit of laughter.

“One thing is certain.” Jounouchi said. “They sure offer a lot of entertainment. With these two around I don’t even miss a TV.”

The blond’s friends agreed with a nod, while they laughed along with the royal twins, for their giggling was a contagious one.

…

A group of Akkadian soldiers rode boldly and gracious despite the hot sun. Their shadows stretched themselves against a dry rocky background. The high-commander announced their arrival by the borderline, which was recognizable by a natural depression on the ground. A few meters further and they would leave the Akkadian Empire.

The Sun and Moon kings exited their carriage and ordered to call the time travelers. When Yugi and his friends stepped outside, the king twins were already talking to the leader of the escort. They could see by his expression and gestures that they had just informed him they were travelling from this point onwards alone. They watched a few soldiers bring horses while they switched hesitant and awkward glances with the sovereigns. Dumuzi gestured his friends from the future to mount their horses. Once everybody was ready, the sandy-haired king nodded to his brother.

“I will not allow it. My Lords, please. You must understand, we made an oath to protect you!” The high-commander insisted while Immaru wrote something on the floor while he whispered words of incantation.

“We appreciate your loyalty and thank you for it. You will perform your tasks for Nigiku from now on.” Immaru explained. He grabbed a bit of dirt and allowed the dusty grains fall from his hand. Yugi and his friends could see the panic grow in the man’s face.

“My Lord! You cannot!”

“I’m not giving you a choice.”
Yugi and his friends watched confused and perplexed as the soldiers all became agitated at the same time, like if they reacted simultaneously to something shocking. They watched the men gasp, point and act disoriented. And then the high commander and the generals started calling for the kings. Yugi and the others looked over at Dumuzi, who smiled at them, while Immaru climbed on his horse.

“Let’s go.” The Moon king said, while he turned the opposite way of the soldiers, ignoring the way the generals kept calling out for them.

“What happened?” Jounouchi asked. The twins had not specified what Immaru was going to do when they left, but seeing the way Dumuzi was snickering, this was it.

“They cannot see us.” Dumuzi said. “We just vanished before their eyes.” The blond and his friends switched surprised stares. The soldiers were still acting completely confused. “But it’s not all.”

“There’s more?” The blond asked perplexed and Dumuzi grinned madly.

“Oh yeah. When they’ll start riding again, it does not matter what direction or path they’ll take, they’ll end up in Akkad.”

“How’s that possible?”

“It’s an illusion spell.” Immaru clarified this time. “It’s harmless, really. The consequence is that they will be completely confused. But it’s for their own safety.”

“We really don’t want to be on your bad side!” Jounouchi blurted while Immaru grimaced uncomfortable.

“No. you don’t.” Dumuzi said with an amused giggle, while the blond gulped intimidated. He looked at Yugi and the others and they simply shook their shoulders.

The friends proceeded riding further till the day was reaching its end and they were following a beautiful red sky with orange and purple glows. It was clear they had covered much more miles in one afternoon by horse than a whole day on a carriage. The journey was still exhausting and far from
being comfortable, but at least they were moving faster now.

They spotted a small village and headed there to spend the night. The group was kindly welcomed by the villagers, who were used to see travelers coming from the east. Yugi had mixed feelings about their journey. He was on high spirits at the knowledge they were finally in Egypt and each day that passed by was a day they were closer in reaching the Pharaoh. But each day that they didn’t reach their friend, was another day that Bakura could use to do his evilness. Each day was another change for danger. And all this worried Yugi greatly. Yet, he didn’t share his worries to his friends.

Everybody was happy, glad they had travelled so many miles today, glad not to have the soldiers slowing them down, glad for the villagers’ hospitality and glad they could eat and rest properly. Everybody was cheerful and Yugi did his best to hide his concerns with a happy smile. He laughed and joked along with his friends. But there was one person who did not let himself be fooled by him. Yugi noticed, during the hours of dinner and joyful conversation, that Immaru’s eyes rested on him. The Moon king was alert and wise. He spoke not one word about Yugi’s fears, but before going to sleep, the silver-haired boy nodded at him and smiled. The teenager understood the unspoken words. Immaru was telling him everything was going to be all right.
**Chapter Summary**

The group learns an important news that urges them to travel faster.
A disturbing event takes place in a village where they stop on their way.
Answers will be given, while new questions will be asked.

**Chapter Notes**

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
PHARAOH AKHENAMKHANEN (US - Aknamkanon) = Gozaburo Kaiba's past life
Enjoy the story
I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

“Guys, Guys!!!”

Jounouchi and Honda yelled while they came running fast and shaking their arms all over the place. Yugi and Anzu stood up alarmed.

“What happened?” Yugi asked worried.

“You won’t believe the news we just heard!” Jounouchi and Honda yelled in unison.

“What is all the commotion about?” A sleepy Dumuzi came out of his tent, followed by his equally sleepy twin.

“The Pharaoh! The Pharaoh died!” Jounouchi blurted. Yugi went pale and Anzu put her hand over her mouth.

“Yami is dead?!” Yugi asked in an unnaturally high-pitched voice, wearing a devastated expression,
tears already forming in his eyes.

“You idiot!” Honda scolded Jounouchi while he hit the blond on his head. “No, Yugi. Yami’s father, Pharaoh Akona… Akeno…”

“Akhenamkhanen.” Immaru said.

“Right, Akonamo –his name.” Honda quickly said embarrassed and cursed for the unpronounceable name. Yugi and Anzu both breathed of relieve and the girl quickly pulled an ear from Jounouchi.

“You idiot!!! You got us all worried! Can’t you just bring the news like any normal person?!” Anzu scolded and the boy screamed in agony.

“This is bad. We still have a four-day journey ahead of us.” Immaru’s voice broke the momentary agitation and Anzu let go of her friend, very much for his relieve.

“We will never make it in time! Yami will be Pharaoh soon! Then Bakura with make his move.” Yugi said while he dropped to his knees. “We are too late.”

“Don’t be so dramatic. We don’t know when it will be his coronation. If we are lucky, they will make burial ceremonies before the official crowning.” Dumuzi told optimistically, but the four friends still looked demoralized.

“We should leave immediately. Travel faster and longer hours, win some time.” Immaru spoke. “Later at evening, I’ll try to see if I can catch a glimpse of your friend.” Yugi and the others looked immediately more hopeful.

“You mean, leave without breakfast?” Dumuzi asked with a smirk, already knowing what his brother would say.

“Well, no. Not without breakfast! First we eat, then we go.” Immaru quickly said while his stomach already grumbled greedily.

“Then eat fast, Moon king! We have a Pharaoh to save!” Jounouchi told. Both Dumuzi and Immaru
lifted an eyebrow, suddenly looking very much alike. They were not particularly used to this kind of daring and disrespectful boldness.

“We’ll prepare the horses.” Honda said and quickly pulled his friend with him, while he scolded again in a muffled tone.

After a quick breakfast the four friends and twin kings rode away towards Cairo. Yugi’s heart bounced from anxiety. It didn’t matter how fast the horses ran, because he felt like they were never fast enough.

Wait on, Yami. We are on our way!

…

The group had travelled long hours and made few stops, so they covered quite some miles and probably won a half a day journey. The sky was becoming darker, for the sun was already setting. Soon it would be too dark to carry on. Besides, everybody was exhausted. The horses, especially, needed a good night rest. Duzumi smiled at the site of a village in the distance.

“Look, there are houses over there. We have shelter for the night.” The Sun king happily announced for everybody’s relief. As they rode closer, it became clear that the village was actually in ruins and abandoned. There was a sense of disappointment, but everybody was contented with the idea of rest. Everybody except for the Moon king.

“Not sure it’s a good idea to stay here.” Immaru said. There was something unsettling about this place that he couldn’t quite pinpoint.

“Why, scared the village might by be haunted?” Dumuzi teased. “Besides, it’s a perfect hiding place.”

“I guess…” His twin murmured dispassionately.

“Oh, I can’t wait to sit down on something that doesn’t move under me!” Jounouchi said, while they entered the village.

The last sunrays hid behind the tallest houses and shadows creeped on the walls and streets. The
Moon king could not help but think there was something eerie about this place and that something was wrong.

“I really think we shouldn’t stay here.” Immaru insisted while he looked around apprehensively. He could feel the hairs behind his back rise and chills run down his spine. “There is something wrong with this place.”

“This is a great spot! Let’s camp here.” Dumuzi cheerfully said, ignoring his sibling. He was tired and not in the mood to look for another place just because his brother was spooked out.

“It’s probably because of the ruined state of the houses. They do look a bit spooky in the dark.” Anzu said feeling solidary for the young king, while she wrapped her arounds around herself, more from the cold than fear.

“Yeah, you’ll see how the place will cheer up with the warmth of a camp fire.” Honda added, while he dropped some wood he and Jounouchi had found. Yugi was standing next to Immaru and looked hesitant. The white-haired king understood immediately what the boy wanted.

“I’ll be over there, where it’s quieter. See if I can pick up anything about Yami.” Immaru kindly told and Yugi gave a thankful smile, although he failed to hide his concern.

Immaru sat a bit further away, next to a tree. He shook the persistent uncomfortable feeling away and did his best to ignore the negative energies around him. He looked up and smiled at the sight of the moon. It was in its First Quarter, which was perfect. It would enhance and facilitate his magic. The young king sat down and ignored the sore muscles from the too many hours traveling. He crossed his legs, closed his eyes and concentrated.

Inhale. Exhale

He concentrated in his regular breathing. Soon, it became the only sound he heard and slowly faded away until it was lost in the background. He concentrated in listening. His ears picked up the merry chatting from his friends and brother. Slowly the words dissolved themselves in the air until they became nothing but a blur of distant sounds.

Inhale. Exhale.
His senses expanded beyond the common hearing and he picked up sounds carried by the winds, sounds brought by the soft vibration under the earth. His hearing revealed him the world around him. The whisper of the wind, the singing of a night bird on the roof of a ruined house, three mice running in a street behind him, the fire cracking wood, a horse tail shooing a fly.

Inhale. Exhale.

The wind whispered him secrets of a world beyond the ruined village. It brought the sounds of the nocturnal desert. A snake sheltering in a hole, a battle between two scorpions, the sands grains being softly swept on the ground, miles and miles of a sandy dead world lying silently under pale moon light.

Inhale. Exhale.

Immaru ventured willingly into a state of trance. He no longer felt his body. He no longer sensed the world around him. His mind was empty. His mind was open. He focused in Yugi’s friend, the new Pharaoh to be.

*How is him?*

His mind travelled along the streets of the abandoned village. It climbed stairs, crossed streets, went through straight alleys. Immaru subconsciously furrowed his brow. He needed to leave the village and cross the desert in Cairo’s direction. Instead, his mind was taking him deeper into the labyrinthic streets of the ruined village. He forced his focus.

*I want to see Pharaoh. The Pharaoh.*

The moon and the stars travelled fast in the sky until it became day again. The sun and clouds travelled fast until it became night again. The moon shrunk quickly and the stars became shinier. The sun set down and set up. Immaru felt his heart beat increase as he watched the sun and the moon move backwards, faster and faster, until everything became a blur and he could not tell apart what was day and what was night.

*No! I need to go back. I need to stop! I want to stop.*

Immaru could feel his control over the trance state slip through his fingers. Something else was
overpowering his mind, his soul. The Moon king was scared but knew he could not panic, or he would risk to lose himself in a limbo.


He breathed too fast and too short. The sky became black and then blue and then black again in a dizzying manner. And then suddenly, everything stopped. It was night again, with a full moon and it was quiet. The young White Magician breathed out relieved. He heard voices, but it weren’t the voices of his travel companions. He saw people, walking in the streets, sitting at home. He saw mothers put their children in bed, lovers share kisses, men drinking and gambling.

Immaru knew he had landed somewhere in the past. He was still in the same village. He could recognize the houses and the streets, only they weren’t abandoned and ruined anymore. Suddenly, he realized it were old unfinished matters, memories of this place, that had pulled him into the past. There was a vague familiarity about his surroundings. He had the alarming feeling he had seen this place before. Then the recognition hit him suddenly. His heart beat accelerated in despair when he understood where he was.

*I don’t want to see it!*

It was deep in the night. Everybody was sleeping peacefully in the small village.

*Don’t want to see!*

A cloud of smoke grew larger in the desert. The noise of hundreds of horse hoofs hitting the ground sounded in the air. Hundreds of men entered the village uninvited. Their swords shone under the moonlight.

*Wake up! I want to wake up!*

Screams. The soldiers invaded the homes. Men woke up with a startle and were killed while trying to protect their families. Women ran in the streets with their children wrapped against their chests. Children yelled and cried of fear. Swords and blood. Nobody was spared.

*Please, make it stop! Please, stop!*
Red blood became black and shiny under the pale moon light. The festering metallic smell of blood spread like a plague in the air. It was nauseating. The soldiers gathered the bodies of dozens of innocent people. Men, women, children, babies. Nobody had escaped the senseless massacre.

*Wake me up! Dumuzi, please wake me up!*

A giant dark cauldron. The bodies were thrown inside of it with no respect, with no care. They fell lifeless like rag dolls. A sickening smell of burned flesh rose in the air with the black smoke. A hooded man stood in front of the cauldron. He raised his hands in to the sky. His light robes contrasted disturbingly with the dark nocturne surroundings. Something shone on his face. Something golden. An orb. It was an eye. His eye.

*His eye!*

“Dumuzi, something is wrong with Immaru!” Anzu yelled alarmed.

Everybody ran towards Immaru and Dumuzi almost fainted at the sight before him. His brother was lying with his back to the floor. He was covered in sweat, his hair was stuck to his temple. His face had a ghostly paleness. But what frightened Dumuzi the most were his eyes. They were open but had rolled back so two disturbing white orbs stared back at him. Suddenly Immaru’s body started convulsing, shaking uncontrollably.

“He’s in trance and lost control! I must wake him up!” Dumuzi quickly grabbed his sibling under his arms and shook. “Wake up! Immaru, come back! Follow my voice! You must wake up”

Dumuzi stared petrified because his brother’s face changed to an expression of pure agony. Immaru’s mouth opened and a horrible sound was released, a sound not belonging to his brother, a sound not belonging to this world. It grew louder and louder.

“What’s happening?!” Yugi yelled shocked, while he covered his ears with his hands, just like his friends. Dumuzi’s words were muffled by the horrible noise. Many human voices escaped the boy’s throat. They were screaming madly. Tears cascaded down Immaru’s face. The many screams became increasingly louder. Immaru’s body shook violently. Dumuzi cried in despair when he saw a large black shiny liquid spread itself around his brother. He knew it was blood and panicked. Where did all that blood come from? This never happened before. He didn’t know what to do. The screams kept increasing. Then he realized, there were words in the awful screams. The five listened with horror to the sound that never seemed to stop. The screams finally became intelligible words.
Dumuzi had had enough. He was desperate and hopeless. He slapped Immaru’s pale face. Once, twice.

“Wake up! Immaru, come back!” Dumuzi shouted desperate. He was losing it. He grabbed his brother by his collar and shook him madly. “Shit! Wake the fucking up!!! COME BACK!!!”

Suddenly the Immaru’s body went numb. There was a moment of petrifying silence. Dumuzi stopped breathing and thought his brother had died. Then suddenly Immaru gasped for air and his brown orbs returned to their right place. Dumuzi breathed out of relieve and held his twin close to his chest. Immaru having his consciousness back, grasped his brother’s back, shaken by the horrible experience, terrified for losing control and for being in danger. He released a few loud sobs and started weeping uncontrollably, while his sibling cradled him.

“I-I lost control!” Immaru stammered between his sobs. “I lost control and I couldn’t get out!!!”

“Shhh, it’s okay.” Dumuzi whispered, while he fought his own tears back. “You’re fine now.”

“It was horrible! It was so horrible!”

“Did something happen to the Pharaoh?” Yugi asked scared. Immaru shook his head and took a few breaths.

“I didn’t see him... Instead, the memories of this village, they – they pulled me back to the past and – and showed me what happened here…” Immaru spoke with a trembling voice. He was slowly calming down, but he was still very much disturbed, his body was still trembling from the terror.

Dumuzi shushed him softly and brushed his fingers in the thick white hair, soothing his brother little by little. He accidently looked at the floor and noticed all the blood from earlier had disappeared.
Had it been an illusion? “I saw the massacre. Dumuzi, it’s the massacre I kept dreaming as a child.” His brother stared shocked at Immaru.

He remembered, as a child, waking up countless times with his brother screaming in his sleep because of a recurring dream that no priest knew to explain what it meant. That was how they discovered the heir to the throne had uncommon magical powers. “Every single villager was killed.”

“Why?” Jounouchi asked perturbed by the thought of it, while he looked around, almost expecting to see a ghost confirm his friend’s words.

“Dark magic. The most immoral, depraved kind of dark magic.” Immaru explained and finally seemed to compose himself a bit. He wiped his tears away and looked at the others seriously. “It was a human sacrifice. Dozens of people, from babies to elders were killed and thrown into a black cauldron. There was this man – I think he was saying some sort of enchantment. Whatever was created that night, in this village, was pure evil.”

“Did you see his face?” Honda asked after an awkward silence, when everybody swallowed dry and looked around at the ruined houses and streets.

“Yes. I would recognize him if I would see him.” The Moon king said with a nod, meanwhile having fully calmed down. “He had a particularity. He had a golden object in the place of his left eye.”

“Could it be, the Millennium Eye?” Yugi whispered while his friends stared at him with apprehensive looks. “Could the Millennium Items, Bakura and this village be all interconnected?”

“But that would mean the Pharaoh too is involved with this massacre!” Anzu deduced appalled.

“Not necessarily.” Immaru contested. “I’ve been seeing glimpses of this massacre since I was a small child. And Akhenamkhanen’s son, the heir to the throne, your friend; was born in the same year as we were. So, I doubt he played any part on this. As for his father, that’s a totally different case.”

“Yeah. The problem is that the guy just died.” Jounouchi reminded. “We’ll never be able to ask him, will we?”

“Surely there are others to ask. There must be somebody that participated in this bloodbath that can tell us what it was all about. Shed some light in the connection of between the Millennium Items and this village.” Dumuzi spoke sternly and his brother sighed heavily.
“We might not like the answers. This massacre could be related to the darkness that’s brewing in Egypt and with this fellow Bakura you fear so much.” Immaru said. Yugi switched worried glances with his friends. Despite his heart wishing for the contrary, the white-haired king’s supposition made a lot of sense.

“Best we get out of here and rest somewhere in the desert.” Dumuzi finally said after a few moments of a heavy silence.

Everybody agreed wordlessly, gathered their stuff and hurried themselves to leave the haunted village. They rode tirelessly, the recent events giving them a renewed energy. The village’s silhouette became smaller and less visible in the landscape behind them, until it vanished in the horizon. After a couple hours orientating through the stars, the travellers finally saw lights far away. It was a small village, one with life. They camped in its outskirts. Everybody was feeling completely exhausted for the many long hours of travel and the most recent event. Immaru looked at the growing moon one last time before entering the tent with a heavy heart. His last thought before falling asleep was his mourning for those people and worries for their souls.
Brotherly love

Chapter Summary

After the events in the village, everybody is still shaken. Dumuzi feels guilty; Yugi wants to leave to Cairo urgently. There is some tension in the group, but all this dissapears after a new tribulation appears.

Chapter Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura

Enjoy the story

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

Dumuzi had a hard time in falling asleep after last evening’s event. He listened gratefully to his twin’s rhythmic breathing. He could not understand how Immaru was able to sleep so profoundly after what happened to him. The only explanation he could come up with, was it had been such an extenuating experience that Immaru simply succumbed to exhaustion. The Sun king resisted the urge to caress his sibling’s face and had to fight the tears back. He felt terribly guilty for not listening to Immaru’s instincts. He should have understood. The moment his brother started having a bad feeling about the village. He should have listened the moment Immaru felt it was not safe to stay. But he had been selfish and impatience, because he was tired and didn’t want to travel for another hour. For this reason, Dumuzi could not forgive himself. His regrets had no boundaries. His mind was plagued with the image of Immaru convulsing during his trance. It haunted him and refused to leave his mind. It could have ended badly. So badly. Dumuzi wrapped his arm around his sibling’s back and wept silently, begging the gods to protect his brother against his imprudence.

…

“Good morning.” Immaru whispered when Dumuzi’s lilac eyes opened themselves. The sandy-haired king was surprised he had managed to fall asleep during his turbulent thoughts.

“Uhm, morning…Did you sleep well?” The Sun king asked in a drowsy voice.

“No nightmares. No dreams I can remember.” Immaru said with a gentle smile. “Best to get up. I heard Jounouchi’s voice a while ago. I think he’s fighting with breakfast.”

Dumuzi unconsciously retributed his sibling’s smile. He was amazed with the fact that, despite knowing Immaru all his life, he still could feel surprised by his twin’s endless good disposition. Then the memory of last evening returned to his mind and the wave of guilt was back. He sat up and the Moon king’s smile faded when he saw Dumuzi’s grave expression. “What’s the matter?” He asked concerned.
“I’m really sorry for yesterday.” Dumuzi apologized in a whisper.

“Please, do not chastise yourself, Dumuzi.” The Moon king immediately said, knowing his sibling way too well. He could already see the tears form in his brother’s eyes.

“I should have listened to your warnings!” The Sun king insisted, unable to forgive himself. Immaru shook his head compassionately and embraced his teary brother.

“Don’t be so hard on yourself. I am fine.”

“Immaru, I am scared.” Dumuzi said in a cracked voice and the Moon king immediately released his twin, so he could look at his face. He was shocked to hear his brother admit such a thing. The Dumuzi he knew was always fearless. He was the warrior. The one always ready to face any danger. To listen to him speaking such words was absolutely unexpected. “I am so scared that something might happen to you.”

“Oh Dumuzi, nothing is going to happen to me.” Immaru said in a sweet smile, his heart filling with warm tender love for his brother.

“Can you promise me that? Can you really guarantee me nothing bad will happen to you?” Dumuzi questioned upset his brother wouldn’t drop his endless optimist and see the reality as it is. “You’ve always been haunted by these creepy dreams and visions. But now things are becoming truly dangerous! We don’t know what this Bakura person is capable of doing! What this Darkness you keep talking about will do! I cannot lose you, Immaru! I just cannot!”

Immaru stared a bit taken aback, not expecting his brother to be so scared about his safety. And yet, he should have known. The Moon king hugged his brother, holding him tightly. He too was in the brink of tears, but refused to weaken. Dumuzi was always the strong one, the brave one. Dumuzi was always the one to make him feel safe and protected during the dark frightening nights of terror. Now he was vulnerable and Immaru felt it was his duty to be the strong one this time.

He allowed his brother to sob against his shoulder and ignored the pain of Dumuzi’s nails digging desperately in his flesh. He lullabied a wordless melody while he caressed his frightened brother. The Moon king was lost for words but he understood his brother. He too was scared of the dangers ahead. Afraid of an unpredictable future. And the outcome of it.

But now that he held his sibling close to him, Immaru realized there was something that frightened him even more. More than losing his own life. Immaru was scared for his twin. Afraid for his future, should something bad happen to him. What would happen to Dumuzi if he died? Knowing his brother, he would become either depressed or insane. Probably both things. He took a deep breath. He needed Dumuzi to hope. He needed Dumuzi to believe in a happy future. For his own sake. For the sake of both of them.

“You know I cannot guarantee you such a thing will not happen.” Immaru regretfully whispered. “But I promise you, I will be careful and I will do everything in my power to protect us all, including myself. I won’t go down that easily Dumuzi. I won’t allow that, ok?” Dumuzi took a few deep breaths before releasing himself from his sibling, feeling somehow comforted by his twin’s words. His wiped his face with his hands and released a silent giggle, feeling a bit embarrassed for his little break-down.

“I love you.” The Sun king whispered and kissed his brother’s forehead afterwards. He knew Immaru’s words had been truthful. Just like he knew the Moon king was the wise one of the two. He trusted his twin to keep his promise.
“I know, silly brother of mine.” Immaru said with an amused smile, his heart warming from tender and unconditional love for his sibling. “Now, shall we see what we are having for breakfast today?”

“You go first. Let me calm down properly first.”

“You sure?”

“Yes. Go before Jounouchi eats everything.” Dumuzi giggled at Immaru’s frightened look at the prospect of missing breakfast. He quickly exited their tent, leaving his brother alone to his own thoughts.

I know you are the White Magician. A god walking on Earth. I know you are more powerful than I’ll ever wish to be. Yet, I promise you this, brother. I will not let you get hurt! I will not let you die! Whatever this Darkness is, I promise I will fight it! And I will win it!

…

“Time is becoming urgent.” Yugi said during breakfast. “I just can’t push aside this increasing fear that our travel will take too long. Especially now that we know the Millennium Items are probably related to this rise of Darkness. I’m pretty sure Bakura’s Ultimate Shadow Game is connected somehow with the village’s ritual.”

“We overheard some people, this morning when we went to buy supplies.” Anzu continued. “They were saying that today will be the deceased Pharaoh’s burial and tomorrow will be the coronation of the new Pharaoh.”

“So, we only have two days before Yami becomes Pharaoh and knowing Bakura, I bet he’ll come right away as soon as Yami becomes king. Is there no an alternate route to Cairo? A shorter way perhaps?” Yugi anxiously asked. Dumuzi and Immaru switched concerned looks.

“There is another route.” Dumuzi told, but it was clear in his voice and facial expression that he did not enjoy the alternative option he was about to present. “To continue travelling through the desert. It’s half the distance than the coast line route.”

“But that is perfect! Why weren’t we taking this route from the very beginning them?” Yugi questioned excited with the idea he could reach his friend sooner than predicted. Jounouchi and Honda cheered joyfully behind the short boy, but Anzu noticed the look of apprehension on the twins’ faces.

“Well, from here on, the desert changes. It becomes even more inhospitable. It is the «Desert of No Return» we are talking about.” Dumuzi told for the four friends’ desolation. “It is told nobody survives this part of the desert.”

“Immaru’s magic can help us bend the extreme temperatures, right? I mean, he is the White Magician after all.” Jounouchi asked hopefully.

“I’m afraid my magic has limits. It is not like I can bright rain to a desert. Besides, magic weakens me physically. It would be unwise to use it carelessly.” The White Magician spoke a bit upset. He hated when people thought his magic was an unlimited resource, something easy to achieve and always available at no cost. “It is out of question. We are taking the coastal route.”

Jounouchi wined like a little child, Yugi begged on his knees with tears in his eyes, while Anzu and Tristan shouted revolted words. But nothing was would budge the Moon king’s result. Apparently, when Immaru said «no», he really meant «no» and there were no tears, no words and no any kind of force that would change his mind. And after the previous night’s events, it was not wonder that
Dumuzi told them his brother was right. So, they finished breakfast quickly, packed their tents and made their way to the nearest village, which had a small harbor. From there on, they would take a ship that would leave to Cairo. At least they had covered many miles the day before.

The journey to the harbor village took almost the whole day and was made in an unusual silence. Yugi, in particular, was angry with the Moon king. He had never expected the teenager to be so stubborn. Anzu tried to talk with the short boy, supporting Immaru’s point of view by telling him «what for good would it be if we died in the desert during your way to Yami? Besides, how are we supposed to fight Bakura if we arrive in Cairo sick from exhaustion?» Yugi knew deep down, the girl was right and Immaru’s decision was probably the wisest one, but it did not stop him from feeling frustrated and powerless. Although they had won a lot of travel hours already, he still could feel time slip between his fingers. There was nothing he could do about it. His hopes only lifted a bit when the contours of a village against the blue of the sea appeared before his eyes.

“The sun is already setting, but if we are lucky, we can make a deal with a fisherman or a merchant and depart tonight.” Dumuzi said while he dismounted from his horse. “Jounouchi, Honda, you two come with be. Just in case we need to force a deal with some brawn.”

The two boys smiled horrendously, their faces deformed by the way their chins twisted unnaturally, while they lifted their arms and proudly exhibited their muscles. Both Dumuzi and Immaru blinked shocked at the display.

“Yeah… good luck with that.” The silver-haired boy told his brother. “I’ll go with Yugi and Anzu to get some supplies for the journey, then. We’ll meet you here in one hour.”

Dumuzi nodded in agreement and walked towards the ships with some distance of the two tall boys, still a bit freaked out by his 21st century companions’ weird reaction. Immaru, on the other hand, smiled happily at Yugi and Anzu before turning around to walk in the market’s direction. He failed to see the look of anger on the short boy’ face.

“I think we should split. Like that we can buy more variety in less time.” Yugi told. Immaru turned around to nod with a contented smile, completely oblivious to the boy’s grudge. He did think it odd that Anzu looked anxious, but shook his shoulders clueless. These people from the future acted strangely very often.

While Yugi and Anzu (who reprimanded the boy for his rancor) went to the right, Immaru took the left side of the market. He allowed himself to forget momentarily his worries about saving the world from the rise of Darkness and delighted with the colors and smells of all kinds of varieties of food. During his shopping, Immaru took the rare opportunity of talking with the local vendors, which he loved. It was refreshing to meet people that were spontaneous and genuine, unlike many members of the high court. He also enjoyed the feeling of being anonymous. Despite it being obvious he was rich, he was treated like any regular customer. The Moon king was so entertained that he failed to notice two men followed him for a while.

“Young fellow. Kind foreigner. Would you like to taste a refreshment from our land?” The elder man said with a wide smile, revealing his almost toothless mouth. Immaru resisted a giggle and nodded happily.

“Young fellow. Kind foreigner. Would you like to taste a refreshment from our land?” The elder man said with a wide smile, revealing his almost toothless mouth. Immaru resisted a giggle and nodded happily.

“That is very kind of you, mister.” The young king said while he accepted the mug. “Hum! It’s delicious.” Immaru added before drinking the fresh contents. The man watched him nervously, glancing from the boy to a corner, rubbing his hands agitated. The silver-haired boy suddenly felt strange. He felt unwell, weak and strangely sleepy. The world around him was becoming a foggy blur.
“I am so sorry! They made me do it!” The old man’s voice was the last thing Immaru heard before the world became black before his eyes and he collapsed unconscious.

…

The first star was already visible on the darkening sky when the group reunited at their meeting point. Dumuzi was quite pleased with Jounouchi and Honda’s help in persuading a merchant in taking them to Cairo as soon they had gathered all their supplies. His smile, however, slowly dissipated when he saw Yugi and Anzu waiting for them alone.

“Where is Immaru?” The sandy-haired king immediately demanded.

“We don’t know. We split one hour ago.” Anzu said, hiding her embarrassment for Yugi’s behavior.

“That fool. Probably is stuffing his face somewhere and forgot the time.” Dumuzi complained upset, already imagining his brother eating a pile of delicious snacks.

“Did you have any luck in finding a ship?” Yugi asked expectantly, ignoring the glare Anzu was throwing at him. They had argued a while ago because of his insistence in being upset with Immaru to a point the girl thought it had become more of a childish stubbornness than anything else. Yugi could read the accusation in her eyes for the young king’s delay.

Dumuzi told the good news, followed by Jounouchi and Honda recount. They told with great pride, the way they intimidated the merchant with threats and their muscled looks into giving in to their demands. They chatted and laughed together for a while, and before they knew it, half an hour had passed by. Night had already fallen and the vendors were starting to close their shops. Dumuzi looked around, searching for his brother and was starting to feel restless.

“It’s not like Immaru to be this late.” The Sun king said, the hint of apprehension present in his voice.

“Maybe he got lost.” Anzu suggested, although she knew it was a ridiculous thought, since the village was quite small.

“I’m going to look for him. Something is wrong.” Dumuzi said decided, while he walked in the streets of the now almost empty market.

The four friends of the future shared worried glances and followed the king’s example. They searched the whole market space and there were still no signs of Immaru. By now Yugi was feeling really guilty. He was starting to share Dumuzi’s fear that something bad had happened to the boy and it was his fault. He was the one who wanted to split up, because he was angry. Each time they crossed path with somebody, they gave Immaru’s description. Fortunately, some people had seen the young king and told how they even shared a pleasant small chat with the teenager. They would point out the last place they saw Immaru, but again, there was no sign of the white-haired teenager.

Dumuzi was panicking, imagining the worst scenarios. His heart was racing dangerously, as he ran from one side to the other, calling out his brother’s name. The friends tried to calm him down, but it was no use. He refused to stop looking for his brother and went to the point of aggressively knocking from door to door and invading people’s homes, with the desperate hope of finding his brother hidden somewhere. After many hours of frustration, Dumuzi finally lost it. He dropped to his knees and screamed his brother’s name.

The streets were empty for the exception of five teenagers. The world was dark, only illuminated by an almost full moon. The Sun king looked at the pale white orb hanging on the sky. It reminded of his brother and he wept uncontrollably. He could never forgive himself. He should have taken his brother with him, he should have never left him walk alone in the streets. Now Immaru was gone
and he had no idea what to do.

The four friends tried their best to comfort and calm down Dumuzi. They decided to restart their search for Immaru in the hope there could be a place they had somehow missed. Eventually, the sky became lighter and a new day was born. Dumuzi watched the sun rise with tired puffed eyes. There were no tears left to cry. His heart refused to grieve and give up hope. Immaru had to be somewhere. But how would he find his brother. If only he had some magic. Dumuzi’s lilac eyes followed the red orb travel higher in the sky. His eyes widened while his heart skipped a beat.

“I do have a piece of magic with me!” Dumuzi said out of nowhere, while the friends from the future stared perplexed at him. “I know how to find Immaru!”
Guess who's back?

Chapter Summary

What happened to Immaru and...Guess who's back again!

Chapter Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar

IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura

Enjoy the story

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

_The Spirit of the Millennium Ring felt the magic working. He knew the Pharaoh’s soul was being transported to the past and, as he was being ripped of his host’s body, he knew he was destined to travel to the very same place. The evil spirit transformed into a bulb of light and travelled fast. Nobody noticed the bright glow entering the Tablet of Memories. Bakura smirked as he fell in the strange tunnel and merged with the part of his soul he secretly had hidden inside the Millennium Puzzle. He welcomed the brisk travel in the void of time, where nothing existed but his desire to revenge the Pharaoh. Soon he saw the end of the dark tube._

“Come on, move on burglar!” A man in the Royal Guard uniform yelled. He pulled harshly the chains attached to a young man. Feeling completely exhausted the prisoner collapsed.

“He fainted, again!” The other guard said. His colleague was about to reply when the sky changed and a lightning fell right next to the guards.

The first seconds were painfully confusing. Bakura felt unwell. He felt extremely warm and his legs were numb. He slowly got up. His whole body ached. It felt like he was carrying a heavy weight. He looked at the floor and saw golden grains of sand mixed with brown dirt. He looked up. His lilac eyes met the blue sky and scorching sun he grew up with. He grinned. He was back home.

Bakura lifted his hands and gasped surprised at his skin’s colour. The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring stared with wonder at his hands and arms. They weren’t pale anymore, but bronzed by the Egyptian sun. But this revelation was quickly overshadowed by the sudden realization that he was handcuffed. All right! He returned to _that_ moment, when he was being dragged hours under the hot
Desert sun.

Great timing!

Then he saw something in the corner of his eye. Bakura smirked triumphantly when he saw seven hooded figures in the distance. They were about to advance, when suddenly, they all stared simultaneously at the same direction. Without any notice, the mysterious figures simply vanished into thin air. The Spirit of the Ring was puzzled. Then he felt a dangerous rage grow inside his chest. But before he could express any of his anger, he heard some voices nearby and was distracted by them. The watched confused as another two guards on horses came in his direction.

“Hey, don’t stay behind and delay us!” One of the horsemen shouted. “I still want to see part of the festivities!”

“Did you see that?” One of Bakura’s captors yelled bewildered while stood up.

“See what?”

“That big light!”

“What bright light? You obviously have been too many hours in de desert! Already hallucinating.”

“I saw it too! It fell right on us!” The other guard confirmed. The horseman switched looks with his companion who shook his shoulders. He too had seen nothing. Suddenly, both men turned to look at a large brown bag hanging on the horse of the first horseman, as an enraged muffled complaining rant was heard.

“Let me out! Let me out you barbarians!!!”

There was a person in the large bag and he was stirring wildly, hitting madly with his feet in a vain attempt of freeing himself from his confinement. Bakura became intrigued and forgot all about the hooded figures.

*I don’t recall any of this happening.*
His curiosity grew when he listened better to the prisoner’s voice. It sounded oddly familiar.

“I told you already! Let me loose!”

“Put the kid down.” The first horseman commanded his colleague impatiently. “I thought you said he’d be unconscious for another few hours.”

“I gave him enough to put a camel to sleep!” The other horseman argued.

“Never mind. Let’s take a look at this jewel and see how much he’s worth.” The first horseman stated, mischief all present in his voice.

Bakura’s curiosity had just doubled after hearing the magical word “jewel”. After all, he was the King of Thieves and any object or person of value was interesting to him. The second horseman placed the squirming prisoner on the sand and took the bag off.

Bakura gasped.

Yadonushi!

Bakura was completely taken aback. His brains seemed shut down for moments, unable to process what his eyes were seeing.

What...What is he doing here?

The Spirit Ring stared open-mouthed at his host. Not only was he unable to understand Ryou’s presence here, but he failed to understand why he was dressed in a somewhat Egyptian fashion, instead of his regular T-shirt and jeans. He watched paralyzed as the first horseman grabbed the boy by his arm to take a closer at him.

“Who are you? What do you think you are doing? Do you have any idea who you are dealing with?” The boy yelled furious at the large man, trying to release from the strong grip. Bakura was
quite impressed with the kid’s rage. He never knew the twit actually had a backbone.

“Wild little thing.” The tall horseman amusedly said. He grabbed the teenager’s chin to examine the young face side to side. He pressed his strong fingers on the boy’s jaws, forcing him to move them. The boy groaned of protest. “Very nice teeth.” The horseman let go of Immaru’s face to proceed in examining his hands. “Clean nails. And look at these hands, smooth like a girl’s.” He stroked his rough hand on the king’s soft skin. The boy pulled his hand back, looking completely violated, giving the guards material for mockery laughter. Meanwhile, Bakura, who stood the whole time watching at the scene, was starting to feel nauseous by the way the tall horseman handled the boy.

“No doubt he comes from a good house.” The shorter horseman said. “Some rich boy, surely.”

“You’re going to win us a good price with that beautiful head of yours.” The first horseman said, while the other three guards were snickering.

“What are you talking about?” Immaru asked bewildered.

“Well, let’s say there are plenty of men that will pay a high price for a boy with your looks.”

“Pay? Men?! You are... selling me as a slave?” Immaru asked outraged, his heart jumping of both anxiety and anger. It was unbelievable how some people were lower than scum. “You cannot do that!”

“Why not, my little prince?” The tall horseman grabbed the boy by his hair, pulled his head back and licked under his neck. Immaru’s eyes widened greatly and failed to scream, too shocked to produce any sound. The other guards laughed amused. “Uhm, you taste like honey.” The man said while he licked his lips.

“Let him go, you filthy pervert!” Bakura shouted furiously while he attempted to jump at the tall man.

The Evil Spirit of the Ring was quite possessive about Ryou. The boy was his host, so only he and nobody else had the right to lay a finger on him. He would have gotten the large man, if he wasn’t weak and chained. The first horseman let go of Immaru, throwing him down on the hard floor. He took a few steps closer to the thief and hit him right between the ribs. Bakura gasped for air and fell shocked. It had been a very long time ago since he last felt pain. He had a habit of always letting his host deal with the less pleasant bodily ordeals.
“What is this? Our kleptomaniac friend doesn’t agree? Hahahaha!” The tall guard sadistically laughed with his hands on his sides.

“Venom Shot!”

The large man instinctively turned around and let out a scream of fright. He and the other guards were petrified, frozen on the spot. Bakura lifted his head feeling slightly dizzy and he too paralyzed. He could not believe what his eyes were seeing. The white-haired boy had two large snakes around his arms, their heads were aimed at the men. The snakes opened their mouths threateningly exhibiting their long fangs. As far as he knew, Ryou would never in his life come close to a snake, even less, hold two highly poisonous ones.

“W-Where the hell did you get those snakes?” The tall horseman asked shocked. Immaru stretched his right arm and the snake stretched altogether, like if it was an extension of his limb, almost biting the man. The guard paled horrified and took a step backwards. “Shit! We have to surround him!” The other guards prepared to entrap the boy.

“Snake Rain!”

At this, snakes from all kinds of colours and sizes came falling from the sky. First a few, but then more and more. The men screamed and yelled frightened.

“He’s a sorcerer!” One of them shouted out.

The snakes kept tumbling on the men, only missing the boy and the bandit that was still lying on the dusty ground, frozen from the shock. Soon the men started running away, absolutely terrified by the boy’s magic. Immaru watched the men disappear in the hot landscape. He let out a deep breath, shook his arms and all the snakes vanished transforming into little shinny dust particles. He let himself fall on the ground, on a sitting position, and sighed of relief.

“How in hell did you do that?” Bakura finally managed to articulate. Immaru looked at him a bit stunned, like if he hadn’t noticed the thief had been there too the whole time.

“It’s just a trick I know, nothing special.” He spoke with the most innocent tone he could to cover up his lie.
“Nothing special? Only the mightiest magicians can do what you just did!” Bakura sounded horrorstruck. Immaru felt a bit guilty for lying at the obvious, but he needed to keep his abilities unknown. He decided to change the subject.

“Why are you chained?” He casually asked.

“Eh? Oh, these…I was imprisoned because I stole one little stupid bread!”

Immaru looked suspiciously at the man. One thing was sure. He was not the only one lying here. The scar on the man’s face alone didn’t make him look very trustworthy. Immaru also thought he was too strong-built to be a poor hungry thief. He decided not to discuss and instead got up. The Moon king started searching the bags the guards left behind on the horses, ignoring the bandit for moments.

“Hey, you didn’t answer me. What are you?” Bakura demanded.

Immaru ignored him. He found a carafe, drunk enough water to satiate some of his thirst. He saw the prisoner from the corner of his eye and decided to share. He walked closer to the thief and Bakura could read the wariness in the boy’s eyes. The reason why the Spirit Ring was surprised when Immaru gave him the carafe. After staring perplexed at it for some moments, he remembered how thirty he was and greedily drunk the rest of the contents empty.

“Ah! Much better.” He wiped his mouth with his eyes shut, enjoying the freshness. When he opened his eyes again he almost flinched. The boy was crouched very close to him, looking at him curiously. Bakura grinned evilly, this closeness was going to the brat’s doom. He suddenly jumped on the young king and Immaru fell on his back, pinned under the thief. Bakura quickly grabbed the kid’s fists to block his movements. “HOW DID YOU COME HERE?”

“I-I was kidnapped! By those guards!” Immaru answered confused and frightened by the other man’s sudden aggressive behavior.

“Wrong answer! You’re telling me why you are here! And how the Hell did you just do that? Did you use holograms?”

“Hollow-what? What are you talking about?”
“Don’t play me the fool. Answer my questions! What are you doing here?”

“You’re hurting me! Let go off me!”

“Look boy, I’m not releasing you unless you give me some kind of explanation.” Bakura spoke threateningly and savoured the panic in the boy’s eyes. Immaru shut them tightly and frowned. In that very moment Bakura felt his body be swiftly lifted in the air and be thrown away just a few meters nearby. He saw Immaru get up, looking at him flustered.

“Nice way of thanking somebody!” Immaru accused, as he pointed at the empty carafe. “You know, I could have drunk it all and let you die of thirst!”

“Then why didn’t you?”

“That’s not who I am. But you! You clearly deserve to be in those chains.”

“How dare you speak like that to me, you little brat?” Bakura angrily stood up. The little twit was acting too rebellious for his taste. He was already planning to attack the boy again and teach him a lesson of good manners.

“Don’t you even try to hurt me! I’m warning you. You’ll regret.” Immaru warned in a threatening tone.

Bakura was taken aback by the amount of determination and threat in the boy’s voice. He could sense he wasn’t bluffing. And something told him the boy could actually hurt him. He decided to change his strategy.

“Okay. You’re right. I apologize. It was rude of me jumping onto you.” He spoke in a clearly fake sweet tone. “Let’s start all over, okay?” He smirked as the boy stared suspiciously at him. He was sure Ryou hadn’t recognized him. After all, he did look very different in his original body. So he decided to win the brat’s trust and try to figure out what he was doing here. “Let me introduce myself. I am Thief King.” He proudly announced. Immaru lifted one eyebrow. He didn’t look impressed at all and didn’t back down his defensive stance either. “Well, aren’t you going to tell me your name and occupation?”
“Thief King is far from being a proper name. Why should I tell you mine?”

“It’s the name I’m giving you twit, so just…” But Bakura stopped, closed his eyes and breathed deep. He had to repress his anger if he was to gain some trust from the kid. “It’s the way I want to be addressed. So please, will you be so kind in telling me who you are?” The boy looked still warily at the man but relaxed a bit after some seconds. He decided to take the risk.

“I’m Immaru.”

The King of Thieves stared amazed. Not Ryou? Was he using an alias? Then suddenly, realization fell upon him. It all made sense now. This boy wasn’t Ryou, but his past life. Yet it was still strange he could not remember anything about this encounter. Was it somehow wiped away from his memory?

“Immaru…It doesn’t sound Egyptian.”

“It’s not. It’s Akkadian. It means Light.” The boy casually explained and the thief felt a strange chill go through his body.

*Light…Hikari…*

*How in hell could I forget this?*

*Why can’t I remember him?*

“As for your question about my occupation: I’m a merchant.” The boy continued. “And a magician apprentice in my spare time.”

“As apprentice? You sure looked quite high levelled when you attacked those fools.” Bakura joked, but the boy didn’t seem to share his amusement. He was still staring suspiciously at him. Bakura knew he had to continue pushing on if he was wanted to get somewhere. He still had too many unanswered questions. “Soooo, you were kidnapped. Where?”

“In this little village by the coast…” Immaru started and suddenly he remembered. He became instantly pale and put his hands on his head. “My brother! Oh gods, he must be hysterical by now!!! I-I…I need to get back!”
“Pffff. That’s quite a journey. Best is to take a boat in Cairo and travel back on the Nile.” Bakura said carelessly. “Unless you enjoy travelling under the hot sun while you cross the desert again during what? 10 long hours?”

“I’ve been out for 10 hours? That long? Oh gods, he must be completely desperate!” Immaru agitatedly said. He made a mental note to never accept any drinks or food from strangers. He was in trouble now. How was he finding his brother, now? He looked around anxiously at the dry wasteland. “Wait, I crossed the desert with those guys? I thought nobody came out of it alive.”

“You mean the «desert of no return»?” Bakura asked amused. “It’s actually the easiest part to cross the desert. The nomads made that one up to drive other merchants and caravans away, so they could have full control of the fastest trading route.”

“Oh dear. Oh no. I can’t believe we fell for that one.” Immaru murmured distressed and embarrassed at the realization he and his brother had been fooled by a rumor. Worst of all, he had no idea where those guards had kidnapped him to. “Just my luck. How far is it from here to Cairo?”

“See for yourself.” Bakura pointed. Immaru only needed to take a few steps to look down and see the immense city developing right beneath his feat.

“I am in Cairo...” He whispered with unbelief.
**Bad company**

Chapter Summary

Bakura and Immaru get to know each other better.

Chapter Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar

IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura

Enjoy the story

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

“I am in Cairo...” Immaru whispered with unbelief.

“Yeah, the great city of the pyramids and the mighty pharaohs. Oh, and did I mention already today is the coronation of our new great pharaoh?” The thief spoke with great sarcasm.

“The new pharaoh?” Immaru almost shouted from shock, unable to hide the incredibility in his voice. He remained thoughtful for a moment and then turned around, full of determination. “I must go.” He smacked his fingers and Bakura’s chains were instantly broken. “It was nice meeting you, Thief King but I must leave now.” The boy said while he was already mounting one of the guard’s horses.

“Wait!”

Bakura needed the boy to stay a bit longer. He needed to figure out what Immaru’s role was in the past and why he couldn’t recall anything from this encounter. The teenager turned around to face him. Only then did he see the black hole in the sky with the upside-down pyramid sticking out of it. Immaru’s eyes widened in horror.

“What is that?!!” Immaru yelled terrified while he pointed to the sky. Bakura looked up and back to the boy.
Nobody is supposed to be able to see that besides me and the Pharaoh. Could this be Ryou after all? No, how would he travel here in first place? Not like he would need or want to. Besides, this brat doesn’t behave like him at all. Maybe he sees it because of his magical powers. Any way; I need to get to the bottom of this.

“I’m sorry, I don’t know what you are talking about.” Bakura spoke as innocently as he could.

The boy stared with unbelief at him. He looked at the sky one more time and then looked around, scanning the surroundings. His eyes rested on the exact spot Bakura had seen the seven hooded men earlier. The thief noticed and didn’t like it.

Do I have the impression this brat can actually sense the presence of Zorc’s men? I cannot lose him from my sight now. He might be a threat to my plans.

“You must be exhausted after being kidnapped and travelling in a bag for who knows how long. Let me accompany you to the city. It’s the least I can do for you, after releasing me.” Bakura kindly offered, acting with all the charm he could find within himself. The boy stared a bit surprised and seemed to ponder this for a few seconds. For the thief’s relief, all the suspiciousness from earlier disappeared when the boy smiled happily.

“I thank you.” Immaru politely thanked and waited till Bakura had mounted a horse too.

“And you are okay with stealing the guard’s horses?” Bakura inquired.

“Considering their deeds today, I’m not even sure these are actually their horses.”

“Touché.”

They gave the horses the commando to ride on. Bakura thanked the gods for the boy being so naïf and planned to make the travelling time a productive one. He would question the boy until he had all the answers he needed.

“So you said you are Akkadian?”
“Yes. I come from the city of Akkad, *Crown of Fire*, hometown of Ishtar, *the brilliant goddess.*” Immaru spoke proudly. Then he paused. He realized he shouldn’t reveal too much about himself. He didn’t really trust the other guy. On the other side, the young king wasn’t looking forward to an awkward silent journey. Especially with a criminal. He decided to continue engaging a conversation, but he should pick the subjects carefully. “My father was a rich merchant. My brother and I took the business over after his death. We decided to expand our contacts in Egypt.”

Bakura observed the boy while he talked. He looked exactly like Ryou. The same hair, the same eyes, the same smile. But he acted very differently, though. Immaru was more self-confident and there was something gracious in his whole posture. His eyes fell on Immaru’s robe’s material.

“Are those embroideries made of silver dread?” He spoke almost hypnotized.

“Uh?” The boy looked at his clothes. “Yes, I guess.” Then, seeing the glow in the bandit’s eyes - “You’re not really considering in stealing my clothes, are you?” Immaru asked completely scandalized, while he tugged his robe closer to his skin.

Bakura blinked for a moment. He imagined the teenager half naked in the desert, while he ran away, laughing madly with the boy’s clothes under his arm. He shook his head at the thought. He was a thief, sure, but there were limits.

“Of course not! Don’t be silly.” The bandit said for Immaru’s relieve. “I don’t believe you, though.” He continued. Immaru stopped his horse and so did Bakura.

“Excuse me...What?”

“I said I don’t believe your story. Well, at least a part of it. I’m sure you’re telling me the truth about being Akkadian, but you are way too...I dunno. Too classy to be a merchant.”

“Classy?”

“Yes. Classy, refined, regal. Get it?” Immaru fell silent. He was now scared that his cover might be blown away.

“What makes you think that?”
“Well... Your hair is too silky.” The thief said while he stretched his arm and grabbed hold of a lock of the boy’s long hair. Immaru immediately commanded his horse to move away from the bandit, who smirked with mischief. “Your skin is too white and looks way too smooth to be from somebody that travels a lot. Not to mention you’re wearing highly expensive clothes.”

“Wow, quite a persons’ judger.” Immaru tried to say in a playful tone. He looked calm from outside, but was totally freaking out from inside.

“I know what I steal.” The thief teased back.

It was true. Living years as a criminal, Bakura had learned to identify the social condition of people by their clothes, accessories, manners and behavior. He could very well differentiate a true nobleman from somebody that tried to look rich, and the other way around.

“Well, as I said before, my father was a rich merchant. He died rather recently, so this is my first travel. I’m sure within time all my classy looks will fade away.” Immaru forced himself to speak in a nonchalant way, hoping the bandit would buy his story. He commanded his horse to pace faster, Bakura followed him with a large smirk on his face.

“I sure hope not.” Bakura said too softly for the boy to hear. “I doubt you can get rid of your elegant manners, though.” He shouted.

“My - What... Excuse me? Are you hitting on me?” The boy shouted back looking absolutely incensed. “What’s your people’s problem? Bunch of perverted Egyptians!” Bakura laughed heartily at the boy’s indignation.

“I was just making a point. If you ask me, I can understand why those guys kidnapped you. I bet you would have earned them a fortune!” Bakura said and laughed loudly when Immaru gave him a furious look. He’s face was flushed, making the bandit even laugh harder. He slowly composed after a while himself.

“Enough making fun of me?” Immaru asked upset.

“Oh, come on. Did you ever look at yourself in a mirror?” Bakura spoke with a lusty tone. He smirked as the boy gained a pink shade on his cheeks. “Its best I accompany you till you are somewhere safe, before somebody tries to snatch you again.” Bakura spoke darker this time.
He was not blind neither dumb. The boy was truly beautiful. His creamy skin was a rarity in these regions, just like his silky white hair and large brown eyes. His frail appearance only made him more attractive and the thief knew there were enough ill-intentioned people that would like to take advantage of such an exquisite boy. Plus, he had the bad feeling this boy was as innocent and lacking survival experience as Ryou. In short, he an easy target.

“I can take care of myself. Thank you.” Immaru sounded clearly offended.

“Yes, I can see that. Your very first travel outside your land and you get yourself kidnapped.”

“That’s not fair! They caught me by surprise!”

“No, you’re too naive and trust people too easily. You do realize you are travelling with a criminal and know nothing about me. I could be leading you into a trap.”

“I do not trust people too easily! I know you wouldn’t dare to do anything to me because you’ve seen me use magic and you don’t know what else I can do. You aren’t willing to take any risks.” Immaru retorted infuriated by the accusation. Bakura groaned at the truthful words and cursed internally. The twit was smarter than he thought. “Besides, you did try to defend me earlier. If you were such a bad person, you wouldn’t even bother to try to help me.”

“Oh, so I am Bad Person.”

“I didn’t mean it like that.”

“No?”

“No. Look. I know you are an outlaw, after all you insist being called Thief King. But that doesn’t make you automatically a bad person. I do not know anything about your background. I do not know what made you live in the marginality. Maybe you steal because you are greedy or because you enjoy it. Maybe you steal because you never had any other options and it became your survival and is the only lifestyle you know. There are so many possibilities. I’m not judging you or anybody else without knowing the whole picture.” Immaru spoke solemnly and Bakura stared at him truly amazed. The more he knew this boy, the more he surprised him.
“Wow, words worthy of a king.” Bakura said in a sarcastic tone. Yet he meant it. The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring had to admit the brat was quite noble hearted. He waited for Immaru’s reaction but he simply remained silent. Little did the Thing King know the boy was not wishing to return to the royalty subject. “I like you.” Bakura said after a while. “You’re not judgmental, like everybody else.” Immaru allowed a small smile form at the compliment, the Spirit Ring’s satisfaction. It seemed he was starting to gain some of the boy’s trust.

“So…, Thief King. What kind of bandit you are, anyway? I mean, do you work alone or in group?” Immaru asked and Bakura chuckled at the boy’s obvious curiosity.

“I work alone. Always did. And it’s the best way, because in this world of stealing, you cannot trust anybody but yourself. I know enough thieves who worked together and ended up killing each other for treachery.”

“Must be a solitary life, though.”

“Solitary? Not the way I see it. It’s a life of freedom. I steal when I want; I’m not attached to anything or anybody. No compromises, I just do whatever I want to. And if I want company, I know how to find it.” He grinned mischievously and Immaru blushed fully understanding what he meant with the last part.

“And what about you? I already know your father died recently and you have a hysterical brother. Do you have more relatives?”

“A cousin. My mother died some years ago.” Bakura recognized the hint of sadness in the boy’s voice. The same sadness Ryou tried to hide behind his happy smile when people asked him about his family.

“And now you inherited your parents’ riches. Must have been nice to grow up in a rich house. Fancy life full of luxury.”

“I guess.” Immaru didn’t sound enthusiastic at all, by the contrary.

“What is it? The boy is saddened for having a pretty material life?” Bakura asked with an overly fake
sweet voice.

“Stop it! You don’t know anything!”

“I know spoil kids tend to be real brats.”

“Look, I may have grown up in a wealthy situation, but it doesn’t mean it’s all a sea of roses!

“Oh, what did our little prince miss? A golden toy?”

“Enough! You are a very rude person! I’m continuing alone. In my land we have a wise saying: Better off alone than with bad company!” The boy scolded upset. Bakura rolled his eyes. This Immaru kid was as sensible as Ryou.

“Okay, I’m sorry, your highness.” Bakura apologized while he bent bowed his head in a mocking courtesy. Immaru was already giving him one of his rare angry looks. “Please, tell me, what’s so bad about growing up in luxury?”

“There’s nothing wrong about it. Actually, it’s quite comfortable.” Immaru said awkwardly. Bakura was now the one glaring at him. “Okay, I’ll admit it. It’s easy when you have everything you need. I was just... - I was thinking about what you said about freedom, that’s all.”

“Let me guess. You had overprotective parents and they didn’t let you do anything? Bu-hu.”

“You are truly an extremely unpleasant person, you know that?” Bakura grinned maliciously at the comment. “And must you know, my parents weren’t overprotected! It were the priests!” Immaru told frustrated. “As soon as the priests discovered my… As soon as I…” Bakura stared expectantly while Immaru broke his discourse and looked lost in his own thoughts.

The Moon king had often wondered how it was to be a normal child and have a normal life. How it was to have total freedom and leave his home, his city whenever he wanted. But he always pushed these thoughts aside, reminding himself of his duty as prince and sorcerer. And when Dumuzi named him co-ruler, he gave extra importance to his role as king and White Magician, willing to give everything for his people and for the gods. But since they left the city and started their journey to Egypt, Immaru had started to question more about his life privations.
It felt like if his childhood and youth had been stolen. Because of his special powers, all prospects of leading a normal life were taken away from him at a very young age. “I never was allowed leave Akkad, to go anywhere. Since a child, my life was dedicated to the learning of magic and spirituality. I grew up protected inside the walls of temples. All the pampering was nothing but a luxurious incarceration, a golden cage.” Immaru spoke with a resentful but defeated voice.

“How old were you when they found out you had magical powers?”

“I was five.”

“And you were since then completely confined to the temples?” Bakura asked shocked. That was indeed a very young age to join the priesthood.

“Gods, fortunately, no. My family insisted I lived at home, but I ended spending most of my time in the temples. The priests believed I shouldn’t be too exposed to the outside world. They were scared I’d be corrupted by society. They never really liked my brother and cousin. Often accused them for being a bad influence.” Immaru said in an amused tone, as the recollections returned. He smiled a sad smile. Bakura recognized that sad smile. It was regret for missing chances in life. Ryou used to smile that way when he turned down invitations to go out with “potential” friends. This boy wasn’t that different from his host, after all.

“What did you do in the temples?”

“It was all about learning to use magic. Learn to understand my instincts, canalize my energies, learn to know my powers to their very core.”

“Quite the school you had there. I’m glad I don’t have any of those weird powers. At least I get to do what I want.”

“It appears you do have some kind of luxury, after all.”

Bakura didn’t really know what to say after that. It kind of sounded like a punch line, leaving no space over to explore the topic. So, they rode a while silently, both gazing at the city they slowly approached. Bakura was pondering the next move to gain the boy’s trust. He needed to find out what Immaru was truly doing in Egypt. His instincts told him the brat was not telling everything. He was lost in his deep thoughts when, unexpectedly, Immaru started riding downwards in a crazy speed.
Bakura stared perplexed and wondered why the boy had only decided to run away now. But then he saw to where the boy was heading. A well. The thief was reminded of how horribly thirsty he was. In no time, he reached Immaru, who was already drinking a great amount of water from a wooden bucket.

“Oh salvation!” Immaru exclaimed absolutely relieved.

He lifted his eyes and saw the way the thief stood opposite him with a wild expectantly look in his eyes. The teenager handed over the bucket still filled with water. Bakura greedily drank it and he emptied what was over on top of him, so he was soaking wet from head to toes.

“Ahh, that feels good.” Bakura smiled thankful for the coolness. He blinked when he saw Immaru staring at him with his hand covering the mouth, his eyes denouncing amusement. The boy was clearly repressing his laughter. “Ha! Laugh all you like. You should try it too. It’s refreshing.”

He threw the bucket into the well, pulled it back full with water and gave it to the boy. Immaru hesitated first but then smiled and turned the bucket over his head, so the water dropped down his entire body. The bandit laughed heartily and so did the young king.

“Hey, what are you guys doing there? This is not a public well! (Why does everybody think they can just use my water?)” A little fat man came running towards them. Both Bakura and Immaru startled. Before anybody could react, Bakura grabbed the boy’s wrist and pulled him into a run.

“Quickly! To the horses!” The thief commanded.

“But...”

“No but! Just mount it and ride!” Immaru, not having any time to rethink, obeyed the man.

“Hey! Come back! Thieves!” The angry fat man shouted, waving his fists in the air.

“I deeply apologize...” Immaru started but was cut by Bakura, who slapped the boy’s horse. The animal immediately responded and rode quickly away.
“You’re a very selfish little man! Lucky for you we didn’t take anything else!” Bakura maliciously shouted at the angry man, who was left behind utterly frustrated and forced to listen at the Thief King’s mad laughter as he got away.
Chapter Summary

The interaction between Thief King and the Akkadian Emperor takes an unexpected turn.

Bakura makes a shocking discovery.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

They kept riding until they reached the city’s outskirts. Bakura stopped his horse and dismounted still laughing at the scenario they left behind. Immaru, by the contrary, seemed to find the whole thing quite distasteful. He too dismounted his horse and stared at the bandit with an accusing and reproving look.

“What?” The thief asked in between his laughter. “Come on! It was fun!”

“No, it wasn’t! It was inappropriate! Not to mention absolutely unnecessary! We could have explained him.”

“Explain what, your highness?” Bakura seemed to be done with his laughter and returned to his creepy tone. Immaru noticed the change and was starting to believe this man was seriously mad.

“That we didn’t know he owned the well.”

“That man wasn’t interested in hearing our story. In his eyes, we were stealing and that was all that mattered for him. If he would have had the chance, he would have beaten us and brought us to the guards.”

“Well, I disagree.” Immaru pouted and crossed his arms.

“Disagree all you want! See if I care. The water was great and I had a good laugh. That is all that matters to me.”
“You’re mean!”

“Really? Well, it looks like I brought you safely to the city.” The thief gestured to the street and Immaru looked in its direction annoyed, because he could not disagree. “Are you not going to thank me?” Bakura grinned maliciously as he read growing frustration in the boy’s face.

“Thank you.” The boy murmured reluctantly.

“What? I couldn’t quite hear you.”

“I said - I am thankful for you accompanying me and guiding me safety to the city!” Immaru shouted out this time, much for the thief’s amusement. The teenager was glad they reached Cairo because this bandit was starting to consume his patience.

“Won’t you pay me a token of your appreciation?”

“I would repay you, but alas I have no money on me. And don’t you dare and think I’ll give you my jewels! They are a family heritage.”

“Who said I wanted money?” Bakura’s grin grew while the white-haired boy stared at him clueless.

“What do you mean…” But Immaru’s words were suddenly cut by Bakura, who grabbed the boy by his shoulders and pushed him closer, so their chests were touching. Immaru’s chocolate eyes grew while Bakura put one hand behind the boy’s head, his fingers roughly gripping his silky hair. He grinned victoriously before pushing the young king’s face closer to his and stole a kiss.

Immaru’s eyes grew even wider, startled and shocked by the bold and rough move. He wanted to fight back but he lost complete command of his body, which seemed to be paralyzed. During the short seconds of the stolen kiss, his blood seemed to boil up and travel too fast through his body, increasing his heart rate madly.

When Bakura broke the kiss, he smirked satisfied at the shocked and flushed angelic face of Immaru. The indecent thought of corrupting the boy’s innocence became impossibly tempting. So he kissed Immaru again. Sensing the boy’s numbness, he took advantage of his non-resistance to force his tongue into the teenager’s mouth.
Immaru made a shocked protesting sound. The moment their lips touched, his mind became foggy. He forced himself to think, but he could feel himself losing his grasp of his thoughts. He tried to fight back and push the thief away, but his limbs were too weakened. Part of Immaru panicked at the realization something, a strange invisible force, had overpowered him. The other part of him wanted the kiss, desired to be touched and was at lust’s mercy.

Bakura laughed internally as he felt the boy go limp under his touch. He easily got inside his mouth. *This is too easy,* he thought. The Evil Spirit of the Ring was a bit disappointed, having expected at least a bit of struggle. He wasn’t complaining, though. If the boy was willing to give himself so easily, who was him to turn down such a tempting offer. Bakura pressed the boy’s body against his and moved his tongue greedily inside the boy’s warmth. *Gods, he tastes damn good!*

Suddenly he felt struck by something, like a lightning bolt hitting his body and spreading its electricity all the way to his limbs, fingers and toes. His heart started pumping blood faster as adrenaline ran hot and wild in his veins. The feeling was amazing, like nothing he ever experienced before. He gasped surprised and looked at Immaru’s shocked eyes, his swollen lips taking in air. Somehow, Bakura knew the boy had felt it too. An uncontrollable wave of tempting lust took over him and the Spirit Ring invaded the young king’s mouth again, with extra force. The kiss was rough, greedy and maddening. Bakura moved one of his hands down the boy’s body and squeezed a buttock. Immaru made a sound that was unmistakably a moan. They both lost themselves in lust and desire. The young king wrapped his arms around Bakura’s broad shoulders, while the thief’s hands covered every inch of the boy’s back.

The bandit could feel Immaru’s heart beating madly against his chest. The Moon king felt a crazy warmth grow in his own chest, a pleasant tingling spreading throughout his entire body. He was sinking in a sea of desire. Bakura forgot who he was, where he was, what his life mission was. All he wanted, all he needed, was to connect with the boy.

Immaru had stopped thinking. His mind was overpowered by an unmeasurable desire for the thief. A small part of his consciousness, though, warned him of danger. He was lost in desire and kept sinking in it deeper and deeper. If he surrendered to it, there was no escaping anymore.

He was reaching the dangerous depths of lust. Immaru moaned wanting more, needing more. But the small part of his consciousness that was still alive, urged him to stop. He needed air. He had to stop! Immaru broke the kiss and pushed Bakura away, so their bodies weren’t touching anymore.

Both stared surprised at each other, panting, bodies tingling frustrated, their crouches complaining painfully. Immaru stared at the bandit scared. There had been a force, stronger than him, that had pushed him towards this stranger. He had felt before a dark force luring in the desert. The upside-down pyramid was still hanging in the air. And he almost surrendered to something he knew was more than just desire and lust. With trembling fingers, he touched his lips and suddenly another realization fell upon him. He felt both infuriated and violated. The thief had ruthlessly stolen a kiss.
“What the Hell was THAT!” The flushed boy yelled desperate to release his anger and fears at his offender.

Bakura stared at the boy and, for the first time in ages, was wordless. Never, in his entire mortal life had he ever felt such an intense and impressive amount of pleasure. There was no orgasm he ever reached that matched the waves of pleasure this boy’s taste and touch offered him. He was confused, but above all, he was greedy for more. His body longed for Immaru’s in an animalistic way. He took a step forward, wanting to restart where they stopped, but the boy pushed him away for a second time.

“You - You are despicable!!!” Immaru pointed accusingly, his eyes flashing in an unfamiliar rage. “You have no right to go and kiss people around like that!”

Bakura blinked a few times and took a few deep breaths. The bodily tingling was finally diminishing and his mind was becoming clear once again. The Spirit Ring realized something odd had just happened. Wasn’t it for the kid’s furious indignation, he would have said Immaru had put a spell on him. Yet, it had felt great.

“I must confess, that guard was right about you. You do taste like honey.” Bakura maliciously said and his tongue licked his lips, tasting them. Immaru gaped from disbelief and the thief grinned mischievously. “Oh, don’t act like you didn’t enjoy it my little prince. You kissed back.”

“No, I didn’t!”

“Yes, you did.”

“No, I didn’t!!”

“Really?”

“Yeah! You caught me out of guard! I would never allow you to kiss me like that!” Immaru spoke determinately. Bakura, amused by the boy’s furious embarrassment, and still wanting to touch him again, moved quickly and seized the boy’s arms. The young king stared with disbelief and panicked at the strong grip.

“Let’s see about that.” Bakura said with a malicious grin.
Bakura kissed without permission for the second time. He wanted to make sure he tasted the teenager before he would start struggling back, so the bandit put a lot of passion right from the beginning. Immaru protested and tried to free himself from Bakura’s grasp, but lacked effort. Their tongues met again and this time the young king simply didn’t care anymore. It felt way too good to stop. So, he wrapped his arms around the thief and pushed him closer, desperate to feel. Bakura, intoxicated by pleasure, tightened his grip and managed to pin Immaru against a wall. The full contact of their bodies pressed against each other caused another wonderful electrifying sensation to travel under their skins, maddening them with their senses.

Immaru felt himself sink again in the deep abyss of pleasure and this time ignored all his mind’s warnings. Feeling the thief’s touch, his warmth and his taste felt as urgent and as necessary as breathing. The young king released a lustful moan and received a delicious bite on his neck. Bakura could feel his body burn against Immaru’s, he could feel the blood pump inside his ears. While he kissed him, he felt a wonderful weightless sensation hit his heart. His mind was filled with a bright light that hypnotized him, compelled him to surrender in it’s warm sweetness. Immaru sensed a dark shadow travel from the bandit’s heart to his. He could feel dark tendrils caress his chest. He felt something cold and empty, hungrily trying to consume him. Immaru’s heart skipped a beat when his mind woke up. It was the same threat, the same source of danger he had sensed earlier in the desert. Immaru broke the kiss for the second time and felt the chains of darkness break around his heart.

While he stared in pure shock at the thief, Bakura looked at him in utter confusion, panting wildly, for his lungs desperately needed air. Bakura failed to understand why this boy’s touch created such a reaction to his body. It was a completely new sensation. It was both wonderful and addictive. The reason why the teenager’s words sounded so strange to him.

“Stay away from me, you demon! I will not allow whatever darkness you carry within yourself overpower me!” Immaru yelled in such a dangerously defensive way that Bakura actually felt some respect for the boy. He grimaced. Just like before, the physical separation made him lucid again.

“I do not know of what darkness you speak of, but I sure know there was a great deal of light coming out of you! What was that? Some kind of magic? A spell? A curse?” Bakura yelled back.

The Spirit Ring was becoming quite apprehensive. From the moment he landed back in Ancient Egypt nothing was making any sense. It was all related to this boy, this Akkadian with magical powers that simply happened to be in Egypt the day of the Pharaoh’s coronation. It could never be a coincidence. The brat sensed Zorc’s pawns, just like he saw the upside-down pyramid. And now he was telling he could sense darkness in him. This was not the way things played out the last time. Sure he had lost many of his memories while he lived trapped within the Millennium Ring, but he
had recovered them all by now. And Immaru was not in any of them.

Immaru stared at the bandit warily. His anxiety was increasing by the minute. He failed to understand what was happening. Why did he become so helpless at the touch of this man? He disliked the thief, but somehow, when they touched, a strange impulse made him desire madly for the man. It made him forget the world around him. Immaru bitterly realized that just a minute ago, he was willing to surrender his body and soul to a stranger, worse, he was willing to give up his virginity to this common bandit whose name he didn’t even know. Immaru would never do anything this reckless in his normal state of mind, so what made him lose his head like this?

And how was it possible that this man saw a part of his soul. Or had he a glimpse of his white magic? Does this mean the darkness he saw earlier was in fact dark magic? He had sensed a negative energy in the desert when the guards were already gone. Was it related to this man? Who was he after all?

“Who are you? Tell me now! No more lies.” Immaru commanded and the other man sneered.

“You are calling me a liar? Look at you, a part-time magic apprentice! You expect me to believe that nonsense?”

Thief and king glared challengingly. None trusted or believed the other. Both Bakura and Immaru were feeling disgusted at the mere thought a while ago they had wanted to touch the other. This mutual aversion was probably their only common ground. None was willing to tell the truth and none was letting the truth escape either. Suddenly their glare contest was interrupted by a loud and terrifying groan that filled the skies above them. Both Bakura and Immaru startled and froze for moment. Another groan was heard, a bit closer, making the floor tremble. The two males stared shocked at each other. Both recognized the source of the sound, unaware the other knew it too. Immaru ran past Bakura who was still stunned and watched the boy run down the street.

“My brother!” Immaru shouted, happiness all spread over his face.

“What?” Bakura stared in pure shock. Had the boy gone mad? He could not mean that was his brother!

“Dumuzi!!!” Immaru yelled as he stumbled on the way, but persisted his running. He followed the source of the repetitive groans. Bakura too started running.

“Wait!” The thief shouted and cursed internally. The boy was a fool, a stupid naive boy running right to the mouth of the lion. He gasped when he saw the colossal shadow fly above his head and his
eyes met a gigantic golden body. Immaru was running on the street, laughing and shaking his arms to the creature.

“Over here! Dumuzi! I’m over here!!!” Immaru shouted.

Bakura would have sworn he heard other voices, but he had no time to think about it. They were on the main street. People had run away and hidden behind houses and tents, fearing the mighty god monster. Immaru was the only person standing in the middle of the street, fully exposed, still waving his arms happily. The Spirit Ring gasped horrified, because the monster was now flying in the boy’s direction. It was lowering itself, preparing for landing and Bakura was now sure the beast was going to kill Immaru. There was no time for thinking. Thief King made a run and threw himself at the teenager, pushing him out of the monster’s way. Both fell on the ground and saw the monster land in their closeness. The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring thought it was their death. But the sight he saw next petrified him even more than the presence of the Winged Dragon of Ra. What he saw was impossible, incomprehensible. Sitting on the golden beast were - The midget, the bitch, the blond twit and the moron with the idiotic hairstyle! What the Hell are those fools doing here? Malik, you traitor!

He watched with fury as Yugi and his friends dismounted the beast. He was fuming from loathing. How did they come here? And how were they able to tame the real god monster? Immaru freed himself from his grip and ran to meet Dumuzi. The King of Thieves quickly moved away and hid in the shadows, not wanting to be seen by any of those fools. He was quite certain none of them would recognize him, but he could not take any risks. He watched, hidden from behind a tent, Immaru embrace Malik. They hugged and laughed and hugged again. It was like if they hadn’t seen each other for several years. The name Dumuzi was spoken again and then he realized. This was not Malik, but his past live. He was Immaru’s hysterical brother!

“Thank the gods you’re all right.” The sandy haired boy said, while he stroked his brother’s bangs. “What happened? I was so worried!”

“I’m so sorry! I was knocked out and kidnapped! When I came back to my senses I was practically in Cairo. I was planning to find you, but you were quicker.” Immaru explained, but his expression hardened a bit afterwards. “Good thinking Dumuzi. I appreciate you coming to my rescue but our cover is now blown!”

“I thought you were in danger! Nobody saw you! We searched you everywhere. What did you expect? This was the best and fastest way to find you!” Dumuzi shouted back defensively. Immaru’s face softened and he looked a bit guilty.

“I’m so sorry! You must have been worried sick.” He apologized. Meanwhile, Thief King stared stupefied, understanding less and less what was going on. The presence of the four idiots only meant
they were here to ruin his plans. And the past lives of Ryou and Malik were obviously connected to whatever plan the four fools had.

“They’re okay. I’m just glad I found you.” Dumuzi said almost in tears, but suddenly he remembered. “You said you were kidnapped. By whom? A- Are you okay? You’re not hurt, are you?”

“I’m perfectly fine. The kidnappers were the ones that got scared of me. I let some snakes fall on them.” Immaru proudly said and Dumuzi grinned broadly. “They were Egyptians. From the Royal Guards. The bastards wanted to sell me as a slave! Can you imagine?”

“Uhg! The Pharaoh will hear off this!” Dumuzi sounded disturbingly pissed off. He had just spoken these words when an eloquent voice was heard from the end of the street.

“Stop right there! In the name of the Pharaoh!” Everybody turned to see who it was. Yugi and his friends gasped from shock, Bakura’s eyes narrowed of discontent. They all recognized the man riding towards them.

“Kaiba!” Jounouchi yelled bitterly. “You’ve got to be kidding me!!!”

Chapter End Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
Enjoy the story
I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS
Reunion

Chapter Summary

Bakura and Priest Seto make some shocking discoveries.

Yugi and his friends finally get an audition with the Pharaoh.

Chapter Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar

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Enjoy the story

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

“Kaiba!” Jounouchi yelled bitterly. “You’ve got to be kidding me!!!”

“You know this man?” Dumuzi asked the blond.

“Yeah, he’s the biggest asshole from Domino City.”

“No, he’s Kaiba’s past life. Remember the stone tablet?” Yugi reminded. “It had a picture of the Pharaoh and Kaiba’s past life. I think he was a priest or something like that.”

“Whatever he might be, he’s heading toward us and really quickly.” The blond whined.

The Royal Priests Seto and Shada rode quickly towards the group and stopped some meters away from the golden monster. The creature looked at them suspiciously and his eyes met Dumuzi’s. The young king gestured the beast to stay still. The monster obeyed remaining alert all the time. Bakura felt his insides burn. So it was Malik’s past live who controlled the Egyptian god! It somehow made sense.

“Who are you?” Priest Seto demanded, without mounting off his horse. “And what are you doing
“Curious. I’m not the Pharaoh or a priest, yet he answers to me.” Dumuzi spoke vainly as he took a step forward.

“Stay back stranger!” Priest Seto warned, his Millennium Rod pointed at the sandy haired king.

“Or else, what?” Dumuzi challenged, by taking another step.

“I don’t think you should defy him.” Immaru warned distressed. But it was too late. Priest Shada had already started the Dark Magic within his Millennium Item.

“Millennium Key, reveal!”

Dumuzi felt his body freeze on the spot. Something was wrong. Very wrong. He wanted to move, but couldn’t, no matter how hard he tried. An invisible force kept him rooted against his will. He was completely powerless. His eyes widened as he watched impotent a golden light travel to him. It travelled inside of him. It crossed his body, it travelled beyond his body. It felt like it was invading the core of his soul. He witnessed something place itself between himself and the golden light. He recognized his brother’s shape overshadowing him. Then something changed in his soul. The invader was expelled. Dumuzi realized Immaru was shielding him against the dark magic. The uninvited golden light was forced to leave his soul. It was repelled by a white one, a stronger and brighter, shooting it back to its source, making Priest Shada fall from his horse. Bakura watched from the shadows the scene unfold itself. He could not believe his eyes. Immaru had just overthrown the Millennium Key’s magic. No ordinary magician could do this. Who was he truly?

“What...How?” Priest Seto mumbled confused. He came immediately to his friend’s rescue. They were both amazed to see the Millennium Key glow by itself. Shada stood up in shock and looked from the Key to Immaru.

“Show me his soul.” Priest Shada whispered afraid. His eyes grew wide as the form before him revealed a great source of white light. It was the purest light he ever saw, so pure and so bright it blinded him painfully. He covered his eyes and screamed from the pain, dropping the Millennium Item on the floor. “I-It’s not possible!” Shada shouted frightened.

“What did you see?” Priest Seto asked worried.
Seto stared at the white-haired boy. He looked fragile. Could he hold such a terrifying powerful monster inside of him that even Shada was afraid of? Everybody else stared both in shock and expectation. People hidden behind tents and houses carefully peeked. The Winged Dragon of Ra’s eyes shrunk and it breathed hot air warningly. The people quickly shrunk back to their hidden places.

“What do you people think you are doing?!” Dumuzi yelled outraged. The moment his brother expelled the golden light from his soul, he regained full control over his body. “First you attack me without warning with some evil force and then you try the same spell on my brother?!”

“H-His soul - Is made of light...Pure white light!” Priest Shada stuttered, deaf to Dumuzi’s infuriated words.

“What?!” Seto stared alarmed at the boy standing before him. Bakura grimaced. Yes, he had seen that light. He had felt it too. And how wonderfully good it had felt.

“It’s pure light. Like the source of light in the world!”

“It’s not possible.” Seto coldly stated. “The only ones with such a soul are White Magicians and those haven’t wandered in our world for centuries!”

“You fools!!” Dumuzi shouted infuriated by the way he and his brother were being treated. “You bet he’s the White Magician! You should bow to him for he’s above you all, you sorry excuse for a priest!”

Seto, Shada and Bakura gasped. The priests could not believe the petite teenager standing right before them was the incarnation of Life itself. A child chosen by the gods, with the power of creation and renewal. As for the Spirit Ring, he truly did not see this one coming. He stared open mouthed at the boy. He had suspected him to be powerful, but never this powerful. The kid could actually be a danger to Zorc.

This is not good. Zorc will not be happy when he hears about this. What am I going to do now? The Pharaoh’s silly friends are here and Yadonushi’s past life is the White Magician! Shit! I must gather all Millennium Items before it’s too late. But how?

“Seto, I’ve heard about the birth of a White Magician years ago, but I thought it was untrue.” Priest Shada started. “The Akkadians claimed he was born in the very heart of their Empire, in the Royal Family of Ishtar.”
Priest Seto nearly fainted from dread. He was realizing by the second he had made a colossal mistake and was going to be in great trouble soon. His brain was already processing the seriousness of it all. The strong alliance between Egypt and the Akkadian Empire could come in jeopardy.

“You didn’t belief the news our messengers send you from Akkad? You think we would make up something like that?!” Dumuzi was beyond his normal fury. He was so mad, he felt like he could explode. “You arrogant priests! Who do you think you are?!” Shada and Seto froze as they stared at the wild intimidating king.

“I must agree with my brother.” Immaru intervened and switched looks with Dumuzi. “It was not only rude but above all it was unconceivable! You cannot attack people without knowing who they are, without knowing if they truly present any threat! Do you always strike people this impulsively?” The white-haired boy questioned is a disapproving tone.

“I was merely looking into the soul…” Priest Shada tried to excuse himself but Immaru cut his words.

“You have no right to invade the soul of whosoever, for whatever reason!” Immaru’s voice rose to an authoring tone that sounded alien to Bakura’s ears.

“I deeply apologize.” Priest Seto, hoping to smooth the Akkadians’ wrath, kneeled before the White Magician. Priest Shada hastily followed his example. “We were very troubled about the presence of the great Winged Dragon of Ra. We acted incorrectly. Please forgive us.” Both Seto and Shada bowed their heads submissively. The twins switched glances. Immaru sighed deeply and nodded to his brother. Dumuzi took a step forward.

“We wish to speak to the Pharaoh.” Dumuzi demanded in a calmer voice. “He’ll hear about this.” Seto and Shada looked at each other apprehensively and swallowed dry. Their apology didn’t have the results they aimed for.

“Who I may announce?” Priest Seto finally asked, his mouth dry. Dumuzi smiled triumphantly, lifting his head majestically while he raised his right hand to Seto’s eyes level.

“The Lords and Emperors of Akkak, golden city of Ishtar.” Seto and Shada though they were going to have and heart attack when the sandy haired boy exhibited the ring with the Akkadian Royal Seal. They recognized the silver version on Immaru’s finger. “Lord Dumuzi, the Sun King and Lord Immaru, the Moon King.”
“Those two are the twin kings of Akkad?” Bakura whispered - *Yadonushi and the Tomb Keeper past lives are - twins?! Kings?! Hikari as the White Magician?! I’m sure this never happened! The past is different! What the Hell is going on?* The Spirit Ring thought, while he felt more troubled by the second.

“The twin kings!” Priest Seto gasped shocked at the realization. He bowed his head submissively again and cursed internally for his bad luck. The Pharaoh would have his head if things continued like this. “Yes, of course my Lords. Please, accompany us.”

“Just a moment.” Dumuzi requested and he turned around to the Winged Dragon of Ra. “I’m sorry, but it’s time for a nap.” The Sun king said and the God of Sun Dragon made a small protesting sound but laid his gigantic head on the ground in front of the young king.

He took out the small tablet, read the incantation his brother wrote on it and everybody watched in awe the mighty beast transform itself into a golden sphere before disappearing into the clay tablet. Priest Shada was surprised with how small the clay tablet was. He and the other priests only managed to place the monsters in large tablets and even then it demanded a lot of effort in placing such powerful creatures inside a stone object. The size of Dumuzi’s tablet was a clear indicator of Immaru’s magnificent powers.

Meanwhile, Bakura had enough and decided to disappear unnoticed. He needed to relocate Zorc’s men. He needed to think and figure out what to do with this piece of information. All of this worried him greatly, because he knew he wasn’t the one in control anymore. Somehow this was not the game he had created to take revenge on the obnoxious Pharaoh. The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring sneered upset. He didn’t spend 5,000 years living inside a cursed object to watch all of his waiting and planning go down the drain because of his Yadonushi’s past life!

The group proceeded in following the two priests of Egypt. Immaru looked around, wondering where Thief King had gone. He was left with the unsettling feeling that the man had chosen to hide. The question was, why was he hiding?

“Immaru, are you coming?” Dumuzi asked when he saw his brother wasn’t moving. The others turned around and stopped. The priests wondered what was going on this time.

“I have this bad feeling…” Immaru murmured while his eyes scanned his surroundings. He noticed his twin and the others were staring at him in wonder. “Never mind. I’ll tell you later on.”
The streets quickly filled up with curious people who slowly came out of their hiding places and watched the Akkandian kings leave with the High Priests. Whispers of wonders started to spread around. Questions were made and wild speculations were the only answers.

Immaru walked almost automatically, following the two priests. The street became a vague image of strange shapes and colours that meant nothing to him. He heard voices nearby, whispered conversations he couldn’t follow and wouldn’t care. His mind was too filled with questions. Thief King. He was sure the bandit was going to be a problem. He carried a great deal of darkness within him. And then there were the Millennium Items, these strange objects filled with dark magic. The Moon king was becoming apprehensive. Were the bandit and the Millennium Items connected? Could he be this Bakura guy the four friends from the future keep talking about? He needed to talk with the others in private, preferably with the presence of the Pharaoh.

While they walked to the palace, Yugi’s heart beat faster in anticipation. He barely could suppress his excitement in meeting Yami after almost a month. He missed his “other self” so badly. Since he solved the Millennium Puzzle, Yugi had never been alone again. There was always this warm and kind feeling in the puzzle, a being living there, encouraging and supporting him daily. Their friendship, their bond, was so strong that Yugi had forgotten how it was to have only his own thoughts, his own opinions, his own feelings. After four years of sharing a body and mind, being just Yugi, being just one person, felt quite lonely.

Yugi also felt nervous. He was worried to death for his “other self’s” well-being. He was curious to see Yami as his original persona, the historical Nameless Pharaoh, the boy he had been before he met Yugi. He wondered how the Pharaoh was. He wondered if he was very different of the Yami he knew, of the spirit with no memories that was modeled as a reflection of Yugi’s personality, experiences and daily life. As much as Yugi longed to meet the Pharaoh, a part of him feared to lose the Yami he knew.

The priests brought them to strong walls that protected the palace. They walked through the gate and were marveled with the magnificent gardens, imposing buildings and servants busying themselves with their daily tasks. While they followed the priests along long galleries with tall columns and high ceilings, many curious eyes watched them, wondering who they were. Priest Seto disappeared during some minutes to announce them to the Pharaoh, while the twin kings and the four friends from the future waited in a fore chamber with Priest Shada.

“The Pharaoh will attend you now.” Priest Seto said as he returned and courteously bowed to the twin kings. Yugi and the others switched glances, while they followed the Akkadians. Yugi took a deep breath. This was it. The moment he waited for so long.
The Pharaoh waited in his throne room, feeling the least excited to meet these foreign kings.

The last thing he needed right now was to explore a political agenda that was completely unknown to him. He could feel the start of a headache. Since he arrived, he could not remember a single thing about this day or his past in Ancient Egypt. He was barely an hour in this new strange world and had already suffered a murder attempt. Then he watched the six priests use the magic of the Millennium Items to release a monster from a man’s body and seal it in a giant stone tablet. He had witnessed the origin of Duel Monsters, which was surreal and quite disturbing. But nothing was as unlikely as the news of a golden monster flying around over Cairo. He had wanted to seek to the matter himself, but he was told otherwise and instead the priests Seto and Shada took over. Apparently, his role as a Pharaoh was to give orders and remain peacefully seated on his golden throne. He had pretended to enjoy the royal ceremonies, which continued as if nothing had happened.

Yami felt completely useless. He felt displaced and wondered if this is how an out of body experience was. He wondered if he was reliving his past or if these were his memories confused and mingled with his experiences from the last four years living in the 21st century. Because he was surrounded by familiar faces and yet they were complete strangers to him. Yugi’s Grandpa was not Grandpa but Siamun Muran, his vizier. Ishizu Ishtar was a priestess called Isis, holding one of the Millennium Items; just like Seto Kaiba, who had control of the Millennium Rod.

Worse of all, Yami still didn’t know his own name. The Pharaoh sighed and straightened his back, wishing to hide any hints of anxiety. He could hear footsteps echo in his direction. Just minutes ago, priest Seto had returned. Despite bringing the good news that the monster situation was solved, Yami sensed some kind of awkwardness and embarrassment while he spoke. And then he announced the arrival of the Akkadian twin kings. If Fate had decided to mess up his day completely, then this was the cherry on the top of the cake.

Yami froze and his eyes grew wide when he recognized Malik and Ryou, who walked side by side, followed by Yugi, Jounouchi, Anzu and Honda. All his troubles were instantaneously lifted while a wave of warm joyful and pure relief filled his heart. A genuine smile spread on his face while he stood up.

“Yugi!” The Pharaoh’s jubilant voice echoed across the ample room. The priests and party guests stared surprised at their ruler.

“Yami!” The short teen shouted and, without thinking, made a run to the Pharaoh, who met him halfway. They hugged while they laughed, glad to be reunited.

“I’m so happy to see you!” Yami confessed, his hands resting on the shorter boy’s shoulders. He pressed his fingers slightly, delighted to feel flesh and bone for a change. The touch felt warm and much more real than all the previous times he had done this gesture.
“So am I! I was so scared we would be too late.”

“Too late? For what?” Yami asked confused, his brow knitting slightly, denouncing concern.

“Later, when we are alone.” Yugi said in an earnest tone. Yami’s eyes glanced at the priests, guards and guests. He nodded in understanding.

“And how is our King of Games doing?” Jounouchi asked while he walked to Yami, they too sharing friendly hugs and pats. The Pharaoh greeted Honda with the same cheerfulness but when Anzu wrapped her arms around him he embraced her back awkwardly. They shared a small shy smile after they departed and Yami hid his discomfort by focusing his attention in somebody else.

“And you brought Malik and Ryou too.” Yami said, unable to hide his happiness and amazement.

“Actually, these are their past lives.” Yugi explained and the Pharaoh’s eyes widened a bit. “Meet Dumuzi, the Sun King and Immaru, the Moon King, from the Akkadian Empire.” Yami looked in awe at the boys. Both placed their right hand on their heart and bowed their head in greeting. The Pharaoh, figuring this must be the ancient courtesy, repeated their gesture.

“It is a pleasure to meet you.” Yami politely said while the twins smiled in return. He turned to Yugi, understanding something serious was going on.

“Would you like to take a stroll in the Royal Gardens? We have quite some exotic specimens.” The Pharaoh invited knowing this shouldn’t sound strange to the priests, who were staring at them with questioning looks.

“What about the coronation festivities?” The vizier Siamun Muran asked distressed.

“Grandpa?” Yugi asked surprised.

“I need a pause. Please, proceed with the ceremonies without me.” The Pharaoh spoke for his vizier and priests’ surprise. This was quite unorthodox. Nevertheless, the celebrations continued unaffected by the ruler’s absence. Siamun Muran watched the Pharaoh leave with the Akkadian kings and what he figured out were members of their court.
“Why do they keep calling me Grandpa?” Siamun Muran murmured confused, his question never to be answered.

Meanwhile, miles away, a crazy laughter filled the walls of the sacred tomb belonging to the recently deceased Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen. This place was supposed to be sealed into all eternity, ensuring the soul’s rest in the Afterlife. No living being was ever supposed to enter this chamber, and disturb the deceased solitude, but Thief King Bakura did. Once he left the city of Cairo and stepped onto the edge of the desert, the mysterious hooded men reappeared. The Spirit Ring concluded they had hidden themselves from the White Magician and waited for Bakura to return. The bandit had grinned victoriously, remembering what he had done that day 5,000 years ago. He followed Zorc’s pawns to the secret tomb of Akhenamkhanen.

He didn’t care if Yugi and his idiotic friends had come from the future to help the Pharaoh. He didn’t care if Ryou’s past live was the freaking White Magician. He had a mission to fulfil. He had waited long 5,000 years for this day. Nothing and nobody was stopping him. Bakura was determined to join the seven Millennium Items, resurrect the evil Zorc and finally destroy the Pharaoh and all those felonious priests who dared to wield the objects created by the souls of his village’s inhabitants. He would have revenge. Justice would be made. He didn’t care for the consequences for Mankind. He didn’t care for the collateral damage. He didn’t care for the price. If he was meant to die, if he was meant to meet his doom, so be it. As long as his family was avenged.
The Pharaoh was forced to ask a few of his guards for directions. The palace was so huge and labyrinthic that he lost all orientation. His servants thought it odd and supposed their new ruler’s confusion was caused by the overwhelming events of the past days.

“Wow! They are beautiful!” Anzu said when they finally reached the gardens. “But I still think the ones in Akkad are more impressive.” She added, facing Immaru and Dumuzi who smiled contented.

“Yeah…” Yami said as he took in his surroundings. He couldn’t help by being impressed by everything he saw, because everything was so grandiose in this world. He had wondered already several times today, if the palace and the pyramids had been built by giants instead of mere mortal men. He turned to Yugi remembering the reason they had come outside in the first place. “So, what is it you wanted to tell me.”

“Best you sit down.” The shorter teen gestured and Yami obeyed while his stomach sunk. This could only be seriously bad news. Yugi took a deep breath before he spoke. “When your soul entered the Memory World, Bakura’s spirit followed you.” At this Yami gasped horrified. “It appears he’s too a 5,000 years old Ancient Egyptian spirit and has returned to destroy you by doing something called the Ultimate Shadow Game.”


“Frankly, we don’t know.” The boy answered.

“Yet…” Immaru’s voice was heard and Yami’s eyes turned to him. “I suspect the Millennium Items are related to whatever plan this Bakura person has.”
“What makes you think that?”

“Do you know anything about the making of the Millennium Items?” Yami shook his head clueless. “Well, recently we discovered a ruined village, miles away from here. Years ago, a horrible massacre took place there, where all inhabitants were killed as a sacrifice. During my most recent vision, I saw a man with a golden eye leading the ritual.” The others, of course, remembered this recent and horrific event. Just like Yami, who swallowed dry, they were already anticipating the young king’s next words. “Today I saw this man again. I recognized him clearly. He is one of your priests.”

“So you think…” The Pharaoh started and Immaru cut him to finish his thoughts.

“Yes, I think that was a ritual to create the Millennium Items.” Immaru spoke with an undiscussable determinacy. “I felt their energy twice today. When two of your priests used their magic on my brother and me today, and when we were in the throne room. Actually, Pharaoh, I can sense the magic emanating from that pyramid that’s hanging on your chest right now. It is filled with dark magic. The darkest, most evil and most destructive magic that can exist.”

“Do you think Bakura is going to use the items to achieve his destructive goals?” Yami asked after looking down at his item. It was hard to believe Immaru’s words when the object looked so harmless.

“Yes. I think that’s the most probable scenario.” Immaru said with a concerned expression. He took a deep breath. “Actually, I think I might have met him today.”

“What?!” The others all yelled in unison.

“I was kidnapped…” Immaru started explaining. “…by members of the Royal Guard.” He said while he gave a reproving look at Yami. “By the way, they wanted to sell me as a sex slave. You might want to check your soldiers for their moral conducts.” He added, while Dumuzi changed to all possible colours and almost fainted from distress. Immaru had not specified earlier on what kind of slave they wanted to sell him for. “Anyway, the soldiers had a prisoner with them. He refused to tell me his name. Called himself Thief King. He kind of helped me get to Cairo, although I must admit he’s all but a pleasant travel companion… – Anyway, I sensed a darkness in him too. Oh, and I had sensed it already in the desert when I woke up. Just like I saw an upside-down pyramid earlier hanging in the sky. Oh look, it’s still there.” Everybody looked up and gasped of shock expect for Dumuzi, who merely saw the usual blue sky.

“And I thought I was the only one who saw that.” Yami told.

“Ehm… I don’t see anything.” The Sun King awkwardly said, because all the others were staring at the sky wearing expressions of shock, cursing and asking what the Hell that thing was.

“Thief King told me he didn’t see it either. Although I think he was probably lying.”

“Where is he? Where’s Bakura?” Yami asked clearly upset. He had the feeling he had fallen in a dangerous trap created by the Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring. Immaru shook his shoulders.

“He disappeared when the God of Sun Dragon appeared.”

“The God of Sun …- wait, you mean the Winged Dragon of Ra? The golden monster - it were you guys?” Yami asked stunned. His headache had just worsened and he was starting to feel dizzy with all the disturbing revelations.
“Yeah, I have him kept in a clay tablet.” Dumuzi told while he showed him the small seal and Yami gasped surprised. It looked just like a card from Duel Monsters, only made of clay and with odd inscriptions in the text area. “Immaru managed to put him there after he, only the gods know how; managed to tame it, after the monster tried to destroy our city.”

“What? The Winged Dragon of Ra tried to destroy Akkad?!”

“It was a political conspiracy led by our main advisor. It happens.” Immaru casually stated. The Pharaoh stared open-mouthed at Ryou’s past life. He then looked at the floor, his heart racing from anxiety.

“So these never were memories. It did feel too real.” Yami murmured.

“We are in the past and we are here to change it. Together.” Yugi told his friend and Yami smiled a bit more encouraged. He was glad he wasn’t alone.

“I don’t know what I would do without you guys.” Yami expressed his gratitude while he stood up smiling.

“You would lose.” Dumuzi said in an obvious tone, receiving a slap on his head from his brother. “Ouch! Damn, Immaru!”

“Forgive my brother for his bluntness.” Immaru apologized. “He was born with the inability to filter any thought and shut his stupid mouth when necessary.” This time, Dumuzi hit his brother’s arm. “Hey!” The white-haired king protested and the brothers glared upset.

“How about we look for some food in those festivities. I’m sure I’m hungry!” Jounouchi loudly suggested, gaining Immaru’s full attention.

“That is probably the best idea you ever had since you arrived here!” The Moon King happily replied for the blond’s humiliation.

“Look who has no filter now.” Dumuzi accused upset. The twins walked back to the throne room hitting harmlessly and insulting each other the whole way. Yami stared at them perplexed.

“Don’t bother, Yami. It’s normal for them.” Yugi explained smilingly.

“Yeah, it’s their weird manner of expressing their sibling love.” Jounouchi added, while the others laughed. Yami smiled too, but soon he grimaced worriedly. They needed to come up with a plan before Bakura decided to strike.

…

If Yami hadn’t witnessed the way Ryou raided Kaiba’s refrigerator after his soul was released from the Shadow Realm, he would have stared shocked at Immaru’s capability of devouring every dish that was presented at him. The Pharaoh’s priests watched with disbelief the boy eat calmly but efficiently a quantity of food that was enough to feed him three times.

“Where do you think all that food goes to?” Priest Shada asked quietly.

“He’s eating more than Karim does.” Priestess Isis pointed out.

“He’s so petite.” Priest Karim added perplexed. He was a tall and muscled man, but Immaru had a small frame.

“It’s because of the magic.” Priest Mahado explained. “He’s the White Magician, remember? If
regular magic already consumes a sorcerer, imagine what the original Light does to such frail body.”

“I wonder if he’s that strong as everybody claims.” Priest Seto said clearly sceptic. “I find it quite convenient for the heir of the Akkadian throne to possess such powers.”

“Seto, I know what I saw in his soul.” Priest Shada reminded. “Besides, you saw the way he countered back the Millennium’s magic!”

“Speaking of, my Millennium Balance started behaving strangely when he entered the room.” Priest Karim told. “It went completely out of balance. But instead of dark magic the Balance recognized white magic.”

“All and all, we must be cautious.” Priest Akhenaden warned. He is stronger than any of us, possibly as strong as all of us combined. Besides, we don’t want to endanger our diplomatic relations with Akkad.”

“Ah, the food was delicious!” Immaru exclaimed contented, while he stretched his arms. “I praise the Egyptian cuisine!”

“Honda, remind me to never have a food contest against this guy!” Jounouchi said in an intimidated manner.

“You’ve been using quite some magic today.” Duzumi spoke. It was not a question, but a clear statement.

“What gave me away?” Immaru asked surprised. His brother simply raised his eyebrow in disbelief.

“Well, best start planning a way to defeat Bakura.” Dumuzi said, this time facing the Pharaoh. He nodded and walked to his priests.

“There’s a matter of urgency I must speak with you.” Yami told his priests, who gasped surprised. “My allies and friends came to help me defeat a man called Bakura. He wishes to destroy Mankind and immerse the world in darkness.”


“I think he wants to steal the seven Millennium Items to achieve his goals.” The Pharaoh answered to his priests’ shock.

“The defenses must be fortified.” Dumuzi spoke determinably while he walked towards the Egyptians. “And I don’t mean just with soldiers. You are lucky tonight it’s full moon.” He said with a confident grin. All eyes fell on Immaru, who gave a weak smile at the sudden attention.

…

Thief King rode under the light of the full moon in the capital’s direction. He was covered in gold and wore an expensive red robe that had belonged to the former Pharaoh. Behind him, seven dark and hooded men rode fast as the wind. He stopped his horse at the edge of a cliff, where he had a clear view over the city. He giggled excited. He was finally going to confront the Pharaoh and have his hands of the seven Millennium Items. Tonight, he would have his revenge.
The priests watched with awe as the White Magician, with the help of Mahado and his sorcerers, protected the outer walls of the city. They watched a translucent white light, as pale as the moonlight, immerse the walls like a morning mist. It was quite an achievement, considering the size of them and the many miles they covered to defend Cairo. After that, Immaru strengthened the soldiers, giving them protective armors and shields. The Moon king exhaled deeply and turned around.

“Okay, the defenses are secure.” The White Magician announced.

“Are you sure the main gate is the weakest point of the wall?” Dumuzi asked Priest Mahado, while he walked towards them.

“Yes, my Lord. If Bakura will try to invade the city, it will be through here.” Priest Mahado confirmed.

The sandy-haired king nodded satisfied and looked up. Soldiers were strategically positioned to protect the main gate. The city was practically impenetrable, yet he feared Bakura and his darkness would find a way to defy his brother’s magic. The fact Immaru had been haunted by the village’s
massacre through horrible dreams and visions all his life only increased his concern. He feared this Bakura guy and Immaru were fated to confront in a battle of good and evil, light against darkness. His troubled thoughts were suddenly interrupted by Isis’s voice.

“My Millennium Neckless senses an evil force approaching the Kingdom!” The priestess shouted in an alarmed tone. “This being lurks just outside the city’s wall and he bears great power!”

Everybody ran to their places and prepared for battle. Dumuzi stood next to Immaru, ready for attack. He drew his sword out, ready to protect his twin’s life. The soldiers positioned themselves, the priests formed a human shield around their Pharaoh, who had insisted to be present during the defense preparations and the possible confrontation. Dumuzi approved this behaviour. The Pharaoh demonstrated to care for his men and not be just a ruler who shouts out wishful commands. The Sun king looked over at his brother. Immaru grimaced.

“The Millennium Items are truly powerful. I could only sense the darkness now. Yet, I do not sense Bakura. How strange…” The Moon king murmured.

Dumuzi had no time to respond because a soldier standing on the walls got hit by a burning arrow. More arrows came flaming down, but this time Immaru was prepared and he threw a spell that made them disintegrate into tiny particles before they reached any man. The hooded figures on the other side of the wall stared confused. They shot arrows a few more times, but witnessed them vanish into thin air. Bakura shrunk his eyes and frowned upset. The brat and his hocus-pocus were behind this, no doubt. He hit his horse to ride faster and prepared himself to break the main gate. His men rode swiftly before him. He suddenly pulled his horse back, which turned on its back feet wildly, preventing a last-minute collision. Three of his hooded men had crashed and were attacked by some strange white energy that made them fall in pain and agony. Bakura watched them roll on the floor yelling, while the other four turned their heads in his direction.

“My Lord. The walls are protected with magic. It’s too strong. It won’t let us pass.” One of Zorc’s creatures spoke for Thief King’s irritation.

“So, the Pharaoh wants to play difficult. Ha!” Bakura replied with a mad look in his eyes. “No worries. I’ll break the walls and the magic protecting it myself!!!” He revealed his diadiank, making the Egyptian soldiers that stood on the walls gasp.

“Pharaoh! The criminal has a diadiank!” One of the soldiers shouted, for everybody’s horror.

“What!?!” The priests exclaimed in unison. Yami switched confused looks with his friends. They had no idea what the soldiers were talking about, but by the reaction of the Egyptians, it was clear it was
something very bad. The Pharaoh and his 21st century friends ran up the stairs to the top of the wall and were followed by the Priests of Egypt. From there, they saw for their great surprise, a man holding an object that looked like -

“A Duel Disk!” Yami exclaimed exasperated. He couldn’t believe his eyes and wondered again if he was witnessing the origins of Duel Monsters.

“Is that Bakura? He looks different.” Anzu noticed.

“Don’t forget he was possessing Ryou, using his body for his evil-doing.” Yugi reminded. “This is his real human-form.”

Suddenly, Priest Karim’s voice called everybody’s attention. He was looking disturbed at his Millennium Balance.

“My Millennium is completely out of balance! This man’s soul is filled with darkness!” Priest Karim spoke horrified.

“We are in the presence of pure evil!” Priest Mahado agreed while his Millennium Ring glowed. The priests looked down the wall and swallowed dry, looks of incredibility and fear imprinted on their faces.

“He’s summoning a Shadow Monster!” Priest Seto shouted shocked while he pointed at Bakura. “It can’t be! Only members of the Royal Court can do that!”

“Did I forget to tell you? Oh, how rude of me.” Thief King mocked while he looked up to see his cowardly enemies standing on the top of the walls. “I paid a visit to your old Pharaoh’s tomb. And while I was paying my respects, I thought I could borrow a few of his toys. I am now in control of his personal collection of shadow monsters!”

At that moment, a tall and intimidatingly muscled monster appeared. Zorc’s henchmen made way for the creature that, at Bakura’s command, threw a mighty energy blast at the main gate. The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring frowned frustrated when the attack had no impact. An ethereal white light had activated and protected the entrance during the attack. It was Immaru’s magic that had guaranteed the safety of the city during the impact. But Bakura was not one to give up easily and grinned maliciously. He summoned another two powerful monsters, which gave a couple violent blows on the gate. Bakura groaned irritated after several frustrated fruitless attempts. He had not
expected the magic to be this strong. Thief King grimaced and decided to recoil the monsters he had just summoned. The gate wouldn’t budge with violence or physical force. This was an extraordinary powerful magic he was fighting. He had to use other kind of monsters. Creatures that could weaken the magic just enough to force the doors open.

Yami and his friends watched horrified as the bandit summoned new monsters with magical powers. Priest Mahado ordered his team of magicians to prepare for attack and hold their positions. Concentration. Then Bakura’s voice rose in the sky and the monsters reacted to his command. They worked together and a powerful magical blast hit the walls. Priest Mahado and his men fell back at the impact. Bakura grinned when he saw how the walls vibrated, how a mist of purples trembled, blurred and vanished. Yami swallowed dry, worried the defenses wouldn’t hold for long. Priestess Isis and Priest Karim were helping a dizzy Mahado to stand up, while the other magicians had been knocked down.

Down below, Immaru stood his ground alone. The blast had hit him too, but he had resisted it, only faltering for a few seconds. On the other side of the wall, Bakura groaned upset when he saw the white ethereal light still envelope the walls and gate. Not for long now! He though with a smirk. He commanded another attack and another. By each impact, an invisible force pushed Immaru back. But the White Magician was both powerful and determined, so he stubbornly stepped back to his former place each time. He focused all his energy in the main target of the attacks which were the gates and begged the Moon God Nanna to help him. Dumuzi, mounted on his horse and watched upset the way things were unfolding. His brow was knitted with concern. He knew it was a matter of time for the gates to give in.

“Are you idiots going to stand there the whole night doing nothing?” The Sun King yelled angrily.

“He’s right. Immaru will not hold for much longer.” Priest Mahado spoke weakly. “We placed very strong shadow monsters in Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen crypt.”

Mahado tried to summon some of his energy to help the White Magician. For the first time in his life, he regretted having split his magic years ago, because now he was needing it urgently. Yet, he succeeded in casting magic spells to reinforce Immaru’s magic. Bakura’s attacks went on for a long time. The bandit proved to be talented and creative in his choice of monsters. He was clever and strategic. While everybody prayed for Immaru to be able to stand his ground, the Spirit Ring kept changing his strategy in order to achieve his victory. Each time he did it, he understood better how the magic worked and started to figure out where the weak spots stood. Priest Mahado fell again at a mighty blast and this time the gates shook. Dumuzi drew his sword out and positioned his horse for attack. Immaru was showing the first signs of fatigue.

“How is it possible?” Priest Mahado wondered perplexed while he weakly balanced on his two legs, supporting himself between Priests Karim and Seto. “The boy should be completely drained out by now!”
“I guess he is truly a powerful magician, after all.” Priest Seto, who had doubted Immaru earlier, was forced to admit. The tall wooden doors trembled again at a very powerful energy blast, the white light flickered but persisted after some seconds. Yami ordered his soldiers to join Dumuzi and prepare for a direct confrontation with the monsters.

“About time.” Dumuzi murmured irritated. His brother merely sighed relieved, but still far from being comforted. Immaru feared he could not hold his magic on the gates for much longer. Above all, he feared for what stood behind the doors.

Another blast. Walls and gates trembled. The magic faltered. The magic persisted. Immaru was stubborn, but Bakura was even more. A massive energy blast finally broke the magical barrier. The gates flew open and Immaru was thrown on the floor at the impact. The moment the doors opened, Zorc’s men rode in shooting their flaming arrows. Priest Mahado and his magicians blew some of the fire away with their magic, but houses still burned up in flames, so people left them screaming in panic. Dumuzi, being a skilled swordsman, succeeded in wounding deadly two of the hooded men right after they entered the walls. The rest of Zorc’s henchmen fought the Pharaoh’s soldiers.

Bakura coolly stepped inside the city, looking victorious. His eyes immediately located the brat who was struggling to stand up in the mist of the chaos. When Immaru stood on his feet again, he met Thief King. They locked their eyes. Bakura could read the determinacy in the boy’s chocolate orbs and knew the battle was far from over. This victory was just a small one. Immaru’s lips moved and the bandit barely had time to command a monster to protect him. Bakura was a surprised at Immaru’s sudden attack. He had not expected the boy to defy him this boldly.

To avoid new surprises, Thief King created a protective shield with his monsters. Once he was safe, he scanned his surroundings, searching for the Pharaoh. He quickly found him. Yami and his friends were still standing on the walls, from where they watched petrified the events unfold. Bakura smirked.

“How dare you, Bakura! You are bringing innocents in danger because of your ambitions for power!” The Egyptian ruler shouted angrily.

“Now, is that any way to speak to an old friend, your highness?” Bakura replied while he rested his hand on his chest, faking shock. Then he giggled amused and grinned maliciously. “Now, if you don’t mind, hand me your Millennium Items.” He darkly spoke. Yami’s eyes shrunk and Bakura opened his arms. “Oh, I didn’t mean for free! I come bearing gifts!”
The King of Thieves threw jewels and small golden objects into the air, which had been kept hidden under his robe, after he stole them from Akhenamkhanen’s tomb. Bakura smirked triumphant at the way everybody stared shocked at him - the four fouls from the future. The insolent priests. Ryou’s twit of a past life. Most of all, he savoured the fury in the Pharaoh’s eyes. “I assumed these trinkets wouldn’t be enough so I brought another token of my esteem.”

Bakura added and then whistled. All eyes followed the source horse hooves that approached the area. Shocked gasps filled the air when everybody realized it was no other than the mummy casket of Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen itself! Thief King waited till the golden chest reached him. He put a foot on it and looked at Yami with a vile triumphant grin. “Say hello to your previous king!”

“Now you’ve taken this too far! How dare you disrespect the tomb of a former pharaoh!

Yami shouted infuriated.

“Ha! Respect!” Bakura said with a disgusted look and spitted on the mummy’s casket. “I’m showing all the respect he deserves. None!”

“Vile creature! Thy shall be punished for this crime!” Priest Seto declared passionately. “Akhenamkhanen was a great Pharaoh!”

“So you say. But I disagree! He was a tyrant.” Bakura retorted furious. “He destroyed my village when he tried to fashion the Seven Millennium Items. A selfish attempt to further his power!”

“You lie!” Priest Akhenaden accused and was about to say something when -

“Actually, he doesn’t.” The silver-haired king stated for the priests’ and Bakura’s shock.

“What?” The eldest priest asked confused.

“He’s not lying about the village and you know it.” Immaru coolly continued. The other priests stared from the young Akkadian King to Priest Akhenaden in utter incredulity, unable to believe the horrible implications of those words.
“What kind of insolence is this?” The older man desperately feigned his ignorance, unable to understand how the White Magician and this Bakura fellow knew about the massacre. “Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen put an end to the great wars that ravished our nation!”

“Oh yes. He did win the wars.” Bakura agreed darkly. “By ordering the creation of Millennium Items with the blood of innocents!”

“Is he telling the truth?” Yami demanded for the priest’s horror.

“Pharaoh, you must believe me!” Priest Akhenaden dropped to his knees in a begging tone. “Your father brought peace and prosperity. He then created the Seven Millennium Items to ensure that harmony would reign forever in Egypt.”

“Correct. Then he gave those tools to us in order to keep the peace and help rule the land with justice.” Priest Seto said in his master’s defense. “As well as to port evildoers not unlike yourself, Bakura.”

“Evildoers?” Thief King questioned. “What do you think you are? The Items were built to react with the inner darkness of the person that owns them. So the fact that the seven of you wield these items makes each and one of you an evildoer, just like your keeper of the peace King Akhenamkhanen. Your king wanted power, that’s why he devised a plan to use the seven items to control the entire world. The secret lies in the village Kul Elna!”

“That’s the village where the massacre took place!” Immaru understood and looked urgently at the Pharaoh, who was shocked with these revelations.

“When did this massacre take place?” Dumuzi suddenly asked, for everybody’s surprise. Bakura froze for moments and his eyes instinctively rested on the old priest.

“17 years ago.” Thief King answered upset. “Why you ask?”

“Well, if my recollection of our national history is correct, Egypt asked Akkad for military help 17 years ago.” Dumuzi clarified.

“Yes, and your father, the king, refused to help us!” The old priest accused revolted.
“Our mother, the Queen, had just died and Akkad was grieving. The last thing we needed were more deaths, above all, engage in a conflict that had nothing to do with us!” Dumuzi retorted infuriated.

“Well, this only proves Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen decided to use dark magic with powers he probably didn’t even understand in a desperate, but successful, attempt to win the wars.” Immaru calmly concluded for the priests’ shock and Bakura’s delight.

“What you speak is treason.” Priest Akhenaden accused, starting to panic. The secrets of Kul Elna had been buried long ago.

“Are you sure you wish to speak about treason. Perhaps there is one or two things you would like to tell your Pharaoh.” Immaru said clearly upset and the old priest went pale, for Bakura’s glee.

“I must thank you, my Highness.” The bandit said. “I never expected you to help me.”

“Help you? No. You misunderstand me.” Immaru said and Bakura stared perplexed at him. “I’m here to make sure you don’t get hold of the Seven Millennium Items.”

“And how do you plan to do that?” The thief asked in a sneer. Dumuzi and the Egyptian soldiers sensed the threat and positioned themselves for an eventual attack.

“By defeating you and destroying the Millennium Items!” This time it was the Pharaoh’s powerful voice that was heard. “Priests of Egypt, purify this man’s soul.” He ordered and all the priests gathered together, their golden items glowing.

“What?! Are you seriously going to use Dark Magic to invade his soul?!” Immaru questioned horrified. “Have you not listened to anything I told you today?! These objects are cursed! Evil! They were created in the most malefic kind of human sacrifice, from the darkest and most forbidden rituals!”

“Immaru, I value your ethic conduct, but extreme causes call for extreme measures.” Yami told, while a giant stone tablet was placed nearby, ready to take the monster that resided within Bakura’s soul.
“Like father, like son.” The thief mocked, while he freely allowed the Millennium Items do their work, anxious to finally release his inner creature.

“Let the Millennium trial begin!” Priest Seto announced.
Clash between gods

Chapter Summary

A great battle follows, with two great opposing forces, both as mighty as gods

Chapter Notes

So sorry for the late update. Was a rather difficult chapter to write. But I'm quite satisfied with the results. Hope you share the same opinion :)

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
PRIEST SETO = Seto Kaiba
PRIESTESS ISIS = Ishizu Ishtar
PRIEST AKHENADEN = Mr. Ishtar

Enjoy the story

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

“Let the Millennium trial begin!” Priest Seto announced.

“Stop! You have no idea what kind of evil forces you are dealing with!”

Immaru yelled in a last but vain attempt to put sense in the Egyptian ruler and stop the dark ritual. He helplessly witnessed the way Bakura succumbed to the power of the Millennium Key, falling to his knees with a scream of agony. The monsters that had been summoned earlier vanished instantly. Priest Shada warned Bakura’s monster was too large and too powerful for the stone tablet they had brought in, but Priest Seto ignored his warning. With the Millennium Rod he released the monster from within Thief King and everybody gaped at the size and mightiness of it. The ritual went swiftly and in a few minutes, the monster was trapped in the tablet. Then Bakura started talking.

“Thank you. You saved my life. That horrible creature was controlling my mind and now I’m finally free.” The bandit’s voice was different, sounding softer and troubled. He slowly lifted his head, a wicked grin forming on his lips. Yami realized, the last second, this had been a trap. “Free to
Bakura announced in his regular rough voice and Diabound broke itself free from its stone prison. Everybody was in shock. The monster turned itself to the priests, who were fully exposed to an attack. Diabound threw a deadly blast. There was a clashing sound and dust raised in the air. Bakura and the Egyptian priests stared stupefied as Immaru stood between them and the monster. He had protected the priests with a magical shield. The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring sneered furious.

Damn brat! Why is he so irritatingly powerful?! Why does he keep interfering in my plans?! I must defeat him! I will kill him, if it’s needed! But Bakura had little time to forge an attack, for Immaru was now striking Diabound.

Wind and dust ran rapidly towards the monstrous Diabound. Something invisible impacted with great force and the monster roared of pain. Although it still stood strong and unharmed, it still suffered from the magical impact. This is not good! If the brat continues like this, he will actually bring some damage to my Diabound. Bakura lost no time in summoning a monster to protect Immaru’s next attack, neutralizing it and striking back successfully with Diaboud’s power right away.

“Immaru!” The Sun King yelled scared when the strong blast coming from Diabound threw his brother on the ground. He tried to reach him, but Bakura’s monster barred him.

“I urge you to stay out of this, your Majesty!” Bakura told Dumuzi. “This is a fight between me and the White Magician. Anybody that is foolish enough to try and interfere will have to deal with my Diabound, understood?” He warned the Sun King and Yami’s court. The twins switched glances. Immaru nodded slightly, indicating he was fine. Dumuzi stared from one to the other warily but eventually sighed reluctantly while he stepped back, becoming a spectator.

“You think you can defeat me that easily?” Immaru questioned Bakura while he stood up again. The thief stared surprised at the boy. There was something unfamiliar in his voice. When he looked at the magician, there was a smirk and look in his eyes that was completely alien to him. Immaru was challenging him. The boy was clearly overconfident about his magical capabilities. Thief King would swear the brat was actually enjoying this confrontation, something he was sure would never happen with sweet and innocent Ryou. “Do you know why they call me Moon King?”

“I can imagine one or two things.” Bakura mockingly said and Immaru grinned amused.

“The moon is my ally. She gives me power in a way you or anybody else could never dream of. And unfortunately for you, tonight it’s a full moon.” Immaru explained before he threw a magical attack to Bakura’s new monster, disintegrating it. “You picked the wrong night to defy me.”
Thief King’s eyes grew wide while he watched his magical monster vanish into thin air by the brat’s hand. Immaru’s words sounded strangely dangerous to his ears but he could care less for the kid’s warnings. He had Diabound on his side, a monster with an extraordinary power. He was ready to put the twit in his right place. Bakura summoned another magical monster to replace the one Immaru had just destroyed to protect his Diabound. He waited for the magician’s next attack. What he witnessed next could not surprise him more. Before the eyes of all, Immaru’s clothing glowed briefly to reveal a new outfit, made of pure white garments decorated with golden patterns. Bakura recognized the Wise Magician Card’s outfit. There also appeared a shiny white glow next to Immaru, which revealed to be his magic staff.

“Cute outfit.” Bakura mockingly said and Immaru snorted.

The thief furrowed his brow when the boy uttered a foreign word, unable to understand it. Suddenly, he felt something on his legs. Bakura let a startled scream when he saw two great claws coming out of the ground, grasping his monster’s limbs. Diabound released itself but more and more claws appeared from under the earth. The strange monstrous hands scratched, punched and took hold of Diabound so Bakura was forced to summon more monsters. The thief had problems in predicting when and where the claws would appear next, as they kept disappearing under the ground to reappear elsewhere, but after several attacks of his monsters, the creepy hands finally vanished.

“Not bad - for an amateur.” Thief King victoriously said. He noticed how Immaru panted after the defeat and realized something important. “You better give up now, while you can, because tonight I shall win! You know why? Because, unlike you, I’m not using my life energy to attack, so even if my monsters die, I will remain unharmed, whereas you - well, you die a little each time you lose.”

Bakura’s cocky grin faltered when he noticed Immaru chuckle under his breath. Well, the brat proved to be much more difficult to intimidate than expected. The White Magician took a straight stance, redirected his staff in Diabound’s direction and again, uttered a magical incantation in the foreign language. A white glowing light formed the shape of a great transparent butterfly and the Spirit Ring stared at it confused. The thing was beautiful and looked harmless. But the moment the butterfly moved its wings, a cyclonic wind blew in the Bakura’s direction. The butterfly then exploded and thousands of thousands tiny glowing butterflies flew towards the monsters. They took the semblance of shooting stars and pierced the creatures like lethal sharp knives. Three monsters exploded so only Diabound remained. It groaned upset, shooing the irritating beasts. Only after several furious blasts, did the plague dissipate.

“I’m sorry, I couldn’t quite hear you a while ago. You were saying?” Immaru teased this time, infuriating Bakura. The kid was really starting to irritate him with his insistence in ruining his plan. On the other side, he could not help and feel some admiration and respect for his abilities.

“It appears I was wrong about you. You are as powerful as a god. I wouldn’t mind having you as an ally.” Bakura proposed.
“Sorry, not happening.”

“Pity. It would have been fun.”

The battle went on. It was as impressive as it was frightening. Curiosity made some civilians leave their homes and witness the clash between the two mighty opponents. Just like the soldiers and the priests of Egypt, they were horrified by their powers. It was like being in the presence of earthly gods and that brought little comfort to their fears. As for Yami and his friends from the future, they watched the fight with bouncing hearts. They recognized in this combat, all the monsters and tricks and tactics of Duel Monsters. It was especially frustrating for the Pharaoh to be unable to do anything. Sure he could intervene and use his diadiank, but he knew better than to interfere in a duel, especially when it involved real monsters. His greatest fear was that Bakura, being experiment and tricky in his strategies, could defeat Immaru with an unexpected move. On the other side, the White Magician seemed to have his own share of tricks and traps in his world of magic. One thing was certain – it was impossible to tell who was winning and who was losing, for both were equal in their strength.

As the battle went on, Dumuzi’s anxiety increased. This was the first time he witnessed his brother in a real battle. He was both impressed and terrified by his twin’s powers. He always had known Immaru to be powerful, but never to this level. No wonder the White Magician had managed to challenge an Egyptian god. Yet, the Sun King knew his brother had two major disadvantages. The first had already been identified by Bakura. Immaru had to sacrifice his life energy for each spell he used. No matter how strong or how much energy the Moon god Nanna offered, he had limits. It was a question of time for Immaru to start tiring and weakening, while Bakura’s energy remained untouched. The second disadvantage was the lack of a military mentality. Immaru had been trained all his life by priests for the wielding of his magic. He knew everything that was to be known about spells, but his knowledge had been always aimed for peaceful and humanitarian goals. The little Immaru knew about fighting, he had learned in secret from his twin. Although Immaru knew the basics, he lacked the experience. Dumuzi could tell Bakura was much more experienced than his brother in dueling. He had a great strategic mind, he was creative in finding solutions to defend and attack and he summoned the right monsters. Immaru needed more time to figure out the best move, he hesitated too long, making sometimes mistakes that costed his energy, giving too much space for his enemy. Dumuzi’s fears became real when Immaru flew back and fell on the ground after a blast of Diabound combined with the power of another two monsters.

“Careful Immaru!” Dumuzi warned his brother. “You’ve been already using a lot of magic!”

“You lack confidence on me, brother.” Immaru retorted in an irritated tone.

Alas, the White Magician knew very well his brother was right. Immaru was the first one to
recognize his own limitations. As much as adrenaline ran in his veins, as much as the moon enhanced his magical powers, Immaru could feel the first symptoms of fatigue in his body. He needed to think fast. He needed to figure out the right way to destroy that immense monster. But just like his battle against the God of Sun Dragon, he merely managed to block the attacks and afflict minor injuries.

It was both frustrating and painful, because he knew he was losing. He could not lose, not against Darkness. The idea he had been chosen by the gods to be the guardian of Mankind and he wasn’t able to protect people horrified him. He could not fail. He would not fail. Immaru decided this time to use a trap and chose not to attack Diabound directly, but instead the two monsters that protected it. The White Magician cheered internally when he succeeded in destroying them, leaving the main monster vulnerable long enough to hit him with a mighty blast of burning meteorites. A cloud of dust lifted and everybody could hear Diabound roaring in pain. Bakura cursed afraid the brat had destroyed his monster. Everybody gasped of horror, when Diabound was revealed, still standing challengingly. It was clear the monster was in pain, but he was far from being defeated. Bakura laughed loudly and savoured the desperate look in the White Magician’s eyes. He could see by his fast breathing and unbalanced stance that his energy was dropping quickly.

“It seems your energy is finally wearing down.” Bakura said with a malevolent grin, while he summoned another powerful monster. “Best to surrender now, before I kill you, sorcerer!”

“No!” Dumuzi called and galloped in his brother’s direction. Yami instinctively ran after Dumuzi. Priest Seto was behind the Pharaoh calling and urging him to return. All three stopped suddenly when a wall of fire blocked their path.

“This duel is only between me and the White Magician, remember?” Bakura angrily said.

Dumuzi cursed furious, terrified for his brother’s fate. Yami and Priest Seto begged him to calm down and persuaded the Akkadian to retreat. Only after they put some distance between Bakura and themselves, did the fire die. Thief King then turned to Immaru. “So, where were we?”

He froze when he only saw Diabound. The other monsters were all gone. Then he noticed there were misty glowing lines converging around the White Magician, entering his staff. They were like small ethereal currents that were being sucked by the magical item. Bakura realized too late that the brat had taken advantage of his distraction to dispose of his monsters and was now summoning magical energy to attack his main monster. I cannot believe it! The brat actually cheated! His plan. He could lose everything right now. There was not time to waste.

“Diabou …-“

Thief King’s command was muffed by the loud and shrieking noise created by a ghostly monster
with the torso of a man, the body of a lion and wings of an eagle. It threw a bright light directly to Diabound while it ran towards the monster. A great ball of white light was formed, followed immediately by a mighty explosion. The earth trembled and strong winds travelled for miles. Bakura fell painfully on the ground. All eyes stared with great expectation at the smoke and dust that gently fell. That blast should have killed Diabound.

“It can’t be.” Immaru whispered deflated. He dropped to his knees helpless and exhausted. He had given all he had in that final blast and yet, there it stood. Diabound was still standing before him. “I failed. I failed you all.”

He murmured softly while silent tears ran down his face. He closed his eyes and bent his head knowing his end was coming soon. He was too weak to fight any longer. He didn’t even have strength to stand up anymore. Bakura laughed victoriously while Dumuzi shouted for his brother in agony. Yami and Priest Seto had to struggle to hold him back.

“I told you, you would be powerless against the dark energy of my Diabound.” Bakura said while his monster was already preparing to give the final blow.

The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring watched the way the boy quietly surrendered, accepting his defeat on his knees, head down. He watched his monster shoot an energy blast in the boy’s direction and at that moment, he felt his stomach twist and his heart contract. Dumuzi’s scream of agony filled the air. Then the world became still. Immaru opened his eyes and lifted his head confused. He saw, right before him, a mighty magical shield protecting him from the blast. He turned around and saw Priest Mahado and his magicians. They had broken the duel’s rules to save him.

“Thank you.” Immaru whispered and smiled weakly at Mahado. The Magician ordered soldiers to carry him out to safety.

Bakura watched as the boy was carried and brought to his sibling, who embraced him tenderly. His heart skipped once and he bitterly realized, part of him was relieved his murder attempt had failed. He shook his strange and offensive thoughts away and turned to Priest Mahado and his men.

“You will pay for this. Dearly.” The thief spoke darkly.

“Mahado!” Priest Seto shouted while he and the other priests ran to meet the magician. “We shall fight together in name of the Pharaoh.”
“I thank you.” Priest Mahado smiled satisfied.

“Ha! Your weak magic can never contain me!” Bakura said in a chuckle and then spat on the floor.

He knew these six fools would be easy to defeat. His predictions came true when the priests’ monsters were destroyed one by one. Even when the priests combined their strength and attacked Diabound together, they still were far from being a match to the monster. During the battle, Bakura glanced once into Immaru’s direction. The boy was sitting on the ground next to his brother. He looked truly weakened and rested his head on Dumuzi’s shoulder. But despite his debilitated bearing, his eyes were alert.

The thief turned his gaze back to the battlefield. He felt so bored with the pitiful attacks from the priests that he actually missed the White Magician. He didn’t understand the priests’ disbelief and incomprehension for their collective defeat. He wondered if they were this stupidly arrogant to think they could surpass Immaru’s power. Bakura had enough of the ridiculous duel and was ready to take their Items, when suddenly the Pharaoh placed himself in front of the priests. For everybody’s great surprised, Yami summoned the Egyptian god Obelisk, the Tormentor. The Spirit Ring stared at the blue monster wide-eyed and truly feared this was his monster’s end. A great collision. A lot of light. And then, both monsters stood opposite each other, stubborn and challenging.

“It cannot be!” Priest Seto shouted horrified. “They are equal in strength!”

Diabound groaned tiredly and Bakura decided this was his leave. As much as his monster proved to be powerful, he was fully aware, wasn’t it for the power of the Blue eyes merged in his Diabound, it certainly had died. He figured out it was best to go now before his monster would weaken. The last thing he needed now was the Pharaoh to strike again with Obelisk or summon another god. Besides, he had lost four of Zorc’s henchmen, so he was more vulnerable. He whistled his horse, while the remaining three hooded men galloped in his direction.

“This isn’t over, Pharaoh!” Bakura warned while he jumped on his horse. “And you, I believe it’s Mahado. Don’t grow too fond of that item around your neck.” He added, looking directly at Priest Mahado. “I have a – what shall I say – attachment to the Millennium Ring. At one time, it was mine.”

“This item was created for me! So you lie!” Priest Mahado contested upset.

“Yeah, but it’s destined to me. In fact all Seven Millennium Items have been fated to fall into my hands. Just you wait!”
At these words, he turned away and jumped onto his horse. Bakura and Zorc’s men galloped swiftly. Yami wanted to follow him, but his priests forbade it. Soldiers persecuted the thief, but soon lost his trail. The sky was still dark, the world was only illuminated by the full moon. There were still many hours till dawn. Now that the fight was over, the damages caused by Bakura were visible.

“I want those houses fixed. Their residences are to be fully refunded for the damages they suffered. I want the gate’s doors repaired and extra secured. And Mahado, protect the city walls with you magic again.” Yami commanded. He walked to the Akkadian twins. “How are you, Immaru?”

“Really tired.” The silver-haired boy whispered. “I’m so sorry I failed.”

“No, don’t say that. You stopped him from getting the Millennium Items and fought bravely.”

“He will strike back.” Immaru insisted.

“Go rest and let me do the worrying.” Yami advised. He looked up at Dumuzi, who was supporting his brother and nodded. “Guards, bring the Akkadian kings back to the palace.” The Pharaoh watched with a heavy heart as the twins rode away with an escort.

“Please, your Highness. You should get some rest too.” Priest Seto spoke as he came closer. “Leave the rest to us. We will find a way to defeat this outlaw.”

Yami nodded feeling weary. This first day in the past had been long and confusing. There were too many impressions, too many events, too many revelations and a too great problem to solve. He looked at his friends and smiled gently. At least he had their support, just like the priests and the Akkadian brothers.

“Yes. I’m try to sleep.” He said in a nod. “I’m sure tomorrow will be a better day.”
Thief vs Magician

Chapter Summary

Mahado leaves the palace and has his own agenda. How will it affect the Pharaoh and others when they discover his plan?

Chapter Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
PRIEST SETO = Seto Kaiba
PRIESTESS ISIS = Ishizu Ishtar
PRIEST AKHENADEN = Mr. Ishtar
Enjoy the story
I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

A new day was born. The early sunrays illuminated the land of the Pyramids with their golden shades. People watched with awe and some concern, as a group of Royal Guards led by one of the priests, steadily made their way to the great gates of Cairo. About one two hours later, the group was riding in an unknown road. Soldiers commented in confusion that they weren’t heading the robbed tomb from the former Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen as instructed. It was true. Priest Mahado had lied to his men. He had also lied to the Pharaoh.

Earlier in the morning, before he asked the Pharaoh’s permission to seal his father’s tomb with protective spells, the Millennium Ring had sensed a dark energy. It had pointed towards a mountain hill outside the city. Priest Mahado had recognized one of Zorc’s men standing there. He knew Bakura wanted him to follow the hooded horseman, but he wasn’t falling into that trap. It was then he had decided to violate the Pharaoh’s command and made a detour.

He needed to return to the training grounds hidden in the mysteries of the rocky mountain range. This place was like a sanctuary. It held the memories of many magicians that learned their arts here. Above all, it held the half of his magical power he had voluntarily separated from his body. Today he would restore his true power and become the mightiest wizard in Egypt. His power might even rival that one of the White Magician. He was confident because of the earlier words from Priestess Isis. According to her vision, he would return. It did not matter in what circumstances he would return, as long as he was successful in his goal. Priest Mahado’s main priority was to protect the Pharaoh.
Soldiers wondered where the Magician was leading them for they weren’t following the road to the King’s Valley. Yet, they obeyed him without questioning and eventually reached an opening in the rocks. Priest Mahado stepped in the entrance alone, while his men watched him merge with the darkness.

*May the gods protect me.*

...

Immaru woke up with a start. He panted while shivers ran down his back. He looked around panicked, unable to recognize his surroundings. A warm golden light coming from his right side caught his attention. Curtains framed a doorway to a balcony and moved along a soft breeze. The young king quickly jumped from his bed and stepped outside. He stood on the balcony and when his eyes recognized the city with pyramids, all the recollections from the previous night returned. He bitterly remembered how Bakura managed to defeat him. But he had learned a lot during their duel and afterwards, while he watched the priests fight the monster with their creatures. Immaru had been unprepared for Diabound’s magnificent power. Now he knew the creature was as strong as an Egyptian god. This piece of information was valuable. Should there be a second encounter in the future, he would be prepared.

The White Magician breathed the morning air. Its warmth announced the beginning of another hot day. He had rested well during the night and felt quite restored. And famished. He returned to his room and dressed quickly. He heard a gentle sound and turned startled to its origin. He sighed relieved while his lips involuntarily drew a smile. Dumuzi was sleeping opposite the bed on a mountain of pillows. His hands were still holding his sword. The Moon King chuckled, knowing his sibling had guarded him as long as he could keep his eyes open. Not wanting to disturb his brother’s rest, Immaru moved quietly and exited the room unnoticed. Once outside, he paced down the gallery, hoping to find somebody who could indicate him where the food was. A passing servant gave him directions to the dining hall, where the court was already having breakfast. Feeling the urgency of his impatient stomach, Immaru broke into a run. He suddenly collided with somebody when he turned a corner.

“I’m so sorry!” Immaru apologized deeply embarrassed when he saw a girl sitting on the floor, caressing her back with a painful expression. He quickly helped her to stand up again. When the girl lifted her head and saw his face, her eyes widened greatly.

“You are the – the White Magician!” She exclaimed in an almost squealing voice, clasping her hands together in an effort to contain her excitement.

“Have we met before?” Immaru asked trying to jog his memories.
“No, but I saw you yesterday with the Pharaoh.” The girl explained. “Everybody is talking about you. They say you have magnificent powers and did incredible things during your fight against Diabound.”

“Ah, really?” Immaru asked embarrassed, unable to hide a blush while he scratched the back of his head. No matter how often he heard how great his powers were, he was always embarrassed, for he had in truth a timid and humble nature. “Well, my powers weren’t strong enough to defeat the monster. I lost. It was the Pharaoh’s intervention that saved us from certain catastrophe.”

“Don’t be so hard with yourself! Everybody is entitled to fail once in a while.” The girl dismissed. “I mean, take me as an example, I’m Mahado’s top student and I still make many mistakes!”

“Well, when you are the White Magician and are battling pure evil, there is no space for errors, for it can be fatal. Yet, I thank you for your kind words and effort in encouraging me, … -I’m sorry, I didn’t get your name.”

“My name is Mana.” The girl said while she made a courteous bow.

“Mana, the magician apprentice. It is a pleasure to meet you. I am…”

“Lord Immaru, Moon King and co-ruler of the Akkadian Empire.” Mana promptly completed for the boy’s surprise.

“Yeah, that would be quite accurate.” He said surprised and then greeted according to his customs, a slight bow with his right hand resting on his heart. Mana smiled and made a small jump, feeling proud with herself.

“So, were you heading to with such a hurry?” She asked.

“Oh, I am heading for the dining hall. Let’s say I need nourishment to restore my energy.” He said while his blush deepened.

“Tell me about it! I’m always hungry after practice!” She said and Immaru smiled amused. It was nice to finally meet somebody who understood his sudden appetite impulses.
“Would you like to join me?” He kindly invited and Mana smiled, but it faded quickly afterwards.

“I can’t. I need to find Mahado.” She said. When Mana spoke the priest’s name, Immaru immediately felt the same shivers running down his spine as when he woke up. A dreadful feeling of doom invaded his heart.

“What is it with him?” Immaru asked concerned.

“I heard he was leaving the city to seal the deceased Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen’s tomb. I’ve been practicing my magic. I can help!”

Without adding another word, the girl ran quickly down the gallery. Immaru hesitated in following her but his stomach protested loudly. He knew he was too weak to do anything without eating first. He probably couldn’t even accompany her pace for longer than a few minutes. He grimaced. The shivers still tormented him, spreading goosebumps on his skin. The White Magician sighed sadly, while he resumed his walk to the dining hall. He knew what these warnings meant. There were times that being the White Magician and having a highly developed Sixth Sense were a curse. For there were things not even he and his magic could change. The shadow of death was hovering over Priest Mahado. It was his fate to succumb today. And Fate was something nobody, not even the gods could change.”

…

“Come out, come out, wherever you are!” A dark and mocking voice was heard in the depths of the dark cavern. Priest Mahado grimaced when the bandit’s form became visible under the dimmer light. “Let the festivities commence”.

Thief and Priest finally met in the interior of the cave. Their first confrontation was one of words. Mocking sentences against eloquent phrases. Bakura expressed his murderous ambitions and vile ideas, wanting to intimidate Mahado. The Royal Priest was not afraid, but sickened by Bakura’s arrogance and overconfidence. His discourse clearly revealed Bakura’s conviction he would win this battle and gain possession of the Millennium Ring. But the Egyptian priest, who was both brave and loyal to the Pharaoh, refused to waver to a common thief. Besides, he had now a great advantage. He was united with his original and full potential energy. Never had he felt so powerful as now. Priest Mahado was sure he could defeat Diabound, while Bakura was certain he would come out victorious. The duel was inevitable. And so, the duel commenced.
When Bakura summoned his monster, Priest Mahado gasped shocked at Diabound’s sight. The monster appeared to be bigger, taller and stronger. And then the chamber was filled with the odious mad laughter of Thief Bakura. The bandit was delighted in explaining Diabound had become more powerful after his fight against the White Magician. Mahado had not counted with this. Diabound’s new strenght would make matters more difficult. Still, the Royal Priest believed he had a good chance in defeating the beast. Priest Mahado decided to give Bakura his share of unpleasant surprises. Because Diabound was not the only one that had become stronger.

Bakura watched with amused curiosity Mahado glow in a strange new energy. He did not know this was the manifestation of the Royal Priest’s true power. He became the more perplexed when he noticed Mahado’s change of strategy during the duel. The Priest was now sacrificing his personal energy to his monsters in a similar way as Immaru did when he used his magical powers. Bakura smirked. Just like the White Magician, each time a monster was attacked, Priest Mahado became weaker. Only, in comparison to the Moon king, his energy dropped very quickly. He fought boldly and he fought cleverly, but just like the previous night, Thief King had the advantage of not spending any of his life energy. A crazed laughter filled the air in the cave each time Diabound resisted Mahado’s powerful attacks. The Royal Priest started to doubt his earlier convictions. After another ferocious blast, Mahado fell to his knees. Perhaps he was not that strong enough after all.

Thief Bakura watched contented Priest Mahado pant on his knees, his hand pressed over his chest. He didn’t understand why the priest suddenly chose to use his own energy in the duels, but he could care less. He could sense his victory was near and grinned maliciously. “Now hand over the Millennium Ring and you may make it home with your soul intact”

“I shall never hand it over to the likes of you!” Priest Mahado retorted disgusted at the proposition. He still had some energy left to fight. He was not giving up. He could not give up. He had made a vow long ago to protect the Pharaoh. He was ready to pay his debt to his ruler, to his friend. “In fact it is I who will see to it that your soul is sealed away!”

“You couldn’t even defeat me with your six friends at your side.” Bakura reminded amused.

“Yes, but now I am more powerful than you can imagine” The priest said in a confident manner and Bakura wondered for moments if Mahado and Immaru were somehow related, because they displayed the same stubborn determination. “Long ago I buried a mighty force upon these grounds and now I gained it back”

“Nonsense!” Thief King shouted upset, sure Mahado was bluffing.

“Generations of Egypt’s Royal Magicians were trained in this very sanctuary and it is here that I locked my true power.” Priest Mahado said with confidence and Bakura frowned.
So according to the priest, this was his true power. A power he had detached from himself and sealed away all these years because he was afraid of its mightiness. Bakura snorted the least impressed. For what he could see, Mahado’s new power did not even come close to Immaru’s. He would defeat him. Kill him. Easily. “Then let’s see you use it” Bakura cruelly challenged.

The Nameless Pharaoh was pacing from one side to the other in the throne room, deep in thought. Siamun Muran observed him in silence and with concern. Since daybreak that the young ruler has been pondering all kind of scenarios and strategies to defeat the mighty villain Bakura. The vizier had insisted he should leave the worrying to the priests, but the King of Egypt would not accept a passive role and remained restless. Suddenly, the Pharaoh flinched, like if he was hit by an electrifying force.

“Siamun! Did you feel that?” The Nameless Pharaoh asked shocked.

“So what, my Lord?” The old man replied, his concern growing by the minute.

“I sense great danger.” Yami said feeling disturbed by an unseen and unspoken premonition. “It is as if my sacred guardian is in jeopardy.”

Before his vizier could say anything, Mana stormed into the chamber and dropped to her knees before her ruler, before her friend.

“Pharaoh!” The girl chocked breathless, tears forming in the corner of her eyes. Yami, sensing her distress, bent slightly over and held her hands in his to comfort her. It felt strangely natural. “I was looking for Mahado, I wanted to help him. I-I could not find him in the Palace, so I went to the shrines area and...” Mana’s voice cracked as tears finally ran down her face. “Mahado’s tablet shrine is activated! It means he’s engaging his creatures in a Shadow Game!”

“Oh no. Could it be he went to face Bakura alone?” Yami wondered out loud.

Priest Mahado had demonstrated to be quite disturbed and unhappy with the way things developed the previous night. The Pharaoh knew he had not accepted their defeat well, the reason he had been positively surprised with Mahado’s calm and compliant behavior this morning. The Nameless Pharaoh realized too late, his loyal priest and friend had lied to him, tricked him into believe he was
going to seal his father’s tomb when in reality, all Mahado wanted was an excuse to leave the Palace
to fight Bakura singlehanded.

“He’ll never be able to defeat him alone!” Mana cried lamentably.

“No. Not alone. But with our help, yes. Mana, stand up. We must haste!” Yami commanded and the
magician apprentice stared surprised for a few moments, before smiling hopefully. She quickly
wiped her tears away and followed her leader.

“Wait, Pharaoh! You must not leave alone! It’s too dangerous. You need and escort!”

Siamun Muran urged while he tried to run after them, but his old heart and legs could not keep up
with the youngsters. He sighed miserably when he heard his sovereign’s voice at the end of the hall
telling him there was no time to lose. He knew his Pharaoh was right and that this was an urgent
matter. But he feared Priest Mahado’s time had already expired. It was unwise to act rashly and
imprudently. The consequences were unpredictable. He suddenly missed his former Pharaoh
Akhenamkhanen.

…

People on the streets jumped to the sides and gasped surprised when they saw their Pharaoh ridding
away with Mana’s company. They watched alarmed as their ruler and the girl they knew to be a
magician apprentice, leave the city walls. This could never be a good sign. And so they prayed to the
gods to protect their king and Egypt from evil. Yami followed the tracks Priest Mahado’s group had
left mere hours before. He hoped he would reach his friend before it was too late. Little did the
Pharaoh know, Immaru watched him leave unnoticed.

After he had breakfast, the White Magician pondered well his options. He avoided crossing paths
with anybody he knew, mainly his brother. The young king knew this situation with Bakura would
probably be his greatest challenge in this lifetime. This was the reason he was born with his powers.
To stop darkness and evil from contaminating the world. This was his mission and, as much as he
loved and cared for his brother and friends, this was something he had to do alone.

Immaru paced without destination along the palace’s galleries. He felt the urgency to forge a plan in
his mind. He knew he had to be strategic and deal this matter with extreme caution. His main goal
was to make sure Bakura wouldn’t assemble the seven Millennium Items. Since Priest Mahado was
fated to die today, it was obvious the thief would get his hands on the Millennium Ring. When
Immaru saw the Pharaoh leave, his concerns doubled, because now the Millennium Puzzle was in
risk too. The White Magician pondered what to do next. He wasn’t surprised his feet led him to one
of the palace’s stables. The Moon King locked his eyes with a beautiful white stallion and smiled.
Providence had just given him the solution.
Not so far away, the duel between two great opposing forces proceeded. Things weren’t looking too good for Priest Mahado who, attack after attack, was confronted with the bitter realization that even his power in full potential was no match for Diabound. The monster simply was stronger and survived each trick, each blast, each attack unharmed. And then something incomprehensible happened. Diabound appeared behind the priest and, in a surprise attack, killed another monster.

“How is it possible? Only my Shadow Goul can pass through walls!” Priest Mahado shouted shocked. The thief could only be cheating. Only his monster had this ability. Was Diabound somehow copying his monsters’ power?

“Oh, I must have forgotten to mention this, my Diabound has the unique ability to inherit the powers of every monster it defeats in battle.” Thief King proudly said to Mahado’s horror.

Bakura laughed madly. He watched the despair and disconsolation on the priest’s face. It felt so righteous. This man claimed to be good willed, to be pure and altruist. Yet, he wielded the dark forces of the Millennium Ring. An object fruit of a horrific massacre. For the thief, Mahado’s soul was as dark as the Millennium powers created by the blood of his own people. He deserved to be punished. He deserved to die.

With a final blast, Diabound hit the Royal Egyptian Priest. Bakura’s crazed laughter once more filled the cave, knowing he had finally defeated his rival. A golden object flew in the air. It seemed to be called by its real owner, because it came in the thief’s direction, who caught it in midair.

“Ah, the Millennium Ring is mine!”

“Bakura, you are trading down a dangerous path.”

Bakura stared surprised as the last clouds of smoke dissipated. He was confused to see the Illusion Magician standing before him, while he knew he had defeated the Royal Priest. Speaking off, where was Mahado? And then he recognized. The Illusion Magician was Priest Mahado! They had united, they had become one. And were stronger than ever. Bakura barely had time to dodge from the mighty full blast that came in his direction. The earth trembled. Stones started to fall. The impact had been too powerful and now the cave was collapsing.
Rocky walls trembled with great power. Thief King ran swiftly, between blocks of falling stone. He found a small lake in the cavern and could see the waters were deep. If he was lucky, it would lead him to the exterior. He dived, while the chamber’s walls collapsed. Bakura swam as fast as he could through a dark tunnel. His eyes widened when he saw a large opening and a bright light behind it. He swam faster, his lungs burning from needed oxygen. With a great impulse, he emerged and broke the wall of water, taking an urgent gasp of air.

“One down. *pants* Six more to go. *pants*” Bakura told himself between gasps of needed air.

He moved easily in the water until it reached his waist. His smirk expressed his double contentment. He finally had the Millennium Ring and the tunnel he followed took him to the grandiose waterfalls, which were conveniently located on the far opposite side of the mountain formation. If anybody even remembered to search him over there, it would take at least a couple hours to travel around the mountain. He was ready to take his next step in his plan and already knew which item he would take. It was time to visit an old acquaintance.

Bakura snickered at the thought. He lifted his head before he took another step and froze. He stood for moments perplexed and had truly no idea what to do or say. On the stony shore, stood nobody else, but the White Magician. Immaru, in his immaculate beauty, was like a mirage under a radiant sun. Bakura shook away his lusty desires for the boy, which apparently persisted after their making out from the previous day, and instead tried to figure out what had just happened. Thief King grimaced. It was clear the White Magician had recovered from his ailments during the night. He took another few steps. He was mystified for his presence here, above all, wondered how he knew where to find him, because it was obvious the brat had waited for him.
“How you knew where to find me with such accuracy is beyond doubt astonishing. Even I didn’t
know I would end up here. But after yesterday, I shouldn’t be too surprised.” Bakura finally
managed to speak. Immaru tried to ignore the way the drops of water ran down on the Egyptian’s
bronzed skin, or how the predator’s grin on Bakura’s face made him look absolutely hot. His
hormones immediately stirred up, but Immaru forced himself instead to focus in what he came for.

“You killed Mahado.” Immaru coldly said and the Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring understood
clearly this was not a question.

“More like a suicide. If you ask me, he wanted to die so he could be confined in a stupid stone tablet
to serve his precious Pharaoh for all eternity.” Thief King grinned at Immaru’s knitting on his brow.
This was obviously new to him. So the brat did not know everything. “You see, he merged his
powers with his Illusion Magician monster becoming the Dark Magician. I can tell you in the future,
when the Pharaoh is the other Yugi, this will be his favourite Duel Monster.”

“The Illusion Magician is part of Mahado’s soul.” Immaru whispered understanding what had just
happened to the priest’s soul. “When it was defeated, Mahado died and his soul went into the tablet.
Fate is truly an unpredictable thing.” Immaru stated perplexed. No matter how much he knew about
magic, there was still so much he still didn’t know. But he could not allow himself to be side-tracked
and reminded himself of his task today. He lifted his eyes to lock them with Bakura’s. “I’m afraid
I’m going to have to retrieve that item from you.”

“And how are you planning to do that?” Bakura asked in a menacing tone, while he stepped out the
water and climbed on the stone bed where Immaru stood on.

“You are nothing without your Diabound.” Immaru boldly told.

Bakura laughed amused at the threat. The adrenaline from the duel and escape from under the water
were still running fast in his blood. The sense of victory was overwhelming, so he felt a sudden urge
to celebrate his success. And now Immaru stood defiantly opposite him, his eyes challenging. He
was a vision of beauty and temptation with his silver hair shining under the sun, his flawless skin,
and his lips that were as smooth as they looked. Thief King felt an intense desire to overpower the
boy to his own lusty desires.

“Such cruel words.” Thief King said stepping closer to Immaru, who instinctively gave two steps
back, sensing something of a predator in the man’s eyes. “Too cruel for such a lovely face.”

Bakura added while his rested his right hand on the boy’s cheek. Immaru’s eyes grew and he tried to
budge, but his body froze at the soft touch. Just like the first time, he was unable to resist when the
bandit bended slightly to kiss him. Unlike the first time, he didn’t want to fight back. He closed his
eyes and relished the feeling of a gentle kiss. One could even call it a romantic kiss. Bakura was
delighted with the sweetness of Immaru’s soft lips against his. He pecked another few times, never
separating their lips, before he inserted his tongue in Immaru’s mouth.

He was marveled by the electrifying sensation that, like the first time, sent waves of tingling pleasure
through his body. Immaru felt it too and, drunken with the lovely sensation, put his arms around the
thief’s shoulders to engage eagerly in the kiss, moving his tongue to meet Bakura’s. The Spirit Ring
was surprised but pleased with the boy’s reaction. He wanted more and needed more, so he wrapped
his arms around the delicate frame possessively and gave more passion to the kiss.

Immaru released a soft moan when their bodies were pressed against each other. His mind warned
him again about danger. The voices of the priests of Akkad scolded him for his inadequate behavior,
for his bodily weaknesses and his easy surrender. Tendrils of dark energy travelled on his body,
teasing him with desire. They invited him to pleasure and Immaru accepted them. He had given up.
Immaru wanted Bakura. He desired him in a way he never desired anything before. He needed to feel the other man like if it was a question of survival. Immaru was tired of fighting his own needs, of contradicting them. The tendrils of darkness travelled to his heart and whispered wishes of independency, of freedom, of doing whatever he wanted. The tendrils found his only source of darkness – the desire to own his own life.

Immaru kissed hungrily and then pulled back his neck to allow Bakura to indulge him with kisses, licks and little nibbles on his skin, across his neck and collarbone. Feeling those lips again, oh and that skillful tongue, his taste, his touch, his scent; simply drove him mad. It was not fair he could not enjoy the same pleasures others were entitled to. Immaru was tired of being chaste, of repressing his hormones, of being somebody the priests wanted him to be. Because the young king wanted to be himself. To make his own choices, to make his own mistakes. To be free to commit his own sins and crimes. The dark tendrils giggled as they travelled deeper to his soul, releasing his darkest wishes.

Bakura was intoxicated by the touch of the king’s soft skin and its sweet scent. He was going mad with the little cute moans Immaru released once in a while. He was losing his mind at the way the boy collaborated ardently. He needed to feel more of the young king’s body and there was simply too much material between them. He hurried in dispensing of the boy’s robe, the thin silky tunic and the cotton pants. He pressed the boy’s bare chest against him and cursed because the Millennium Ring stood in the way. Without thinking, Bakura took off the item and carelessly threw it on the stony bed. Their skins collided, their nipples met, Immaru moaned excited.

Bakura felt a warm and sweet sensation take over his whole body. A translucid white glow settled under his skin and travelled inside his veins, travelled through his organs and limbs. The thief felt dizzy at the wonderful feeling. The white glow whispered him words about love, about caring, about being happy with the other’s happiness. Motivated by the overwhelming sensation, he bit Immaru’s nipple, who moaned of pleasure. Immaru felt crazed by lust and rushed to dispose of the red robe that covered the thief’s back. Bakura chuckled at the boy’s bold move. The white glow told him, the other’s pleasure was his pleasure. Sharing was completion. He felt the urgent need of bonding physically with Immaru. He guided the boy to lie down on the stone bed and took off Immaru’s underwear.

Immaru released a moan of surprise and unexpected pleasure when Bakura’s tongue met his entrance. His body was helpless at the touches and he collaborated eagerly when the thief inserted a finger in his opening. Soon his body was moving at his own accord, his ass taking two and even three fingers with excitement. The tendrils of dark energy coached him to free himself from his fears, from taboos, from the cruel restrictions he had been accepting all his life. Immaru revolted at the knowledge he had been passive at all demands, behaving like the good boy he was expected to be. The young king was tired of being a model to priesthood and wanted to be stained. Wanted to sin so badly. He yelled from pleasured pain when Bakura’s erection entered his body.

Bakura thought he was going mad from pleasure when his cock entered the straight and tight tunnel. He thought he was coming at the surprised yell coming from Immaru, because it was such a torturously animalistic sound, that the thief thought this was his most erotic moment he ever experienced. He moved in and out, observing Immaru’s knitting on his brow denouncing his discomfort. Another sound of pleasure filled his ears when he found the prostrate and the young king’s face became the purest image of love combined with temptation. Sharing happiness is being happy. Sharing pleasure is to feel pleasure. Sharing love is to be loved. The white glow whispered to him while it nestled softly in his heart and his soul.

Being alone is solitary! Being independent is empty. Bakura thought while he banged Immaru crazily.
I am free to feel! I am free to surrender! Immaru’s mind yelled over and over while the pleasure increased by each pounding. I am free to be me!

“Is this good?” Bakura asked while he lifted Immaru’s hips slightly in the air so he could pound easier, deeper and faster.

“Oh! Yes, ngh, it feels good. It feels very good.” Immaru confessed between his heavy breath. He shut his eyes with force. Darkness was enveloping quickly around his heart.

Free…Free to sin…Free to be me

“Come for me.” Bakura begged in a chocked voice, sensing his orgasm nearing. “Come for me Immaru!” The white glow sunk in his lonely heart, merged with his solitary soul.

Share…Bond…Love

Immaru lost all of his senses at Bakura’s words. They were too powerful. Too stimulating. His body reacted madly at the words and the young king moaned loudly, while his legs contracted and milk was spilled from his erection. He pulled his head back, while his body trembled at the superb sensation. His eyes were shut. Darkness enveloped his heart. Darkness invaded his soul. Immaru opened his eyes in a shot and saw a great monster, black as the moonless night, colossal as the mountain, eyes red like blood. Around the creature was a world of destruction. Fire and smoke erupted from countless houses. Helpless screams filled the air. A putrefying scent of blood, smoke and something toxic invaded his nostrils. Immaru screamed involuntarily when the dark tendrils were violently expelled from his soul and heart.

Bakura came at Immaru’s final scream, his climax never been his intense and powerful before. The white glow filled the empty space of his revolted soul with love, tenderness and caring. It warmed his heart with all the sweet and pleasant feelings he had once felt long ago and had forgotten their existence. The memory of his mother’s voice lullabying him, the feeling of his father’s strong hand around his small one returned to his mind. Bakura groaned a chocked moan and collapsed on top of Immaru, feeling shocked. Tears ran down his cheeks.

Both remained lying quietly for a while. Bakura resting on top of Immaru. Their hearts banging wildly against each other. Their fastened breathing easing slowly. Both were shocked by what was revealed to them. Immaru understood the meaning of this passionate moment, the need of the physical desire. This had been the gateway to discover the secret plans from Darkness.

Bakura didn’t understand what he felt, didn’t understand the white light he saw in his mind and was confused. An ancient pain and longing to feel something else than rage, desire for revenge, cruelty overflooded him. He wanted to feel the love, protection and security he once had felt. He wanted to feel the carefreeness and happiness he felt as a little child. And wondered if Immaru was the one to remind him what those feelings were like.

Long minutes stretched by. Their heartbeats slowly returned to their normal rate. Their breathing slowly regularized. None dared to move. None dared to speak. Immaru was paralyzed by fear, having realized this man was carrying a hidden Darkness inside his soul that would destroy the world at its first change. He wondered if Bakura knew he had this darkness inside of him. The King of Thieves kissed the boy’s cheek without thinking. This caused a reaction. Immaru turned his face to look at him and their eyes met. The bandit was confused because of the shock reflected in the chocolate brown orbs. The young king was surprised because of the gentle look in his enemy’s eyes. It was all too much and he moved, gently shoving Bakura from on top of him. With trembling legs, Immaru walked to the water, while lilac eyes followed him.
“Having regrets already?” Thief King asked, while his heart panged from disappointment. A strange sorrow settled in it and seemed to steal away his strength. He watched silently as Immaru entered the water but gave no answer. Bakura sighed annoyed, while his cold heart cracked a bit. The silence was the answer itself. He stood up and decided to follow the young king. Immaru stood with his back to him, washing his arms with the water. He obviously was decided to ignore him. Thief King exhaled loudly. Immaru’s behavior was bothering him, but something else was bothering him more. “I think I saw your soul a while ago.” At this Immaru froze. He seized his movements, his hand resting on his arm. “A white light. Very bright.” Only then did Immaru turn around. It was hard to tell what the boy was thinking because he was expressionless.

“What happened after the massacre in your village? What did you do?” The young king asked and Bakura gasped from surprise. That was not what he had expected to hear. The more he got to know Ryou’s past live, the more mysterious he proved to be. He wondered to what extends the White Magician powers went. The tension in the chocolate brown orbs gave him the shivers. And came to one single conclusion. They both needed to understand what was going on.

“I-I… I dunno know. I don’t quite remember. I guess I left the town and went into the desert. I remember crossing paths with a caravan and travelled with them for a while.”

“I mean before that. When the priests left. When you were left alone in the village. You did something, didn’t you? Some kind of pact.” The teenager insisted and Thief King’s memory unwillingly returned to the past.

Bakura, of course, remembered every detail. That night remained imprinted in his mind forever. His memories were as fresh as if they had just happened, the emotions as raw as 17 years ago. He remembered he stayed hidden after the priests and soldiers had left the town. He remembered he didn’t dare to leave his hidden place for many hours. He cried of fear and sorrow till the moon was gone and the sun was born, till his tears had run dry. He felt afterwards tired, numb, dead. The only sound he could hear was the wind carrying the sand under the warm morning sun. The only sound he heard was a whisper calling his name. Bakura remembered stepping out of his hiding place and…

“I walked to the cauldron. I didn’t really want to go there, but my legs – I remember I reached the cauldron. It was so large. I touched its surface and it burned my fingers. It was still hot.”

Bakura could still hear the whisper calling his name. “Then I saw a stone structure near it. The Millennium Stone. The mould to shape the Seven Items.” Thief King paused. He remembered the sadness mingled with fear. The despair and absolute loneliness. He remembered the pain of grief mingled with revolt and anger. The desire to avenge his people. “I made a promise that day. I promised I would kill those who hurt my family, my community. I promised I would avenge them and bring suffering to the Pharaoh and his monstrous priests!”

“Did – you receive an answer?” Immaru asked and his voice was so faint that even Bakura felt the boy’s fear. He remembered the whisper talking to him. Soft and comforting. Answering his desires. He nodded and witnessed tears swell in the boy’s eyes. Thief King felt the boy’s pain and knew what Immaru feared for.

“Don’t worry. I won’t get hurt.” He said, a strange compassion for this boy, who was as vulnerable as he was mighty. And something else, that was filling his hard cold heart. He rested his hand on Immaru’s face, his thumb wiping a tear away. “Hidden deep under the sands of Kul Elna, lies the structure known as the Millennium Stone. Place the Seven Items in this stone and ultimate power will be yours.” He added and Immaru’s eyes widened. “That is what he said. Zorc.”

Zorc!
The colossal monster, darker than night, covering the world with fire and smoke! That was Zorc. Immaru finally had a name and a form to go by the darkness that has been haunting him since young age. He finally understood. Zorc was the Darkness born from the horrifying crime committed in Kul Elna! He was the result of the Dark Magic to create the Millennium Items! He was forged with the Millennium Items! He had gained life but needed the Millenium Items to gain a physical body. He had manipulated a scared and hurt child to do his bidding. Bakura didn’t know he had been fooled by this evil creature. He did not know he would be the sacrifice to give a body to the monster. He did not know that Zorc will destroy the word and fill it with darkness.

“I know now what I must do!” Immaru said. He quickly jumped out the water and dressed himself. Thief King knitted his brow and made a scoffing sound.

“And what may that be?” He said while he followed the Akkadian and approached Immaru. The young king turned to look at the man. Bakura would not understand. Because the Pharaoh was his escape goat. Revenge had become his way to survive the pain and loss he suffered as child. He would never accept the reality as it is. That Zorc must never be born. Immaru knew the King of Thieves would try to stop him.

“I am sorry.” Without a warning, Immaru gently placed his hand behind Bakura’s neck, his fingers pressed just under his head and released a small amount of energy. Thief King had no time to react and felt a jolt of pain in the back of his head. The teenager watched the man’s eyes roll back, before he collapsed unconscious. “I am not allowing Zorc to leave your body. He will destroy you. Just like he will destroy many others. Because that is what he is. Destruction.”

Immaru picked up the Millennium Ring that was lying on the floor. He watched as the sun shone of its golden surface. It felt cold and heavy. The young king put it around his neck and felt Darkness protest. He climbed on his horse and swiftly rode away.
Convergence

Chapter Summary

The paths of Destiny are converging. Each character must fulfill their part in the final battle between good and evil and are called to their duties.

Chapter Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
PRIEST SETO = Seto Kaiba
PRIESTESS ISIS = Ishizu Ishtar
PRIEST AKHENADEN = Mr. Ishtar
Enjoy the story
I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS

Dumuzi was crazed. First, he overslept and then, he woke up to find his brother’s bed empty. He immediately went to search him. He was nowhere in the kitchens or in the dining room. People had seen him having breakfast, but after that, the Moon King seemed to have vanished. The knowledge Mahado had gone to fight Bakura disturbed him greatly. To hear the priest was was followed by the Pharaoh, who left the Palace without an escort, only helped to increase his worries. Everybody was acting impetuously. Rushed decisions would only lead to chaos. And the Sun king had the bad feeling his twin was somewhere in the middle of this chaos. Beholding, for the second time, to Dumuzi’s panic mingled with mad rage; Yugi and his friends saw no other options than to aid him with his search. They had already witnessed his hysteria the day Immaru was kidnapped, but this time, the Sun king was blazing in fury.

“How is it possible nobody saw him!” Dumuzi shouted.

“The palace is huge. He could be anywhere.” Anzu said in a vain attempt to soothe him.

“Don’t speak nonsense! We would have found him by now!”
“My Lord.” A guard appeared and bowed in humility. “There is a horse missing from the stables.” Yugi and the others switched concerned looks.

“That idiot!!! He went away to do something alone!!! A dangerous thing!”

“How are we going to find him?” Yugi asked.

“I know somebody that can help you.”

The five teenagers turned around to the source of the voice. It was Karim, the priest that guards the Millennium Scales.

…

“Mahado!!! No!!!” Mana shouted in tears, while she fell to her knees.

In front of her, stood a great stone tablet with the Illusion Magician represented on it. It had Priest Mahado’s face. The Pharaoh clenched his teeth in anger and promised to avenge his loyal friend. He would take down Bakura, even if he had to go down with him. Killing the remaining obscure three hooded men had given him little comfort, but at least his enemy didn’t have back up anymore. Yami decided it was time to return to the Palace. He would gather the remaining priests, he would call for the Akkadian Kings and with the help of them he would start a war against Bakura. Together, they would find that evil soul and kill him once and for all.

…

“Ever since Bakura arrived, my vision of the future has been clouded. It is as if the kingdom is shrouded in a blanket of shadows. But I will continue my efforts to see through the darkness.” Priestess Isis kindly explained Dumuzi, while she prepared herself to focus in the magical waters of foresight, for the countless time.

Dumuzi’s eyes darted nervously from the priestess to the magical waters, from Priest Karim to Yugi and the others. The Sun King was edgy to the extreme and had to make an enormous effort not to demand immediate answers from the young woman. She needed concentration and making a racket would certainly not achieve anything. “Please, Millennium Neckless, I besiege thy, heist the shadows and show me the light of the future. Wait, what is this? I see something. Jungle of pieces of events
yet to come. I sense a great evil!”

“What did you see?” Dumuzi asked desperate, his heart racing from fear for his brother’s safety.

“I saw your brother, my Lord.” Priestess Isis said with a concerned face. “He is in a ruined village, far out in the desert.”

“Kul Elna.” Yugi spoke. “That’s Bakura’s village. That’s where Immaru had his last vision.”

“Why would he want to go back there?” Jounouchi wondered.

“It’s where everything started.” Dumuzi darkly spoke, finally understanding his brother’s actions and final goal. Everything was suddenly clear. Everything was coming to a full circle. Immaru had been having visions of Hell since a small boy. Visions of the bloodshed of innocents, visions of the rise of Darkness, visions of the destruction of the world. It all led back to Kul Elna. “It’s where the Millennium Items were created. It’s where Darkness will rise. And Immaru is there to stop it.”

…

Lilac eyes shot open. There was a gasp followed by a groan. Bakura sat up while he rubbed the back of his head. He looked around and quickly understood what had happened. That brat of a sorcerer had used his magic to knock him down when he least expected. He cursed his own stupidity for letting his guard down. It was becoming clearer by the minute that Immaru was not to be trusted. The Moon king was as determined to stop him and Zorc the same way the bandit was determined in having his revenge.

Thief King scanned the ground around him and bitterly confirmed his suspicions. That fool had taken the Millennium Ring. He cursed furious, more to himself than anything else for letting himself be tricked by the innocent looking king. For allowing his heart, which for long had rejected love and other wonderful feelings; to warm up to the teen. For falling so easily for the boy’s seduction. Immaru would pay dearly for this, above all, Bakura would make him regret snatching the Millennium Ring from him.

Bakura stood up and dressed himself. Those idiots of Zorc’s henchmen were not to be seen anywhere. How helpful! He sarcastically thought. He also had no horse. This time Immaru had really set him up. But Bakura was not one to give up that easily. He had gone too far, he was too close to his goals to stop now. Hatred and the desire for revenge made his blood run hot in his veins.
Adrenaline made his limbs run fast and swift. He followed Immaru’s horse’s tracks. He would find him. He would have the Seven Millenium Items. He would have his revenge! Even if this mean he had to kill the White Magician.

…

People screamed and ran all directions when a gigantic shadow flew over the city of pyramids. Those who looked up were momentarily blinded by the reflection of the sun light hitting the golden body. A loud roar filled the sky and people panicked. Dumuzi had finally lost it. Realizing his brother was putting his life in risk, he summoned the Winged Dragon of Ra without thinking twice. For the second time, the golden monster flew above Cairo. Yugi and the others barely had time to climb up the Egyptian god. Priestess Isis and Priest Karim joined the group after a short hesitance, not sure they wanted a ride on the mystical beast. But Destiny called them to their duty, and so they pushed their fears aside and climbed on the creature. As they flew away, Priests Seto, Shada and Akhenaden watched petrified the monster leave city.

“What is happening?!” Priest Seto questioned confused.

“Strange happenings are occurring.” Priest Akhenaden answered. “The Pharaoh has left the Palace in search of Mahado. Something bad must be going on.”

“Bakura!” Priest Seto darkly spoke. “We must follow them! If the Pharaoh or one of the twin kings are in danger, it is our duty to help them.”

“What about the city? Who will protect it?” Priest Shada asked.

“You will stay. You will be the guardian of the city.” Priest Akhenaden solemnly spoke while the younger priest gasped surprised. “Use your Millenium Key to lock it away from evil.”

“But that will bring me and all the people within the city walls to another dimension. How do I know when to unlock the city and return to this realm?” The priest asked shocked.

Priest Seto stared mystified at his companions. He had heard about the secret power within the Millenium Key, but he always believed it to be a myth. It was said it has the ability to transport entire regions to a world where time and space have no meaning. The entire city would be protected in a kind of bubble, where time stopped for everybody, except for the guardian of the Millenium Key. Shada would be alone in a world where the notion of time did not exist. Minutes on Earth could
mean centuries in the Shada’s world, and yet he would not age. Seto could not imagine a more frightening task. To have to wait without knowing when he would return to his world. Worse, without knowing if he would ever come back to Egypt.

“You will know when.” Priest Akhenaden assured while he rested his hand on Priest Shada’s shoulder. “Remember, it was the Millennium Key that chose you. This is your Destiny. Do not be afraid to embrace it.” Priest Shada nodded, a new light of courage and determination shone in his eyes, while a part of him was still very terrified. “Seto, let’s get some horses and follow the Winged Dragon of Ra. We must haste.”

“I will wait until you leave the city.” Priest Shada said. The older priest nodded and urged Seto to follow him suit.

“May the gods protect you, Shada.” Priest Seto said before turning around and make a run to the stables.

“May the gods guide you too, my friend.” Priest Shada whispered while he watched the other two men disappear behind a corner.

…

The Nameless Pharaoh rode fast as the wind. His heart beat from painful anger. It was strange to feel such an intense agony for losing somebody he barely knew. Maybe it were his suppressed memories that caused this grieving, hidden memories from a boy he saw grow up into a young and brave man who sacrificed his life for his ruler and his country. Because, despite having no memories of Mahado, he felt like he had known him his whole life. He felt an unexplainable bond with the deceased priest, a trust that was rare, one that only existed between real friends. A trust that only exists among family.

Behind him sat Mana, her face glued to his back, weeping silently, tears still running down her cheeks. This was the first time she ever lost anybody close to her. Mahado was her friend, her master, her guardian. And now he was gone. His soul was cruelly sealed in a rock. The young apprentice strengthened her grip around the Pharaoh’s waist at the thought she could lose somebody else. At the thought she could lose him too. If her childhood friend would die today, Mana was sure she would die too. The reason why she made a silent vow. She promised to Mahado’s soul she would do everything to protect the Pharaoh. She would fight for him fearlessly. She would die for him, if that was what the gods wanted from her. This much was her loyalty and her caring for the Pharaoh.
Suddenly, Yami stopped his horse and both looked up shocked. A large mass came towards them, the sun light reflecting its evening’s golden rays and before they could react, a colossal body landed just before them. Both the Pharaoh and Mana were speechless, terrified and awestruck for they were in the presence of a mighty god.

“Hey! Yami!” Jounouchi yelled while he waved at them. “You and your girlfriend must join us.” Yami and Mana switched confused looks and both blushed ferociously at the word girlfriend. Nobody missed Anzu’s furious look while she hit the blond’s head with force.

“Immaru is in Kul Elna. He wants to stop Bakura from destroying the world, but he is alone.” Anzu explained, ignoring Jounouchi’s dramatic whining. “We brought Karim and Isis with us.”

The Pharaoh nodded and quickly dismounted the horse. He helped Mana to get down and they shared an awkward look, when their bodies briefly met. Still blushing horribly and not daring to look at anybody, they headed to the Egyptian god. Only when they stood right in front of it did both realize on what they were about to ride on. Yami hesitated.

“Come on! The God of Sun Ra will not bite you. I don’t have all day! Immaru needs us!” Dumuzi said upset and his demand was enough to shake the Pharaoh’s intimidation towards the creature. Mana summoned her courage, took a deep breath and followed him suit. Before they knew it, they were in the air.

“Oh gods! We are – flying!” Mana shouted while the realization of the impossible hit her. Yami looked at her and smiled. He looked down and had to admit, it was quite the experience to ride the Winged Dragon of Ra.

Meanwhile, and down below, the friends missed the presence of the one person they feared the most. Bakura, breathless, had seen the figure of the golden monster fly not so far from him while he followed Immaru’ tracks. He stopped exhausted from the running, sweating and panting, and groaned furious at his impotence. Where was Zorc and his men when he needed them? How was he supposed to summon Zorc if that distasteful Pharaoh and his obnoxious friends had the Egyptian god on their side? But as he continued jogging in the direction of the setting sun, watching how the monster mingled with the fire star, he grinned. It appeared Fate had some providence reserved for him, after all. Right on the spot where the Winged Dragon of Ra had landed, stood a horse, alone and abandoned. Bakura giggled amused.

“The Pharaoh’s stallion. Now this is what I call quality.”

The King of Thieves mounted the horse and made haste to follow the Egyptian golden beast. He had
to stop the Pharaoh and his despicable friends whatever it cost him. There was no way he had waited 5,000 years to see his plans go down the drain. The battle was on and he was determined to be the winner.

…

Immaru reached the Village of Kul Elna by dusk. He had ridden for many hours without stopping. His horse had been fueled by his magic, so the beast never got tired or thirsty. The young king, in the contrary, felt his energy drop because of the use of magic. He knew he should have thought better things through, but he had the feeling he was racing against time. He stopped the horse at the village’s entrance and descended it with a painful groan. His whole body ached. He stretched his back and ignored the unpleasant sore sensation between his buttocks. Intercourse with the thief that been great, but the repercussions were horrible, especially if you planned to ride a horse the whole day. He dug his hands in the bags hanging by the horse’s saddle and ate some bread with honey and fruit he had taken before he left the Palace. He sighed relieved, feeling quite restored. He could feel the strength return to his muscles. He could sense the magic flow easily in his veins again.

Immaru turned to face the road that led to Kul Elna’s interior. The ruined sand coloured houses looked eerie against a sky of orange and red shades. He looked up and grimaced. Today he would fulfil his life’s purpose. He would risk his life by fighting the creature of Darkness, but he had at least the moon on his side. The great yellow orb slowly rose behind the dark houses, while the sun lowered in the horizon. It was time to answer to the gods’ challenges, it was time to embrace his role of White Magician and protect the world from all that is evil.

He took one step. A step closer to the village. A step closer to Destiny. A step closer to the edge of the world’s Fate. And while he slowly advanced into the interior of Kul Elna, he could feel the heaviness of the past’s tragic memories crush him, haunt him, demand him. Immaru swallowed dry when a large group of men and women, elderly and children stared at him from the village’s central square. They were waiting for him. Waiting for their revenge. Waiting to be freed.

…

Twilight coloured the skies with a pallet of fresh blues. The first stars appeared and prepared for their celestial nightly journey. The God Sun of Ra landed on the dry ground making sand particles lift in a cloud of dust. King Dumuzi was the first one to jump to the ground. Without a word and without waiting for anybody, he ran into the deserted village, calling out his brother’s name. Yami, Yugi and Jounouchi too jumped from the monster to the ground. They switched worried glances when they saw a white horse resting at the entrance of the village. It was clear it was the missing horse from the Royal stables, the one Immaru had used to travel to Kul Elna.

“Something is wrong!” Priest Karim, still sitting on the Sun God, suddenly shouted. His Millennium Balance was shaking madly between his hands. “This never happened before, not even with
“Bakura’s presence.”

“What does this mean?” Anzu asked worried, while her hand rested on her heart.

“It means there is a very dark energy residing in this place! We must act with caution.”

The Egyptian priest had just spoken these words when they heard a horrible scream. The Winged Dragon of Ra roared loudly while it fluttered its wings wildly, so Karim and the girls quickly jumped to the floor scared by the creature’s reaction. In just a few seconds, the Egyptian god flew high until it disappeared in the sky.

Yugi paused for a moment and wondered why the beast had decided to fly away, but he had no time to think about it. He had to go after the Pharaoh, because Yami and Jounouchi had just turned a corner. The short teenager ran through the dark streets and alleys of the haunted village, only stopping when he reached his friends. Yugi noticed Yami was staring with a worried expression and followed his gaze. The boy recognized Dumuzi’s dark silhouette contrasted by the pale moon light. Jounouchi finally called out for the Sun king, who turned around. The three friends froze at the expression of pure hopelessness and anguish in his face. Two silent tears ran down the young king’s face.

“We are too late.” Priestess Isis said breathless, when she, Anzu and Karim finally reached the two sovereigns. She turned to Dumuzi, her face denouncing concern and compassion. “The White Magician – he’s under the control of Darkness.”

All friends turned their eyes to a higher point of the village. On the top of the highest hill, there he stood, Immaru. He was dressed in his White Magician’s attire and was a pleasant bright sight against the nocturnal background. But something was very amiss with the Moon king. Anzu and Mana both suppressed a scream when they saw his face. The other’s gasped of shock. Isis and Karim sensed the unbalance created by Darkness in their items and switched worried glances.

Only now that they saw the Moon king, could they understand the meaning of Isis’ words. Only now could they understand the reason behind Dumuzi’s lost look. The moon illuminated the young king’s eyes enough to see his orbs were completely rolled back. Just like the time he lost control during his trance. Only this time he wasn’t convulsing and instead was standing on the hill, staring down at the group with his unnatural glare.

“Immaru, please! Snap out of this!” Dumuzi shouted in a cracked voice. Immaru’s head turned to face the Sun king. An unfitting cruel grin was drawn on the angelical face, making the Moon king look scary.
“The one called Immaru is not here now.” A multitude of voices left Immaru’s throat and spoke in unison.

“God! This guy is a real creep!!” Jounouchi yelled horrified by the unnerving sound.

“He is possessed by something dark.” Priestess Isis said. She closed her eyes, while her trembling fingers surrounded her Millennium Neckless. The item glowed and Yami, who was still looking at Immaru, would have sworn the young king’s white eyes had glowed too. “I see… many people, a multitude of people – they have all ages, from infants to elderly…” The young priestess added. She suddenly opened her eyes. “They took control of his body. He is possessed by dozens of souls!”

“The villagers! Those are the people that were sacrificed to create the Millenium Items.” Yugi shouted at the realization. Dumuzi dropped to his knees helpless and desperate, while the others stared at the White Magician with great fear.

“Souls of Kul Elna! I am the Pharaoh of Egypt! Tell me, why are you doing this? What do you want?” Yami asked revolted at the way his friend was being used by the haunted souls. He felt chills run down his back when Immaru’s grin changed into a cruel frown.

“Revenge!” The many voices clamored. “Your death.”
Vengeance

Chapter Summary

Immaru is possessed by the villagers of Kul Elna. How will they use his body and his powers? What will his brother and friends do? And what will happen when other characters arrive the scene?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Yami clenched his teeth angrily. He was not going to allow these ghosts hurt him or any of his friends. Then he sensed somebody moving closer to him. It was Dumuzi. He had woken up from his initial state of shock and now stood side by side the Pharaoh. He looked in his twin’s direction, his eyes filled with unwavering determination.

“How dare you use Immaru?! You vile spirits! I will not allow you people to use my brother to hurt the Pharaoh! I will free him from your power!” Dumuzi spoke fearlessly, while he raised his sword. He was decided to fulfill his vow to protect his twin, no matter the cost. He was ready to protect the Pharaoh and the priests too. He would not dare to allow these haunted souls to harm any of his loved ones during his wake. Immaru’s possessed form stared aloofly at the Sun king.

“Your love and loyalty for your brother are truly touching, but I am afraid it will not be enough!” All heads turned around when they heard the too familiar voice behind them. A maniac laughter was followed and Yami felt his anger be fueled by Bakura’s presence.

“You!!! You will regret being here! I will stop your evil plan!” The Nameless Pharaoh shouted enraged.

Bakura continued to giggle amused. He loved the chaos, he loved to see the fear in everybody’s eyes. He enjoyed watching Yami’s fury. Above all, he was thrilled with what happened to Immaru. That brat of his Hikari’s past life may had fooled him earlier, but now he was being justly punished. Now, Bakura had the boy’s powerful magic at his side. And with this power, there was nothing that could stop him. Not much longer now, and he would release Zorc. Thief King licked his lips, savoring his nearing victory. He walked passed Yugi and his friends, then Mana and Dumuzi and stopped to stare greedily at the Millennium Items that Isis, Karim and Yami carried.

“Ha! I’d love to see that.” Bakura retorted darkly and then turned to the figure of Immaru, whose white eyes followed all the movements down below. He grinned satisfied when he understood his people were using the boy’s immense powers. Immaru being the White Magician was proving to be
Quite handy after all. “People of Kul Elna! The time has come! The time to claim your revenge! The
time to free Zorc!”

Everybody gasped scared when Immaru instantly reacted to Bakura’s words. He slowly raised both
arms and a strange warm desert wind swept the earth swiftly. Then suddenly, the ground started
shaking. Karim and Isis watched horrified as their Millennium Items started glowing and behaving
erratically. Fearing the fate of their Pharaoh, they quickly joined him and stood ready to protect him
from any danger. The moon’s light illuminated Immaru’s white orbs, giving them an even more
unnatural look. The possessed White Magician continued rising his hands to the sky and two objects
started to emerge from under the ground next to him.

Bakura grimaced when he witnessed the oversized cauldron arise. An ancient pain hit his heart,
while the memories from many years ago returned fresh as if they had just happened. He swallowed
dry when another object too raised from under the dried earth. It was the Millenium Items’ mold. The
different engravings were revealed on the sarcophagus shaped stone, where 17 years ago, the golden
mixed with blood of the innocent, was forged. Today, it would receive the seven Millennium Items
and Zorc would be finally freed. Bakura and his community would finally have their revenge.

“By Ra’s name! What is going on?!”

Once more, everybody turned around, at the sound of another familiar voice. This time it was Priest
Seto, who was accompanied by his master, Priest Akhenaden. The two priests of Egypt had arrived
in Kul Elna shortly after Bakura entered it. They both looked shocked at Immaru when they saw him
in his possessed form. Priest Akhenaden then saw the cauldron and became even more disturbed by
the events.

The memories of his greatest mistake in the past took hold of his mind. For many years, Priest
Akhenaden had been haunted by the screams of the murdered people. Often had he woken up in
cold sweat, watching the look of fear in the victims’ eyes in the darkness of his comfortable room.
After living years with guilt and regret, the eldest priest could no longer understand what drove him
to his sickening actions in the past.

Sure he had been desperate. His home, his family were in danger and he had wanted to protect them
by all means. No matter what. But, had it truly been the fear of losing his loved ones in a war that
made him do the things he did, or had it been something else? Something much more intimate, much
more selfish and perverse? Had it been ambition that had guided him to the darkest secrets of magic?
Had it been thirst for power that made him discard 99 lives and instead consider them nothing but a
way to achieve this power?

Fear or greed, it did not matter, because nothing could justify the atrocities he did that one night. A
normal person would immediately reject the idea of killing somebody to have more magical power.
Priest Akhenaden had killed 99, including little babies. It was sickening and it was disgusting. So revolting that even language had not enough words to describe this atrocity. Although he regretted it terribly, the truth was, he had done it. And nothing could ever change that.

“Priest Akhenaden.” The multitude of voices called the oldest Royal priest. Akhenaden flinched from shock and stared horrorstruck at the empty white orbs of the White Magician. “How kind of you to grace us with your presence tonight.”


“It’s your fault!” Dumuzi suddenly accused, rage glinting in his eyes. “You did this! You sacrificed all those people in the past and now their souls took over Immaru’s body!!!”

Bakura’s laughter rose in the air. Dumuzi’s heated fury could eventually turn him into an ally. Priest Akhenaden was compromised. Just like the other priests and the Pharaoh for using the Millennium Items, the fruit of his people’s sacrifice. Thief King was delighted with the whole situation. Despite wishing to kill Akhenaden himself, Bakura secretly desired watching Dumuzi strike him down.

“Please! It was a mistake. At the time, I did not think! But I swear, I regretted it all my life.” Priest Akhenaden defended and Thief King frowned upset, appalled by the man’s words. He was about to yell something at him, when the people of his village used Immaru to vocalize one single word.

“LIAR!!” The voices accused. Priest Akhenaden stared bewildered at Immaru, his beautiful face contorted by crude rage.

“I-I…” Priest Akhenaden stuttered shocked. Tears accumulated in his eyes and he stared into the young king’s white orbs. “Sorry! I’m so sorry!”

“You? Sorry?” The voices asked in a mocking voice and then laughed a bitter laughter. Immaru frowned enraged. “You didn’t care about our lives! We were just a community of outlaws in the outskirts of the Kingdom, weren’t we? We were a problematic issue that needed to be dealt with. And that is exactly what you did, didn’t you, old man?”

Priest Akhenaden opened and closed his mouth unable to say anything that would defend his actions. What could he say to defend himself anyway? So, instead he revolted himself against these cursed people, these felons that even after death continued to hurt others. He felt revolted they had possessed the planet’s most powerful wizard, a child with a pure soul, to do their biddings. Even
after death, these wrenched souls carried on committing atrocious crimes. He clenched his teeth and looked directly at Immaru.

“What choice did I have? The war was going to destroy us! And you people were always trouble. We needed to get rid of you! You were disposable! Nobody would miss you! That’s why I chose Kul Elna! And thanks to your sacrifice we won peace and have the power of cleansing bad people’s souls! Can’t you see? Your lives were used for a greater purpose!”

Priest Akhenaden shouted for everybody’s shock. Yami and his friends stared in disbelief while Dumuzi and Bakura were disgusted by his words. The priests stared bewildered, Priest Seto in particular, felt his stomach twist from nausea. Never did he expect to hear his teacher utter such vile words.

Suddenly, out of nothing, Priest Akhenaden started screaming in panic. His face was an expression of pure agony. Everybody stared confused at him. The eldest priest was looking at the ground, lifting his feet fretfully, like if he was stepping on something he could not escape from. Nobody understood what was going on, because they could not see what Akhenaden was seeing.

After he had spoken, an unbearable heat came from under his feet. When he looked down, he saw the ground had become a glowing red. It shifted as it became liquid, in a dance of flaming reds and yellow. A small fire started consuming his feet, first slowly and then it crept upwards rapidly. He watched horrified his skin boil to the point of bubbling. His skin melted like wax and the red of blood and tissue were exposed. The flames burned his limbs and travelled to his waist, to his arms and hands. He watched horrorstruck his flesh become black, charred. The priest screamed from pain, terror and desperately called for help.

“What is happening?” Priest Seto asked horrified. Dumuzi turned to look at Immaru and understood the souls were using his magic to create an illusion.

“Immaru! Stop this!” Dumuzi shouted. “Immaru! You must return! Listen to my voice! Listen to my voice and come back!”

Everybody gasped from surprise, when Immaru moved in an unnatural speed, crossing the space between the hilltop and Priest Akhenaden in a matter of seconds. The old priest had only enough time to perceive the boy standing right in front of him, white orbs staring soullessly back at him. Immaru smirked cruelly. Akhenaden was petrified and unable to move. He watched with a bouncing heart the Moon king lift his right arm. He watched under cold sweat the boy’s hand travel to his face. A new hollow pain followed. Black dots covered his eye, while he heard screams of horror around him. The pain was so great. Too great. He could think of nothing else but the pain. And then suddenly, he was blind, the world was completely black. Suddenly he was deaf and the world was silent. And the pain was gone.
Everybody watched horrorstruck Priest Akhenaden’s body fall numb on the floor. His remaining eye was glazed, while blood streamed from his left eye’s socket. Immaru stood immobile, holding the Millennium Eye. The red blood dripping from it contrasted disturbingly with his immaculate white skin. The teenager stared down at the dead man with an impassive look on his face.

“Immaru! Please! Snap out of it! Please! Listen to my voice!” Dumuzi shouted while he ran to his brother. He grabbed him by his arms and shook the boy. The Sun king expected his possessed brother to strike him but he was willing to risk. He had to give it a try. “Follow my voice, Immaru! Follow my voice!”

Dark.

A pitch of blackness.

Numbness.

No feeling of a body at all.

Sleepiness.

No thoughts.

Nothing.

A sound.

Very far away.

A sound of a voice.

A voice that feels familiar.
But why? Why does it feel so familiar?


From where? Where is where? Where am I?

Blackness.

Where is my body?

Cannot feel my body.

So sleepy.

The voice.

So familiar.

I recognize it!

Its calling me.

Why is it calling me?

- «I'mmaru!!! Follow my voice! My voice!» -
Dark. Where I am?

A pitch of blackness.

Why can’t I see anything?

Numbness.

Where’s my body? Why can’t I feel it?

Sleepiness.

Feel so weak, feel so tired.

- «Come back!!»

The voice! I must wake up. It’s calling me. He’s calling me back home!

White eyes rolled and two chocolate brown orbs replaced them. Dumuzi released a relieved laughter when he witnessed his sibling’s return to conscience. He prevented Immaru from collapsing, holding him under his arms. Immaru gasped and his fingers wrapped themselves around Dumuzi’s strong arms. He felt weak and drowsy, like if he had been in a deep sleep and had woken up too suddenly.

“Oh, thank the gods you are back!” Dumuzi exclaimed with watery eyes. Immaru stared at him confused. When had his brother arrived? The last thing he remembered were the spirits of the village circling him, so he could not leave, could not move.

“What happened?” The White Magician asked in a hoarse voice, like if he had slept for many hours.

“The villagers, they possessed you. They – They used your magic.” Dumuzi explained and Immaru felt the blood leave his face.
This could only be serious. Immaru forced himself to stand on his own feet. His legs were still shaking from the lack of strength. He looked around and was surprised to see his friends and some of the priests. He read the unbearable sadness in their eyes, Priest Seto was pale and looked paralyzed from shock. Priest Karim held priestess Isis in his arms while she muffled her sobs behind her hands. Immaru, still feeling weak took one step. He stumbled but did not lose his balance and gestured Dumuzi he was fine. He took another step and his foot hit something. He looked down and saw something large lying on the floor next to his foot. The Moon king felt his breathing increase when he recognized the body before him. He stared shocked at Priest Akhenaden’s pale face. His expression still screamed agony. The hole of his eye socket was disturbing, red dripping out it blackness.

Horrified, Immaru took a step back, his stomach turning around, while his heart raced madly. The terrible realization hit him. He slowly turned his eyes to his right hand and gasped shocked. He dropped the Millennium Eye and stared sickened at the crimson red staining his skin. The golden eye hit the floor with a hollow thud and rolled down until it hit Bakura’s foot.

“I thank you, my lordship. For your assistance.” Thief King said in a mocking way. He bent over to pick up the object and when he stood up, grinned victoriously. Immaru stared at him completely dazzled and then looked at his brother, his watery eyes translating his trouble.

“The villagers – I - They…Shit.” Immaru said once his mind finally connected the dots. Dumuzi gave his brother a compassionate look and was about to tell him it was not his fault, that he had been used; when he heard Bakura’s maniac laughter. The Sun king felt his blood boil from anger.

“Okay, I had enough! I am killing you – you evil soul!” The Sun king threateningly yelled while he took off his sword. Meanwhile, priest Seto and the Pharaoh had too recovered from their initial shock.

“Thy will be punished by Ra’s will!” Priest Seto shouted enraged, only worsening Bakura’s crazy laughter.

“We will defeat you! Together!” Yami joined for the thief’s growing amusement.

“No.” Immaru’s voice followed and everybody was silent from shock and surprise. Even Bakura ceased with his crazy laughter and stared confused at the Moon king. “This is the doing of Darkness. Bakura is being influenced by it too. He is nothing but a toy in Zorc’s claws.”

“How dare you, twit!” Bakura spat in a sneer. “I’m not being controlled by anything! You know what happened in my village. You know what happened to my people, to my family! I chose to take
revenge! I’ve been waiting all my life for this moment! I will summon Zorc and everybody that was in that mad ritual and everybody that wields these cursed items will be punished by him!”

“I will not allow you to summon Zorc.” Immaru said in an unwavering determination and ignored the angry whispers of ghosts disperse throughout the village.

“You know how the Millennium Items were forged! You saw how the priests wield them for their own benefit! Will you allow that to continue?”

“No, I will not allow this to continue.” The boy said determined and Bakura stared at him perplexed, just like the others. “That is exactly why I want to destroy the Millennium Items.”

Chapter End Notes

DUMUZI/Sun King (Son Who is Life) = Malik Ishtar
IMMARU / Moon King (Light) = Ryou Bakura
PRIEST SETO = Seto Kaiba
PRIESTESS ISIS = Ishizu Ishtar
PRIEST AKHENADEN = Mr. Ishtar

Enjoy the story
I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ITS CHARACTERS
Critic point

Chapter Summary

Immaru is as determined in destroying the Millennium Items as Bakura is in joining them to summon Zorc. How far will they go to achieve their goals?

Chapter Notes

I am so very sorry for the horribly long hiatus. I got so damned caught up in work that I didn't have the time and energy to write. I believe I'm back in a normal daily rhythm, so it should be possible to update again in a regular basis. I'll try my best.

I DO NOT OWN YUGI-OH OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS

“Destroy? Ha! Over my dead body! I’m getting the Seven Items and I’m summoning Zorc! The Pharaoh, his evil priests and whole Egypt will answer for their crimes!!”

“Don’t you understand?! This vengeance of yours will destroy much more than just Egypt! The whole world will fall under Darkness! Millions of innocent people will die and suffer because of Zorc! He’s evil incarnated! He’s fooling you. He has been manipulating you all your life, feeding you with rage and thirst for revenge! He’s using you so – ugh”

A strange pain hit his chest. Immaru’s words became silent, while the world around him screamed of horror. The Moon king stared down to his chest and felt air leave the lungs. The Millennium Ring, which was still hanging around his neck, was glowing and it’s five elongated points had just pierced his chest. The White Magician could feel the metal pierce deeper and break his body with its dark magic. The pain was so excruciating, that Immaru wrapped his fingers around the Ring and ripped the five points from his chest in one strong yank. His ears were buzzing insanely, but he could hear his brother’s voice shouting his name far away. Five small red dots appeared on the white garment and quickly expanded until they met each other. Immaru dropped the Millennium Ring. It hit the ground with a dry clank. A strange pressure on his chest made him lose his strength and his legs gave in. Dumuzi immediately caught his brother to help him lay on the ground. Immaru looked up to his twin with an expression of shocked confusion.

“Can’t - breathe…” The Moon king said in a gasp. He felt panic hit him when he lost control of his lungs. The Millennium Ring had pierced them and blood, instead of air, was filing them. His fingers dug in his brother’s arms, while his body fought back for survival.
“Oh gods, no! Gods no!” Dumuzi whispered in panic, as he watched Immaru’s face become whiter, while his garment became redder. Tears cascaded from his face at the realization his twin would die in a few minutes. He turned to the Egyptians. “Help him! Please, somebody help him!”

“Mana!” Priestess Isis turned to the girl, who flinched from fright. “You can save him with your magic!”

Dumuzi looked from the priestess to Mana with hope in his eyes. His arms were growing numb from the pressure of Immaru’s fingers. He was taking shorter and shorter breaths, he was struggling to stay alive. Mana looked frightened from Isis to Immaru.

“I-I’m just – an apprentice.” The girl feebly said.

“You are Mahado’s top student, aren’t you? You can heal Immaru with your magic. Do it in Mahado’s honor!” Priestess Isis stated with determination.

She held Mana’s hand and guided her to Immaru. Isis nodded to encourage the apprentice and Mana nodded back, a new light of purpose filling her eyes. Priestess Isis’ encouraging words succeeded in freeing her from her insecurity and her fears. The young apprentice kneeled next to Immaru, whose breathing was becoming more and more shallow. Dumuzi watched her with large scared eyes while she summoned her book of spells and frenetically went through the pages.

“Healing of flu, no – healing of headache, no - healing for diarrhea, no,no,no! Ah! Healing for deep wounds!” Mana victoriously announced after a short frustrating search.

“Hurry up!” Dumuzi urged, when Immaru’s strong grip started loosening, a sign his body was finally succumbing to death. His eyes too were shifting from terrified to cloudy.

“Sekhmet fadlan, waan ku baryayaaye, xiro nabrihii qoto dheer oo ninkaas dhallinyarada ah.”

Mana spoke these words with will and reverence. She hovered her hand just inches above the wounded chest. A bright blueish light emanated between her fingers and Immaru’s body. The Moon king gasped and took one long deep breath. His face and muscles visibly relaxed afterwards. His lungs quickly restored the air and the boy breathed normally again. Dumuzi laughed blissful, witnessing the colour return to his sibling’s face. The twins locked their eyes and wordless words of relieve and happiness were switched. The Sun king kissed Immaru’s head, while a few stubborn tears insisted in springing from his eyes.
“Thank you.” Dumuzi said first to Mana and then to Priestess Isis. “Thank you so much.”

Both Mana and Isis smiled, while everybody else sighed from relieve, including Bakura. He had stood rooted when he witnessed the Millennium Ring’s dark magic attack Immaru fatally. He had been petrified and a strange unfamiliar fear settled itself in his heart. The king of Thieves bitterly realized that moment he did not desire the boy’s death. He even stopped breathing for a while, when he watched the boy desperately gasp for air. So when Mana cured the White Magician with her magic, a wonderful sensation of glee and relieve swept over his body. He watched for a moment, Yugi and his friends cheer loudly in their stupid manner. He watched the Pharaoh switch some words to the twin kings. The Pharaoh! He suddenly remembered.

Thief King remembered his mission. He saw the Millennium Ring lying on the floor forgotten and at his hand reach. He grabbed it and grimaced at the five points stained in Immaru’s blood. Then he shook away any thought related to the boy. He needed to focus. He needed to summon Zorc. He was so close to his revenge. Bakura grinned wickedly and made a run to the hill, where the Seven Millennium Item’s mold laid.

“Hey! Bakura is busy with his evildoing again!” Jounouchi yelled while he pointed at the hill.

Everybody turned to watch Bakura place the two Items on the mold. They had been so shaken by Immaru’s close encounter with death, that had been distracted for moments. The Nameless Pharaoh, disgusted by the bandit’s coldness and wickedness, ran in his direction. Bakura grinned maliciously, seeing his chance. He ran towards the Egyptian ruler, who was already waving his sword in the air, and took a knife he had hidden under his robe. Yami realized too late his disadvantage and watched in horror the blade shine under the moon light before it would strike him. He shut his eyes in dreadful anticipation and instead of feeling pain, he heard a clash of metal against metal. He opened his eyes and gasped. Priest Seto was blocking Bakura’s attack with his Millennium Rod.

“Fear not, Pharaoh! I vowed to protect thy.” He eloquently said, before he pushed the thief back.

“I thank you, Seto.” Yami spoke sincerely.

But before he had time to add anything else, Bakura struck back the Egyptian Priest and Seto barely had time to defend himself. Yami went into his aid and they engaged in a fierce battle. If only Kaiba could see himself fighting boldly at my side. The Pharaoh thought. He was surprised with Bakura’s combat skills, proving to be not only strong, but also swift and lean. In a cunning move, the bandit managed to make a cut on Seto’s arm. The priest released a yell of pain and dropped his Millennium Rod. Thief King, quickly caught the object and hit the Pharaoh on the way of his escape.
“Excuse me, I’m not done with shopping yet!” The thief mockingly said while he pushed both men out of his way, so both fell on the floor.

“Seto, are you all right?” Yami asked worried, seeing some blood dripping from under the priest’s hand, where he was pressing the wound.

“It’s only a superficial cut.” The priest reassured. “Don’t let him hurt the others, Pharaoh.”

The Nameless Pharaoh nodded and ran down, back to the place where his friends were. He gasped when he met on the way Jounouchi and Honda, who were clearly injured. They were being helped by Anzu and Yugi.

“Are you guys okay?” Yami asked worried. He had to stop Bakura. The man was becoming wilder and more dangerous. He could not understand where all that strength came from. He could only figure the desire for revenge was so great that it fuelled the man’s adrenaline.

“We’re fine.” Jounouchi said, while he rubbed his head. “That guy sure is strong.”

“I have to stop him!” Yami muttered and ran down the road again.

Yugi called for him and, since he was ignored, chased the Pharaoh ignoring too his friends’ pleas to stay. Then a woman’s scream filled the air and both teens ran faster. When Yami and Yugi finally caught up with Bakura, Priest Karim was lying on the ground unconscious, some blood dripping down his forehead. Thief King was now in the possession of the Millennium Rod and the Scalles. And he was moving threateningly in Priestess Isis direction.

The young woman, terrified, ran away. Bakura grinned amused and started a chase, ignoring Yami’s commando to stop. The bandit followed Isis through dark alleys and narrow streets. Yami and Yugi followed suit through the labyrinthic streets. Their pursue was diffculted by strange shadows of ghosts that creped out from the darkness. They would cross paths and try to block their way. After some hesitance, Yami decided to ignore the ghosts and simply run through them, frustrating their attempts in preventing him from reaching Bakura. The Pharaoh and Yugi accelerated their pace when they heard the crazy laughter rise in the air, echoing in the streets.

“Fly, little bird, fly or you’ll be caught!!!” Thief King yelled and continued to laugh manically.
His laughter stopped abruptly when they finally reached a square. Priestess Isis stared at him wide-eyed, her chest moving up and down rapidly from accelerated breathing caused by the mad chase. The king of thieves frowned upset when he saw Dumuzi standing in front of his prey, shielding her. His stance was firm, his sword ready to strike.

“Ha, you defending her. How appropriate!” Bakura mocked, referring to their reincarnations as siblings. Dumuzi lifted an eyebrow.

“What do you mean?” The Sun king asked clueless, wondering what the thief was trying to imply.

“Never mind. You wouldn’t understand, anyway.” The thief replied upset. Sometimes, being the only one to know the future was boring.

Bakura’s frustration grew when he heard the footsteps of the Egyptian ruler and his dwarf friend stop right behind him. There was a tense moment. A cool breeze swept the square. All parties stood still, like they were frozen in time. Bakura quickly studied his position. The Pharaoh was easy to defeat, but Dumuzi was a different story. That stance alone screamed military experience. If he was not careful, the Akkadian could hurt him. Or worse, slay him to death.

“Give up, Bakura! You are in disadvantage.” The Nameless Pharaoh commanded and Bakura grinned. The ruler’s arrogance would be his downfall.

“Come and get me, Pharaoh.” Thief King whispered.

Dumuzi’s eyes widened and he opened his mouth to warn the Egyptian king, but it was too late. Yami fell in Bakura’s trap and made the move to strike. The attack failed and the was fight short-lived because the bandit easily dominated the Pharaoh. Yami was hit by the heavy golden rod and fell on the floor half unconscious. Yugi, terrified, ran to him and lifted his head slightly.

“Pharaoh!” The boy yelled. Yami let a small groan escape, his eyelids half open. Bakura laughed loudly.

“That fool knows nothing about combat!” The thief told and then turned to Dumuzi. Unlike you, apparently.
Now he could focus solely on the Sun king. All he had to do was defeat him and both the Millennium Neckless and Pyramid were his. Without a warning, he made a short run to close the space between himself and Dumuzi. His biggest chance in winning was to strike first. Thief King made a run, madness all spread on his face, on his crazed eyes and crooked grin.

Bakura’s eyes widened of shock when the Sun king lifted his sword in defence and it suddenly grew considerably in size. Their weapons collided and Bakura was thrown back by the impact. The king of thieves stared confused at the Akkadian, because his garments were changing into a strong dark coloured armour. Before he had time to understand what was going on, Dumuzi launched at him and the bandit managed to defend himself with difficulty from several deadly strikes.

Bakura finally managed to put some space between himself and the Akkadian. He panted annoyed. The young king proved to be quite the warrior. He was both strong and fast. Actually, he was too strong and fast for a normal person, especially with such heavy armour and sword. Then he sensed a movement coming from his right. The White Magician silently stepped out of the shadows. It became clear to the bandit that the boy was using magic to enhance Dumuzi’s strength. The cheaters! Thief King grimaced while he watched Immaru approach them. His walk was steady and he seemed to have recovered fully from his injuries. Yet, he was no longer wearing his White Magician garments. Instead he was back in his Akkadian outfit. Bakura hoped this would be an indicator his powers were weakened.

“Two against one? It seems quite unfair.” Bakura spoke in his mocking way, never revealing his concern, which was growing by the minute. The situation was becoming quite critical.

“Considering you have a whole haunted village backing you up, I would say it’s more than fair.” Dumuzi said and threw another attack.

Again, Bakura managed to survive, more by dodging than attacking, since the Sun king proved to be both skilled and vigorous. Meanwhile, Yami slowly regained his senses. His vision was blurry, but he could make out the forms of the two fighters. He tried to speak, but a sound closer to a moan was all he could utter.

“Rest for a while, Yami. It looks like Dumuzi has the upper hand. I’m sure soon it will be over.” Yugi reassured the weakened Pharaoh. But the boy spoke too soon. Bakura, for a second time managed to create some space between himself and his enemy, but this time he drew out his diadank and –

“Looks like I need some assistance of an old friend of mine!” The thief said in a dark tone, his grin growing malicious, his eyes shining from insanity. “Diabound! Come forth!”
The monster, which had become larger and stronger after his last duel against Priest Mahado, immediately attacked and hit Dumuzi directly.

“Dumuzi! Are you okay?” The Moon king, who had run to his brother after the attack, asked while he helped him to stand up.

“Yes, it’s more my pride that got hurt.” The Sun king reassured with a smirk, gaining back a smile. He then redirected his gaze to Diabound. “Look, Immaru. His monster is stronger.”

“It has the ability to gain the powers from defeated monsters. It will not be easy to defeat him.” The Moon king told.

“Okay then. Let’s do this.” Dumuzi said while Immaru nodded.
The final battle

Chapter Summary

Diabound is back and stronger than ever. Will Yami, his friends and the Akkadian kings manage to defeat it?

Chapter Notes

Sorry again for the hiatus, again longer than expected. Still having very busy days and little time to write.

Enjoy this chapter!

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The Sun king made a run to attack Diabound. Bakura smirked. He commanded his monster to strike the sandy-haired king with a blast. Dumuzi’s heart skipped a beat when a moment of hesitance took hold of it, but the warrior king surpassed his fear, because he trusted. He trusted his brother and his powers. And so, he felt his body lift unnaturally while jumped in Diabound’s direction. A great shockwave came in his direction. A translucid fog surrounded him, protecting him like a cocoon. Dumuzi pierced the blast and continued flying in the monster’s direction. Closer and closer. Until sword met flesh. The creature protested and the Sun king quickly jumped back, in the same strange speed, to stand next to his twin.

A cloud of dust lifted. Bakura frowned angrily. The sandy-haired king had survived the blast untouched. As long Immaru was around using his magic, his revenge would be delayed. He wasn’t feeling like toying anymore. The bandit was becoming impatient. His revenge was so near. He could already taste it, but the twit of his host’s past-life just wouldn’t give a break. Thief King was confident it was a matter of time before Diabound defeated the Akkadian duo. So he summoned new monsters. He was going to finish this duel quickly.

“You focus on Diabound. I’ll take care of these creatures.” Immaru told, looking apprehensively at the two new monsters roaring angrily.

“Watch out. You lost a lot of blood.” Dumuzi warned. He, better than anybody else, knew how magic consumed his sibling.

“As long as I have the power of the moon, I’ll fine.”
Thief King had not expected Immaru to strike first in a daring attack. His two monsters were caught by surprise, weakened but not destroyed. But the moment they wavered, Dumuzi struck Diabound again in his incredible superhuman jump. Yami and Yugi watched the duel unfold with awe and concern. The Akkadians were beyond doubt courageous and persistent, but they were clearly in disadvantage. The Pharaoh tried to stand up, only to fall back in Yugi’s arms. He was still weak and this frustrated him immensely. He wanted to help, he needed to help.

Meanwhile, Bakura decided to end this duel once and for all. He gave his two surviving creatures the command to strike the Akkadian kings. Immaru watched with horror as two yellow-red blasts came in his direction. It was too sudden. He wasn’t prepared and made a desperate last-minute attempt to create a defence shield, which was instantly disintegrated by the energy. Dumuzi grabbed his brother and barely dodged them from the attack. The twins switched terror-struck glances when they heard Bakura’s voice giving a command to Diabound. They joined their hands, understanding this could be their end. While an intense bright blast came in their direction, Immaru shouted for protection from the Moon god. A loud explosion followed and the bandit stared expectant as the cloud of dust dissipated. He gasped shocked. A long scaled red body stood in front of his targets. It’s large serpentine body rose high in the sky and roared mightily.

“Sly, the sky-dragon!?” Bakura exclaimed shocked. He turned around and his face twisted in pure rage. Standing on shaky legs, but defiantly, stood no other but his nemesis, the Nameless Pharaoh.

“Now it’s three against one! I believe these are not the rules of the game.” The bandit scolded infuriated and Yami smirked confident.

“It is not you who decide the rules.” Yami retorted, his smirk widening. “Have you forgotten, Bakura? I am the King of Games.”

“Bah! Not even your Egyptian god can defeat my Diabound!”

“No, not alone, anyway.” Yami said and nodded to the twins.

“It is time.” Immaru said, understanding the Pharaoh’s silent words. “Summon him.”

“What?” Bakura asked while he watched Immaru make a flowing dancing gesture with his arms, a misty white haze form in front of him. Then his eyes shifted to Dumuzi, who called with a loud and clear voice for his great ally.
“God of Sun Dragon! Please come in our aid!!!”

A sound was heard in the distance. Like a thunder far away. Bakura could feel his heart accelerate. If he was lucky, Diabound could survive a combined blast from the two Egyptian gods. He listened with alarm the hard sound of giant wings flapper in the night sky, coming closer and closer. With a final loud roar, the Winged Dragon of Ra descended to stand right behind Dumuzi. Thief King could feel himself grow pale. He summoned more monsters for protection. He would fight back. He still had a change. A thin chance. But then something made his blood freeze.

“Lamassu, Protector of the Akkadian homes, Genie of the Royal Empire, I beseech you for your aid.”

Bakura gasped as the fog created by Immaru formed a figure he had met not so long ago. It was the creature with a man’s head, lion’s body and eagle wings that the White Magician had used as his final resort in their last battle. His eyes widened, his heart pumped wildly, while cold sweat drops ran down his temple. There was no way his Diabound could survive these creatures, three gods combined. This was his doom. His revenge was slipping away from his fingers. Frustrated tears cascaded down his cheeks when the three kings ordered their simultaneous attack. The major monsters disintegrated in seconds when they were hit by the triple energy blast. Diabound roared of pain. It bravely tried to resist the attack. And went down in an honourable way. Bakura fell to his feet. He was in shock. He had not expected this. His revenge. So close. So near. Was slipping away. Things could not get worse, could they?

“Immaru!!! Oh Lord Immaru!!!” All eyes turned to follow the voice of Mana. The magician apprentice stood on the hill next to the Cauldron and the Seven Item’s mold. She was waving in glee. “I did it, just like you asked for!”

Bakura thought he was going to have a stroke, when he noticed there was fire under the Cauldron. Just behind the girl, stood Priest Seto holding the Millennium Ring and Eye on each of his hands. The thief realized too late that the fight with the Akkadians had been nothing more than a distraction. Killing Diabound had never been their priority. He realized the twins had been prepared to risk their lives to make sure they bought enough time. Precious needed time to heat up the Cauldron to the right temperature. Bakura turned into a pale ghostly shade to face Immaru.

“I told you I would destroy the Millennium Items.” The boy spoke, his voice holding a sweet compassionate undertone.

It broke Bakura to hear those words. Furious tears sprung from his eyes as he stood up. His legs shook, his hands trembled with fingers closed in fists. The thief clenched his teeth in fury and panted
like a wild bull. The White Magician, Ryou’s past live, the Akkadian ruler had dared to step in between him and his revenge.

“I am going to kill you!!!” He furiously shouted, while Dumuzi was already lifting his sword.

“Pharaoh! Take Isis with you. Quick, you must haste!” Immaru pled, witnessing the blinded rage in the thief’s eyes. Yami grabbed the priestess hand and made a run towards the hill. They headed to the Cauldron. They needed to destroy the Millennium Items. It was the only way to defeat Bakura, to avoid Darkness from swallowing the world.

“How dare you!” Bakura shouted and attempted to chase the Pharaoh and Isis, but Dumuzi stopped him by blocking his way. An uncontrolled rage took over the Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring mind. He saw red, quite literally. Everything was turning red.

“Immaru!” Dumuzi called out, feeling quite intimidated by the display of fury in front of him. He would swear Bakura’s face was morphing, misshaping. He would swear his eyes grew and blood-red painted them. He would swear the thief’s teeth had become sharper like a tiger’s.

“Now!!!” Immaru commanded.

Priest Seto, who stood on the hill, walked closer to the great Cauldron. He took the few steps that allowed him to stand just above the mouth of the Cauldron. He looked into its interior and felt the unbearable heat wash over his face. A blubbering red liquid was enflaming the Cauldron’s interior. He heard a desperate cry of anger far away. He sensed the ghosts around him, moaning displeased. He ignored all of this and did exactly as Immaru had instructed him. He took the Millennium Ring and raised it to his eyes’ level. He looked at it and the memory of Priest Mahado invaded his mind. His friend had died because of this piece of golden. Many more would if it wasn’t destroyed. A sense of cold anger invaded his heart. Priest Seto dropped the Millennium Ring.

“NO!!!” Bakura had yelled when he saw Priest Seto stand by the edge of the Cauldron’s mouth. “Stop!!!” The thief pled while he violently pushed Dumuzi out of the way and ran up in the hill’s direction. Immaru, Dumuzi and Yugi followed him immediately, afraid he would hurt somebody in his despair. “NOOOOO!”

The world stopped.

Bakura watched the Millennium Ring, his Millennium Ring, be dropped. He watched the golden
item fall from Seto’s hand into the Cauldron. The magical object fell as if in slow motion, turning itself around in the air, in fear, protesting, vainly trying to escape from its death. And it met the red liquid. It sunk in it and short after a small golden stream surfaced.

Bakura was still running and screaming mindlessly when a horrible jolt of pain hit his body. He stumbled and fell to his knees, panting in shock. He pressed his hand against his rib cage confused. He took a few deep breaths and the pain diminished a little bit. Enough for him to be reminded of his anger. Enough for his murderous instincts to return. Now it was impossible to summon Zorc. His revenge, his sole life mission, had been stolen. Bakura clenched his teeth in maddening fury. Hatred fuelled his existence. He still could have his revenge. He would have his revenge. He out took a sharp dagger from under his robe and in a swift move, turned around to attack the first person he could find.

Yugi watched horrified as Dumuzi blocked Bakura’s attempt in murdering him. The short teenager stared petrified at the way the thief yelled at him, barking and spitting like a mad animal. “I’ll kill you!!! Yugi, I’ll finish your miserable existence! I’ll cut your insides and spread them on the ground, so your dear Pharaoh can mourn over them before I stab him too!!”

The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring made a move to strike again. His eyes widened greatly, the dagger fell from his hand while he collapsed to his knees again. For a second time, Bakura felt a horrible pain sting all his body cells. This time it was worse. His heart contracted. His stomach turned in agony. He rolled to his side while he released an involuntary scream. Priest Seto had just dropped the Millennium Eye in the Cauldron and was already looking at the Rod with a pensive look.

“What is happening?” Yugi asked perplexed while he and the Akkadian kings watched Bakura stand up in agony, his arms encircling his abdomen, his fingers clenching to his sides.

“The Darkness inside of him is dying.” Immaru explained in a clear concerned look. Priest Seto had just dropped the Millennium Rod and Bakura was yelling of pure agony, while rolling on the ground from one side to the other. The pain was awful, excruciating, unbearable. The Moon king saw Priestess Isis arrive at the hill, followed by the Pharaoh and Priest Karim, all three of them bearing their Items. “Wait! Just wait a minute!” The Akkadian ruler shouted for the others surprise.

“What are you doing?” Dumuzi asked upset.

“He needs some time to recover. If we destroy all the items in one time, his body might not survive.” The Moon king explained.

“What if he dies? Who cares? He’s a dangerous criminal, a psychopathic murderer.” Dumuzi said
clearly annoyed by his twin’s endless compassion. Sometimes his brother was simply too good.

“The man we have come to know these last days isn’t the real Bakura. He’s influenced by Darkness in such a way, his real persona is eclipsed by this evil.” The Moon king retorted. “Once the Items are all destroyed, he will be free from Darkness.”

Dumuzi switched glances with Yugi, sighed and then nodded. They allowed the Egyptian to slowly recover. His breathing became less fastened and he fought to stand up on his shaky legs. He took a few steps, his endeavour in stopping all the Millennium Items from being destroyed never dying. Immaru looked up at the hill. The Nameless Pharaoh was looking at him expectantly. The White Magician gave a sign to proceed and Yami quickly climbed the few steps on the Caudron. He stared at the Puzzle that he was holding between his hands. Suddenly he felt reluctant of letting it go. This object was the bond between Yugi and him. It was what brought them together, it was the symbol of their friendship. It pained him greatly to destroy it. Many memories of Yugi and him returned to his mind and he hesitated.

“Do it.” Yami turned around abruptly, shock all written on his face. Yugi had seen the way his “other self” lingered too long at the Cauldron’s mouth. He understood the reason for his hesitance and ran up the hill. “It’s okay, Yami.”

The Pharaoh gasped surprised but nodded. With a sad sight, he let go of the puzzle and immediately heard a horrible scream. He turned around and Bakura, who had gained enough strength to reach the hill top during the Pharaoh’s hesitant moments, was bent over on his knees, grasping his middle in obvious pain.

“Isis, Karim, quick! Give me your Items.” The Pharaoh urged and his command was immediately obeyed.

“No, wait! Please.” Bakura begged, while he stretched his arm. “Please! It hurts so much!”

Yami stared surprised, not expecting his nemesis to beg him for anything. He watched the way the thief breathed in and out with difficulty and took pity of him. He saw Immaru and Dumuzi reach the hill too. The Moon king looked down at Bakura and when he thought it good enough, nodded at Yami. The Pharaoh turned around without any hesitation and promptly threw another item. He wanted this to end as soon as possible. The Millennium Neckless’ gold mingled with the red liquid and Bakura let out another loud scream. A burbling cough was followed and a black liquid escaped his throat. The bandit stared shocked at the black fluid on the floor. His whole body ached, he felt like his head was exploding and he felt nauseous. But none of these indispositions matched the horror of watching this alien substance being rejected by his body.
Another wave of pain. Bakura didn’t have the strength to scream this time. He saw black dots in front of his eyes and contorted when his stomach twisted around. He vomited a wave of black liquid and moaned terrified, feeling sicker by the minute, cold chills running under his skin.

“We are missing one Item.” The Nameless Pharaoh realized. “Where is Shada?”

Mana and the priests wore looks of guilt, having completely forgotten their friend. The time travellers were concerned his absence would prevent the cycle from being broken. The Akkadians switched worried glances, while Bakura released a soft mourning moan. Priest Seto was about to tell that Shada was stuck in another dimension, when all heads turned to the source of a voice.

“My Pharaoh, I am here.”

Relieve washed over everybody (except Bakura, who was still dealing with his excruciating agony) when they saw the priest walk towards them, holding the final Millennium Item. He walked past Seto and switched glances. The taller priest felt chill run down his spin when he looked into his friend’s eyes. They were different. They held in them a new knowledge, a new wisdom, one that only was possible to achieve by defeating the barriers of time. Seto instantly knew that, a few hours for him, were years, perhaps centuries for Shada. His eyes were old and mysterious, but they spoke of loyal friendship. Priest Seto whispered “welcome back” and Shada smiled. He handled over his Key to Yami. The Nameless Pharaoh looked down at the final item. Soon it would all be over. Darkness would be defeated. His mission would be complete. He looked at Immaru, who nodded again, encouraging him. Yami turned to the Cauldron. The understanding that all the troubles of the past days, no, years, were about to end was strange. He opened his hand and the final Millennium Item was swallowed by the red glowing liquid. It started boiling insanely, so Yami quickly ran down the few steps.

Bakura made a strangling sound while waves of black sticky liquid were rejected by his body. The ground shook. The ghosts of the village flew around in circles. Bakura coughed the last remains of the liquid and relieve washed over his body. The pain was finally over. Then a blast followed and everybody gasped shocked as the Cauldron shook violently, before a beam of red and golden light burst out of it. The flash lasted only a few seconds and after that, the Cauldron collapsed to the side and fell down the cliff side of the hill, shattering in pieces as it hit the ground. The souls of the villagers continued moving in circles, rising up in the sky’s direction until, one by one, they transformed in a small dust particles and vanished like stars in the early morning. Everybody stared in awe. The spirits were free. Darkness was defeated. It was all over now. The priests sighed of relieve, the 21st century friends cheered happily, the Akkadian brothers hugged in an uncoordinated dance.

Bakura was the only one to remain immobile. The man was still on his knees, his hands on the floor supporting his weight. His eyes were fixed on the sky, on the place dozens and dozens of little lights had shinned and departed. His people, his friends, his family, were finally free. Tears cascaded down his face while sadness and blissfulness invaded his heart at the same time. He was thankful. They
were finally gone. They could finally rest. He could finally move on. He turned his head to look at his side and saw Immaru laughing along the others. And then, Bakura suddenly realized. It was as if a misty fog had blocked his vision for centuries and now the thin veil of illusion was finally lifted. All the evil he did. All the crimes he committed. From his years in Egypt, to the centuries he lived in the Ring.

The Moon king suddenly halted with his cheering. He saw the way Bakura was looking at him. There was so much hurt in his eyes. New tears ran down the bandit’s face when he looked at Immaru, because in truth, he saw Ryou. The sweet, caring and vulnerable Ryou. The boy he abused, mistreated, hurt to no limits during the last four years. An innocent good-hearted child, condemned to lose everything – his family, his friends, his body and even his mind – because of one insane spirit. Bakura was disgusted at himself. He stood up with difficulty, stumbled in the process, his eyes never leaving Immaru.

“What have I done?” Bakura muttered in shock. “Oh gods, what have I done.” All he memories, all the crimes, murders, evildoings returned to his mind in a whole new perspective. “What have I done?”

“Bakura!” Immaru called, when the bandit made a run down the hill. He was about to follow him, but Dumuzi held his arm.

“Let him go, Immaru. I believe he needs to be alone. For now.” The sandy-haired king said and Immaru reluctantly agreed. He turned to look at the others and smiled still a bit apprehensively. He was about to congratulate everybody for their efforts when Mana’s voice raised above all others.

“We did it! Atem, we did it!”

Yami turned to Mana and stared at her shocked. Atem. Hearing that name, his birthname, all his past memories suddenly returned, like if they never had been lost. He remembered his days as a small child, playing with Mana under Mahado’s vigilant eyes. He remembered his father teaching him about ruling a country. He remembered Priest Akhenaden was actually his uncle and, often they had private lunches in the palace’s gardens. He remembered meeting the priests for the first time. He remembered meeting Seto and being impressed with his moral conducts. He remembered everything!
Chapter Summary

What will happen after the destruction of the Millenium Items. Will Yami remember his name? What will happen to the up to now unbreakable cycle?

Enjoy another chapter

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Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Atem.

The Nameless Pharaoh was not nameless anymore. It was like some kind of curse had been broken, like a thick fog was lifted from his mind. Remembering this one short word, his birthname, was the key to regain his stolen identity. He was Pharaoh Atem, son of Pharaoh Akhenamkhanen; ruler of Egypt, a god incarnated in flesh, Horus reborn. Pharaoh Atem turned to Yugi feeling blissful.

“Yugi! I re-“

Atem cut his own words when he saw Yugi’s face. The shorter boy wore an expression of crude shock. His widened eyes were filled with an ominous fear. Then, unexplainably, just like Anzu, Jounouchi and Honda, Yugi’s body became translucid. Suddenly, their bodies seemed to be violently pulled by an unnatural force, as they flew high in the sky. The four friends screamed helpless while they were defencelessly sucked upwards in a fast speed.

“Yugi!!!!”

Pharaoh Atem’s shout was the last thing the 21st friends heard before they were swallowed by the upside-down pyramid that hung weirdly on the sky. They screamed disoriented during their unexpected and dizzying travel that lasted, fortunately, only a few moments. They landed roughly on cold hard floor but quickly stood up, completely alarmed.

“Where the Hell are we?!” Jounouchi asked loudly while the others looked around apprehensively.
All was white. Their surroundings were completely white. The whiteness stretched itself into eternity, where there was no beginning and no end. They were in nothing. Anzu braced herself protectively, while Yugi called out for Atem in despair. Jounouchi and Honda joined him. Suddenly they froze. In the mist of this strange whiteness a shape started forming itself. The four friends silenced immediately and watched expectantly as the new shape slowly morphed into a human form and walked towards them.

“Shadi!!” Yugi shouted, feeling relieved. Surely, the man would explain what happened, or at least, tell them how to get back to Atem.

“Thank you, my friends. You broke the cycle.” Shadi said in a smile. He joined his hands and bowed in thankfulness. “I can finally move on.”

As soon as the words were spoken, the ghost of Shadi became quickly transparent, until it faded in the whiteness.

“Hey! You cannot leave us here!” Honda shouted revolted.

He barely had spoken these words, when suddenly, the surroundings started changing. The four friends turned into all directions, witnessing new shapes and colors gaining life around them. Everything was becoming clearer and clearer. They were finally somewhere. A solid place, with walls and floors, with furniture and artificial lights.

“We are back in the 21st century.” Anzu realized. She flinched with a gasp when a whole new set of memories invaded her mind. Memories of alternative events that took place the last four years. Events in which Yami and Bakura did not exist, events where there were no Millennium Items. No confrontations with Pegasus, Malik or any other villain they had encountered the last years.

“I remember things that did not happen!” Jounouchi said perplexed.

“And yet, they happened.” Yugi added confused.

“Where are we in the first place?” Honda questioned while he scanned his surroundings.
“There you are! I’ve been looking for you everywhere.” A raven-haired handsome teenager with green eyes walked in the ample division they were in.

“Nigiku?” Yugi asked.

“What?” The teenager asked confused.

“I mean, hi Otogi!” Yugi quickly corrected, while he rubbed the back of his head nervously. The other three smiled awkwardly. Otogi raised an eyebrow.

“You guys are acting really weird today.” The green-eyed teenager mumbled. “Anyway, our guide is waiting for us. We are so lucky! He speaks Japanese. Can you believe that?”

“Yeah, indeed, what are the chances of finding anybody speaking Japanese in these parts?!” Jounouchi joked, while he and the rest of the gang followed their friend.

Soon they realized they were in a museum. One displaying ancient Egyptian artifacts. They saw posters about temporary expositions and gasped when they recognized the Tablet of Forgotten Memories on one of them. They were the more dazzled by the minute. The friends switched confused gazes while they followed Otogi. Suddenly they all froze. Waiting for them, were Jounouchi’s sister Shizuka and Grandpa with the company of a white-haired teenager. He smiled while he watched them come closer.

“Great, now that we are complete, we may start.” The silver-haired teen said making a welcoming gesture. “Welcome in Cairo’s Ancient Egyptian Museum. My name is Ryou and I’ll be your guide for your visit here. Please forgive my Japanese. I’m a bit out of practice.” He excused himself and the group dismissed, telling him his Japanese was perfect and followed him.

“What the Hell is going on?” Jounouchi whispered at his other three friends.

“I don’t know, but I’m pretty sure it has to do with the breaking of the cycle.” Yugi apprehensively said.

“Is that why we have a set of new memories?” Anzu asked.
“Apparently.” Yugi said with a grimace and then sighed. “I hate we were just pulled away from the past. I wonder what happened to Yami.”

…

Not so far from the museum, an alarm was ringing loudly. Wheels screeched as two police cars stationed in front a Jewelry shop and four officers stepped out of the vehicles. One went into assisting the robbed shop’s owner, who was hysteric, shouting loudly and shaking his arms in all directions. The other three started their pursuit. The jewelry thief ran swiftly, knocking people over as he raced as fast as he could in streets, avenues and alleys. The three police officers chased him, replicating his mad speed. At a certain point, there was an intersection and they split. Two continued pursuing the thief, while the third one entered a different street. The thief threw a few trashcans in the policemen’s way, winning time. He made a quick turn into a straight alley, snickering at his triumph. He turned into another dark alley and didn’t even have time to see the fist that landed hard on his face. He fell back on the floor from the impact and cursed when he brought his hand to his bleeding nose.

“Hey! Never heard that crime does not pay?” The police that had punched the thief asked with a cocky grin.

His smile only widened when the other two officers caught up with them. He thief lifted his eyes and sighed defeated. There were three men pointing a gun at him. Having no other choice, he lifted his hands in the air, while he cursed internally for his luck.

“Great work, Tousoku!” The Senior police spoke to the officer with lilac eyes, shoulder-length messy white-hair and a bad-ass looking scar on the right-side of his face. “You continue like this and you’ll get promoted soon.”

After reading the criminal’s rights, Tousoku and his partner escorted the thief to the car, while the other two officers remained in the crime scene. After a short ride, they were back at the station, where the procedures for the arrest followed. Tousoku boasted proudly of his achievement to his co-workers, retelling the chase with an overdramatic tone. The others laughed and teased in a friendly way, amused by the way he always portrayed himself heroically in his adventures. Nobody was bothered by his need to envy others with his successes. Tousoku was popular, for he had gained their respect years ago, when he was no more than a “greenie” and a boy coming from the shanty town. Once he was finished with his tale, the white-haired officer went to get a coffee from the vending machine. He took one sip from it and made a face. He heard an amused chuckle behind him and turned to see his favorite trainee holding a bunch of papers.

“If you dislike the coffee this much, why you keep drinking it?” The trainee asked. Lilac eyes curved along with a grin, forming an expression of pure mischief.
“I see they are giving you all the boring paperwork.” Tousoku retorted, ignoring the boy’s comment. The kid, only a few years younger than himself, sighed annoyed.

“They told me I need to understand the bureaucratics first before I can go to the streets!”

“Ha! You believe that bullshit?” Tousoku said in a mocking tone. “You carry on being this naïve and obedient and you’ll never see daylight.”

“So, what am I supposed to do?”

“Fill in the papers, of course.” Tousoku said matter-of-fact.

The trainee pouted in a way that made Tousoku bark an amused laughter. Despite his crazy giggling having become something of the ordinary in the police station, there was still always somebody who insisted in scolding him and telling him to control himself. He sounded like a maniac, after all. The white-haired Egyptian mumbled something unkind under his breath before he turned to the vending machine. He needed another coffee. The trainee walked back to the office, shaking his head. Why Tousoku insisted drinking coffee he clearly considered filthy was beyond his comprehension. The trainee entered the office where he was assigned to do his paperwork and suddenly froze.

He quickly turned around, his face holding an expression of pure bafflement. He stared at the back of Tousoku. He could see the tension on his too straight back and broad shoulders. The white-haired man too turned around, holding the same look of incredibility in his eyes as the trainee. Both opened their mouths and the same words were spoken at the same time.

“I remember!”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the short chapter

I'm guessing you already figured out who's Touzoku. If not, go to google translater and write Touzoku-ou in Japanese and see what will appear in English. :D
Did you also figured out who's Touzoku's favorite trainee?
Yugi and his friends sat outside on the steps of the Museum’s entrance. They needed air. They needed space. Grandpa and Shizuka had gone to eat a snack and Ototi was still inside, chatting merrily with Ryou. The two of them got along very easily (no wonder) and were still engaged in an apparent endless conversation. It seemed they had millennia to catch up.

The four friends still could not understand what was going on. They were back in the present, but in a world where the last four years they lived had never happened. They had two sets of memories, the one from before their travel to the past and the one they gained after their return. And had no idea which memories were the real ones for both felt equally truthful.

They had toured the museum and visited the five rooms dedicated to the Egyptian History of 5,000 years ago. The stele of Lost Memories stood there, in the center of a chamber. It was unchanged with the exception that the once empty cartouche had now the hieroglyph “Atem” inscribed in it. Also, the stele was not about a battle between the Pharaoh and Priest Seto, but instead it was an ode to their great deeds, achieved by their team work. The royal priest had been named Main Advisor by his king during his fourth year of rule and an era of prosperity in Egypt was followed.

Yugi and his friends had seen personal objects of Pharaoh Atem displayed in several vitrines. Pieces of cloths, jewelry, hygiene products, weapons. There were beautiful statues of their friend, made out from wood or different kinds of stones, all portraying him in his youth, his nobility and divinity. The most disconcerting section of the exposition was the chamber reproducing his tomb. There lay Pharaoh Atem’s mummified body. It hurt them to be confronted by his death. It disturbed them to see the flesh dried and crimpled by the mummification methods that survived time. He lay there, exposed in a vitrine like a meaningless object, reduced to a fascinating curiosity for many eyes. It felt wrong. Yugi had excused himself telling he felt suddenly unwell, which was the truth. Anzu, Jounouchi and Honda volunteered to stay with him missing the last part of the visit.
“I can’t believe he’s dead.” Yugi finally broke the heavy silence. “I mean, I knew he was dead. It has been 5,000 years, after all. But…” The corner of his eyes filled up with tears, as he choked in his last words. Anzu rested her hand on his shoulder and gave a soft comforting squeeze.

“Can’t believe he only became 52.” Honda said in a sigh and missed Anzu’s murderous glare.

“52 was ancient in those times. Yami – I mean, Atem, actually became pretty old.” Jounouchi clarified. He gave a hurt smile and turned to Yugi. “He had a good life. Thanks to us, he lived a long and fulfilled life.”

Two tears ran down Yugi’s face, as the pain became too great to hold back. He smiled sadly and nodded, unable to utter a word. He knew the blond was right. Still, he missed his partner greatly. What pained him the most was the fact he didn’t even have the chance to pay farewell properly. A sob escaped his throat when he wished he could see Yami’s face one last time.

“Hey, Yugi!”

The short teenager felt his eyes grow insanely, while he gasped, lost of air. Just like his friends, he stood up in a jump. Not too far away from them, two guys were running in their direction and one of them looked just like –

“Yami!!!!” Yugi shouted while his heart jolted of overwhelming joy. He could not believe his eyes. He could not trust his ears. How was this even possible? But then again, he had travelled to the past, witnessed magic and monsters, possessions and ghosts. So, he didn’t care to know how this was happening. All that mattered was that the boy running in his direction was his best friend, his other self. Yugi shortened the distance between them by running down the stairs and met his Egyptian friend half way. “Oh, I’m so happy to the see you!!!” The boy merrily said and shared a tight hug with the Pharaoh. He could feel fingers dig with the same strength as his in his back, a wonderous sensation.

“It has been too long.” Yami whispered in his ear, before they released each other, their eyes denouncing their overwhelming emotions.

“I can’t believe you are here!” Yugi blurted overwhelmed with joy, while he wiped the water that rested under his eyes. “How is it possible?”

“I don’t know.” Atem spoke, his eyes shining from the waves of emotions, his smile never fading, his mind still not grasping the reality “I have no idea what is going on. All I know is, I have this life here in Egypt, and just now, a few minutes ago, my old memories from my life as a Pharaoh returned to my mind.”

Yugi stared surprised at his friend and opened his mouth to say something, but Jounouchi’s loud and shrieking voice rose above all other sounds.

“Hey! What the Hell is he doing here?!” The blond shouted infuriated. Atem looked at Jounouchi who was pointing down, behind him with an expression of utter horror. The Pharaoh then turned around, so he was face to face to Tousoku.

“He’s a friend.” Atem said with a smile and the other four gasped horrified. “We have been friends for quite a while, actually.” Yugi and his friends stared with pure disbelief at the once king of thieves. Jounouchi fell backwards, but was back on his feet two seconds later, rubbing his eyes and blinking repeatedly, obviously not believing this reality. The Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring was standing arms crossed, looking as arrogant and confident as ever, a mad grin on his lips reminding them not to trust him. He looked exactly like the last time they saw him. Same age, same hairstyle. He even had the same scar on his right cheek. The only thing that was different was…

“Is that a police uniform?” Anzu asked shocked and Tousoku’s grin grew wider.

“It appears I’m on the side of law, this time.” The former king of thieves said to the bewilderment of the four time-travelers. It was all very strange and disconcerting. They were confused and needed answers to their too many questions. But Yugi could only think about one single question.

“Atem, what happened after we disappeared?”

The two Egyptians switched glances. Touzoku nodded. Atem’s eyes became grave and wise, suddenly too old for his current age. The memories of his former life returned to him mind, as fresh as it had just happened. He turned to his friends. He was ready to tell them his story.

…

5,000 years ago, Kul Elna, Ancient Egypt
“Yugi!!! Yugi!!!” Pharaoh desperately shouted while he saw his best friend, the boy that did everything in his power to help him regain his memories, be swallowed by the creepy upside-down pyramid. “Nooooo!!!” The object disappeared from the sky too, so that the dark starry cloth of night returned to its normal state. “What happened?” The Egyptian ruler shouted scared and furious at the same time. He turned to Immaru bewildered. The White Magician was staring at the sky wide-eyed, mouth gaped. He turned his gaze to him. His face screamed utter confusion. Immaru’s disoriented look only increased Atem’s despair. “What happened?!!!”

“I-I’m sorry. I really have – no idea.” Immaru sadly admitted and Atem screamed while he fell to his knees, tears cascading down his eyes. He had lost Yugi. Again. And this time, he somehow knew, he wouldn’t be able to recover him.

The evil Bakura was defeated and Darkness prevented from rising. Egypt and the rest of the world were safe from a danger that fortunately never evolved. The curse was lifted. Good won. Destiny smiled to the world. It was an event worthy of great commemoration. It was a happening that should be loudly cheered. But there was no cheering or joyful laughter in Kul Elna. The general feeling was of unbearable sadness, grief and misery. Yugi and his friends disappeared. Nobody knew if they lived or if they died. And if they lived, what guaranteed they were safe? What if they were caught in some kind of time limbo, cursed to be lost between past and future for all eternity? And if they returned to their time, was their world a safe place? Would they remember Atem or would their minds erase everything, now that the Past was changed? There is nothing more horrible than an open question mark, an unfinished chapter, for all options are always open. Uncertainty survives to the end. The book is never closed.

But after a long dark night, the sun always rises again. While the group slowly and mournfully left Kul Elna, a new day was slowly born. A warm golden light chased dark shadows away and redesigned the world with colors. The caldron and the Millennium’s mold had been buried. And with it, the tragic history of Kul Elna. The once haunted and eerie village was now a quiet, silent and peaceful place. Its streets were empty, their houses uninhabited. No grudge filled the walls that once had witnessed so much pain. The group slowly left the ruined village.

Atem led the way out of this once cursed place, his feet stumbling while his mind was foggy. Yugi was gone. His friends were gone. His heart was heavy with sorrow. Mana followed him, looking concerned. When they reached the end of the road, she rested her hand on his shoulder. Their eyes met. She witnessed his inner pain and gave a small squeeze on his shoulder. He read her unspoken words in her sweet eyes and soft smile. And he smiled both sad and happy. Because today he had both lost and won. He lost Yugi, Anzu, Joucouchi and Honda. But he won Mana, the girl he had a lifetime of memories. He remembered. She was his childhood friend, his confident, his safe haven. Mana always had been there for him and he knew she would always be. Their gazes were locked and spoke wordless words like they always did. The intimacy was overwhelming. Atem awkwardly broke the gaze and the fleeting magic died awkwardly.

The Pharaoh looked back and watched the priests. They too were his loyal friends. They carried the lifeless body of Priest Akhenaden. Brother to his father, his uncle, the Royal house’s second twin.
He thought it funny to suddenly remember this particular detail. Well, he now remembered everything. What an irony. What a strange coincidence. His father became the ruler of Egypt, while his uncle became the High priest. Many years later, in Akkad, also two twins were born. Only, the firstborn was appointed to the religious life, while the second born was to be the king. The rest was history. The Sun and the Moon cannot rule the skies alone. One cannot exist without the other. And so they ruled together as One. Many years later, Atem would be reminded of this musing moment, when a messenger would bring the news that the Sun and Moon kings died in their birthday at the age of 50.

They died together, like everything else they did in their life time, lying on a bed side by side, old, ill and worn, under the watchful care of priests and surrounded by their beloved family.

Both had died in their sleep. Dumuzi right in the moment the moon disappeared behind the horizon. Immaru a few minutes later, the moment the first sun rays illuminated the world with a new day. Their death had been the opposite of their births. It was like they were summoned by the gods to be reborn in the Afterlife.

Atem watched the young twin kings walk down the road. Immaru was leaning on his brother for support, looking exhausted, pale and weak. The Pharaoh would have sworn he heard him whisper “food”, followed by an impatient and exasperated sound coming from Dumuzi. He resisted an amused chuckle and was glad some things never changed.

When he finally reached the outskirts of the village, the Pharaoh saw the Winged Dragon of Ra was patiently waiting for them. Its eyes watched the brothers with mellowness. Priest Seto and Shada mounted their horses. Karim took the white stallion Immaru had brought, for he refused to ride the monster a second time. Priest Akhenaden’s body was placed on the Pharaoh’s stallion. Pharaoh Atem, Priestess Isis, Mana and the Akkadians mounted the Sun Dragon and together, they all headed to Cairo.

After that, days slowly passed and little by little, life started to return to its normality. Atem soon understood ruling a great kingdom was no easy task. He was therefore thankful for his Court, for his vizier who looked exactly like Yugi’s grandpa; for his priests from which some would be reborn to meet him again in the distant future; for his generals and for his counselors. Above all, Atem was grateful for his father’s teachings, which remained imprinted in his mind. The civilians were his priority. Streets, homes and shops damaged by Duel Monsters’ rage were being rebuilt.

As for the Akkadian rulers, they chose to stay in Cairo for another couple of weeks. This was the perfect moment to strengthen the diplomatic relationships between the two great cities. A message was sent to Nigiku with urgency, to let him know the Sun and Moon kings would return soon as winners. Yet, the twins too did not savor the victory. They too missed their strange travel companions from the 21st century. They too were worried with their safety. During the first days, right after his recovery, Immaru started to try and pick any signal, any hint of Yugi and his friends. But nothing. The same happened with Priestess Isis and Mana. They even tried to combine their energy and focus together, but it was all fruitless. The 21st century was a too distant future for them
to even catch the tiniest glimpse.

What nobody knew, was that Immaru did capture other glimpses. He saw flashes from things that had already happened, like the three children he once saw running around in the palace’s gardens; children he recognized as Atem and Mahado. Sometimes he saw images of things that had not yet happened and saw other children, sometimes around Atem, sometimes around Dumuzi. But most of the times, Immaru caught glimpses of the present. His mind would travel to the desert, not unwillingly, but also not premeditated. When Immaru meditated, his mind somehow seemed to want to drift away to the barren landscapes of the hot arid land. And there, he would see him. Bakura, the Thief King. It hurt him to watch the man lost and disoriented in his own life. A man without a purpose anymore. A man confused, trying to understand who he used to be and who he wanted to be. Immaru witnessed Bakura’s inner turmoil and longed desperately to aid him. But for some reason, something prevented him from doing so. Eventually, Immaru’s mind would leave the desert and return to the palace.

“Drifting away in your thoughts again, brother?” Dumuzi’s cheerful voice was heard behind Immaru. The Moon king turned around with an amused smile, but failed to hide the sadness in his eyes for a fraction of a moment. “Is something wrong?”

“No, I’m just having mixed feelings about leaving Cairo.” Immaru lied and walked to a chair to sit down. Dumuzi watched his twin thoughtfully and then a smirk formed on his lips.

“Going to miss Mana?” He asked teasingly. The white-haired teenager blinked twice confused. Dumuzi’s smirk grew wider. “You have been spending quite some time with her lately.” Immaru, understanding his brother’s intentions, chuckled amused before he shook his head.

“She’s my friend, nothing else. Mana is quite enthusiastic about learning magic.” The Moon king explained, but he could see by his twin’s face, Dumuzi wasn’t buying it. “Besides, I don’t think the Pharaoh would appreciate if we would take Mana away from Cairo.” Dumuzi snorted entertained and too sat on a chair.

“That’s true. But still, Immaru. She’s very pretty.”

“Not as pretty as Priestess Isis.” Immaru retorted with an identic smirk and the sand-haired boy blushed profoundly. The Moon king released an amused giggle while Dumuzi tried to look cool. “I heard there was a last arrangement for her to travel with us to Akkad.” The Sun king cursed internally for his brother’s astuteness.

“The Pharaoh thinks it’s important for the relationship between the religious members of our
“Of course, Dumuzi. I knew that. You didn’t have to justify.”

“You mean, I didn’t need to explain.”

Immaru released another amused giggle, while his brother’s eyes became darker from shame and his cheeks redder from embarrassment. A pleasant silence followed, in which none of the brothers felt the need to talk. An evening warm breeze brought by the desert moved the curtains and played with their hairs. The Moon king’s gaze automatically casted itself in the desert’s direction and melancholy filled his eyes.

“You’re thinking about him again, aren’t you?” Dumuzi asked, breaking the appeasing quietness.

“What do you mean?”

“Ever since we left Kul Elna, you often stare in the desert’s direction. You’re worried with Bakura, aren’t you?” There was no teasing, no scolding or judgement in Dumuzi’s tone. It was a legitimate question coming from a concerned brother.

“Yes. I can sense him sometimes. When I meditate I have glimpses of him.” Immaru sorrowfully confessed.

“That’s odd. I always thought once the evil and Darkness in Bakura would be lifted, that you wouldn’t be connected to him anymore.”

“I think it’s more complicated than that.” The Moon king tiredly said while he rubbed his temple. “I kept seeing his memory about the massacre. Later on we bonded. I don’t think it’s that easy to break such a connection.” Dumuzi nodded in understanding, his chin resting on his palm. Then, his brow knitted.

“You mean - you were always bonded.”
“What?”

“Well, you said – later on we bonded. Weren’t you bonded from the very beginning?” The Sun king innocently asked. Immaru’s eyes widened from shock and he went from pale to pink. Dumuzi stared perplexed at his twin. “In what way did you guys bond?” The sand-haired teenager slowly asked, while his eyes shrunk from suspiciousness. Immaru looked trapped and then took a deep breath.

“We bonded – in all ways that’s possible to bond.” The Moon king whispered embarrassed, his cheeks glowing. He didn’t have the courage to look into his brother’s eyes and waited dreadfully for a mocking laughter or a furious scolding. None of that happened. Immaru lifted his eyes and was surprised to see his brother wearing his rare serious expression on his face.

“I always did think you were more into guys.” Dumuzi blurted after a torturous stretching pause. He curled into a ball when a sudden hard wind swept the room. Immaru looked quite upset and his brother looked up at him without fear. He was already used to his sibling’s windy outbursts, which were always inoffensive. “Guess we do are opposites in everything. I like girls and want to have a family one day; you like guys and – well, unless you find a way to magically impregnate yourself, will never have children.”

“You know very well I was never supposed to get married and have children. I’m the High Priest and White Magician!” Immaru reminded irritated.

“The pure and chaste!” Dumuzi dramatically shouted. “How are you going to break the news to the White priests?”

“Has nothing to do with them. Besides, I’m king too, aren’t I?” The white-haired teenager spat while he crossed his arms.

“Yes, you are.” Dumuzi said in an appreciative tone. He realized, this trip to Egypt, the adventures in the way, the fights against monsters and ghosts, helped Immaru become more confident, more self-assured. Which was great, because he hated the way his brother always accepted everything from the priests with passivity. After contemplating this joyful realization, Dumuzi was hit by a new thought. “Why don’t you look for Bakura?”

“I…” Immaru started and then sighed tiredly. “I don’t think I’m supposed to. I don’t really know how to explain but – there is something that tells me our paths will cross again and I mustn’t force or anticipate our meeting.”
“That’s the lamest excuse for cowardice.”

Dumuzi dodged from a pillow that flew to him. The brothers switched murderous glares and after a moment, burst into laughter. Dumuzi knew his twin wasn’t angry with him, just like Immaru knew his brother didn’t really mean those words, that it was all a tease. Yes, they were opposites. The Sun and the Moon. And yet they coexisted in harmony, just like the burning star and the cold satellite in the sky.
Forgive

Chapter Summary

Ryou comes into scene. More flack-backs about Immaru.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for theu hiatus!

Cairo, the present

“Wow, so you married Mana and had five children with her!” Yugi said a bit surprised after Atem told his friend’s his past live’s story. The Pharaoh nodded contented.

“Yeah, great work Pharaoh.” Jounouchi said with an accomplice smirk while he teasingly elbowed his friend, who smiled a bit awkwardly. He didn’t miss Anzu’s angry eyes and her red incensed cheeks.

“That’s what happens when there is no TV.” Tousoku playfully said and Atem shot him a glare.

The former thief was about to say something else when he heard a voice that made him freeze. It was the most beautiful sound he ever remembered hearing, a sound so pure and crystalline like the morning dew, cheerful and sweet like the first flower’s birth after a long cold winter. Tousoku turned his head to the source of the wonderful voice, his eyes denouncing a deep ancient longing, a mixture of joy, regret and nostalgia. The other’s followed his gaze and saw Ryou walking down the stairs in the company of Otogi, both giggling between their merry chats.

“You two seem to be getting along.” Honda pointed out amused, while the others smiled knowingly.

“He loves Dungeon Dice! How can I not adore a guy that loves Dungeon Dice?” Otogi answered amused. He then turned to Ryou enthusiastically. “Hey, wanna have dinner with us tonight? You can bring that friend of yours you were telling me about.”
“Thank you. That sounds great. I’m sure Malik would love to come.” The white-haired boy said with a sincere happy smile.

“Hey, are those friends of yours, Yugi?” Otogi asked when he saw Atem and Tousoku.

Ryou glanced at the two Egyptians and had the strangest sensation. There was something oddly familiar about them. A strange sense of *déjà-vu* invaded him when he looked at the former Pharaoh. Then his eyes switched to Touzoku. Brown eyes met lilac. And the world seemed to stop.

*5,000 years ago, Akkad*

One year, four months and 13 days had passed by since the day the White Magician saved the world from the Darkness. Despite him not fighting alone, he was considered a hero in both Egypt and Akkad. He was the most powerful magician on the planet and was already a legend during his waking life.

A lot had happened in the space of little over one year. Unsurprisingly, Dumuzi and Isis fell in love. The romance started with little shy moments shared during the travel to the Empire’s capital and it developed during the stay of the Egyptian court in Akkad. Isis never returned to her home country and the marriage took place half a year later. The Pharaoh himself had travelled to witness his friends’ happiness. The world saw it an arranged marriage, shrouded with political interests and diplomatic values. The reality was, the couple was truly in love.

Immaru, being the High Priest, had the honor to conduct the marriage ceremony. He was happy to witness the blissfulness of his brother and his new sister-in-law. Their happiness had increased very recently, with great news. Isis sensed a subtle change in her body and Immaru confirmed her happy suspicions when he rested his hand on her belly. He smiled. He sensed a new life growing in the warmth of her womb.

The White Magician loved the prospect of becoming an uncle and was a bit surprised with the absence of jealousy towards the happy couple. The White Magician was confronted with his most secluded desires. Strangely, priesthood’s demand on not fathering children did not bother him at all. Immaru realized he never truly desired or dreamed in having children. Maybe it was because he already felt like a father to all Akkadians. Truly, it was in his tasks as White Magician where he found his personal fulfilment.

After his return from Egypt, Immaru decided he ought to be the one to regulate the religious calendar and its daily tasks, very much to his brother’s jubilation but to the priests’ horror. He was, after all the Moon king and White Magician, thus the authority in both politics and religion. His first main
decision was to break the priesthood exclusivity. No longer would all rituals be performed in absolute secrecy. Apart from some intricate rituals, the cult of Akkadian gods became publicly accessible. Anyone could go to the temple to pray and leave offers to their gods. More importantly, Immaru decided to dedicate six hours a day to receive civilians in the temple. Every meeting was supervised by priests and secured by royal guards.

Every day, Immaru would listen to people’s pleas for help, related to health, financial or even romantic issues. He would answer people’s requests by giving them advise, medicine and sometimes, when it was needed, he used his magic. The young ruler impressed everybody with his kindness and altruism. Tales about his magical talents quickly travelled outside Akkad. By the age of 25, Immaru would receive in his temple, people from all different kingdoms and ethnicities. Once the visitors returned to their homes, they would bring stories about the greatness of the city of Akkad, the nobleness of the Sun king and the generosity of the White Magician. The Sun and Moon kings would become legendary already during their waking lives.

Evening was nearing, and the White Magician had completed his religious tasks for the day. He stepped out the Ishtar temple and stopped when he sensed an unusual warm desert wind travel to the sanctuary and play with his garments and hair. Immaru felt a change in the air and his heartbeat accelerated from a joyful anticipation for something he knew was about to happen, even though he did not know what. He walked down some steps, mystified by his odd intuition.

A group of eight priests followed him unaware of his internal excitement and missed the way his eyes searched for something out of place. The priests were bearing ollie lamps and incense while murmuring an ancient chanting. They performed the ritual to guide the good spirits of the night into Akkad, to drive the bad energies away and soothe people’s concerns during the long dark hours.

The White Magician suddenly halted. He had mistaken a person for a shadow and only realized there had been somebody climbing the stairs swiftly and unnoticed when he practically had reached them. The priests immediately stopped their singing and gasped shocked and confused. Some guards moved immediately in their ruler’s direction, wielding their swords to protect the king. The person Immaru had mistaken for a shadow dropped on the knees just a few steps away from him. The stranger bore a long gray cape with a hood, so the face was concealed by a dark shadow. The person bended all the way down, until the head touched the ground while the hands were stretched in Immaru’s direction, clasped in a begging and praying position. The White Magician could see in the dimming evening light the tanned color on the parched young skin and instantly knew who was kneeling submissively before him.

“Who are you?!” One of the priests shouted upset, the authority and disapproval present in his tone. “The White Magician is ready for today. Tomorrow, there will be audiences again!” The priest breathed deeply in discontent when the stranger didn’t budge. He was about to shout an order to the guards when Immaru’s voice was heard.
“It’s okay. I’ll open an exception for this one time.” His voice was calm and soothing. The stranger’s muscles seemed to tense for moments and then a tremor spread through the body. He slowly lifted his head and the lights of the torches carried by the guards illuminated his face. The White Magician released a silent sigh, something between relieve and happiness. He did not smile, however; neither showed any emotion than that of one waiting to listen to a request. Yet, his chocolate eyes were warm. Lilac eyes stared back at him, tormented and tortured.

“I’m sorry!” The man blurted in a chocked voice. “I am so sorry! I did horrible things! I-I wanted him killed, so bad that I – I couldn’t think about anything else. It was like – like my mind was clouded, like a there was a constant mist blocking my thoughts. All I could think was my revenge! To kill the Pharaoh! It was my one single thought!”

“That was the power of Darkness.” Immaru softly said, his voice bearing a comforting warmth. “It used your pain and twisted it to its will, so you became obsessed by revenge. I bet the thought of revenge was the only thing that kept you alive.” Bakura could feel his eyes prick, could feel his body shake. Standing before him was this teenager, this god on Earth. Speaking words of consolation, words of comfort. His eyes, those big brown eyes were full of compassion and forgiveness. The same eyes he tortured with horror and witnessed fear 5,000 years in the future.

“I hurt others. I killed without regret!” Bakura almost shouted, anger building up in his chest. Anger to his own person. Anger for the crimes he committed. Anger for being a person he detested. “I tortured, both body and mind. Throughout centuries, any person that had the misfortune to bear the Millennium Ring was tormented to the point of becoming insane. The last person, a boy – an innocent boy, I did – I did such horrible things to him!” Lilac eyes swell to the point Bakura’s sight became blurry. It was only after he blinked that his vision returned, and he felt something warm travel down his cheeks. He realized he was crying, but he didn’t care. Immaru was a god of Earth and he was nothing but a torn animal needing to be patched. And so, he opened his heart. “I did things – indescribable things! I hurt him so many times and – and I didn’t even care! I watched him suffer. I watched him being tortured by my actions. He tried to – to fight me but – but I was stronger. So, he eventually he – he accepted it. He accepted it all and took the burden of bearing a vicious soul in that object with a smile!”

“Are proud of what you did?” Immaru asked, no trace of judgement or disapproval in his voice. The priests and guards watched the scene unfold with awe. By now they were fully aware this was the man that had tried to bring Darkness and destruction into the world. Never had they expected to see the man in person, above all, to witness his regret.

“No! No, I’m not! I swear I’m not!” Bakura shouted in agony. Again, he bended so his temple was touching the cold stone. His hands were clasped and lifted above his head. “I would take it all back! I don’t know why I did all those horrors! I was me, but it didn’t feel like me!”

“What do you mean?” Immaru asked and lowered himself till he was crouching, so he could be close
to the man. Bakura lifted his head and stared at the boy, surprise all written on his face. *What did he mean?*

“I… It felt – When I did those things, it was me but...” Bakura closed his eyes and swallowed. The memories of the sensation while he tortured, while he duelled and sent souls to the Shadow Realm, when he attacked and tried to kill those who opposed him. A strange sensation like… “You know when you dream, and you do something out-of-character, but in the dream it’s natural, it makes perfect sense, but when you wake up, you don’t understand why you did that in your dream, because normally you wouldn’t do anything like that during your waking life?” Bakura watched Immaru blink a few times and nodded afterwards with a gentle smile. They locked their eyes and the Egyptian thought he would lose himself in the depths of those chocolate eyes. There was a new glint in them. Something wise, blissful and secretive that made the bandit think Immaru would never be as beautiful as he was in this very moment.

“That was the work of Darkness in you. It contaminated your mind until your mind was not only yours anymore.” Immaru explained in a whisper. Bakura took a moment to process the words and nodded in understanding.

“My mind was released from Zorc when the Millennium Items were destroyed. That’s what happened, right? Zorc, he was the black sticky liquid my body expelled.”

“Yes.”

Bakura stared shocked at Immaru when realization hit and everything became clear. It made perfect sense. He was possessed by Zorc the whole time. He was not possessed or controlled the same way Ryou was by him, but it was the Darkness that had controlled his mind to do his bidding. Zorc was like a parasite. Zorc lived in him until he started becoming a part of him. Darkness used his weaknesses, his pain, his sorrow, his rage and channeled all these feelings into one single obsession – revenge. Once this became his one sole purpose in life, Zorc was free in manipulating his mind into believing that joining the Seven Items and freeing Darkness was the only way of getting his revenge. It was all one great plan, an evil scheme from Zorc and he had been his puppet the whole time without even knowing.

“If I was possessed by Zorc, what would have happened if I would have succeeded in summoning the Seven Millennium Items?” The king of thieves asked with a hint of fear. Immaru grimaced, before he stood up straight again.

“Your body would have not resisted the amount of energy and would have been destroyed. You would have perished.” Bakura’s eyes widened in shock.
“He saved me.” Bakura whispered to himself, while staring at the steps before him. He lifted his head, his eyes dry and alert. “You saved me! I thank you for it! How can I ever repay you?”

“You have no obligations to me.” The White Magician kindly told the thief. He felt his heart warm up at the look of praise and gratitude in the lilac eyes. He could read sincere admiration in them and his heartbeat skipped once in a strange longing. Immaru took a sigh, which was easily confused by a deep breath. He had not forgotten they weren’t alone and that priests and guards watched their interaction closely. Immaru had to continue performing his role as king and High Priest. He straightened just a bit, looking both regal and powerful. Bakura saw the slight change and knitted his brow in confusion. “You are free now. You can do whatever you would like to do.”

Bakura felt his heart jump once. Their conversation had reached its conclusion. The next logic step to take was the one that would depart their ways. But after seeing Immaru again, after looking into those warm eyes, after listening to his kind voice, after receiving closure; he wanted nothing else but to be with the young king. During the 16 months of his solitude, when he was lost and confused, angry and bitter at himself; there was only one thing that would bring some peace to his mind. The memory of the white-haired teenager.

It was not only the fact Immaru shared the same genuine kindness as Ryou, but since the moment they met, the Moon king never had been judgmental. Sure they disliked each other, because of their great personality differences; sure they fought violent battles, because they had opposite goals. But even then, Immaru did not judge him and did not condemn him. Immaru had saved him in more ways than the boy could possibly imagine. It was not only in that decisive night in Kul Elna, but also during his ordeal in the desert, when he was conflicted with his own person. Bakura would often think of Immaru. Sometimes he would swear he could feel his presence in a soft gentle breeze that soothed the desert harsh heated temperatures, and mellowed his inner turmoil. Sometimes he would dream of him and they would meet in a pleasant peaceful place, a garden, a fertile land of green, the coast. In these dreams Immaru would tell him things would fall back into to their places. He would tell him to never lose hope. He would smile before he would vanish, with a promise they would meet again in his chocolate eyes.

They did meet and Immaru was setting him free. Only Bakura did not know what to do with all this freedom. He did not know what he wanted to do with his new given opportunity. All he knew was that he did not want to depart from Immaru.

“The only thing I know to do is steal, and I don’t want that life anymore.” Bakura told, his heart filled with fear for losing the only person that could lift him up again. “I don’t know what else I can do! Where am I supposed to go anyway? I don’t want to go back to Egypt! I don’t think I ever want to go back there!” Immaru looked at him with serene earnestly. He understood Bakura had never had a life of his own. He was still trying to figure out who he was, what he liked, what he wanted. It would be unfair for somebody who had been controlled by a superior dark power, to be abandoned to his fate. Because Bakura had no family and no friends. Well, maybe that was not totally true. The White Magician smiled.
“You are young and strong. I’m sure there will be something useful you can do in the Palace.” Bakura’s gasp was muffed by the gasps and protest sounds coming from the priests and guards. Immaru turned around to face them and gave the men one of his rare hard looks. They all went silent and bend their heads in submission to their sovereign. The Moon King turned to a couple of guards. “Please escort this man to the Palace grounds and bring him to Zaidu.”
**New Threath**

Chapter Summary

Bakura starts his new life in the Akkadian Palace. Meanwhile new threat appears and endangers not only the Royal Family, but the entire Empire.

Chapter Notes

The story is reaching its end. I do not know how many more chapters there will be. Not so many anymore, I guess. I'm struggling with the end. I want it to be perfect so its taking me more time than I wished for.

I do not own Yugi-Oh or any of its characters

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*45 minutes later*

“Are you out of your mind?! How could you give a job to that lunatic?!” Dumuzi yelled furious at Immaru.

After leaving the temple, Immaru quickly summoned his brother, Isis and Nigiku for a private conference, wanting to make sure they would receive the news from him first. He had expected his twin to react badly, but hoped his sister-in-law and his cousin would chose for a more diplomatic approach.

“I’ve told you before. Bakura was corrupted by Darkness.” Immaru explained for what it felt the thousandth time.

“Look, I understand your point, but you cannot ignore the fact he has been all his life a criminal! Come on, he’s a thief, a murderer! You cannot expect him to change radically.” The Sun king insisted, receiving a glare from his sibling.

“All I’m saying is, we should give him a chance. He is not the same man we met in Egypt.”
“He doesn’t belong in the Palace! He doesn’t belong in Akkad! If anything, he should be in Egypt, in the prison!”

“What makes you think we can trust him?” Isis asked in a calm voice, interrupting the quarrel between the twins. By the way their voices kept rising and the angry looks on their faces, things would soon escalate and the anger would not be limited to words. The young Queen bore a slight knit in her brow revealing some distress. She had not forgotten the way Bakura tried to attack her in Kul Elna.

“I’m not sure we can trust him.” Immaru admitted with a sigh. “But he deserves a chance. You should have seen the way he begged to be forgiven. He really regrets what he did.”

“You’re not using your head. You have pity for him because you are in love with him!” Dumuzi accused receiving a rare murderous look from the Moon king. Isis and Nigiku both widened their eyes in shock and glanced at each other. The matter had just become personal. They were becoming more apprehensive by the passing minute.

“I am not!”

“You had sex with him!”

“Okay, time out!” Nigiku said while he stood up, seeing this was escalating to a dangerous degree. The fire in the lamps was moving unnaturally and he felt a wind pass through his hair that should not exist in that closed room. “Let’s just think through things properly. Bakura was released from Darkness, right? You all witnessed it, didn’t you?” The three of them nodded confirming his words. “And his inner monster, Diabound, was destroyed too, right?” Again, they nodded and Dumuzi sighed upset, seeing where his cousin was heading too. “Wouldn’t it be unfair not to give him a chance?”

“Thank you, Nigiku.” Immaru said, grateful for his cousin’s reasoning. The Sun king was biting his under lip, feeling frustrated. He looked at his wife. She looked divided, but he had a hunch which side she would take.

“Although I do not trust Bakura, I do think we should give him a chance.” Dumuzi groaned irritated at Isis’ words, hating himself for being always right about his wife. “But, should he demonstrate the same tendencies as before, then he should be punished.”
“I could not agree more. Thank you, Isis.” Immaru said and released a breath he had been holding for a while. “That settles it. Dumuzi?”

“Yeah, yeah! He can work in the Palace. But the moment he…”

“Then I’ll punish him myself.” Immaru cut his twin’s words. His eyes were determined, and the Sun king finally came to a reluctant acceptance.

…

It would be an understatement to say the world turned around several times for Bakura since the evening he visited the White Magician at the temple. Zaidu, the head of the Palace’s staff, was delighted with the addition of another strong and fit young man to his team. There was plenty hard work at the palace to be done, such as carrying heavy loads to its different parts, whether it were supplies for the kitchens, metals and wood for the weaponry or stones and clay for building. Bakura didn’t mind the physical work, actually he enjoyed doing these chores. He always thought better when he used his hands and the work distracted his mind from the many confusing and troubling thoughts that still haunted him. Above all, he felt useful and valorized, something that was completely alien to him. Bakura was surprised with the comradeship among the different members of the staff and, although he avoided being friends with anybody, he did enjoy the company of others.

Thief King was sure he had turned a new page in his life. Sure, he sometimes still had the urge to steal. Sometimes he would daydream of plans to enter certain noblewomen chambers to shop some pretty jewelry, but he managed to restrain himself. He had a promise to keep and the last thing he wanted was to disappoint Immaru, because he would be violating the trust the boy had given him. He would steal away his one big chance. Should he return to his old habits, he would not only betray Zaidu and the White Magician, above all, he would betray himself.

Bakura, instead, was building up a reputation on himself. He was a silent worker, only speaking when spoken to. He focused simply in his daily tasks and didn’t bother to lose time with senseless small talk that some of his co-workers engaged in. Unless the subject was jewelry, murder, monsters or dark magic, then he would participate in the conversation, sometimes a little too eagerly and enthusiastically, intimidating some of the members of the staff. Even so, this manifestation of madness would be tolerated by the palace’s servants, who sometimes even joked about his dark humor.

The former bandit went on with his daily routine, well aware he was being watched closely by the twin kings. He had been the least surprised when, late in his first evening at the Palace, a very pissed-off Sun king came to him with a threatening message. You hurt anybody from my family, my friends,
my people and I swear; your death with be slow and painful. Bakura had stiffened an angry groan and ugly frown, but he knew the threat was legitimate and justified. Just before Dumuzi left the room, the king turned around and told him to stay away from Immaru. Thief King was quite sure he hated the sand-haired monarch from that moment on and felt impotent, knowing the moment he would try to seek contact with the Moon king, Dumuzi would send for his head. He was pretty sure, not even Immaru could stop his hot-headed overprotective brother in this matter. No, Bakura knew better than to challenge the warrior king.

So, the former bandit would catch glimpses of the twin brothers now and then, knowing both were watching him for the same reasons. To make sure he would not break his agreement with the White Magician. Dumuzi would go to the extent of interrogating Zaidu about his conducts several times a week, worse of all, in his presence, something Bakura loathed and made his blood boil, for it was humiliating. While one king provoked him openly, the other observed him discretely. Bakura often saw Immaru watching him from a safe distance, behind a window or a door and would disappear like a shadow when their eyes met. The Moon king’s behavior was both frustrating and heartbreaking. He longed for the young ruler. Deeply, desperately and painfully. And that was that.

Bakura was living in Palace’s the staff housing area for a bit over two months. He woke up to a still starry sky and was welcomed with the smell of fresh baked bread. He ate his breakfast at the staff’s kitchen and listened with amusement to the merry chatting of young maids and the laughter from men. It was the start of another ordinary work day. Or at least, that was what he thought, because in just a few hours later, the former bandit would do something that altered his life forever.

The Palace’s main courtyard was filled with the sounds of people and animals due to the come and go of carts. They brought all kinds of merchandize such as fruit, grocery, flowers, colorful materials made of silk, linen and cotton; aromatic oils, hand-painted ceramics, tapestries and many more beautiful things. With the nearing of the great Spring Ishtar Festivity the movements of vendors, buyers and staff was greater than usual. A small group of noble women surrounded the beautiful Queen Isis, while she chose the prettiest flower arrangements for the Festival. Thief King was unloading heavy wooden boxes not too far from her and feigned to ignore her presence, not willing to have any problem with the fiery Sun king.

Suddenly, Bakura froze. He felt something amiss in the air. He felt a strange wind play with the hairs in the back of his neck. Something chilling and unnatural. He turned around searching for something he didn’t know what it was. All he knew was that it was a threat. It was dangerous. Then he saw it. A shadow, inconspicuous to untrained eyes, moving swiftly in a serpentine manner. And it was heading in the court’s women’s direction. It was aiming for the Queen.

Without thinking, Bakura yelled a “look out” and ran in the shadow’s direction. People were caught by surprise with his sudden move. Many stumbled, bumping on boxes and knocking down their products. The soldiers had not enough time to react and ran with the frustrating thought Bakura would reach the Queen before them. Isis froze when she saw the once Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring fly over her, throwing her down on the floor. Noble women screamed terrified, while the soldiers shouted unintelligible commands. Isis choked a scream when she saw a great shadow in a
cobra shape hovering over her and the former bandit. It opened its mouth, displaying its fangs dangerously. Bakura stood up, ready to fight the beast when a bright translucent eagle attacked the cobra, killing it after a short fight.

Both Bakura and Isis stared confused but relieved when the cobra’s shadow vanished. The eagle flapped its wings and flew away, through the courtyard. All eyes followed it with awe and nobody was truly surprised to see the magical bird meet the While Magician. Dumuzi, who followed him suit, made a run to Isis, his face pale from fright.

“Are you hurt?” The sandy-haired king asked breathless.

“No. I’m fine.” Isis kindly said and her husband sighed of great relieve. She turned to Bakura, a sincere smile on her face. “Thanks to him. He managed to protect me from the creature’s attack.” Dumuzi looked truly surprised at the former bandit. He placed his right hand on his heart and bended his head in reverence, making Bakura gasp of disbelief.

“You have my sincere gratitude.” The Sun king told in a rare display of humbleness. He then turned to Immaru. “Do you know what that was?”

“The Order of the Black Priests. The cobra is their mark. I’m afraid we are not done with them yet.” The Moon king explained. “I felt the spell working, but I was too far away to stop it. Good thing Bakura spent enough time with the Darkness to recognize its presence.”

“So, what now? Are the Black Priests going to attack again?” Dumuzi asked bewildered. He cursed their existence and insistence in hurting the Royal Family.

“I’m afraid that’s the most likely scenario.” The white-haired king confessed with a worried look, while his eyes scanned his surroundings. “It feels like this was a way to test the strongholds of the city, searching for vulnerabilities, weaknesses in magical barriers.”

“Those evil bastards!” Dumuzi muttered with his teeth clenched. Immaru nodded in agreement and turned to his sister-in-law.

“I will make an amulet that will protect you and the baby.” Immaru spoke and Isis’ hand involuntarily covered her still flat belly while her heart was filled with terror.
“Will it be enough?” The young woman asked, her blue eyes revealing her troubles. Immaru hesitated a bit before answering her.

“Its powers are limited against the Black Priests’ magic.”

“What?!” Dumuzi broke in between, petrified with the thought his wife and unborn child were still in imminent danger. “Is there nothing else you can do?”

“I’ll have to be in the temple for unlimited time. I have to reinforce the magical protection around the city walls and the Palace. And I must try to locate the five members of the Black Priesthood and stop them. Weaken them so they are powerless to hurt anybody. Please understand that.” The Moon king explained with a regretful heart. There was nothing else he wanted but to be at his family side to be able to protect them, but the only way to defeat the Black Priests was through rituals and meditation he would have to perform with the assistance of the White Priests.

“Ehm…I might be able to help.” Bakura spoke after a mourning silence. He lifted his hands in a defensive manner when Dumuzi glared furiously at him. “I can sense it too. The Darkness. I know how it behaves, how it weakens others, just like I know its weaknesses too.”

“No way!” The Sun king replied upset.

“Dumuzi, please. He did save me against that shadow monster.” Isis reminded. She turned to her brother-in-law. “Immaru, what do you think?”

The White Magician’s eyes widened at the Queen’s question. He looked at Isis’ frightened eyes. He looked at Dumuzi’s wild and dangerous glare. He looked at Bakura and read the willingness in his lilac orbs. There was a plea for another chance, a plea to be useful and meaningful. To prove he had changed and that he wanted to help. To show he was a better man. It was something he needed to do and Immaru knew, independently of his answer, Bakura would do everything to make sure Darkness would never hurt Isis or anybody else.

“Bakura recognizes the presence of Darkness and knows the means to prevent it from hurting others. I think it would be wise to have him around.” The Moon king declared. Dumuzi had a murderous look on his face, but restrained himself after witnessing Isis sigh with great relieve and smile for the first time since she was attacked. “Isis, have him working in the Palace as one of the servants, but keep him always in your proximity. We do not want to raise any suspicions. Let everybody think it’s your gratitude for his help today. The last thing we need is for people to understand we are all in danger.” Immaru instructed Isis and the Queen nodded in agreement.
“Are you sure this is wise, Immaru?” Dumuzi questioned, his tone leveled, as he realized he had lost this cause. Still, he wasn’t giving up this easily. “Darkness is his second nature, after all.”

“Yes, it is. And today he proved that he can make something good and valuable from it.” The White Magiacina told with a smile, so Dumuzi groaned upset. “Now, you will excuse me. I must head to the temple and start my vigilance immediately.”

The Royal Couple and Bakura watched the white-haired boy walk away in silence. After he disappeared from their gaze, Isis went searching for Zaidu. Dumuzi and Bakura were left alone for a few moments, the tension between them being so thick, a knife would easily cut through it. After a while, the Sun king finally broke the heavy silence and turned to the former bandit.

“Don’t get any funny ideas. Now come along. And keep always three steps behind me and the Royal Family members, understand?” The Sun king reluctantly said. He paced away to join his wife, who was already talking to Zaidu. Bakura allowed to have enough space between him and the sovereign before following him. He smiled. This will be interesting.

The present

Chocolate brown eyes were locked on lilac ones. The world seemed to stand still. Time seemed to stop existing. The surroundings seemed to fade away into oblivion until in the end, all that was left were the two of them. Ryou took a deep breath. He felt light headed.

“Is everything alright, Ryou?” Otogi asked, noticing the look of dazzlement on his new friend’s face. The white-haired boy blinked twice and turned his head to face the dark-haired boy. The odd sensation from earlier seemed to dissipate a little bit after he broke eye contact with the stranger.

“Oh yeah. I’m fine.” Ryou reassured and then turned his eyes back to Tousoku. A warm desert wind passed through his body, touching his hair and cheeks playfully. He had seen those eyes before. He knew it. He walked a few steps, so he was closer to the man in the police uniform.

“I am sorry. Have we met before?”

Yugi and the others looked from Ryou to Tousoku wondering if the memories of Immaru’s distant past would return to the boy. Yami, unlike his friends, knew it was a logical thing the boy would sense the familiarity with the former Thief King. He knew, after all, what their relationship had been
5,000 years ago. He knew what their bond was. Their connection was so strong, it had to survive time itself. Tousoku smiled at the teenager’s words and he forgot how much he loved that accent that had a hint of British on it.

“Who knows? Maybe we did.” The former bandit said, leaving the mystery in the air.

He adored the way Ryou tilted his head very slightly to the side, denouncing his curiosity. Then the boy smiled back. An unfamiliar excitement filled Ryou’s heart, making it race madly under his chest. He was sure he never saw this man before. Yet, the moment he saw Tousoku, he knew it. The moment he saw those eyes, he knew this man was his soul mate.

Chapter End Notes

Just to refresh some stuff:

In chapter 7, Jounouchi and Honda discovered Abishu was plotting against the twin kings with the help of the Order of Black Priests. They were once the five Highest Priests of Akkad. The previous king discovered they were plotting against him and the Court. As a punishment to their crimes (use of dark magic) they were sentenced to soul wandering.

As Immaru explained, soul wandering is «a ritual condemned by our ancestors for its irreversible consequences. The soul of the victim is reaped. It’s not allowed to pass over, but it also doesn’t die. The soul is then trapped between two worlds, trapped in the Shadow Realm.»
Midnight conversations

Chapter Summary

More updates about the Black Priests situation. Bakura has questions and needs to talk with Immaru

Chapter Notes

A thousand and a more appologies for this very long delay. Trying to write more often, but time and inspiration had not been very present. Still, I'm glad to present you guys with another chapter. Good news, I'm already working in the next one. I'll try to update sooner.

I do not own Yugi-Oh or any of its characters

5,000 years ago, Akkad

Days followed the frightening event and quickly stretched into a week. Immaru had not left the temple since then and Dumuzi was going mad from anxiety. The reports he received from the White Priests were troubling. Immaru and his team of priests had succeeded in strengthening the protection in the Palace, the city and its surroundings. They even had sent magic to protect other villages and towns from the Empire. But it was a work that demanded a lot of energy, discipline and caution. Especially from the White Magician, whose only way of fueling his energy was food, since he barely slept. And all of this happened only during the first three days.

From then on, Immaru came and went from meditative states, searching for the Black Priests. The evildoers were much more difficult to find than expected. They hid well in the shadows and knew to avert the White Magician, forcing him to enter deeper phases of meditation. The White Priests were worried with his boldness and stubbornness. The Moon king could sense the presence of the enemy and sometimes he could almost grasp them. But they would flee at the last moment, leaving him frustrated, making him go deeper in his trance. The White Priests were afraid Immaru would enter a too deep level, so deep they would be unable to bring him back. They were afraid their king would lose himself in the depths of the spiritual world and stay trapped there forever in a limbo.

Every evening, just before the Royal Family would leave to bed, Dumuzi would share the White Priests’ daily reports with his wife, his cousin and Bakura. The four of them shared the same anxiety, for each of them cared deeply for the Moon king. Afterwards, the former bandit would spend many
sleepless hours staring at the temple, illuminated by torches and the moon, from a balcony between
the Royal Couple and Nigiku. He often would wake up with the first light of the morning, feeling
stiff from falling asleep on the balcony’s hard floor. And then his new routine would start all over
again. Everybody had agreed the best was for Bakura to be always in proximity of Isis, since the
Queen was the most vulnerable member due to her pregnancy. His new chores were easier and
lighter. After a short while, the former king of thieves came to the unpleasant conclusion that this
new function was as tedious as Hell. Yet, he remained alert at all times, waiting for the moment the
shadows would attack. Because he knew they eventually would and he needed to be ready.

“We should take Immaru out of that place.” One evening Bakura overheard Nigiku tell the Queen.
“He’s only hurting himself for nothing. The Black Priests must be too weak to attack.”

“You are probably right. That attempt was probably all they had. Poor Immaru, he is wasting his
energy.” Isis sadly said. She turned when she heard an annoyed grunt behind her. The Queen was
surprised to see Bakura staring at her with an annoyed expression. “You do not agree?”

“Of course not. Can’t you see? It’s a trap!” Bakura spoke clearly upset. He took a few steps closer
and both Isis and Nigiku paced a bit backwards, intimidated by the strong Egyptian. “The Black
Priests are leading you into the false sense of security and then, when you let your guard down,
they’ll attack! That’s how the shadows work. They are patient and they will wait until the moment is
right.”

“Immaru’s work has been fruitless till now. Isis can’t sense anything either. What makes you so sure
the shadows are brewing anything?” Nigiku contested, receiving an unpleasant growl from the
former Thief King.

“Ha! Isis’s amateuristic magic?” Bakura spat in a mocking tone, while Isis frowned offended.
“Immaru has been training magic since he’s a small boy, remember? He’s the White Magician. He
wouldn’t be spending all this time and energy for nothing!”

“He’s right.” The trio gasped surprised and all heads turned to the source of the voice. Dumuzi had
just entered the room, accompanied by his brother. Immaru was looking pale, with dark rings under
his eyes, denouncing lack of sleep. Bakura felt his heart jolt at the presence of the Moon king. He
had not seen the white-haired boy since the attack on Isis. Their eyes met for a brief moment in
which the Egyptian read the fear and uncertainty in the depths of the brown orbs. Bakura felt an
untamed desire to protect the young monarch from any evil.

“Immaru, how are you feeling?” Queen Isis asked concerned. Immaru took a seat and gestured the
others to follow his example. Nobody missed the grave look in his eyes, just like the tension around
Dumuzi.
"I think I know what the Black Priests’ plan is." The Moon king started, without answering his sister-in-law’s question.

"You managed to catch them during meditation?" Nigiku asked hopefully, but Immaru shook his head sadly.

"I didn’t even get a glimpse of them. But I could sense them. I’ve been trying to follow them during these two weeks and I came to the realization they have been playing me the fool all this time. It was nothing but a distraction. To keep me busy, while they became stronger in Darkness and prepared their attack."

"Which will be in four days. When it’s New Moon and Immaru is in his weakest." Dumuzi announced, making the others gasp from shock. Bakura cursed internally and couldn’t believe he didn’t come to that conclusion himself. He was so busy making sure Isis didn’t get hurt, that he failed to see the greater picture.

"As you can understand, I stopped the search, so I can focus in regaining my strength." The Moon king tiredly continued. "Each of you will have a role during the battle that is coming. We are going to be prepared when they strike."

Nigiku and Isis smiled at the hopefulness of Immaru’s last encouraging words, but Bakura didn’t. Immaru hid his worries well, or perhaps he was too tired to stress himself up, but the Egyptian could sense the tension irradiating from Dumuzi. He instinctively knew the twins were not telling the whole story. He was determined to get the truth out.

That night, everybody went to sleep early. Everybody except for Thief King. He was too restless to sleep. Unpleasant thoughts tortured his mind. He had too many worries and questions to be answered. Also, he could not get rid of the tempting image of the Moon king from their earlier meeting. Despite looking tired, Immaru was still beautiful. That look of fragility in his eyes only deepened Bakura’s troubles. Knowing the young monarch was sleeping so close by drove him crazy. He wanted to be in his closeness, wanted to see him, hear him, touch him. Above all, he wanted to protect him, tell him he was safe while he was around. After hesitating for a long while, Bakura decided he would get his answers this night still.

The Egyptian walked resolute towards the Moon king’s chambers. He would have knocked down the door, stormed into the royal bedroom and demanded a private audience, wasn’t it for the two big-build guards protecting it.
“What do you want?” One of the guards asked, clearly not happy in seeing him.

“I only wish to have a little conference with Lord Immaru.” Thief King smoothly said and grinned at the sneer the guards gave him.

“Go back from where you came from, servant! Nobody is to disturb the king!”

“Oh, I can guarantee you, I will not disturb him, very much the contrary.” He mischievously purred. The guards did not miss the sexual hint. Outraged by the offence, and without any words or delay, they threw themselves at him.

There was a short-lived battle between the former bandit and the two oversized guards. Bakura was lean and dodged most of the blows, managing to hit the guards once in a while. They crashed against walls and furniture, knocking down vases that broke when they hit the floor. The men became loud and shouted angry curses. Suddenly the door was opened and the three of them paralyzed.

“What is all this racket about?!” Immaru questioned clearly upset. He froze when he saw his two guards and the Egyptian intertwined in what could only be very uncomfortable positions. One of the guards was strangling Bakura with his arm, while the Egyptian had his legs around the neck of the other guard.

“A little help here?” Bakura pled in a chocked tone and Immaru stared at him in great disbelief. He felt exhausted and the last thing he needed right now, was the Egyptian bothering him with his silly behavior.

“Release him.” The king ordered and the three instantly freed their grasps around each other. “What do you want?” The Moon king demanded, coming a step closer to face the Egyptian. Bakura grinned cockily at the irritated look in the boy’s face (which he absolutely adored) and was reminded how the Akkadian would lose his temper around him easily.

“I need to talk with you. About - you know, our creepy shadowy friends.” Bakura said in a secretive tone. The guards glanced at each other confused, while Immaru took a deep breath. He had expected Immaru to confront him with this issue, but had hoped the man would have the decency to wait till morning. But, of course, he didn’t. Immaru was trying to remind himself why he had given a second chance to the former thief in the first place and why he had the brilliant idea of having him living in the closeness of the Royal quarters.
“Fine.” The young king said with a tired sigh.

Immaru gestured the Egyptian to follow him, who grinned cockily and casted a malicious victorious look at the guards before leaving. They headed to the common room where they had discussed their plans earlier. Both took a seat on couches opposite each other. And then a moment of awkward tension installed itself. They stared at each other and suddenly words died out. Despite both living in the Palace, they barely interacted. In fact, since Bakura arrived in Akkad, they had seldom spoken to one another. They have never been alone. Until now. Immaru’s heart raced at the sight of the tall Egyptian. He had to struggle to remain stoic and avoid any unholy thoughts that would make him blush. Thief King had recovered his lost pounds since he arrived in Akkad. He was muscled, clean, well-cared and Immaru had to admit he looked absolutely dazzling in the Akkadian attire. As for Bakura, he had to restrain himself from throwing himself at the king and indulge him with all kinds of lovely pleasures. The memories of the afternoon they shared intimacy filled his mind and made him forget his earlier purpose. Yet the moment didn’t last for long and Immaru was the first one to break the strangled silence.

“So, what did you want to say about our creepy shadowy friends?” Immaru asked, going straight to the point. The Egyptian grinned amused at the way the king paraphrased his earlier words.

“Actually, I have a question.” Bakura said in a serious tone, which made Immaru’s brow lift and wrinkle his temple, an indication he had his full attention. “I was wondering, the moment you stopped searching the Black Priests, they must have suspected something was off. I’m guessing it’s a matter of time for them to figure out that you know what they are up to.” He paused and Immaru merely nodded. Thief King grimaced. So, the twin kings did think about this, which explained Dumuzi’s tension. “My question is… If they know that you know about the attack, they’ll figure out you know they know what you know. So, do you think they still will attack Akkad this New Moon?”

The Moon king stared blankly at the Egyptian and blinked a few times in confusion. His brains were deciphering what the other one had just told him, while at the same time, he was trying to remember why he was sitting in the common room having a midnight chat with the former criminal instead of lying in his bed sleeping his deserved sleep. The White Magician’s expression then changed to a you-must-be-kidding-me? Thief King grinned amused and Immaru felt the tinge of a headache. He was suddenly reminded of how the former bandit irritated him deeply.

“They’ll take the risk.” The Moon king finally said, in a tone that gave no space to discussion. Bakura had clearly not expected that answer and hissed annoyed.

“Come on, be realistic! This just became a cat and mouse game. Both parties are aware of each other! There is a great chance nothing will happen this New Moon! The element of surprise is gone,
“You’re absolutely right.” Immaru calmly said to Bakura’s surprise. “The thing is, you don’t know them the way I do. During their lifetime as mortal men, the Black Priests always demonstrated an unproportioned ambition and thirst for power. They were arrogant and believed to be invincible. This arrogance ultimately led to their downfall. They became careless and were caught. I expect their overconfidence will lead them again to their demise. I’m quite certain their desire for revenge is stronger than reason. Revenge is the drive to attack boldly. For the corruption in their hearts is enhanced by the shadows. Considering your background, I imagine you fully understand what I mean.”

Immaru’s last words were like a blow to Bakura. Apparently, the White Magician was as powerful with words as he was with magic, as he put the finger right on the wound. Yes, Thief King remembered very well how revenge was once the only thought he had. The only thing that filled his mind. The darkness that consumed his heart, making him do despicable things. Things he was sure he couldn’t do anymore.

“Still, it’s a big possibility.”

“My brother and I are aware of that. But I don’t want anybody to let their guard down. If we are to tell people there is a possibility of nothing happening, they will automatically become less alert. I need everybody to put all their energy in defending the city. Because there is no space for mistakes. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes, you do.” Bakura said with a sigh. “I will not speak of this to anybody and I assure you, I will be prepared. But there is another thing bothering me.” Immaru blinked a bit surprised at the gravity in the Egyptian’s tone. “I think you are the Black Priests’ target. I think Isis was a distraction. It’s clever, actually. Attack the weakest link, the pregnant woman, because everybody will want to protect her and meanwhile find ways of weakening the most powerful element. That’s what happened, and fortunately you found it out on time. But will you be protected enough when the real attack comes? Because they will want you dead. You are the only thing standing in their way. You’re the only one who can prevent them from conquering Akkad and, from there, immersing the world in Darkness.” Once finished, Thief King looked straight in Immaru’s eyes, wanting to read what the other was thinking. He was a bit surprised to witness a gentleness in them, something he thought looked like pride and perhaps trust too.

“That’s why I’m counting on you to watch my back.” Immaru told with a confident smile. He nodded afterwards like if he was confirming his own thoughts and then stood up. “I wish you a goodnight, Bakura.”

The young king exited the room without any delay and left a dazzled speechless Bakura behind.
Thief King’s heart had jolted at the boy’s words and was now racing madly. He had to fight the urge to follow the Akkadian and bother his night rest again, because his heart was filled with an agonized joy. The look in Immaru’s eyes, its gentleness; the boy’s smile, it’s sweetness; his words of such crude confidence and trust. It all created a desperate craving for a feeling he did not known, but one he knew he had longed for all his life. Immaru made him thirsty for something he could not understand, because it was so alien, so different from what he ever experienced in his life. But it was something that made him feel so good, so warm. The former bandit quickly realized this wondrous sensation was addictive.
Confession

Chapter Summary

In which Bakura needs to get some things off his chest. How will Immaru react? And some small developments in the present period.

Enjoy!!!

Chapter Notes

I do not own Yugi-oh or any of its characters!

During the following days, Bakura was restless. He was frustrated because he felt the uncontrollable need of having a talk with Immaru. A serious talk. One about things that remained unspoken because they were ignored, buried under the guise of normality. It was time to come out in the open. The Egyptian needed some private time with the Moon king. Unfortunately for him, his wish proved to be unachievable. Their daily routines were so unsynchronized, that most of the time they were in completely different places, whether it was in the city or in the palace. When they were finally in the same quarters, there was always somebody nearby – the guards, the servants, Immaru’s irritatingly excessively overprotective idiotic twin. It was annoyingly torturous, and it was killing the former bandit. There was so much he needed to talk. About things that had nothing to do with shadows or other evil beings. Bakura cursed his luck, but Fortune had mercy on him and finally had a change of heart.

It was the last evening before the New Moon. They were at one day to the possible attack and, therefore, everybody when to bed early to gather strength for the next day. Bakura, of course, was too agitated to sleep. Instead, he wandered around in the Palace. There was nothing more horrible than standing still. Movement usually eased his mind. While he was walking along one of the galleries, the corner of his eye caught a glimpse of a figure. He stopped to look better and recognized Immaru. He was almost hidden in the shadows of the night, but the dim light of a nearby lamp denounced his silent presence. The White Magician was sitting on one of the balconies, his back against the wall. The Egyptian could not believe his luck and thanked the gods for finally listening to his frustrated prayers. He slowly walked towards the king.

“Couldn’t sleep either, huh?” Thief King asked in almost a whisper, not wanting to startle the boy. Immaru didn’t move but his lips drew a small sad and ironic smile. “Mind if I keep some company?” The Egyptian attempted and almost released a sigh of relieve when the Moon king gestured him to sit down. Bakura accepted the invitation, sat next to him and pressed his back against the wall. He reluctantly left a small gap between their bodies, so they didn’t touch. He ignored the pumping sound of his heartbeat in his ears, just like he ignored the way his skin craved to feel Immaru’s.
“This anticipation is killing me.” Immaru confessed in a low voice, his eyes never leaving the starry sky. “On one hand, I wish the Black Priests will never attack, on the other, I want them to just to get over with it for once and for all.”

“It’s normal to be nervous.” Bakura replied and was surprised with the softness in his voice. It sounded strange and unnatural to his own ear.

“More like terrified.” Immaru spoke in a thin voice while he wrapped his arms around his knees, pulling them close to his chest.

Bakura nodded. He felt a bit helpless, not really knowing what to do or say. He never had needed to comfort anybody. In fact, he usually was the cause for others to need to be comforted. How ironic. So, he spoke not, and they remained silent. At a certain point, the former thief could not handle the awkward tension anymore and decided it was time to speak out his mind.

“I never had the opportunity to thank you.” The former thief said. Immaru turned his head to look at him and the Egyptian did not miss the surprise in the boy’s look. “For giving me a second chance, for allowing me to stay in Akkad and work in the Palace. For saving my life when you did not allow the Seven Millennium Items to be gathered and stopped Zorc from taking my body and kill me. For not letting the others arrest me or kill me. You saved my life so many times and you have no idea how – how…”

Bakura paused as words suddenly seemed too shallow to describe his true gratitude, to express how all these emotions worked on him; how they frightened and marveled him at the same time. He locked his gaze with the boy and saw the way Immaru’s eyes had become large, his face betraying wonder. Thief King smiled at the expression and continued, knowing now exactly what he wanted and needed to say. “When I was in the desert, I was so lost. I did not who I was, my memories were all a confusing blur, my past motivations didn’t feel natural like they once had, I didn’t feel comfortable with my old ways and life-style. I was so disoriented I really had no idea what to do with myself, with my life. And while I struggled to figure out who I was, I led a tormented life of solitude and isolation.

But sometimes I would sense a cool breeze in the desert, a wind that brought the freshness and scent of green grass. And I somehow knew it was you. I knew in those moments, I wasn’t alone. I could sense your presence and sometimes it was so strong I thought I could touch you. I saw you in dreams and you told me not to give up. You told me, in time, everything would fall in its place. You gave me hope. You gave me courage. More than anything, you gave me a purpose to live. I needed to see you again. Just to thank for believing in me, because I didn’t. You saved my life countless times and in so many ways that there do not exist words that are worthy enough to express my gratitude.”
When he finished, Bakura was panting slightly. He shut his mouth to hide his excitement. His voice had trembled at the final passionate sentences and he felt a knot in this throat. This was everything he needed to get off his chest and, although he felt relieved, he felt like he was now an emotional frenzy. His eyes were still locked on Immaru’s and, despite the darkness, he could see them shine. The white-haired boy shifted his body and turned in Bakura’s direction, until he was on his knees, opposite him. Immaru gently placed his hands on the Egyptian’s cheeks, cupping his face. A soft and tender kiss was followed. Time stopped for some seconds. Seconds in which Bakura felt himself melt under the gentle touch, while his heart seemed want to explode from happiness under his chest.

Their lips departed unhurriedly and Immaru released Bakura’s face, resting his hands on his lap. Thief King opened his eyes and read the look of tenderness and expectation on the young king’s face. Bakura smiled, and his smile was reflected on the boy’s face. Bakura then chuckled and the boy released a small giggle. A tension that had resided between them since the Egyptian’s return seemed to finally dissipate. Mutual fears of rejection had died away in that kiss.

Bakura’s confession had been all Immaru had ever dreamed to hear. Since his return, Immaru was confronted with the fact he still felt attracted to the Egyptian. And he knew it was mutual. But he had feared Bakura to have be the wrong type of attraction for him, the passionate and carnal kind. His brother had accused him to be in love with the former thief, and although he hated it, he had to admit his twin was right. Immaru could not get the other man out of his mind. He would watch the other discretely when he was working, torturing his heart with longing. If their eyes would meet, he would go away frightened. He feared his romantic feelings weren’t corresponded. Recently, he had not missed the look of lust in Thief King’s eyes when they were at meetings. There were times Immaru had thought he was obsessed with the Egyptian, but now he knew all his fears and worries had been uncalled for. He felt so happy, he thought he would explode of blissfulness.

The Moon king bent over slightly, so their lips would meet again and Bakura was sure he never had felt so elated before. Once again, the kiss was filled with warm tenderness and, despite its chasteness, it made Bakura feel more connected and intimate with Immaru than when they shared their passionate moments. This was stronger and more intense than the flash of warm electricity that had filled his body when he kissed the boy the very first time. This kiss was deprived of maddening passion, of uncontrollable carnal desire. No. It felt real, genuine, sincere. It was the most wonderful and marvelous sensation Bakura had ever experienced in his life.

Suddenly, the Egyptian knew. He could never leave Immaru. He knew he would do anything for the boy. He would go to all extremes for the Akkadian king. He would kill for him. He would die for him. Bakura had found his light, his Hikari. Everything made sense. Everything was right. He felt complete. He instantly knew he loved the boy.

“I think I’m falling for you.” The Egyptian half-joked when their lips departed for the second time. Immaru let out a small laughter and all the earlier worries about shadows and darkness seemed to have dissipated.
“I know I have already.” Immaru confessed in a whisper. He released a startled squeal when Bakura wrapped his arms around his waist and, in a swift move, turned the boy around so the young king was lying with his back on the floor. An amused laugh escaped his lips and Bakura was sure it was the most beautiful sound he had ever heard. He stole a few more kisses, still gentle and chaste, but put a bit more force in them. “Stop it!” Immaru said between his giggling, reading mischief in the other man’s grin. “Somebody might see us.”

“That would be quite scandalous.” Bakura said with a malicious smirk, which made Immaru’s heart speed up. The Egyptian was surprised when the boy pressed his hands against his chest, pulling him away and creating space between them.

“Yeah, really very scandalous.” The Moon king said with a serious expression and Bakura moved away, understanding.

Immaru was right. As much as he wanted to fool around with the boy and make out with him, he would never forgive himself if he would stain Immaru’s reputation. He was the king and the White Magician, while he was a servant and former thief. If they would be seen in this behavior, the Moon king’s image of authority, virtue and respect would be damaged forever. So, they sat next to each other quietly, their shoulders this time touching, their hands intertwined and hidden in the dark. They remained like this for a very long time, relishing the feeling of just being together. Until Immaru yawned tiredly.

“I must go to sleep.” He unwillingly separated their hands and stood up. He shivered at the cold that replaced the warmness of Bakura’s body. “You must rest too. Tomorrow will be a long day. A goodnight to you, Bakura.” He politely said and Bakura smiled affectionately, regretting the boy’s leave but knowing it was necessary.

“Goodnight, my king.”

…

*The Present*

Tousoku smiled back at Ryou’s smile. He instinctively knew, even if the boy was not flooded with his memories from 5,000 years ago, his soul, his essence had recognized him. Ryou may not remember who he was, but his subconscious did.
“Yeah, we must have crossed paths somewhere. I’m sure we met before.” Ryou said with a kind of certainty that was alien to him. The Egyptian nodded with a contented grin. Yami was smiling too, understanding what was going on, in opposition of his friends that switched confused glances from Ryou and Tousoku to Yami.

“Hey, Pharaoh, you might want to tell us what’s going on.” Jounouchi whispered while he elbowed his ancient friend. Yami merely smirked amused, leaving the mystery in the air. Suddenly there was an electronic voice coming from Tousoku’s direction. The Egyptian startled and quickly picked up a walkie-talkie, looking comprised and nervous.

- Agent Tousoku! Answer me, agent Tousoku! – Said the voice from the walkie-talkie. Tousoku picked it up and cursed under his breath before he pressed a button and brought it close to his mouth. He and Yami switched glances, the former annoyed and the second clearly scared. Both were in duty, but had left their stations without any warning.

“Agent Tousoku here.”

- Where the hell are you?! It’s still four hours before you are off duty! And where is the trainee?

“Shit, what I am going to make up?” Tousoku asked Yami who shook his head, while his face was starting to grow pale. The former Thief King rolled his eyes. Great help - he thought. He pressed the walkie-talkie again. “The trainee is with me. We are already on our way back to the station house. There was an emergency with Yami’s family, but it was false alarm.” The police officer coolly said and grinned maliciously at Yami’s horrified expression. He went in a split of second from pale to red. Tousoku would swear he saw smoke coming from the teenager’s ears, while his small body when all rigid, his fists in balls.

- You are excused for this time, but you are never to leave the station without permission again, you understand? -

““Yes Chief.”

- Good! Now get your asses over here! Over and out!

“What the Hell?! Why did you involve my family in this?” Yami yelled infuriated, while Tousoku put his walkie-talkie back on his belt.
“Hey, you had no ideas. I had to improvise.” Bakura said while he held his hands up, in a fake apologizing gesture, which only increased Yami’s fury. “Come on, best not to delay.”

“Yami!” Yugi called before the men would leave.

“I’ll come back here when my shift is over.” Yami assured while he waved at his friends.

“So will I.” Tousoku said with a mischievous grin, before turning around and make a run to the police station. His heart raced along joyfully. He had not missed the look of relieve and happiness in Ryou’s face.
The sky darkened slowly, giving birth to thousands of bright stars that shone cheerfully in a black moonless background. The night of no moon had come. During the last past days, the Akkadian military and priests had been preparing themselves for an attack from the Shadows. Councils and meetings took place, where heated discussions were loudly heard. The fear for the safety of the twin kings had been the motivation to train and prepare tirelessly for a battle. Time was of the essence and everybody had made sure that all minutes were well used. The war was on.

Tonight, everybody was watchful. Soldiers were stationed on the defensive walls, their eyes fixed of the blackness of the world beyond the city lights. Dumuzi, Nigiku and Bakura patrolled the walls, making sure the men remained vigilant. It was crucial to identify any abnormal movement in the vastness of the night. The White Priests were gathered in the different temples and combined their energies to secure the capital of the Empire with magic under the leadership of the White Magician. Bakura looked down the wall he was walking on. He recognized the same ethereal haze of whites and purples he had seen in Cairo, during his failed invasion on the Egyptian capital. The recollection of how difficult it had been to break those barriers was comforting. The Black Priests would have to be extremely strong to breach this magic.

The stars moved very slowly on the black sky. Long silent hours passed by without anything happening. The night was high and even the fittest were easily tempted to give into slumber. Guards and priests fought their bodies demands, focusing on the threat that could come any moment now. But as minutes passed, their purpose slowly faded away and their minds started shutting along with their eyes. Bakura too could feel the weight of his eyes and struggled to keep them open. He had a promise to keep, and that was to make sure nothing happened to Immaru. He decided to make another round on the walls, startling any poor soldier that showed any signs of drowsiness. He stopped when he had a clear view on the Ishtar temple, it’s steps and walls illuminated with oil lamps. Inside, the White Magician was performing his magic. The Egyptian could sense from this point the magical energy travelling from the sanctuary, protecting all Akkad from danger. He directed his gaze to the streets. They were empty, there was not one soul to be seen. This night, curfew had been implemented and all Akkadians received strict orders to remain inside their homes, no matter what they heard or saw.

Thief King could feel his eyes weight again and felt his head slowly drop when he suddenly startled...
at the sound of voices shouting. They came from the city’s entrance. He made a quick run to the
towers protecting the main gate and met Nigiku half way. No words were needed to exchange, for it
was obvious they were under attack. Soon, the first arrows were flying and disappearing into the
darkness beyond Akkad. A strange roar made the air vibrate. When they made it to the main tower,
Dumuzi was already leading the defenses, shouting orders.

“Hold your posts!!” The Sun king shouted while the archers prepared to shoot when the command
would be given. The strange roar was heard again and this time the walls trembled.

“I can’t see anything.” Nigiku said while his eyes scanned the darkness.

“It would be a wonder if you could, after all, the Shadows live in the dark.” Bakura replied.

The ground under their feet trembled again, this time with might. The ethereal mist of whites and
purples flickered briefly around the walls. The magical barrier was being attacked by something
powerful. The soldiers gasped and their eyes denounced fear. Still, they stood their ground,
remaining obedient to their king. Suddenly, a horrible icy scream was heard. All heads turned to the
source of the dreadful sound in time to see a black colossal tendril wrap itself around a guard and
swallow him in the darkness.

Horrified, Dumuzi shouted a command to shoot fire at the tendril. Arrows flew in the air,
illuminating the skies for seconds and pierced the monstrous thing. The black tendril twitched, while
a painful roar sounded from down below. The attacker disappeared behind the walls, looking like it
was backing away. Just when everybody wanted to sigh of relieve, a multiplicity of new tendrils hit
the magical protected walls.

Everybody watched with horror as the translucid veil activated its defenses while it was mercilessly
attacked. The magical barrier shook, it’s colors switching from white to purple to blue. It flickered in
a desperate attempt to survive. Dumuzi shouted new commands and a sea of fire crossed the skies to
meet the monster made of darkness. For a few moments, the creature was illuminated, revealing its
true hideous form. It was gigantic, as large as a god monster, with a black shiny body made of
many tendrils. In its center, two large yellow eyes turned to all different directions.

The battle was arduous, as the creature continued hitting the walls, sometimes succeeding in hitting
soldiers altogether and taking them with it. On the other hand, it suffered greatly. The monster roared
with great pain while arrows bit its large body with fire and soldiers cut its tendrils. Sometimes it
looked like the monster was being defeated and would finally retreat, but then it would return with
doubled strength and anger. Bakura lost the notion of time. Just like in Egypt, the magical barrier
resisted a very long time. The White Magician’s power and that of his priests was great and
intimidating. But just like in Egypt, their limitations as humans was evident. The use of their life
energy was their ultimate downfall. After what felt like an eternity, the White Priests succumbed to
exhaustion, one after the other, until in the end, all that was left was the White Magician’s magic.

Suddenly, a flash of an immense white electrifying energy travelled from the Ishtar temple. It had
form of Lamassu, the Akkadian genie with human head, body of a bull and eagle wings. Lamassu
travelled in speed and hit the monster fully. Bakura swallowed dry. He recognized the energy and
the technique. It was Immaru’s final blow. This was all he had left. He had summoned the rest of
energy his body could give him to strike that one last blast. And what a mighty blast it was. But just
like in Egypt, the monster of Darkness was stronger than Lamassu. It survived and emerged from the
smoke. With a swift angry hit, it broke the magical barrier. Bakura could just imagine Immaru fall
unconscious on the temple’s floor when the ethereal veil around the walls disintegrated into thousands of tiny particles.

What followed was a blur of chaos. The soldiers panicked when the tendrils wrapped themselves on the walls. Many men fell along the crumbling stones. Many ran to safer parts of the wall and fought the dark enemy. New monsters, taking the shape of large felines, giant toads and scarabs crawled up the walls, others entered through the openings. The sound of metal clashing, the smoke of burning fire filled the air while soldiers and monsters fought, both winning and dying during the battle.

“They are entering the city!” Nigiku shouted while he pointed at shadows that were moving in the streets.

“Nigiku, take the command here at the walls!” The Sun king ordered.

He made a few agile jumps and descended the wall to follow the creatures. Bakura ran right behind him. They succeeded into slaying the shadowy monsters that crossed their paths. Alas, more and more entered the city. Even with the help of the skilled soldiers, many dark creatures managed to escape and spread throughout the streets of the capital. Dumuzi went white when he saw the shadows split into groups and take two separate directions. One group headed to the Ishtar temple while the other went to the Palace. Dumuzi halted in the intersection, turning his head from the temple to the palace unable to decide where he should go. He was torn between his brother and his wife. Bakura, seeing Dumuzi’s dilemma, intervened.

“Go to the Palace! Go protect your wife! I’ll go to the temple.” The Egyptian instructed while his blade cut a shadow monster in two, disintegrating it. The Sun king looked lost for moments, but having no other options, nodded in agreement.

“Save my brother.” Dumuzi pled just before he hunted the beast that headed towards the Palace.

“Don’t worry. I will.” Bakura said despite the Sun king being already too far to hear him. “That I swear.”

Thief King ran as fast as his legs allowed. Shadows crept out the darkest corners of the night, crawling on walls like spiders and making sudden attacks on the well-trained soldiers. Bakura ignored the screams of agony as he ran along the streets made of fire and smoke. He was nauseated by the sight before him and pretended not to witness the monsters eating men’s guts while they were still alive. He ran up the Ishtar temple’s stairway and noticed the fire of the ollie lamps was being extinguished while he passed them. He swallowed dry at the realization something eerie was right behind him. He felt the cold chill cross his body and knew at that moment, the Shadow Realm had caught up with him. The air became heavy and difficult to breathe. A familiar mist of white and red shrouded the world around him. The floor lost its solid consistency, becoming sticky under his feet. He felt like he was walking on mud. But all this he ignored. His eyes were fixed on the sanctuary’s entrance. His thoughts were one and fueled his body with a single purpose. He had to save Immaru.

With a final jump, Bakura entered the temple. The sounds of screaming and clash of blades died
instantly behind him. The heavy smell of fire disappeared. The Egyptian took a deep breath and took
one step forward. He was familiar with the Shadow Realm and its tricks. And right now, the world
of darkness had created a complete new world inside the sacred ground to disorient him. The space
had altered greatly and had nothing to do with the real temple’s architecture. Thief King stood in one
of the many galleries made of columns and arcades that repeated themselves infinitely, as they
stretched endlessly. There was no ceiling and no walls, only blackness. It was both disorienting and
erve-wracking because there seemed to exist no beginning and no end in this world. There was
simply no sense of space. Fortunately, Bakura had lived in Darkness long enough to understand its
secrets.

“Ha! Is this all you’ve got?” The former bandit questioned the shadows. He grinned undisturbed.
They had forgotten he once had been one with them and now he was up to any challenge. “You
cannot prevent me from rescuing Immaru.” He said in a low dark voice. His smirk grew confident
while he started walking coolly.

The light was dim and unnatural, just enough to see his surroundings. The air was thick. The heavy
dead sound of silence surrounded him. The air was cold, sending chills down his spine, making his
hairs go up. Bakura walked, and his footsteps did not echo like they should. Instead, they sounded
dry and muffled. Now and then he sensed shadows move nearby, or heard strange whispers coming
from the depths of darkness. The Egyptian knew he had to remain focused and could not allow
anything distract him. The shadows enjoyed using illusions to misguide. While he moved, Bakura
focused all his senses. He never had been this alert before. His eyes searched for clues in the
surroundings, his ears listened to the silence. After for what felt like a long period of time, the former
bandit sensed something. An oddness in the dark world, something misplaced. He suddenly halted.
He sensed a shy presence of warmth, a tiny vestige of the world of living. His heartbeat increased as
his vision grasped a small white halo moving far away in his direction. Thief King stared marveled,
knowing this was not an illusion from darkness, because the shadows could never create anything
made of light. The small brilliant white-blue light reached Bakura and paused right in front of his
nose. It had the shape of a night moth. Small and fragile, yet beautiful and ethereal. It moved its little
delicate wings with a happy easiness that belonged to the essence of light. The pale moonlight.

“Show me where Immaru is!” Thief King requested the small insect, while his heart was filled with
hope.

The moth flapped its little wings and made a cheerful circle in the dark before it flew swiftly away.
Bakura raced behind the tiny thing, which looked like a shooting star, fast and bright, illuminating
the world it travelled. While he chased the moth, Thief King noticed his steps made no sound. Not
even his breath could be heard. And he wondered if he had become deaf. While he followed the
insect, the world remained unchanged. It remained dark and disorienting. It was like he was moving
in the same spot all the time. Don’t be fooled by the illusions of darkness. Bakura thought to himself
while a grin formed on his lips. They are nothing but tricks.

Suddenly he saw a dark shadow move just ahead of him. It was one of the felinelike shadows. The
Egyptian felt his energy be renewed as he understood the evil shadow had the same goal as him. It
wanted to reach Immaru too. Suddenly, the former bandit was engaged in a deadly race. The brilliant
moth gained speed and overtook the shadow beast. The Egyptian saw the small spark land on
something on the ground and instantly knew it was the White Magician. He could make out the form
of the boy’s body, lying unconscious on the ground. The shadow was so close. Bakura was so close.
The monster gave a jump, aiming to the defenseless boy. With a muffled roar, the Egyptian flew on
the air at the same time as the shadow. He drew out his sword and with a silent scream, slew the beast in the middle of the air. A dark smoke disintegrated and faded into the darkness. Thief King landed next to Immaru. Panting, he scanned his surroundings and, when he was sure there was nothing nearby, stepped closer to Immaru.

The moth flew away from the boy to hover nearby. The former thief kneeled and carefully picked up Immaru, putting an arm under his back. With his other hand, Bakura pushed some hair strands away from the boy’s face. The White Magician bore a tense expression, translating his exhaustion and worries in his sleep. Without thinking, the Egyptian bent over and pressed his lips on Immaru’s. Thief King felt a start under his fingers and a gasp escaped the teenager’s lips. Slowly, his eyes opened until chocolate brown were locked on lilac. A genuine smile followed and Bakura chuckled shaken by his emotions.

“You came for me.” The Moon king weakly whispered, awe present in his voice.

“I would cross time and space to find you.” The Egyptian confessed and melted on the sweetness of Immaru’s smile. He felt something warm run down his face and only then he realized he was crying. Bakura knew, had it taken one more second, Immaru wouldn’t be alive and breathing in his arms.

“I have no doubt of that.” The White Magician said, while his fingertips wiped the tears away. His eyes then darted to the brilliant moth and smiled happily. “Look up to the skies, Bakura.”

“What do you mean?” The former bandit asked confused after looking up and seeing nothing but blackness. His gaze returned to the White Magician, just in time to see his eyes roll back as he fell back to unconsciousness. “Immaru? Immaru, wake up!!” Bakura called while he shook the boy. The Moon king’s eyes opened slowly.

“So tired…”

“I’m getting you out of here.” Bakura said with conviction.

He easily picked up Immaru and swung him over his back. He wasn’t too surprised to see the small moth fly ahead of him, showing the way out. He wondered if the small creature of light was a small part of the White Magician’s consciousness or magic he was still controlling. It didn’t really matter, as long as they got out of this place as quickly as possible. Alas, the shadows weren’t willing to allow them to escape that easily. It felt like they would never find the exit. The galleries multiplied endlessly until it was a great confusing jungle of columns and arches. The Egyptian chased after the bright spark, which was getting further away. Bakura cursed frustrated. Then suddenly, he stopped. The former bandit stared around baffled. Just like that, he had crossed the sanctuary’s exit and stood outside the temple. The little moth had disappeared, but it didn’t bother him. They were outside again, back to the world of unpleasant sounds and putrefying odors. The real world.
“Stay put, Hikari, I’m taking you to safety.”
The Battle between good and evil, light and darkness continues. Bakura does everything in his power to protect Immaru. Will he succeed?

I'm hating myself for allowing this long hiatus and apologizing therefore to those who have been following this story.

Lack of time has been the major reason for not writing. I'm a bit back on track again and the story is nearing its end, which means, it's getting the more difficult for me to write it down (a problem I have with all my stories)

Thank you for your patience. Hopefully this chapter will be epic enough to compensate the waiting.

While Bakura descended the temple’s stairway, he could see smoke rising everywhere in the city. There were many bodies of good soldiers lying lifeless on the ground. There were still many shadowy creatures running around. Bakura reached the level ground and headed towards the Palace. Two shadow monsters cut his path. They paced slowly and menacingly towards him. Yet, they did not scare the former thief who, without moving Immaru from his back, defeated them with his battle skills, as he moved swiftly and with agility. He resumed his run to the Palace but, unfortunately, the White Magician’s aura seemed to attract more monsters. Now and then, the strong Egyptian had to stop to face the creatures that crawled out of the shadows. Bakura fought them tirelessly, overpowering them, one after the other. Alas, the boy’s weight on his back and all the running around for god knows how long was finally taking the toll. The monsters kept on coming. It was like a plague, never coming to an end. The creatures groaned satisfied and licked their lips with their pointy tongs when they realized the human protecting their target was tired and weakened. When the Egyptian thought things could not get any worse, a chilly and mocking laughter filled the air and was followed by a deep voice.

“Seems we finally found you, Moon king.” A man’s hooded shadow appeared.

Bakura took a step backwards. He was panting heavily and sweat drops rolled down his face. His senses told him whoever this person was, he was more dangerous than the creatures he had been fighting all along. His suspicions were confirmed when another four hooded men joined the first one. Thief King’s eyes widened at the realization.
“The Black Priests!”

“Hahaha! That would be correct, Thief King.” The leader spoke in a chillingly mocking tone. “I must thank you for bringing the boy to us. Now, allow me to put an end to his miserable existence.”

“Ha! Over my dead body!” Bakura challenged while he pointed his blade towards the five evil priests. The man laughed again.

“Gladly!”

Bakura’s eyes widened as he witnessed the five hooded men merge together into one single shadow. It grew larger in size and rose tall into the skies. The former bandit gulped while his heart raced from fear. The five Black Priests’ shadow combined took a new shape. Hovering the Egyptian was now a colossal cobra, tall as a tower. Thief King cursed internally, conscious this beast was too strong for him. The giant snake opened its mouth, revealing its long fangs and threw itself at the former thief. Bakura dodged just in time.

“Immaru, this might be a good time to wake up.” He urgently said in clenched teeth but the boy hanging on his shoulder remained unconscious.

There was another attack. Bakura dodged again, but this time, he lost his balance and rolled on the ground. Immaru fell on the ground too and the Egyptian quickly moved to protect the young king, shielding him with his body. He helplessly listened to the five Black Priests’ dreadful laughter and shut his eyes, anticipating the final blow. Then a loud painful roar was heard right behind him. Confused, Bakura turned to see what was happening behind him. A new hope filled his heart when he saw the colossal snake struggle against a glowing white ring that was strangling its body.

“How about that for amateur’s magic?”

A woman’s defiant voice was heard. Bakura chuckled amused when he spotted Queen Isis. She lifted one elegant eyebrow when their eyes met, making sure he didn’t forget his insult about her talents, from only a few days ago. She stood strong and firm at the feet of the oversized cobra, her arms raised, immobilizing the beast. Two men jumped from behind her and flew in the enemy’s direction, piercing it with their swords. They were fast and agile. They landed on the ground afterwards and the former thief wasn’t surprised to recognize the men as Dumuzi and Nigiku. The gigantic beast screamed while it contorted in pain.
“I’ll admit it. Great timing.” Bakura coolly said. Yet, his happiness and relieve were evident in his voice.

“How’s Immaru?” Dumuzi asked, clearly worried.

The moment he looked in his twin’s direction the monster made a sudden attack, trying to bite him, despite its restricted movements. The Sun king managed to dodge in time and returned another cut on the oversized shadow’s body. Queen Isis strengthened her magical prison, frustrating the evil Black Priests even more.

“I’ll survive.” A frail voice was heard, and Thief King turned to the White Magician.

“You’re awake!”

“You must help them.” The White Magician told while he weakly sat up.

The former thief nodded and quickly joined the two warriors. The cobra was still struggling, so Isis continued to reinforce the magical ring’s grip around its body. The Black Priests were persistent and refused to give up. They had come too far and weren’t going to allow to be defeated this easily. The giant cobra moved, contorted and struggled to break free from its prison, while its fangs met the hard ground when it tried to swallow its attackers. Dumuzi, Nigiku and Bakura suddenly witnessed their blades gain a blue fire. They briefly turned around to witness Immaru still performing magic, despite his weariness.

The White Magician remained seated on the ground with his arms stretched and palms directed to the trio. The warriors smiled and switched confident glances. They decided to attack the monster simultaneously. It roared and shook its body wildly from the pain. But the more it got hurt, the more furious and violent it became. The three warriors pierced its body again and again, while Isis ensured the cobra remained secured. The blue fire caused excruciating pain, and yet, the Black Priests refused to yield. At one point, the five voices produced a mighty scream, its sound blast sending powerful winds around it. The magical ring that imprisoned the cobra exploded and Queen Isis was thrown to the ground.

“You fools! You think you can defeat us? Your reign has ended here, Twin Kings! Now it’s our turn to rule Akkad! And afterwards, we will take over the world! We will swallow all lands in shadows!!!” The mighty cobra roared with the five voices.
They stared shocked as the monster rose bigger and taller. It eyed its different adversaries until its evil orbs rested on Immaru. Dumuzi raised his sword and pierced it into the shadow flesh but, this time, had no impact. He stared confused at the clean blade when he pulled it out. He took a few steps back, while he looked up, intimidated by the creature’s strength. Bakura made a quick run to Immaru, ready to protect him with his own life. For some strange reason, the White Magician was staring up with a look of merriness on his face. Bakura followed his gaze, only to meet the evil monster under a sky made of black and crimson clouds.

“The skies. Look up to the skies, Bakura.” The Moon king whispered, his voice verbalizing joyfulness.

Bakura looked up for the second time and swallowed dry. All he saw were the strange clouds circling above. He turned to look back at the Moon king, his brow wrinkled in sorrow. He sighed sadly. Immaru’s large brown eyes refused to leave the dark skies and the Egyptian was sure the strange glint on them was the expression of madness. All the recent worrying, the weight of the responsibilities, the sleepless nights, the exhaustion and the imminence of death could only have been too much for the great magician.

Thief King ignored the sounds of fighting behind him. He could hear Dumuzi and Nigiku attempt to inflict injury to the monster. He could hear their panting and their frustrated curses. He could hear Isis’s voice casting spells that were repelled right after. He could sense the monster move closer to him and Immaru. All this he ignored. Because soon, it would be over. All he wanted right now was to drown in Immaru’s beautiful warm smile. The only pure and innocent thing that existed in the middle of this mess. The Egyptian moved his hands to hold Immaru’s. They felt cold. They foretold his soon to come death. Thief King swallowed down the lump in his throat. The cobra would strike any moment now. They had given a great fight. Hell, it was the greatest battle he ever fought. But, they had lost. What an unjust reality this was.

Bakura placed his hand on Immaru’s cheek and the boy finally glanced away from the dark skies. The Egyptian witnessed the boy’s face chance from blissful happiness to an expression of peaceful contentment. A look of perfect serenity. There was such an unbearable wisdom in those brown eyes, that Bakura thought the boy was an ethereal being, out of this world. The air became still, and he was surrounded by silence. The Egyptian forgot where he was, for there was so much unconditional love in those chocolate orbs, that Bakura was sure he had stopped existing. The Egyptian opened his mouth, his lips verbalizing the one and single thought he wanted to tell this special boy. But a deafening sound muffed his words and Thief King froze. He read the certainty in Immaru’s eyes. They were old, wise, experienced. They were confident. Victorious.

Bakura lifted his eyes to the sky. A second loud sound travelled the air. It was a distinct roar made of blinding suns and burning fires. He could see, above him, the cobra was looking up too, startled, confused, uneasy. Another roar. During one second, the skies flashed a bright yellow light. During that one second the ground trembled. Bakura’s heart missed a beat. It filled itself with unbearable joy. He looked back at Immaru and the young king nodded once, his smile never fading. Bakura could hear behind him, Dumuzi’s uncoherent rejoiceful discourse of laughter and cheering.
A great yellow orange light covered the skies and consumed the red and dark clouds. A wind made of heat warmed the cold city. The skies opened themselves, a blinding light penetrating the few clouds left. Darkness was replaced by daylight, and a golden shadow was the only thing contrasting with the blue sky. Bakura involuntarily laughed when he recognized, no other but the Winged Dragon of Ra.

It flew fast and swift above them, spitting hellfire on the enemy. The giant cobra tried to flee, but a fire blast blocked its path. The evil monster made a desperate attempt to attack the god monster. It made an impressive jump. The cobra flew in the dragon’s direction. It opened its mouth, exposing its poisonous fangs. A scorching fire made of many suns was released from the Egyptian god monster. It hit the cobra with the force of a thousand hurricanes and the merciless burning flames consumed the evil shadow. The five Black Priests’ voices echoed in one horrible scream. The fire obliterated the giant cobra, which turned into smoke and vanished into the air.

Bakura blinked surprised. Just like that, with one single supreme powerful blast, the Egyptian god monster had destroyed the five evil priests. All remaining shadows instantly faded away. The warm sunlight illuminated the world again. It revealed a city with a lot of damage and ruined streets. But a new sound contrasted the depressing sight. It was the sound of thousands of people cheering, laughing and chanting from rejoice. Civilians finally dared to step outside their homes and came to aid the surviving soldiers. Despite their wounds, despite their losses, despite all the horrors they had witnessed, they celebrated. Because the battle was over. They won. Peace would rule in Akkad again.

Thief King looked down at Immaru. He had been holding the young king protectively the whole time. They locked their eyes and smiled at the happy victory. Bakura looked tenderly at the boy. The Moon king looked so exhausted. He was terribly pale, even his lips were white. Yet, the Egyptian thought he looked as beautiful as always. Maybe it was because of the purity of his innocent nature, of the sincerity in his kindness, of his never-ending optimistic view on life. Whatever the reason was, it made the silver-haired ruler beyond attractive to Bakura’s eyes. An involuntary impulse made him bend over and peck the young king’s lips. They locked their gazes a second time and Immaru blushed profusely. Bakura heard behind him the sound of somebody clearing the throat. He turned to see who it was and was faced with the Sun king. The sandy-haired ruler bore quite a mischievous grin.

“Hey, lover-boy! Mind sharing my brother? I would like to hug him.” Dumuzi teasingly said and Bakura didn’t miss the way Nigiku and Isis failed in concealing their chuckles.

Thief King grinned amused, realizing this was the first time Dumuzi addressed him without stiffness or wariness. He stood up, giving space to the inseparable twins. The Sun king practically threw himself on his brother and gave him a tight bearhug. The White Magician’s eyes widened, and a strangled sound escaped his lips, surprised at the force of his sibling’s embrace. But he smiled sweetly and wrapped his arms around Dumuzi. They remained like this for a while, relishing the
warmth their bodies emanated, sensing the life flowing in them. Happy they were both alive.

Then suddenly, the ground trembled. Thief King repressed a startled scream when the Winged Dragon of Ra landed his gigantic claws right next to him. The twins parted at the sudden presence of the Egyptian god monster and watched him slowly pace in their direction. It lowered its head, so it touched the ground next to them. The kings switched glances and chuckled, understanding what the creature wanted. They stood up to stroke its oversized head. Bakura snorted at the realization the intimidating god monster was acting like a kitty.

“When did you summon it?” Thief King wondered out loud.

“When the attack started.” Immaru replied, while he wrapped his arms around the colossal beak.

“Well, it could have come earlier.” The Egyptian complained. At hearing these words, the Winged Dragon of Ra turned its head and released hot air from its nostrils. “Sorry! Sorry! It’s just, - it took you hours!!!” The former thief said in his defense, while he lifted his hands in a surrendering gesture.

“No wonder. The Sun God Dragon had to travel all the way from Egypt.” Dumuzi explained. After the events in Kul Elna, they and the Pharaoh had decided the dragon should live in freedom. The White Magician had thus, annulated the spell that bind the creature to the clay tablet.

“Why didn’t you summon it earlier?” The former thief questioned, not understanding. “All the deaths and destruction could have been avoided if the god monster had been with us from the very beginning!”

“It’s not that simple.” Immaru explained in a regretted tone. “It’s a god. It’s above all of us. You don’t disturb him just like that. Imagine if I had summoned him for nothing and later the real attack would have started. He would have been legitimate to refuse to help us. After all, we are already in debt from our time in Egypt.”

“Besides, it would spoil the element of surprise.” Dumuzi added in a teasing way. “Good thing we managed to stall the Black Priests long enough.”

“You call that stalling? Lots of soldiers died. We all almost died!” The Egyptian stated the obvious, unable to hide his outrage.
“Please, do understand. Like I said before, he’s a god. We are to be glad he even answered my request.” The Moon king sorrowfully insisted and Bakura looked over at the colossal beast. The golden monster was gazing him with wise ancient eyes. It looked regal, mighty and indeed, from divine nature. Despite feeling absolutely frustrated, Thief King realized he had taken the monster for granted. He had taken it as something that could be idly used. He reminded himself this was the god monster and not a mere card from a game. It had life, a will of its own and it demanded respect and humility from mortals. Yes, they were lucky he even answered to Immaru’s distress call.

“I understand.” Bakura told defeated.

He was still learning to deal with the fact he no longer could force others to do his bidding. It felt like years already, since he was the Evil Spirit of the Ring, when he had almost unrestricted power and used everything and everybody to achieve his goals … Ryou … Poor Ryou … Thief King was reminded he was, again, nothing more but a mere mortal. Vulnerable and defenseless to the injustice of life. It was like being the small child that witness a bloody massacre so many years ago. It was frustrating and it made him feel powerless. And yet, he was blessed with forgiveness and second chance from Immaru. While he looked at that beautiful pale face and entered the depths of his brown eyes, Bakura sensed he would receive much more than just that, if he continued learning to be human again. To be a good man.

The Egyptian sighed deeply. He reluctantly forced his heart to accept the unfairness of this situation and was surprised with how fast he mellowed down and felt less bothered. He turned to the golden monster and bowed in reverence. The Sun God Dragon nodded while it made a sound of contentment. It then greeted the twins one last time with the tip of its gigantic beak and then flew away and disappeared in front of the sun.
New Chance

Chapter Summary

I know, I know, I took an eternity. But hey! I finally finished the story. So I'm updating the 3 final chapters one after the other to compensate the continuous hiatus.

Thank you for your patience. I hope it was worth it to wait.

I DO NOT OWN YU-GU-OH OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS

The present

Tousoku erased a sentence on the computer for the countless time. He still had to fill in his report, something that is normally simple and quick to do, but today the Egyptian agent had problems in focusing. How could he not? For a strange and unknown reason, his memories from 5,000 years ago had returned to him. He was glad Yami had his share of memories too and that Yugi and friends confirmed it was all real. Because Tousoku was still trying to grasp these new, no old, memories were all real. They had really happened. He was not mad. He was not dreaming. They were as real as he was real. Tousoku had already three lives before this one. In Ancient Egypt, in the Millennium ring and in Akkad. Oh, how these memories assaulted his mind.

He remembered Kul Edna. His traumas and his ordeals into adulthood. The stealing and killing for survival. He remembered the sickening anger residing in his soul, the persistent and determined desire for revenge.

He remembered when he lived trapped inside the Millennium Ring. How his memories slowly faded away, but the desire for revenge always survived. He remembered how after 5,000 years he still loathed the Pharaoh and wished him dead, even without knowing who he hated and why anymore.

He remembered how he drove the Ring’s owners insane. Driving them into despair and madness until they were worthless vessels. Yet, his search would go on. He was as merciless as he was unstoppable. He would take new hosts and destroy their lives and those around them while he searched for something he didn’t even know anymore what it was. Until he met Ryou. Poor little sweet Ryou.

Ryou was different from the others. Or had it been him, Thief King, that had been different in his treatment towards the boy instead? Was it his own loneliness that made him make a deal instead of abusing the child from the start like he did with all his former hosts? Or had it been some kind of a strange twist from destiny? Because in his first life, Immaru had died before they ever had the
chance to meet. When Ryou received the Ring from his father, was it destiny correcting an event that should have happened 5,000 years ago?

Tousoku could feel a painful point bore his forehead, right above his left eyebrow. There were too many memories. Too much information. Too many lives he had lived. Too many mixed feelings.

He remembered the way he mistreated Ryou. He would never forgive himself for the way he abused the boy, for the horrors he made the innocent child go through. Ryou had been different than the other hosts. Despite his fears, he defied and scolded the Spirit of the Millennium Ring when it still bothered to listen to the child. Despite his fragility, he proved to be resilient and supported the psychological and emotional torture that was living with the cursed object. Ryou was like Immaru. Frail from the outside, but from the inside, there resided an admirable strong will.

Tousoku could not focus on his work. How could he? He remembered everything. All the good memories with Immaru, all the horrific things he did to Ryou. He felt guilty. He knew those things never happened in this reality. He saw Ryou today, in this new reality. No, his reality. Because he was not Thief King anymore, neither the Evil Spirit of the Millennium Ring. Or was he? No, he was Tousoku of Cairo, born in the 21st century. The others were other lives. They are his past. Him and yet not entirely him anymore.

Tousoku let out a very frustrated roar, startling some of his colleagues. He put his hands on his head and rested his temple on his desk. The police agents went on with their works, some upset with his little outburst, others amused, thinking he was truly having problems with today’s report. Everybody ignored his silly behavior. Everybody except Yami. He understood what was going on. He too was suffering from a major headache, his head filled with many images of the past. And thought it was unfair he should be mourning his wife and children that parted 5,000 years ago. That he should have to miss friends and family that were part of a life that ended long ago. Because his life was starting now. Tousoku’s life was starting now too. Perhaps this was the greatest curse of the Millennium Items. It was not fair, because he and Tousoku were ultimately the real victims of these objects’ Dark Magic. They had nothing to do with them and yet, they were the ones to be punished for the mistakes made by one mad man.

“Are you alright, Tousoku?” Yami carefully approached the other man, who had not moved for an entire minute.

“I remember hurting Ryou, and yet, these things never happened.” Tousoku said with a sigh while he lifted his head to face Yami. “I feel guilty for my crimes, but I never committed them because I never ended up in the Ring. That first life should have been erased the moment the Millennium Cycle was broken. Just like my life in Akkad should have been wiped off from my mind in this world. Which was the reality, until today! What the heck is going on?!"
“I wish I knew. Shadi had said the creation of the Millennium Items had brought unbalance in the Universe. Maybe this is a side-effect.”

“Side-effect, the Hell! It’s all *his* fault! I hate your uncle! Well, not this one, I mean Aknadin.” Tousoku corrected in the mist of his confusion, remembering meeting Yami’s uncle once, who seemed to be a really nice guy. “He’s the one to blame… What one man can do for power. I’ll kill him or his reincarnation if I come across him!”

“Best not do that.” Yami said grimly.

“Why not?” Tousoku asked irritated.

He watched Yami take his computer’s mouse to use internet and type something on google. He gasped shocked. The words spelled: CAIRO’S ANCIENT MUSEUM DIRECTOR and Priest Aknadin, or better, a man who resembled very much with Aknadin, appeared in several photos. Yami clicked on one and Tousoku’s eyes widened when he saw Ridish, Ishizu and Malik standing next to him. The title wrote MUSEUM DIRECTOR MR. ISHTAR WITH FAMILY AT INAUGURATION… The two men switched looks.

“Now we know why Malik was so crazy when he was the tomb keeper.” Yami sorrowfully said.

“Man, Karma is a twisted thing.” Tousoku said shocked while he scrolled for more pictures.

“I read some articles about his life. Kakra Ishtar is one of the most renowned Egyptologists of the actuality. During the first years of his marriage, he and his wife could not have children. That’s when they adopted Ridish. She eventually got pregnant and had both Ishizu and Malik, but died short after he was born. So, this is pretty much similar to our old Universe, expect they weren’t living underground and isolated from the world.”

Yami said while Tousoku nodded in agreement. The trainee then proceeded with passing the information he had gathered.

“Also, they are linked to Ryou’s family through their jobs. Ryou’s parents were both archeologists, specialized in Ancient Egypt and worked in some projects together with Mr. Ishtar. But then Ryou’s mother died in a car accident, along with his little sister in England. Just like in our old world. It appears it was the loss of their wives that bounded them. They still work together and that explains why Ryou ended up here in Cairo today.”
“His past may be similar, but the fact he never got the Millennium Ring changes everything.” Tousoku said, and Yami could hear the relieve in his voice. “In this Universe, he is a very different person than the boy from my memories. At least, a happier person, I hope.”

“I’m sure you’ll discover tonight.” Yami said smiling and was surprised to see his friend grim instead. “What’s the matter?”

“I… I am nervous for dinner tonight. I want so much to be with Ryou. To learn to know him as who he is and not the kid I remember mistreating. I want make up for the wrongs I did long ago, even if it never happened to this Ryou.” Tousoku confessed and then sighed heavily. “Also, I don’t want to create too great expectations. Because when I looked at him today, I saw Immaru.”

“You are afraid to mix up things, aren’t you?” Yami said with a compassionate smile, while he rested his hand on Tousoku’s shoulder. For a brief moment he contemplated the irony that there was a time they wished each other dead. But within time, they learned to tolerate one another until, one day, they actually enjoyed the other’s company. One could even say, they became friends. It was all thanks to Immaru’s calm and patient diplomacy.

“Ryou’s face is his face, his eyes, his voice. They are all Immaru’s. And yet they are all Ryou’s.” Tousoku shook his head irritated. “Ryou has to be Ryou. Immaru is a memory, and yet, he lives in Ryou! I want Ryou to be Immaru, but I also want Ryou to be himself. How am I going to deal with a face that is both my victim and my lover? Immaru and Ryou are both one, and yet, they are different persons. Ow, my head hurts. This is all very confusing!”

Tousoku was worried, afraid his expectations about Ryou would be unrealistic and unfair to the boy. He was afraid to jeopardize his and Ryou’s future. He wondered if gaining his memories back were his curse, his punishment for all the evildoing during millennia.

“You shouldn’t work yourself up. You cannot change the past, or the memories you have from then.” Yami said while he looked at Tousoku’s computer and saw the unfilled report. “Want me to write that report for you?

“Please.” Tousoku said wearily. In the end, the trainee was right. He could not change the past. But he could build a new future. He had done once, after all, a very long time ago.

…
Bakura watched Akkad be rebuilt from a balcony. It had been surprising how fast the Akkadians had overcome their traumas from the horrific long night. They proved to be a resilient people, one that took immediate action during dire times. Dumuzi, along with Isis and Nigiku’s help, did everything to assist the victims. Give them comfort for their loses, strength to go on, hope for a future. The dead were buried and mourned. The wounded treated, bathed and fed. New families were created. Parents that lost their children welcomed the many new orphans. People came from villages close by to the capital to bring food, clothes and anything Akkad needed. And so Akkad healed from its wounds quickly.

The former thief turned around with a sigh. It was truly impressive, and he doubted the Egyptians could ever had handled things this way. He reentered the room he had spent most of his time during the last days. After the battle against the Black Priests, Immaru was completely worn out. The White priests took him back to the Ishtar temple and did some rituals. When they brought him back, the boy was in a deep sleep. According to them, he would wake up when his body and magical energy were restored. Bakura had been truly surprised when Dumuzi had tasked him to guard Immaru while he was absent.

“You trust me to take care of Lord Immaru?” Thief King had questioned, unable to hide his disbelief.

“My brother trusts you, so I trust you.” Had been the unexpected answer.

Bakura wondered when exactly had the Sun king started to warm up to him, but he was glad he had. He could not imagine a worst torture if he had been refused to see the Moon king during his recovery. He looked down at the boy and smiled at his peaceful face. He gently caressed his right cheek before placing a chaste kiss on Immaru’s temple.

“When will you wake up?” He wondered out loud, while he sat down, his chin resting on his palm.

Suddenly, Immaru gasped and his eyes shot open, making the Egyptian flinch. Thief King stared surprised, never expecting his request to be this quickly answered. The boy quickly sat up, his eyes large and scared.

“Where am I?!” The Moon king asked with a hint of panic. He looked disoriented and didn’t seem to see Bakura.
“You are in your private chambers, my Lord.” Bakura answered in shock. Immaru looked at him, then to his right, then to his left. Apparently, he not only recognized his room, but also, he remembered the great battle against the Black Priests.

“How’s my brother? And the people in Akkad? How’s everybody?”

Bakura was taken aback by Immaru almost electrifying energy. For somebody who had slept for three days, his voice was abnormally clear and high-pitched. Also he moved in a fidgety manner.

“Calm down first.”

“Tell me now!!”

“Okay, okay. Your brother has everything under control. The people are recovering well, and the city is being rebuilt. You need to calm down! You’ve been out for three days!”

“Three days?! Oh, not again!!”

Bakura blinked surprised when Immaru suddenly and, with an abnormal speed, jumped from his bed and ran off to the door.

“Hey, where are you going to?” The former thief demanded, quickly getting up, for the kid was already passing through the door.

“To the kitchens! Must eat!!”

Bakura stepped out and glanced at the guards, who simply shrugged their shoulders. After all, it wasn’t the first time the Moon king acted this way. Thief King groaned annoyed and chased the hyperactive monarch. He stormed into the kitchens panting and looking murderous. He grabbed the arm from a woman passing by carrying a basket with bread.

“You! Tell me where the Moon king is!” He angrily demanded.
“Lord Immaru is over there.” The woman answered while she pointed at the end of the kitchen, shocked at the Egyptian’s rude manners. Bakura let her go and quickly followed her directions. He found the boy sitting by a large table and the kitchen staff was presenting all kinds of food to the boy with a happy smile on their faces. He stared at them warily, for they were acting way too natural for his liking.

“What do you think you are doing?” Bakura asked while he sat opposite Immaru.

“Eating, of course.”

“Couldn’t you wait till food was brought to your chamber?”

“Nope.”

Bakura was about to add something when the door flew open and the kitchen fell silent. Dumuzi paced hurriedly towards his brother, looking absolutely infuriated. Immaru’s guards stood right behind him looking nervous. The staff members quickly bowed in reverence, before they went on with their work with tense looks on their faces.

“How many times do I have to tell you not to do this?!” The Sun king angrily questioned, while he placed both hands on the table, bended over so his face was inches apart from his twin’s.

“How many times do I have to tell you I need food to restore my energy?” Immaru coolly said for his sibling’s growing annoyance. Bakura looked from one to the other and sensed a storm coming.

“Why do you insist in doing this?”

“Why do you insist in questioning the obvious? You think my magic just appears from nowhere, like this – puff! Out of the air?”

“Arg, you are impossible!” The Sun king admitted defeated and sat opposite Immaru, next to Bakura. “You shouldn’t mix with the common people. You know it’s not appropriated for a king.” He whispered but the Moon king simply shook his head.
“Sorry, this goes above any protocol.”

“And by this, you mean your stomach. Why am I even surprised?”

Immaru chuckled at this last comment and Dumuzi smiled in return. Bakura let a sigh of relief escape. He had not realized he had been holding his breath during the short confrontation. He listened while the Sun king updated his brother, telling him what had been done the last days. There was a small part in Bakura that was jealous from the siblings. The way they interacted, the way they switched accomplice looks, spoke sometimes without words, was both beautiful and intimidating. The Egyptian was sure, as much as his newfound feelings for the Moon king were authentic, he could never surpass the unconditional love between the twins. Their bond was too strong, too special. It was one of a kind.
Innocence

Chapter Summary

You are so going to enjoy this chapter!!!

I DO NOT OWN YU-GI-OH OR ANY OF ITS CHARACTERS

Bakura sat with his back to the wall of the balcony he had found Immaru the night before the attack. The sun was setting and soon the shadows of the night would cover the world with a dark blanket. He was brooding for not having anything to do and for not being needed anywhere. After Immaru and his brother reunited in the kitchens, he was dismissed. The Twin Kings gave him the day off and told him to do whatever he wanted with his spare time. He knew they meant well and that it was their way to reward him for his help, but to him it felt like a punishment. He was bored and didn’t know what to do with the time given. The only occupations he thought were fun was stealing or creating havoc in the streets, something he dared not to do anymore, especially when people were rebuilding their city and lives. Besides, he had come too far to ruin his life because of boredom. Also, after the victory against the Black Priests, he kind of ascended to the level for Hero, although, never in an official manner. It happened through rumors and stories that were told among the common people of Akkad.

It started when the Palace’s staff and the militaries noticed early on that Bakura was undertaking tasks that went beyond protecting Queen Isis. He was often seen in the presence of the Twin Kings and Nigiku in short and secretive conferences. Then, after the attack, stories about his courage spread throughout the city. Tales about how he fought against dark spirits and saved the Moon king travelled the streets. In truth, it was difficult to keep secrets in the Palace, and soon everybody knew he too was guarding Lord Immaru during his recovery, as if he was one of the members of the Royal Family.

In the end, everybody was talking about the mysterious Egyptian. Many wondered about his origins and the wildest theories were made up. All of them enveloping his life and persona with greatness, boldness and mysterious powers, and somehow, always linked to the Royal Family. Bakura wasn’t bothered with the fantastic tales created around him, in fact, he thought them very amusing. He enjoyed parading along the Palace’s galleries and see men and women give him side glances, unable to hide their curiosity mingled with awe.

“Having fun thoughts?” A voice he had learned to love broke his musings.

“What makes you think that, Lord Immaru?” He coolly questioned and noticed the Moon king stifled a giggle.
“You were giving the most mischievous grin.”

“Ah, I was thinking about all the rumors people tell about me.”

Immaru chuckled, he too having heard some of the incredible stories. He paced to the balcony and leaned on it, resting his elbows on the cool stone. His gaze was on the setting sun, the disk was an intense pink, almost red and painted the sky around it. Bakura looked from the boy to the sun and back to Immaru, taking in the wonderful way the pink and yellow reflections shaped the boy’s beautiful face. By now, the Egyptian was convinced the Moon king was an otherworldly being, a god or an angel in flesh, for he was too lovely and too perfect to fit in this mortal world. The sun disappeared behind the horizon and Immaru looked pensive for a moment. He then turned around to face Thief King. The young sovereign was smiling.

“This is the same balcony, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it is.” Bakura confirmed with a whisper. They locked their gazes and both smiled at the happy recollection of their sweet moment from that one evening. Immaru then made a small hop to sit on the balcony, still facing the other man, his feet hanging close to the ground.

“It feels like the world has turned around many times.” The boy confessed. Thief King merely nodded with a knowing look in his eyes. How he fully understood the young sovereign. “Come to think about it, had Yugi and his friends never travelled to our time, we wouldn’t be here right now. Do you think they are well?”

“Well, they fulfilled their mission in breaking the Millennium curse, or cycle, or whatever that was, so, yes, I imagine they simply returned to their timeline and went back on with their lives.”

“But their lives must have changed too.” Immaru spoke concerned and Bakura lifted an eyebrow confused. “Think about it. You and the Pharaoh’s souls were never trapped in the Millenniums Items. Which means Yugi will never receive the Millennium Puzzle. He will never meet the spirit of the Pharaoh. Probably all the events that occurred related with the Millennium Puzzle will never happen. So, if they returned to their timeline, has our past changed their future too?”

Bakura blinked a few times. He never had thought in this perspective before. Not that he really cared. He still disliked Yugi and the others, so he wasn’t the least concerned with their wellbeing. But Immaru had a good point. If the past had changed, the events in the future had to change too. Unless there were several dimensions and theirs wasn’t affected by the changes in the past. The
Egyptian sure hoped the future changed. That would mean Ryou had never received the Millennium Ring and would grow up like any normal and regular teenager. He could only hope for that outcome.

“I guess we’ll never know.” The former thief said with a shrug. Immaru grimaced at the uncertainty about his friends’ future and gazed back to the world outside. Night was already darkening the world. They remained a while in silence, listening to the surroundings that became gradually quieter.

“Come, it’s getting late.” Immaru jumped back to the floor and gestured Bakura to follow him. After a while, the Egyptian noticed they weren’t heading to the dining room.

“My Lord, we just missed the turn to the banqueting hall.”

“I’ve sent food to my chamber.”

“Okay. But I could eat something too.” The Egyptian complained upset, as his stomach rumbled in protest.

“Who said you weren’t eating anything? Just come along.” Immaru said cheerfully.

Bakura followed him obediently, a bit mystified, wondering when and where he was supposed to dine. He was starting to build an expectation that both excited him and caused some anxiety. He knew this route all too well. Hell, he could walk it blindfolded if he wanted. He had to make sure he did not pace to quickly from excited glee, and make sure he kept the minimum distance behind the king, respecting the protocol. He never forgot how a guard once threatened him when he once walked a bit too close to Queen Isis. His suspicions were gladly correct, when they reached the door from Immaru’s private chambers. The king gestured him to enter first and Bakura couldn’t resist and grin from delight at the awkward expression on the guard’s faces.

They entered the fore chamber, the door being closed and locked behind them. The Egyptian had to adjust his eyes at the darkness that had enveloped the familiar space. He watched Immaru move in between the shadows and lighten candles and ollie lamps with the touch of his fingertips.

Bakura’s blood was racing in his veins and he wanted nothing more but to jump on the boy and indulge him with all kinds of pleasures he knew the king would enjoy. But he resisted his urges and instead remained planted at the fore chamber, waiting for an invitation he knew would come soon. Once there was light in the space, he could see there was indeed plenty of food on the table nearby.
“How many guests are you inviting for your private banquet?” The Egyptian asked in a teasing tone, already knowing the answer. Immaru chuckled and, after lighting the last lamp he walked towards Bakura.

“It’s only you.” The boy whispered when he reached the Egyptian and faced him.

Immaru locked his eyes with the lilac ones. The look on them was so intense that it immediately sent butterflies to his stomach. The young king reached his hands to the man’s face in a gentle touch, guiding him closer, so their lips would meet in a sweet caress. Bakura closed his eyes and felt the air being stolen from his lungs. It was even more tender than the last time and the man was sure this is how love tastes. Sweet, gentle and warm. His hands travelled the boy’s back until he was enveloped in a protective embrace. Their lips pecked a few more times before they made way for their tongues. The Egyptian felt a wonderful thrill when he tasted the boy’s warm mouth. They kissed for a long while, exploring each other’s warmth, relishing the taste of sweetness mingled with lust. Immaru wrapped his arms around Bakura, pulling them even closer. Stimulated by the sensation, the Egyptian’s hands ran down the boy’s back, landed on his buttocks and gave them a squeeze. A moan of pleasurable surprise escaped Immaru’s lips. Bakura bit the boy’s underlip and proceeded in planting dry kisses and wet licks on the young king’s neck and collarbone.

“Feels good.” Immaru whispered in Bakura’s ear, motivating him. One of his hands dived inside the king’s robe and was surprised when Immaru grasped his hand. He looked at the boy confused. “I don’t want it to be like the last time. I want it to be real.” The Akkadian spoke earnestly, lust and fear darkening his chocolate eyes. Thief King gave a small but sincere smile and pecked the soft lips.

“There is no darkness or magic inside of me anymore.” He reassured. “No supernatural power controlling me. It’s just me. All me.”

Immaru left out a trembling gasp of relieve and satisfaction. Feeling more reassured, he kissed his lover with some force. Bakura could taste the fading fear and the growing longing. He rubbed the boy’s back to comfort him. Their tongues worked more hurried than before, the pace only being broken by intakes of air, gasps and soft moans. After a while, the king carefully removed Bakura’s robe and then took a step back. The Egyptian watched the red material fall on the floor, but soon his gaze fixed itself on Immaru, who was disposing his own robe. Their tunics were still on when they returned to their kissing. Passion and lust increased the temperature in a feverish way and Thief King’s hands could already make out the boy’s flesh under the thin layer of clothing. A thought crossed his mind, wondering why there were so many layers. It was as frustrating as enticing, delaying the skin’s contact, but increasing its want. He worked his lips and tongue skillfully down Immaru’s neck, to his chest until teeth found a nipple.

The king released a small yelp of delight, surprised with the pleasure such a small touch could cause. Thief King stiffed a cruel chuckle, loving the manner the boy was responding to his advances. Everything about the Moon king was intoxicating. His scent, his taste, his voice. He felt soft and
silky, warm and inviting. Bakura wanted to hear that lovely sound again, so he removed their tunics. He looked down at Immaru and gently guided the boy to the bed. He recognized the initial fear return in the monarch’s eyes and realized, this was going to be more Immaru’s first time than his actual first time, which had been steered by magical energies.

“I’ll be good to you. I swear it.” Bakura whispered while he laid the Akkadian with his back on the royal bed.

“I know.” Immaru said with a tender smile and their lips met again, sharing sweet slow kisses until lust started taking over their bodies and minds again.

Thief King indulged the teenager with more nibbles and kisses. He quickly found the sensitive parts of the kid’s body. Immaru meowed when Bakura teased his skin between his neck and collarbone, when he sucked his nipples, when he planted gentle kisses on his belly. His hands travelled the monarch’s limbs, up and down, like ghostly fingertips close to the groin. He smirked as he felt the boy’s virility grow warm and hard under him. Bakura decided he wanted to play a bit more before he would give the full treatment. He delighted himself with the mix of moan and yelp that escaped Immaru’s throat, when he surrounded his lips around the boy’s reddening’s head.

“Oh gods!” The young king gasped breathless, pulling his head back at the amount of pleasure the other man was giving him. He mindlessly grasped the sheets with strength, having no idea what to do with his hands. He stifled his moans, but could feel the pleasure overpower his mind. It was a very different kind of pleasure than the last time, it felt much more real, much more authentic.

“You like this?” Bakura asked with a victorious grin, continuing rubbing the erection during the break.

“Yes, oh yes- ngh.” Immaru admitted shamelessly. Another moan escaped his lips, as Bakura continued pleasuring his sensitive member.

The Egyptian adored the way the boy sounded, the way his legs moved restlessly, the way his hands travelled indecisive between the bed sheets and his head. He listened to the fiery panting and knew soon his king would come. And he wanted to taste the royal milk. So, Bakura moved his tongue skillfully, moving his head up and down to meet Immaru’s growing speed. The Moon king was going crazy with the building of pleasure, making him pant and sweat from distressed lust. And then, like a mighty wave that hit a wall, release came with sublime pleasure, translated with a musical loud moan. The Moon king became silent afterwards, catching his breath, unable to believe such sensations could exist without the influence of magic. He sensed the Egyptian crawl up his body and their gazes met.
“You taste absolutely delicious! Like a tempting Akkadian sweet.” Bakura told and Immaru giggled clearly amused. Thief King simply adored how perfect the boy looked with his flushed cheeks, full lips and untidy hair, with his long bangs glued to his temple, playing with his dark eyelashes.

Their lips met in a quick greeting and then Thief King whispered in his ear. “That, my Lord, was only the main course. I still have to serve you the best part: the dessert.” He then licked behind the boy’s earlobe, making him gasp. Immaru shivered from excited chills that travelled down his spine at hearing those words. Their eyes met again.

“And how is this dessert called?” Immaru asked in a playful tone. He lifted an eyebrow mystified when Bakura started wetting two fingers. He released a surprised gasp, when he felt them play with his entrance.

“Its name? Uhm, let me see…” Bakura said with a mischievous grin, while he adventured his fingers inside the boy’s body, making him wince from both pleasure and discomfort. He could already read lust in the dark brown orbs and his grin grew malicious. “How about, Desert Oasis, or Summer Delight, oh – I know, Egyptian Night Prelude.” He suggested while he shoved his fingers down the entrance. Immaru’s eyes shot open at the strangely carnal sensation, pulled his head back, while his whole body seemed to stiff for some moments. Bakura didn’t miss the suffocated moan that translated the pleasure the monarch was feeling.

“They all sound very exotic, but nothing like a dessert.” Immaru managed to retort and closed his eyes at the wondrous torturous sensation Bakura’s fingers were producing with gentle movements up and down his channel. The Egyptian snorted at the king’s response. He noticed the boy’s erection was large and hard again and smirked.

“Maybe I’ll just call it Egyptian Hard Tart.” Bakura quipped and Immaru let out a loud amused laughter, which was followed by a protesting sound, when the Egyptian took his fingers out of his body.

“Don’t stop!” Immaru told off and this time it was Bakura who barked a laughter.

“My, my, I finally get to witness your impatient and demanding side, your Highness.” Bakura spoke in a slight dark tone, while he lowered his body on Immaru’s, their erections touching each other. The predator’s look on Bakura’s eyes and proud grin sent the boy exciting chills down his spine. “Well, I guess you give me no choice. I am after all your loyal servant. Your wish is my command.” He whispered in the boy’s ear, who shivered from thrilling expectation, as he could feel Bakura’s hot head aligning with his entrance. He nodded to reassure the man he was ready.

A delighted moan filled the air and Immaru was sure it was impossible to feel more pleasure, more completion and connection with somebody than that of having a hard, warm body inside of him.
And then Bakura started moving. In and out, up and down, slow and fast. And by each thrust, the more pleasure was built. On top of it, the touches of hands, the kisses, the looks they shared, brought the experience to a whole new level of intimacy. Immaru was overwhelmed by all these new, strange but fantastic sensations, moaning and whining of painful pleasure.

“Are you okay?” Bakura asked at a certain point. Immaru was panting increasingly harder, his muffled moans were becoming louder and more uncontrolled.

“Yes, ngd – this feels, ah - feels so much better…”

The Moon king muttered breathless. He wanted to say, *better than the first time*, but pleasure was consuming both his body and mind. He couldn’t produce any coherent sentences, because his brain was so overwhelmed with all these new sensations, that it could not produce one single straight thought. All Immaru could do right now was feel. Fell Bakura, feel his body piercing him cruelly, feel the intensity of his feelings, feeling something so great, so powerful, even he, the White Magician, was at its mercy.

Yet, Bakura understood what Immaru meant. Their first time had actually been stolen from them. Dark and White magic had interfered with their senses. It had triggered their bodies to act on their own, to open a gateway to Magic. Bakura was glad Light won over Darkness, otherwise he would never experience what he was experiencing right now. Although, the only time they were ever intimate sent unimaginable waves of pleasure, Bakura was sure he never felt something this real, this intense, this right with anybody he ever knew.

Emotions and bodily lust merged into something great. Unable to control his urges any longer, Thief King banged Immaru’s body with violence. The young king, overpowered by the intensity of the bodily pleasures, failed in controlling his voice, and moaned freely and loudly. When he thought he could not bare any longer, when he thought his heart could not give another beat, his lungs would cease exhaling, the most ecstatic sensation took over his body, shut his mind and made him scream from sublime joy.

Bakura collapsed on top of Immaru. They panted madly, their heartbeats raced unhealthily, their bodies were numb from exhaustion. The Egyptian was completely drained and, after long minutes, he finally had the strength to get from on top Immaru and shift to the side. He gazed upon his lover, his Akkadian king, and knew he would never be contented with anybody else in his life. After years of solitude, of a selfish lifestyle, he had finally found somebody he wanted to share his life with. Their breaths stabilized progressively. They faced each other, locking their gazes with intimacy and confidence. Immaru smiled and was the first one to talk.

“I can’t believe the White Priests wanted me to abstain from something as great as this.” The Moon king said. Bakura chuckled amused.
“What will they think about their pure innocent king now, corrupted by the carnal desire for an Egyptian outlaw?” Thief King jested, but Immaru understood the subtle undertone of bitterness.

“There is nothing corrupt about what we just did.” The teenager spoke with such determination, it surprised Bakura. “How can they consider the expression of love as anything else but pure and innocent?”

“You think this is love?” Thief King questioned hopeful, his heart bouncing from insane longing. How he wanted Immaru to be right. How he needed Immaru to be right. To feel something good. Something pure and innocent like his lover claimed. Because these were things he lost when he was just a small and defenseless child. Things he thought he had lost forever when he watched his people be melted in fire, when he made an evil pact with Zorc.

“If this is not love, what else could it be?” Immaru interrogated, while he turned to face Bakura properly. “Tell me, Bakura. What is this?”

“Its…” Thief King started but lost his tracks. What was this thing he was feeling? He gave a proper look at Immaru. He saw the seriousness in the boy’s gaze. And felt all warm and fuzzy at the thought he had just given himself to him, body and soul. So, what was it he was experiencing.

“For the first time in my life – and it has been an extremely long life, believe me – I want to share my days, my time, my thoughts and feelings, sorrows and happiness, I want to… I want to share everything – everything, with you.” Bakura confessed and Immaru smiled sweetly at him. He kissed his lips before speaking.

“What else can be purer and more innocence than the feeling of being completed by somebody else? It is love.” Immaru spoke with an unwavering conviction. But Bakura had something that worried him. It wasn’t about what he and the monarch felt, but what others thought.

“What if the White Priests disapprove our relationship?”

“They can go to Hell! I am the Moon king and the White Magician. I am the most powerful person in this world and if they dare to step between you and me, they will regret it!” The Moon king spoke with an uncharacteristic fiery determination that reminded Bakura of Dumuzi. “Our paths, our lives, our destinies…they crossed for some reason. And it goes beyond the eternal battle between Light and Darkness. Its something greater. It’s like… It’s like…” Immaru could not find the words to finish his thoughts, but Bakura understood perfectly what he meant.
“It’s like our lives were designed to meet each other and complete the other.” The Egyptian said and he witnessed a light flash in Immaru’s eyes.

“Yes! That’s it! That’s exactly it!”
The present

Tousoku looked one last time at his reflection. He wished Immaru was here to explain him what was going on. From early on, the Moon king seemed to have all the answers to all the mysteries of the world. During the lifetime he shared with the White Magician, he never ceased to be surprised by the wisdom and knowledge the monarch had about life, death, relationships and all other great questions Mankind had. Immaru always seemed to have the answer to everything.

The Egyptian sighed heavily. Why did he return to this timeline? Why was he reborn with the same body as 5,000 years ago? Why was he living a complete new life and was now cursed to remember what he lived millennia ago?

“It’s the magic of the Millennium Items.” He could almost hear Immaru tell him. “It’s the collateral damage of its Dark Magic. And somehow, you and the Pharaoh were affected by it. Maybe it’s because once your souls were imprisoned in a Millennium Item. You are ultimately paying the price of one man’s crime. You both are his true victims.”

Bakura sighed again, unhappy with what his imaginary Immaru had revealed him. But then, in his mind, the White Magician told him something a bit more hopeful.

“See it as a second chance. You have carried all your life the burden of guilt. Now it’s your opportunity to fix things with Ryou. You can make him happy, just like you once made me happy.”

Bakura smiled painfully and forced tears away from his eyes. The ghost of Immaru in his thoughts was hurting him. The former thief longed for him so badly.
“I miss you.” Bakura whispered.

There was no answer.

…

A few hours later

There was a loud noise of happy chatter and laughter. Tousoku entered the restaurant to realize he was the last guest to arrive. He was merrily welcomed, and his eyes quickly met Yami. The Pharaoh greeted with a silent nod and his eyes signed him to look further on the other side of the table. Ryou was sitting at the end of the long table, Malik sitting next to him and Duke opposite the blond. They were engaged in a cheerful conversation. The scene was so familiar, so recognizable, that for moments Tousoku saw the three Akkadians back in their youth. But this image dissipated quickly and he was no longer in Akkad’s royal dining room, but in a low-cost Egyptian restaurant from the 21st century. And then Ryou saw him. He gestured to the chair opposite him, the only place that was still vacant. The Egyptian wondered if it had been a coincidence. He wondered if Yami had somehow played a role on this. Anyhow, he felt his heartbeat increase while his legs moved towards the empty chair. His limbs felt like jelly and he felt like he was walking extremely slowly. But in just a moment, he was pulling the chair and sitting down. During all that time, he and Ryou did not break eye contact.

Malik looked from one to the other, giggled childishly and elbowed Ryou. The white-haired boy looked at the other and gave him an upset look. Tousoku gasped at the realization the boys were communication wordlessly, like their Akkadians’ counterparts used to. Everything was different now and yet, nothing has changed.

“This is Malik. He’s my best friend. The Museum’s director’s son.” Ryou eloquently introduced, while he tried to ignore whatever wordless message the sand-haired boy was sending him. Tousoku did not miss the way the pale cheeks turned suddenly pink.

They chatted, laughed and teased each other like in the Ancient times. Tousoku was relieved Yugi and his idiotic friends had chosen to pester the Pharaoh instead of him, so he could talk properly with Ryou and the other two boys.

“I’m telling you! There is enough evidence in Ancient Texts pointing to the existence of magic in Ancient Egypt.” Ryou said clearly annoyed with Malik’s mocking giggling. “They have whole descriptions about practices that are nothing more than instructions.”
“Yeah, ancient magic is as real as vampires and werewolves.” Malik jested. “No, wait, you believe they exist too!”

“Not the way literature and movies portray them, you idiot! Where do you think all these myths and occult stuff come from?” Ryou retorted, his annoyance clearly growing into irritation. “There is always a truth in myths and legends. Even if it’s tiny, even if it’s only 1%, but there always is a historical origin.”

“Nonsense. They come imagination, not history.” Malik said in a carefree manner.

“Really? Despite the you-know-what, you really believe that?” Ryou questioned while he crossed his arms. Malik’s laughter died out almost instantly. Both Duke and Tousoku stared at the sand-haired boy with curiosity. His face had turned grave and somewhat pale.

“Look, sometimes there are things that seem not to have a logical explanation, but I am sure, one day, science will be able to solve all these mysteries.” Malik said in a cautious manner. “You cannot explain everything with magic and the occult.”

“You know that’s nonsense. You don’t even believe your own words.” Ryou accused.

Duke glanced towards Tousoku mystified. The Egyptian was silent for a moment, having recognized Immaru’s spark in Ryou’s person. He wondered what the boys were talking about. He could imagine it having something to do with astrology or cartomancy, since the Ryou from his past was attracted to these mysteries and even practiced them sometimes. “Do you believe in the supernatural?” The white-haired boy asked Duke and Tousoku.

“I’m sorry, way too down to Earth.” Duke said in an apologetic manner. Malik’s face was a mix of victory and unease. Suddenly Tousoku realized he had three pair of eyes staring back at him.

“Ehm – Yeah, why not? I mean – I’m sure there could exist something of the spiritual level that we don’t understand or recognize in our walking lives. Like energies or something.” Tousoku said uncertain gaining a snort from Ryou.

“People that dream with future events, intuition, people able to cure others with their touch, Cancer patients able to heal themselves with positive thoughts. Coincidences that are too strange to be just a coincidence. The list goes on. How do you explain those things?” Ryou insisted.
“I admit it. You don’t. Still, I’m sure there is an explanation. We just don’t know which one yet.” Malik said for Ryou’s evident aggravation.

“I hate you.” The white-haired boy said without any sentiment and Malik smiled.

“We both know you don’t.” Was the triumphant answer. Malik and Ryou switched accomplice looks, their lips drew a grin until they both giggled in amusement. Tousoku was glad things weren’t as different as he had expected. The kids may not be twins anymore, but it was evident, their friendship was of a brotherly level.

As the evening went on, the friends left the restaurant to go to a cozy bar. The night was lively, and everybody was having fun. At some point, Ryou went outside alone, having said something about catching some fresh air. Tousoku saw his chance to be alone with the boy and joined him shortly after. When Ryou saw him, he smiled.

“Did you mean, what you said before?” Ryou asked. “About magic.”

“Yeah, I did mean it.”

“You didn’t sound that sure. You don’t think I’m crazy or delusional, do you?”

“No! Absolutely not!”

“Good. By the way, Malik doesn’t either.”

“So, what happened for him to be convinced?”


“I won’t make fun of you.”
“Sometimes I guess things. It’s more of an intuition thing. I somehow know when friends or my father are in trouble. It has happened several times that I’m in England and I know Malik is sick. I once… I once dreamt with him having an accident with his new bike. I warned him and described exactly how it happened. The same day, Malik went for a ride and suddenly he recognized my dream’s description. He managed to avoid a collision that could have been fatal.”

“That is pretty scary.” Tousoku admitted and was somehow not entirely surprised the boy still had a small part of magic living in him. They started to pace in silence for a short while. Then Ryou stopped to look at Tousoku.

“Do you believe in reincarnation?” The teenager asked quietly and Tousoku felt his heart jump. He wondered if the kid remembered. No, he was certain he did not. Immaru had lived a very long time ago. There must have been many lives in between and the memories must have all faded away with the passing of centuries. But, perhaps not totally. A glimmer of hope still survived.

“Definitely.” The Egyptian hadn’t noticed they had been walking for a while now and the loud noises from the bar were left behind, becoming a murmur in the background. Ryou smiled and looked at the full moon. His eyes were lit, and his smile was like one greeting an old friend.

“Isn’t she beautiful?” The teenager asked. Tousoku looked up and nodded. “Sometimes I wonder, what the moon has witnessed all these millennia. How many lives has she seen. How many civilizations she witnessed, their growth, their downfall.” The boy sighed and paused looking thoughtful. He then turned to face Tousoku. “They say, when we reincarnate, we meet the people we loved the most in other lives.”

“That’s a nice thought.”

“It is, isn’t it?” They both stared back at the moon and Tousoku wondered if she could remember him as Bakura, the outlaw. “Tousoku?” Ryou whispered cautiously and the Egyptian turned to face the boy. The way the light touched his pale perfect features was exactly the same way the moon caressed Immaru’s face. The teenager looked exactly the same as when the White Magician was Ryou’s age.

“Yes?” The Egyptian asked hopefully.

“I think we’ve met before. I don’t remember you, but I’m pretty sure I’ve met you. Am I making any sense?”
“Not really.” Tousouku said amused. “But I understand you perfectly. For I feel exactly the same way.”

The way Ryou smiled at his answer, that wide, beautiful and innocent smile melted his heart. How he wished to tell the teenager who they once were, the adventures they lived together, the time they shared together. But he knew he could not. Because this was Ryou and not Immaru anymore. And yet, he was, under the moon light, still the embodiment of the Moon king. They remained a long while staring at the moon, each lost in their own personal thoughts. There was no kissing, there no touches, no hands shyly brushing. But both could feel the power of an intimacy that was much older than the few hours they spent together. It felt pleasant, comfortable and natural. It felt real.

At a certain point, Malik called them back inside. They were going to play a card game and he needed his friend to be his partner. Tousoku and Ryou switched glances and the white-haired boy gave a knowing smile at the older man. The former Thief King knew, at that specific moment, a new chapter in his life had just begun.

THE END

Chapter End Notes

It was so difficult to write the two final chapters. I was scared to linger too long or be too short at anything. Mainly this last chapter was a struggle. I kept changing it, created so many versions, all of them in which Tousoku and Ryou would get involved romantically. Yet, I was never happy with the ending. I think they felt too cheesy, too far-fetched and too unrealistic (in the sense they would hook up right away). So, I ended up writing a completely different version than I originally planned. They meet, there is attraction but, whatever follows, will have to be built with time. An open end, thus.

I'm sorry to tell you, there will be no sequel. The tale of the Sun and Moon kings is over. The story I wanted to tell is told. To be honest, I have no ideas to continue this anyway.

Yet, and the invitation comes right here, if you have the inspiration and want to start a new story from where I ended, I would be delighted to read it.

It feels strange, I have the feeling I am saying goodbye to this story and to my dear Immaru and Dumuzi.

Thank you for following this story and hopefully you enjoyed all 36 chapters. Let me know your thoughts in the comments.

Lots of love, DarkTragicAngel
End Notes

There are 2 time periods in Yugi-oh.
In the Japanese version, Yami lived 5,000 years ago, in the USA version it's 3,000.
I'm sticking to the original version, thus 5,000. Just like Yugi-oh, historically it is NOT accurate.

The Akkadian Empire was established in 2,334 BC and ended 2,154 BC. I chose this highly developed civilization because it co-existed with Ancient Egypt. Mainly because the main goddess of the empire's capital Akkad was the goddess Ishtar.
Not adding any further information for now. The clue is given. You may theorize!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!