Shadows of an Empire
by Archaeologyfiend

Summary

Bill Weasley has a secret. A secret that is about to threaten not only the wizarding world but also that of the Millennium holders. Add to that, two ancient Princesses, a man 10,000 years of age and Voldemort attempting to get powers beyond his imagination and this might be the end of the wizarding world as they know it...

Notes

So this is not going to be added to for a while but colour me curious as to the reaction this will get. This is not going to be the typical crossover even if there might be elements that have become a typical trope here. It's going to start off slow and while there might be OC's (beware), they are not the most essential element in this story and are mostly background noise in the grand scheme of things if you're put off by that sort of thing. Also, some historical aspects here as well ;)

Hope you enjoy and enough of me musing for now

See the end of the work for more notes
Chapter 1

5 Years Ago

The tomb was icy cold as Bill descended into the depths of the earth. This was not a tomb that was open to the public - in fact it was one not usually open to wizards either. Especially not wizards who were newly hired Curse-Breakers at Gringotts. But, considering he was the most talented of those working for them and after having to undergo a rather unusual-but-nonetheless rigorous test by the Egyptian Ministry, he had been given access to this long-lost place that only a few had entered.

The tomb was unusual for a number of reasons. It was relevant to what the Ministry referred to as the 'Shadow Era' of Egyptian History- an early period about 5000 years ago dating back to the early Dynastic period that was shrouded in several questions. Not much was known about this era and it was one that Bill had based his entire application for working in Egypt on. The paper had been panned within the modern world but the Egyptian Ministry had been intrigued and had invited him for a test that Bill wasn't entirely sure how he had passed. The first few stages had been simple-prove his skills as a Curse breaker, his abilities in general magic, his studies of Muggle archaeology and knowledge of local languages and dialects. Then things had gotten stranger: how far was he willing to go to keep a secret, how well did he tell lies and what did he usually lie about? And then one bizarre test where he had been forced to sit in a room filled with dark, whispering shadows until a little girl, clearly native to the country had approached him with a smile and said that he had passed. Passed what, Bill was still unsure, but he hadn't questioned it.

And now, here he was, descending into the tomb of an ancient Princess of a neighbouring kingdom to see what her tomb could tell him of the mysterious period of Egyptian History. Her name had been Haphiri, and there were more curses on the tomb than that of Pharaoh Set's. It was odd- the curses were numerous but Bill didn't need to disable them. In fact, they almost seemed to ignore him altogether. Bill was relieved that it was easier than he had expected but also ill at ease. Why were they ignoring him and why was he being allowed this far into the tomb? He didn't even have a guide.

Reaching another inner chamber and, at the other end, he was facing a doorway covered in gold leaf and stamped with various hieroglyphs. While he couldn't read them from here, Bill could almost feel that this was the burial chamber. He was so close…

There was a far-away groan, and the whole room shook ominously. The light from his wand flickered and died, leaving no light but that of an eerie glow somewhere high up above him. There must be a hole leading to the surface Bill thought as he desperately muttered "Lumos!". Except, nothing was happening and the shadows seemed to loom ever closer. Bill had never been particularly scared of the dark but there was something oppressive about these shadows. Something that reeked of Dark Magic, of a kind that Bill very much did not want to interact with. Silently cursing the fact that magic was clearly not going to work down here, Bill did the next best thing and dived for the wall just as the tomb shook again. There was a loud grinding noise from behind him and then a dull thud as some kind of door, triggered by a trap that Bill had unknowingly stepped into, sealed off the way he had come in. And with that, he was trapped, alone, in the darkness.

Swallowing, Bill reached out to carefully brush against the wall he knew was to his left. There was technically nothing between him and the door except… except the whispering was back again. It was faint at first- too faint to be made out in fact. And then, almost as if something had slithered down his back, they were almost as loud as if his younger brothers were there screaming at each other. Shuddering off the horrific feeling, Bill tried to make out what they were saying but it was either indecipherable, or some kind of language that he could not understand.
Whatever it was, he did not want to meet what else was in these shadows.

*Why won't my wand work?* Bill thought desperately to himself as he staggered forward, one shadow in front of him seeming to shift in the dank murky light, screeching in that odd tongue as it went. *Why would the tomb let me this far only to stop me right now? Unless... unless it's not the Burial Chamber that they want me to go to.* That thought pulled him up short and, as he took a step backwards, the shadows seemed to slither away a bit, the cold dread that had settled in his stomach easing ever so slightly. Clearly, something or someone wanted him to go somewhere in this tomb. But not into its most sacred chambers. An oddity, considering it was the Egyptians who revered this part of the ceremony the most, despite the fact that this tomb was built during the beginning of the prolific pyramid builders. Not that it truly mattered- tombs from the Shadow Era were designed to prevent people from getting into them, with only a certain select few even knowing their locations. And if the Egyptian government had tested him in such a way to prove that he was worthy of entering these tombs then he must give them some evidence to back that up with. And so, against all advice his father had ever given him, he straightened up and prepared to enter into the jaws of whatever was about to throw itself at him.

"Hello? I know that there's someone here with me," he started, shuddering as the feeling of being watched, which had been a constant niggling sensation throughout his entire time in the tomb even if it had only been pushed to the back of his mind, intensified. "I won't enter the Burial Chamber if you don't want me to. But I need to know where you want... where you need me to go." The silence stretched on, as if this thing was waiting for something. But what else was there? And then... of course, Bill thought. *Egyptian style tomb- it will want the most important thing to have power over me.* "My name is William Weasley," Bill said, pushing the shakiness from his voice, despite how bone chillingly terrifying this experience was and praying to every known deity that this wouldn't backfire. "Everyone calls me Bill though."

*Giggle.* Bill blinked as, suddenly and without warning, the torches mounted on the walls lit up, bathing the room in light and revealing exactly who had been watching him. Blood red lips turned up into a wicked smile as the girl from the ministry peeked around her waist, giggling like some great joke had just been said. And then those terrifying lips parted, the words cold as the air in the room.

"Well, well, Bill Weasley. Has no one told you what power a name can have?"

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**Present Day**

His parents were arguing again. Bill internally sighed as he leaned back against the wall, waiting it out while the others were doing their best to subtly stay in the room. It wasn't as if it was an argument he hadn't heard before- as one of only three of his siblings of age, and the only one currently at Order headquarters, he was used to being used as the reason why the others should be able to sit in on order meetings. Not that Bill was particularly bothered by these meetings- his adventures in Egypt had shown him far more terrifying dangers than even the threat of Lord Voldemort. And while he had sympathy for Harry and his friends, he was also tasked with something completely different than what his parents actually knew.

Something that he just knew was going to come back to haunt him soon enough by the sound of the conversation in the corner.

Turning away from the current argument he tuned in slowly to the whisperings between Snape and the Headmaster in the corner. Bill had a new level of respect for the Potion's Master- after that first terrifying meeting with *her* and a rigorous crash course in mental protections he had been banished back to his country to 'seek out the man with the best mental fortifications that she had seen in 5000
years'. After the first initial contact and what he had thought was a discreet letter, he had been summoned back into the Potion Master's presence, dressed down on inept use of secret letters and a lecture on not being a complete dunderhead in the presence of 5000 year old half Akkadian princesses, then sat down into an even more intense series of lessons on Occlumency. After that, Bill wouldn't have called them friends but he was certainly on more even ground with Snape than many of the other Order members.

"I don't think that is a good idea Headmaster," Snape was saying, eyes flitting over to Bill for a moment before returning to watching the others. If Dumbledore noticed, he didn't say anything but Bill was sure that Snape at least knew he was listening.

"Come now, Severus. You must see the benefits, especially considering that there will be others who will be new," Dumbledore said, tone reasonable, but Bill could hear the slight manipulation underneath it. Something he hadn't heard, or been blind to, during his time at Hogwarts. Snape seemed to have heard it too as his lip curled.

"Perhaps you would be better off consulting those who know them better than I." Snape looked as if he wished to be anywhere else as Dumbledore just smiled genially.

"Ah, yes, but I want you to be aware in case any of them end up in your house…" Snape merely scowled all the harder, eyes hard.

"And if they don't agree?" There was silence at their end of the kitchen as Sirius finally managed to soothe his younger siblings into leaving with underhanded promises to share some information with them and loudly stating to his mother that they ought to know the essentials, even if they didn't divulge all details of the meetings. His father looked as if he wanted to agree but was also afraid of what his wife's opinion might be while his mother turned her rage on Sirius instead.

"Why would they not agree? All children are fascinated by magic," Dumbledore said quietly, a twinkle in his eye. Snape shot him a slightly disgusted look.

"Not those that have lived in such a technological country, they won't." Ah, that was what they were talking about. The attacks in Japan. Dumbledore had suggested, some meetings ago, around the time that Hermione had arrived, that the four teenagers that had been attacked would be invited to Hogwarts for their 'protection' while they investigated what exactly it had been that Voldemort was looking for there. Alongside this, he had suggested that one of the teen's older sister come to help teach Divination since he could not convince her to teach DADA. Most of the others had been all for it while Bill had internally bashed his head against the table after seeing the list. He had dealt with the Ishtar's very briefly before- his posting rarely dealt with them after their father had been cut off and Marik's antics had pretty much distanced them further from the rest of their people until recently- but the name on the list that would be the most difficult, would be Seto Kaiba.

The man was a business tycoon and Bill had had to deal with him once, and only once. A member of the corporation had come up to him and his charge, asking them to discreetly meet with his boss and, after going, they had been forced into signing several agreements that had left him with a headache and his charge in a bad mood. From what he remembered, he would be the least accepting of anything that he couldn't prove with science. Magic probably didn't exist in his vocabulary. The other two names on the list Bill was less familiar with. Bakura was a name he had heard in the muggle archaeology circuit, but he had never met the man, so hadn't even known he had a son living in Japan, and he had never really heard of Yugi Mutou until recently which had been, of all things, about his hair. He wondered if the others had pictures of it- if not they would be in for a surprise that was for sure.

Snape and Dumbledore never got to finish their argument as the meeting began, but it was clear that
both he and Snape were outvoted. Although, by the sounds of it, he had even more people in mind to invite although why he had yet to figure out. And in the presence of the others, he couldn't exactly ask Snape.

"I believe now that we are all here, we may start?" Dumbledore said, standing up and cutting through Mum and Sirius' argument, not answering Snape's question. Or ignoring it as the case may seem. Mum started, while Sirius merely looked slightly abashed- but never apologetic. It was something that Bill had noticed in the man; he could be cowed but never ashamed, probably some leftovers from his time growing up in this house. It was a very Slytherin reaction, not helped by the fact that, by the sounds of it, Dumbledore had never truly punished the man for his past misdeeds. He got that he wasn't guilty of killing Harry's parents, but other stories that he had gathered from a variety of sources (some even from Snape although he took those with a pinch of salt) led him to believe that Snape did have quite a few reasons to not be fond of the man. It truly didn't help that Sirius had had nothing but his past to use to get through Azkaban and seemed to be stuck somewhere between still acting like a person in his twenties just out of school and the more grown up and responsible man he should have matured into. A fault not his own, but one that he just wasn't getting past and used riling up his old rival as some form of release of tension, an old fallback exacerbated by the memories brought up by the house they were in.

Another reason that Bill found to find issues with Dumbledore's reasonings of locking Sirius up here. There were plenty of places the man could have been hidden than his old house that would worsen his mental state rather than help it.

"Now that we are here, I have a small announcement. As of tonight, I have sent out some Order members to retrieve Harry from his Aunt and Uncle's house due to his upcoming Hearing with the Ministry." Bill started at that, blinking as the rest of the table erupted. It explained why some of the core members were missing, or at the least delayed, from this meeting. Once Dumbledore had calmed the table a little, he continued. "He was attacked by two Dementors and in protecting himself, Cornelius attempted to expel Harry for performing the Patronus in the presence of his cousin." Bill frowned as the table exploded again into noise. Even if the Ministry didn't accept that the Dementors were there- something that they should be easily able to find out- that it was done in the presence of his cousin shouldn't involve expulsion, muggle or not. Since they were family, exceptions were made to magic, accidental or otherwise, in their presence but would only result in some mild form of punishment. And none at all if Harry could prove that the Dementors were there in the first place.

"But is Harry alright?" Mum asked, over everyone else. Bill smiled, happy that out of all the things she could be worried about, it was Harry's health. Typical Mum. Dumbledore gave her an assuring smile, nodding and waving away the rest of the questions.

"Yes, yes, Harry is fine. And Moody will ensure he gets here safely." The Headmaster then turned serious again, face grave. "However, there has been another attack. Death Eaters were spotted in Egypt." Bill's blood ran cold and suddenly that attack in Japan made more sense, if Voldemort had found out about the Shadow Era. The Ishtar's had owned two Millennium Items and he had heard rumours of a third falling into Bakura's hands and most likely given to his son- Bill had never heard of any strange objects worn by the man, especially none made of gold. He wasn't sure what Kaiba or the Mutou boy had to do with this, but if they attacked where he thought they had, he would be in trouble when he returned.

"Where?" he asked, masking the majority of the worry in his voice. Please don't be where I think it is, please don't be where I think it is...

"A site somewhere around the ancient city of Hierakonpolis," Dumbledore said and Bill's fragile hope drained away. "The attack was centered on a group of local magicians there, but they managed
to fend them off long enough for help to come." You mean they feigned being weak so you could sort out your own mess because, by the Gods, they will not get involved. "They have agreed to send two young envoys to Hogwarts, to learn of our magic and help with our research into what Voldemort is looking for." Bill could see the confusion in the others' faces and hoped no one looked at him too closely. Only Snape was watching him and he had no doubt that, had they been alone, he would be interrogated about what he knew; not that Bill could say anything and at the very least Snape would understand that. Especially with his own job. It was at this point that Sirius seemed to remember that Snape was supposed to be a spy.

"And why can't Snivellus just tell us? Since he's in You-Know-Who's inner circle." It was said with a sneer towards the Potion's Master and Bill winced, but was glad for the distraction, wondering how he was going to get out of this. Because there were only two people within the Clans who were of an age to be these envoys and he had the feeling that neither Dumbledore, nor anyone in the Ministry, had any idea of the trouble they were about to dump themselves in. Snape's face twitched and he looked just as irritated by the attention as he always was.

"Because the Dark Lord has not deigned to explain to any of his followers what it is he is looking for. Except that it is something made of gold with the Eye of Wedjet on it,", he snapped back at Sirius. Well, he's not completely right but it won't take him long to figure it out if he's attacking all the right places… There was a flicker in the corner of the kitchen and Bill narrowed his eyes at it. For a brief moment, he thought that he had glimpsed a small figure in white but it couldn't be…

He was snapped out of his thoughts at a loud thump from the hallway and the screaming of Sirius' mother. A moment later and Harry, looking as scruffy as he ever did in the muggle clothing provided to him by his family, stumbled into the kitchen. For a kid recently attacked by Dementors and now dragged to a strange house with a screaming portrait, he didn't seem anymore affected than perhaps bafflement as to why he was here rather than at the Burrow. And then he spotted Bill and confusion flitted across his face.

"Uh… hi Bill," he said awkwardly and Bill smiled warmly at him. They had barely spoken to each other, only having met the year before at the Quidditch World Cup briefly. And while he had heard all of Ron's stories about Harry and the fun they had at Hogwarts, he was sure that Harry had probably heard far fewer about him, other than perhaps his official job as a curse-breaker in Egypt.

"Hello Harry," he replied, gesturing for him to sit down. "They'll probably get her to stop shouting soon." Harry blinked, sat and then frowned.

"Where are we?" he asked, although the tone suggested he truly wanted to say why are we here?

"Grimmauld Place, the Headquarters of the Order of the Pheonix," Bill told him, not caring for his mother's stern rules about information regarding the Order and its activities. "Well, technically it's Sirius' parents' house, but while he's hiding out here he offered it to Dumbledore to make this the headquarters when he wanted to revive the Order with Voldemort's return." Harry's mouth opened in an 'oh' just as his mother walked back into the room, eyes flashing in such a way that meant she had heard every word Bill had said.

"And that's quite enough of that!" she snapped at him and Bill shrank back in his seat. It wasn't often these days that he earnt his mother's ire, but it was just as intense as when he had been much younger. The younger boys might argue back but Bill was the eldest and therefore, had been given the harshest punishments since he was the one that was supposed to be the role model. "Harry's much too young to be any part of the Order!" She then turned to Harry, scowl dissolving into a sad smile as she looked over Harry critically, bustling around the kitchen preparing a meal for him. "Oh, look at you! Much too thin, what are those people feeding you?" she stated, piling food onto a plate.
Harry didn't seem to mind, just starting to scarf the food down as quick as he could. Bill deducted that the answer to that was not much.

"Mum, it's not exactly as if we're discussing anything too important," Bill pointed out. Well, to them they weren't. "Besides I'm sure that Ron and Hermione will be telling him about the new students soon enough." His mother shot him a scathing look but Harry, mouth full of food, turned to look at him questioningly. Bill shrugged nonchalantly, fiddling with his wand. "For their safety apparently. Hermione probably knows more than I do- she's been investigating them like mad," he said with a grin. Well, if Kaiba did end up coming she would have a challenge in someone just as intelligent as her, if not more so. The man was a child genius billionaire after all, and it would be interesting to hear how he interacted with Malfoy. Harry blinked a couple of times and then smiled between bites, clearly thinking of his friend, before it fell a bit. Bill wondered at that, but the white flash caught his eyes once again. That had definitely not been his imagination.

"Bill, where are you going? The meeting isn't over!" Mum asked, looking slightly alarmed as he stood. He smiled at her, grabbing his wizard's robes from behind him.

"Sorry Mum, I've got to be getting back. Especially after the latest news. I'll be needed to make sure everything's in the right place!" He rounded the table to give his mother a goodbye hug and winked at Harry who was watching him curiously and obviously thinking he was being covert about it. "Tomb Robbers are an issue even in this day and age." He felt his mother relax in his arms slightly, probably thinking that he was going to reveal something to Harry that she deemed inappropriate. He'd leave that to Sirius.

After saying similar goodbyes to his father he slipped out of the front door of the building and, after turning the corner and making sure no one was around, he was about to disapparate when a pale hand tapped his arm. He turned to see Snape, hood pulled over his head, Death Eater mask in hand and clearly on his way to another meeting, standing in the shadows of an alley. Had this been five years ago, he would have been freaking out but he had seen worse than this. He allowed himself to be pulled into the alleyway, knowing that Snape would not have done this if he thought they would be seen.

"You know what it is the Dark Lord is looking for." It was not a question and Bill wasn't surprised.

"You know who the envoys are." Snape raised an eyebrow and merely nodded so Bill continued. "It's ancient magic and it won't give him anything like immortality. People have had their souls stripped from them for less. It doesn't help that the Princesses are on edge- Haphiri has been muttering about some travelling… person raising his head again." Bill wasn't entirely sure what to make of that. He had no idea what exactly she had called the man (when he had figured that that was what she was talking about)- the word she spoke was in her native tongue of early Coptic and all he had gotten from her sister was that it roughly translated to 'stranger from across the seas'. Whatever could scare her like that though, was not something that Bill wanted to meet. Snape didn't seem to either, but he accepted without being told that that was all Bill could tell him.

"Akhefia Kheti and Atem Menes." There was the signature crack as Snape disapparated and Bill allowed his head to fall into his hand. Looks like I'll be going back to Hogwarts after all.
Harry was angry and yet also confused. Just as Bill had said, Hermione was all in a fluster over the new students- one of the many titbits of information that they had been keeping from him. But now, three days later, it was harder to be angry at them with how little they actually knew. Even had they put in their letters what they had discovered, it would barely fit half a page of writing. But he was confused by the news they did have to tell him, coupled with what Sirius had filled him in with. And he couldn't be mad at Bill- that conspiratorial wink probably meant he had actually been inconspicuously sharing the news that Voldemort had attacked those people in Egypt. But why he had attacked a bunch of teenagers in Japan, was another conundrum altogether. Dumbledore had returned the day before to ask Hermione to come with him to speak with the new students, should they accept Dumbledore's invitation, at which point she had argued that she would, so long as Harry and Ron got to go with her. The more the better. Mrs Weasley didn't seem too happy with the suggestion, but Dumbledore had agreed so, later that night, they would be off to Japan. Or at least, very early in the morning, a fact that Ron only seemed pleased about due to the fact that it got them out of chores to rest up for the early start.

Hermione was busy flipping through a magazine that she had brought with her from home on Harry's bed, muttering away to herself while Ron was buried under the covers of his own bed, snoring away. Harry had been attempting to get through some of his homework but found that it was impossible.

"What are you looking for?" Harry asked, mildly exasperated at his friend, who barely glanced up at the interruption. Then again, he rarely saw Hermione reading things from the Muggle world nowadays.

"I could have sworn I had heard the name Kaiba somewhere before. I asked my parents about it, but they haven't answered yet, so I thought I would look through some of my old things," she replied, eyebrows drawn together. Harry blinked, thinking that now that she mentioned it, the name did sound familiar. He hadn't thought too much about it when no one else seemed to know either, but if he was known in the Muggle world, then it was unlikely that anyone else other than Hermione in the house would have. No matter how accepting of Muggles the Weasley's were, they still didn't really interact outside of their own world, even with how much Muggle stuff Mr Weasley collected. It was then that Hermione made a noise of triumph, slapping the magazine down on the bed, the old business journal open to a double page spread showing a teenager and a younger boy pictured outside some huge skyscraper. Why Hermione had a business journal was beyond Harry, but she didn't really talk all that much about what her aims had been before Hogwarts.

"Found him?" Harry asked as he sat down on the other side of her to look more closely at the photo.
The teenager had brown shoulder length hair and piercing blue eyes that were as cold as ice to match his posture. He was dressed in a white suit, hands crossed in front of him and appearing as unfriendly as a person could possibly look. The boy had long black hair that someone must have last-minute tied into a ponytail from how messy it was, and eyes that were only a shade or two darker than the older boy’s. They were a similar shape too, if slightly wider. He seemed much more timid, dressed in some sort of blue uniform and looking somewhat self-conscious. Harry got the feeling that he had been dragged into the photo at the last minute and that the older boy’s scowl had something to do with that. Hermione was nodding vigorously, tapping her finger on the teen’s face.

"Yes. That's Seto Kaiba, CEO and head of the Kaiba Corporation," she stated, picking the magazine up again to scan the article. Harry stared, wondering how someone like that could have gotten mixed up with magic.

"I thought they were some kind of technological company?" Harry asked, and Hermione nodded.

"Mmhm. Hang on, it says something here. The brothers Seto and Mokuba Kaiba have revolutionised the entire Kaiba Corporation, turning it from a weapons manufacturing company into a top contender in the race towards virtual tech in gaming."

Harry felt his eyebrows rise, amazed. He sounded more and more like someone firmly stuck in the Muggle world and he got the feeling that the meeting tomorrow would not go so well if they were introducing him to the magical world.

"It says here that he took over the company when he was thirteen years old and that in two years he turned it from the weapons manufacturer it was under Gozaburo Kaiba and into the gaming company it is today."

"Seriously? How are we going to get someone that busy and important to go to school for a year?" Harry asked but Hermione was biting her lip and shaking her head.

"Not only that, this magazine is two years old. If he was thirteen overtaking the company and fifteen at the time of this article, he'll be approaching eighteen by the time we get to Hogwarts, if he isn't already. He'll be too old to attend."

"But then why would Dumbledore offer? If all he can do are NEWT's, even as a child genius I don't think he could learn enough in a year to complete them," Harry mused out loud. Hermione almost seemed to twitch but seemed to be following that thought.

"Unless Dumbledore plans on having them put with the younger years, I don't know how this will work."

"Them?" Harry asked, confused.

"Well, by the sounds of things they all know each other, and assuming that the place they met was a school, then it's more than likely they're all the same age thereabouts," Hermione explained, and Harry nodded, thinking that it made sense.

The evening passed quickly after that and in no time they were being shaken awake at 1 AM by Mrs Weasley and escorted down to the Portkey. Dumbledore was apparently already in Domino, Japan, so they were meeting him there, at the other end of the Portkey. Finally, after some quick sandwiches and more fussing by Mrs Weasley they each placed a finger on the worn sock that was the Portkey and, with the odd familiar sensation of tugging at his naval, they were gone.

Domino

"They're late," Kaiba stated, scowling from his seat next to his brother and looking thoroughly
misplaced in Yugi's front room. It had seemed sensible at the time- the old man had asked politely after all that it be somewhere discreet and if they were meeting at Kaiba Corporation, it would be more out of place than Seto Kaiba entering the household of his arch rival Yugi Mutou. Despite the public's view, Kaiba had been here before, if only to pick Mokuba up and challenge Yugi to a duel before leaving, on the rare occasions he let his brother come round to try out a new RPG or Capsule expansion.

It didn't make it any less awkward for him to be there.

Marik was scowling right back at Kaiba from his position on the floor next to Ryou, halfway through their own game of Duel Monsters. In fairness to their guests, they were only a few minutes late and not everyone had a private jet, which Yugi had to point out. Kaiba did not look impressed.

"If this was a business meeting I would be gone already." The trouble was, this wasn't a business meeting and that it contained Kaiba's most hated topic. Magic.

"I hope we are not too late," an affable voice asked in English, from somewhere behind Kaiba's head. Marik looked up and Yugi, cursing his short stature, leant to the side so he could see round Kaiba's height. The old man with the odd dress sense was back, along with three teenagers a couple of years younger than them. Two boys and one girl, all three looking around them with curiosity, right up until the girl saw Kaiba and let out a squeak. The ginger boy looked confused as his friend whispered something to his ear. Out of all of them, he looked the most bemused by his surroundings- not unlike Yami when confronted with some new piece of technology. Suffice to say Yugi had banned him from ever using the microwave again.

I didn't know you weren't supposed to put the fork in too came the petulant grumble at the reminder of that incident and Yugi stopped himself from giggling. It was funny now- it had not been when they had the fire brigade here and a dozen worried fans outside, wondering what had happened.

"No, you're not too late. Kaiba just has a meeting to get to," Yugi said, jumping up to greet them. He didn't know if it was true but hopefully it would be a reasonable explanation for Kaiba's constant grumpiness. Ishizu too moved away from the window to join him. He gave them a polite bow, before making the introductions. "Hi! I'm Mutou Yugi, that's Bakura Ryou, Ishtar Marik and his sister Ishizu, and I'm sure you recognize Kaiba Seto and Kaiba Mokuba," he said, gesturing to each person in turn. The ginger boy still looked confused, but the girl smiled brightly at him, holding out a hand awkwardly.

"Hello! I'm Hermione Granger and this is Harry Potter and Ron Weasley," she said, gesturing first to the black-haired boy, and then the ginger boy. "And you know Professor Dumbledore." Yugi nodded, and took her hand, remembering from some long-lost English class that in England they greeted each other with a handshake rather than bows. Kaiba merely grunted behind him, not even having turned around. At least he wasn't being too abrasive yet.

There is a dark magic at work here Yami suddenly stated and Yugi almost jumped.

Where?

I'm not sure. His partner appeared in spirit form, red eyes glancing over the four newcomers uneasily. And whatever made the Pharaoh wary was not something that Yugi particularly wanted to run into. They were still attempting to unravel the mystery that was what they were supposed to do with the God cards. Marik was trying to help in any way he could, but until Yami could figure it out they were at an impasse. Again.

As the four made themselves comfortable, Yugi internally twitching at the fact that only two of them
had removed their shoes, with the girl- Hermione- and her friend she had named as Harry having removed them before they had walked in. Kaiba, however, was openly giving them a glare that Yugi had seen scare away veteran businessmen. Ryou looked mildly alarmed and Marik had returned to their game once seeing who the newcomers were. Then again, Yugi was sure that Marik was more concerned about his own issues at the current moment rather than anyone else's. It had been hard enough trying to sort through the blank gaps that had been the first few months after solving the Puzzle- Marik had had nearly a full lifetime's worth of memories to go through and try to work out what was him and what had been Yami Marik.

"Well, now that we are all settled, have you thought on my offer?" Dumbledore asked, eyeing them over his spectacles. He seemed to briefly glance towards the corner of the room where Yami was standing and then away again.

"Can he see him?" Yugi wondered but brushed that off as Kaiba opened his mouth.

"No. I have neither the time nor the inclination to waste my time on silly tricks and sleight of hand when I have a multinational company to run," he stated forcefully. Dumbledore looked about to answer when Ishizu cut him off.

"Unfortunately, my brother and I are needed here as well. My duties to the museum cannot be put off for however long it will take for you to deal with your… problem." She pronounced the last word as if she had trouble with it although Yugi got the sense she meant something much ruder but, unlike Kaiba, was too polite to say it out loud.

"I won't be able to transfer without permission from my father and he's digging somewhere out by El Armarna at the moment," Ryou said shyly, flipping up a trap card to stop Marik's attack. Yugi nodded, looking at the floor.

"I'm sorry but I can't either. I have upcoming meetings with Kaiba and Industrial Illusions to attend," he said, for once thankful for the title of King of Games. It wasn't that he hadn't wanted to go but it seemed unfair to Yami, who had waited five thousand years to be set free, to run off to learn something for himself. Especially when they were finally on the right track to learn how to free him in the first place. Yami had chided him for the idea, stating that he had waited this long, what was another 365 days to him, but Yugi couldn't bring himself to do it. And now that he was famous in the gaming world, all sorts of companies were clamouring for interviews, quotes, job offers and god knew what else. For the first time, he had been saved by Kaiba, who had batted most of them off, stating that Yugi worked under him alone now, and if they wanted all of these things they would have to go through him first. Personally, Yugi thought it was because Kaiba wanted easy access to challenge him for his title, but it also helped that he got some form of payment for attending all these meetings and interviews, which only helped the Kame Game shop. Plus, he couldn't leave his Grandpa for that long to run the shop on his own.

Dumbledore was looking disappointed but not surprised. The teenagers seemed to have a range of reactions. Hermione looked sad but understanding, Harry looked disappointed and awkward while Ron looked incredulous.

"How could you not want to go to Hogwarts?" he exclaimed, eyes wide. Yugi was taken aback by that, but Kaiba's patience was rapidly running out.

"Quite easily. Especially when its students are clearly not taught any form of manners," he replied scathingly, blue eyes boring into the boy as if he wished he had the ability to set him on fire on the spot. Ron looked set to argue but Hermione elbowed him in the side.

"I am very sorry to hear that, but I must ask that you at least allow some trusted Order members of mine to guard you then? If Voldemort attacks again, you will be unable to defend yourselves,"
Dumbledore asked imploringly. There was a strange twinkle in his eyes, the face of a concerned old man. Not that it would make much of a difference considering that Yami Bakura had set half of them on fire and Yami had set Celtic Guardian on the others, but he supposed that Dumbledore didn't know that and thought they had got away somehow on their own.

"I have top of the range security of my own. I don't need the help of a manipulative old man," Kaiba snapped. "Come on Mokuba. This was a waste of time." Kaiba made to rise but Dumbledore made a polite little cough.

"I understand that this is a lot to take in, but I assure you the danger is real and I'm afraid that Lord Voldemort and his followers will not have much trouble with Muggle technology. I ask that you hear from my students so you know how safe the school is or accept the protection of my Order members." Now even Yami was looking at him with narrowed eyes and by the looks of things Yami Bakura had taken over, one hand slipped into a pocket and no doubt handling a knife. Marik had glanced up at that statement too, sharing suspicious looks with his sister.

"And what would your Lord Flying Death want with us?" Marik asked before Kaiba could retaliate. Ron looked alarmed at the descriptor while Harry looked like he wanted to laugh at Marik's mocking tone.

"I have it from a reliable source that Lord Voldemort is looking for something. Something golden, with an Eye of Wedjet on it." Dumbledore was now looking directly at the puzzle and Yami was suddenly behind Yugi, crouched and ready to take over if need be. "That truly is a remarkable piece of jewellery you're wearing Mr Mutou." Silence reigned in the room and even the Ishtars had stiffened. Unlike Ryou, who could hide the Ring under his shirt, or Ishizu, who could have disguised the Necklace as nothing more than a knockoff, Yugi had nowhere to hide the bulky Puzzle.

"And what of it?" Yugi asked, allowing some of Yami's anger and possessiveness to leak into his voice. If they ever needed to switch in their presence, the less noticeable to change in attitude the better. Dumbledore gave him a genial smile, but there was something in his eyes that Yugi didn't like.

"Nothing. To me. But to Lord Voldemort…" he trailed off and then glanced down at Harry, eyes sad. "Harry has had the poor fortune to have witnessed what he is able to do twice. Both times he barely escaped with his life." Harry twitched, one hand coming up to touch an odd lightning shaped scar that Yugi hadn't noticed in the mess of black hair on his head. Kaiba seemed even less impressed with this, still heading for the door when Dumbledore spoke again. "If you have concerns, you will not be alone in joining the school this year. There have also been attacks in Egypt and the Tomb Keeper Clans have agreed to send two of their own to join them." Kaiba paused as both Maik and Ishizu stiffened, paying much closer attention than they had before.

"Where were these attacks? I have heard no such thing from any members," Ishizu demanded and Dumbledore looked mildly surprised. Even Kaiba looked interested, if in an annoyed detached way.

"A site close to the ancient city of Hierakonpolis," Dumbledore stated. Ishizu frowned.

"I know of no such Clan close to Nekhen," she stated, eyebrows drawn together. Marik looked just as confused but oddly enough Kaiba seemed to have wandered further back into the room. Yugi couldn't read the expression on his face, but from the looks of things, he did know something about this site.

"Do these members have names?" Kaiba asked, voice devoid of any clue to what he was thinking. Even Mokuba looked confused, staring up at his brother as he loomed over the man, something dark in his eyes. Dumbledore appeared startled by this- it was clear that he was not getting the reactions he
had been expecting.

"Ah… yes," he said, clearing his throat a little. "I believe their names are Akhefia Kheti and Atem Menes. An associate of mine is already out there, helping them prepare to move to England and gather school supplies." Something flitted across Kaiba's face, unreadable for how fleeting it was but Yugi would guess that he knew those names. But how, he wasn't sure. Kaiba was adamant in avoiding everything and anything to do with magic, even going so far as to outright refuse any belief of things put right in front of his eyes, stating that facial similarities to an ancient tablet did not make him involved in any way. Ishizu, however, only looked all the more confused.

"You are certain that they are clan members? I have heard no mention of anyone possessing the name of Egypt's first king."

"Huh?" Ron asked, chiming in. Hermione looked as if she were trying to remember something, but it was Marik who answered.

"Menes is one of the names associated with the first Pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt, also referred to in some academic texts as Narmer. He was the first king of the First Dynasty."

Recognition seemed to flood over Hermione's face and even Harry looked a little less confused by this whole ordeal. Ron looked less so but now was hardly the time to be talking about the ancient past when they had an issue on their hands. That Dumbledore claimed to be in contact with Tomb Keepers was something that was hard to believe, but since the attack on themselves, Yugi had the feeling that they had also been looking elsewhere. And if Dumbledore was right and this man was looking for the Millennium Items… There were four out of seven just sitting in this house alone, with all of the people with knowledge to the location of another two. Thankfully, the Eye had been missing since it was been pulled from Pegasus' head, but that could mean anything if Voldemort already had his hands on it.

"I assure you, Mr Weasley has worked with them for many years. He, of all of us, would know if they were lying by now," Dumbledore said, in what sounded to be a reassuring tone. Kaiba was still frowning, but in a way that Yugi had learnt he was thinking hard about something. Usually something he didn't particularly like. Ishizu looked as if she wanted to argue but Marik was the one to cut off anything she might have wanted to say.

"It isn't outside the realms of possibility, sister. Our father wasn't in any particular contact with other Clans while he was alive. There could be those that we don't know about," he said slowly, considering it. Yugi supposed that could be true- neither of the Ishtars spoke much about their past and from what he did know, their father wasn't exactly a pleasant man.

If there are other Clans, they too will know about the Items. But would it not be easier for this Voldemort to focus on us and the Ishtars, with how cut off from them we are? Yami asked and Yugi internally nodded, agreeing with him. To attack these others and have them so readily agree with this man was strange, especially with Ishizu's distaste of the topic. It wasn't as if it had been hard for those who knew how to use the Items to run them off either- if these Tomb Keepers were capable of similar abilities, it was unlikely they had much of a challenge. Unless there is something they want from Dumbledore Yami stated to Yugi's musings.

"I'll go on two conditions," Kaiba suddenly interjected. Yugi blinked and even Yami looked up from where he had been considering the man in the armchair. Bakura, too, looked startled, hand slipping from his pocket, eyes wide. Dumbledore simply smiled, as if that had been his intention all along. "I will have constant contact with my brother, meaning that you will ensure all of my technology works, and that I will be able to return to Kaiba Corporation should I be needed, no matter the time."

Kaiba's face was serious, mouth set in a straight line that showed that he would not budge on that.
Although, Yugi wondered what he meant about the technology… until Hermione spoke up.

"There won't be any way for your technology to work," she said, sounding almost apologetic. "The amount of magic that exists within Hogwarts stops any Muggle technology from working."

*That can't be right* Yami mused. *If it were true, nothing in your house would work with the amount of magic the Puzzle emits.*

*But how did Kaiba know?* Yugi asked. *He made it a condition before she even said anything.*

*I think Kaiba might know more about these people than he is letting on. Why else would he agree so readily now, rather than earlier?* Yugi couldn't help but agree even if he couldn't understand the how of it. Kaiba had wanted nothing to do with this conversation and had been leaving, right up until these other Tomb Keepers were mentioned. A mystery in and of itself that needed to be solved- how had he known about them but the Ishtars hadn't? Marik might have stated that their father was out of contact with the others, but Ishizu had been working on finding any potential Clans they had become estranged from. *But how much of that is their actions?* Yami seemed to agree with him, eyeing their guests up as Kaiba narrowed his eyes at Hermione, then Dumbledore.

"I gave you my conditions. Meet them, or nothing." Dumbledore frowned but nodded and that was that.

Chapter End Notes

And... that's it for now. A little bit of Harry's perspective and what's going on in Japan. Continuitywise, I know that technically Bakura is 'free' of the spirit as this point (before he reappears in the beginning of Dawn of the Duel) but I kept him as it's way more interesting plus I need Yami Bakura for this story. So, he was written back in.

Before I get complaints, I have also rewritten Kaiba's backstory a bit (cough a lot cough) as well because, again, needed for later. As you may have realised by the end of this chapter. In terms of Harry Potter, I always find it interesting that Hermione reads like mad but you never hear her reading Muggle books/materials and, as an avid reader myself, I find that weird. So I assumed that she does, but generally tends to do so out of sight of others or at home during the holidays. That aside, more Dumbledore manipulation for you with a dash of Kaiba dishing it right back out to him.

(Also does anyone else question how an Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh understands technology automatically?)

Thank you to all the reviews and please keep them coming!
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

So head's up now- next chapter may be a little late. I am insanely busy at the moment, not helped by my laptop deleting half of chapter 4 so I'm going to say that the next update will be, at earliest, in two weeks. I'm sorry that you'll have to wait but, hopefully, this chapter will keep you entertained for a while.

Thank you to everyone you reviewed, favourited and followed this story so far, and I'm glad your enjoying it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This is going to get very confusing was the first thought that ran through Bill’s head as the four exhausted teenagers stumbled through the door of Grimmauld Place. There was little more than a week left before the beginning of term and Kaiba had insisted that they travel via airplane. It was bad enough that he was going to have to share a room both before and after term started, he had been insistent that he would have control over how they arrived. And Bill’s eyes were immediately drawn to his much shorter acquaintance with crazy tri-coloured hair that had obviously been gelled into spikes around his head. Don’t see many punk inspired hairstyles in the wizarding world he mused, wondering what the others thought of him. He made a note that he had less blonde in his hair at the very least than he had seen before.

Kaiba, however, stopped the moment he spotted Bill waiting at the end of the hallway, eyes narrowing. He got taller was the first thought that entered Bill’s head followed by, he probably hasn’t told them.

There was a moment as the pair stared at each other, right up until the young Egyptian boy fell into Kaiba and started swearing at him in Arabic. Kaiba immediately scowled and dropped whatever it was he had been thinking, allowing Bill to slip away. The others wouldn’t be here for another week, arriving the day before the train left considering that not only did they have to go through their last chores, but there was also the issue of checking on the tombs. Bill wasn’t particularly sure what that entailed and had decided long ago that he really didn’t want to.

He wandered upstairs, towards the rooms that would be theirs and considered what his next move would be. No matter what happened in the near future, there was no doubt that Dumbledore had spotted the Puzzle. And from the feel of the Shadows in the air, there was more than likely more among the others. Gods, I didn’t even know what the Puzzle looked like before now he found himself thinking as he pulled up next to the door the read Yugi and Seto. Well, subtlety had never been something that the Weasleys were ever accused of. Bill pulled out a marker and hoped that what he was about to do would work.

“Need some help?” a voice asked from behind him and Bill jumped, concealing his yelp with the shouts of Mrs Black’s portrait. By the sounds of it, one of the boys had just knocked that stupid troll stand over. The woman at his elbow smiled, something that was as terrible as it was beautiful.

“Princess Haphiri,” Bill acknowledged and the ghostly woman’s eyes gleamed in pleasure. She gestured for him to continue and Bill swallowed. Here goes nothing.
Carefully, he inscribed the names of the two boys again in hieroglyphs, below those in English. Then, checking that no one was coming towards him, he quietly muttered the spell which he knew by heart, even if he had never performed it before. Haphiri seemed to smile as Bill felt that internal *click*, telling him that it had worked. Allowing a tiny triumphant smile on his face, he moved over to the next door, repeating the process for Marik and Ryou.

“You have missed a name,” the princess intoned from behind him, making Bill jump again, right as he had finished. Bill blinked, and she gave him a long look. It took his now drained mind a moment to catch on.

“Hard to miss a name that no one knows,” he stated flatly.

“Even so.” She gestured towards the door and Bill sighed, moving back towards it. He would have to do this fast-no doubt Kaiba would be up here as soon as he possibly could, and the others would want some rest from the eight-hour time difference. Quickly, he drew an empty cartouche with nothing but a drawing of what Haphiri called the Sennen Eye in it and murmured the same protection spell.

“Am I going to need one for the others?” he asked when he finished. The two Tomb Keepers would be able to do their own, but these newcomers didn’t know what Dumbledore was capable of when on a mission, so Bill had helped them out a bit as he was bid by his mistress. Haphiri’s eyebrows drew together as she frowned, the shadows of the hall deepening.

“No. Necrophades can burn in your hell and then be devoured by Ammut.” And then she was gone, as suddenly as she had appeared.

Bill wondered if Dumbledore had even sensed that she was here.

*Did you sense that?*

*Huh?* Yugi blinked blearily at Yami’s question, glancing sleepily to the side to find his partner staring at the ceiling as if it would give him the answers to all his questions.

*There was… It felt like…* It was rare for Yami to be so caught off guard that he was speechless. He usually had an answer for pretty much anything that was thrown at them. But now, he seemed confused, staring resolutely above them as if there something off about the ceiling. It looked normal to Yugi, the most normal thing that was in this house. *I could have sworn that I felt some stirring of Shadow Magic* Yami stated but he sounded unsure.

*Bakura? Marik?* Yugi suggested, slumping further down in his seat, wanting nothing more than sleep. It was midday now in England, despite the fact that his brain was telling him that he should be going to sleep *now*. He did not have the mental fortitude to be wondering about anything Shadow Magic related. Why couldn’t it wait until he had had a nap?

*No, it felt like… I don’t know…* Yami trailed off, looking more confused than ever. There was a sadness behind the perplexed attitude of the Pharaoh-as if he had caught some semblance of a memory only to have it slip through his grasp once more. It was something that happened every now and then, odd flashes of Yami suddenly thinking *this is familiar*, only for it to escape his grasp. Usually, Yugi was more in tune with him but the jet lag had fogged his mind to it, right until this very moment. He blinked a couple of times and then gently nudged Marik, who was only looking slightly more awake than he felt.

“Hey Marik, the Pharaoh thought he felt Shadow Magic being used.” Yugi murmured in
Japanese, just to be sure. They had been left in the kitchen and, while Kaiba looked as if he wanted
to demand to be let into his room, he was more interested in getting his laptop started. It seemed to be
working perfectly in the kitchen of this magical house, so Yugi was doubting that it was magic that
prevented technology from working at Hogwarts. The balding ginger man who had introduced
himself as Mr Weasley, Ron’s father, seemed fascinated with it although Kaiba was steadfastly
ignoring him while checking his emails. Bakura looked to be actually asleep.

“Yeah,” Marik murmured, blinking rapidly at Yugi. “It startled me earlier, just before that stupid
painting started screaming.” Yugi vaguely remembered Marik jumping and then falling over a
particularly grotesque umbrella stand, the noise rousing a rather loud portrait. Both Yami Bakura and
Kaiba had sworn at it before some others had wrestled the curtains shut. They were now being
served food by Mr Weasley’s wife.

“You did?” Yugi was surprised- he hadn’t felt anything. Although, Yugi was only just starting to
get the hang of it while Marik had been taught since he could talk.

“Mm.” Marik looked ready to join Ryou in sleeping.

“The Pharaoh thought it was familiar.” That seemed to rouse Marik, who sat up like Yugi had
just electrocuted him.

“What?” he half shouted, causing half the room to jump.

“I’m sorry dearie, was there something you needed?” Mrs Weasley asked, turning around to find the
problem, wand held at the ready. Marik flushed and muttered “Nothing,” in English before turning
back to Yugi.

“But he doesn’t have any memories? And what could be familiar to him in this place?” Marik
asked, voice lower but eyes oddly frantic. Yugi shrugged, just as confused as Yami was himself.

“It… happens sometimes. Like when seeing the Tablet for the first time. He sort of sees things
and they feel familiar but he doesn’t know from what, where or why,” Yugi tried to explain.

“But I don’t know why that would happen here unless there was some artefact hiding away
that wants him to find it.” Marik shrugged as Mrs Weasley, smiling, placed a pile of food in front
of them all, floating them over with her wand. Kaiba’s face twitched at the blatant use of magic, but
dutifully went about eating the meal as if it were just another chore.

He was less appreciative when she tried to feed them another two helpings.

“But you’re all far too skinny!” she protested when Kaiba refused her again. Yugi wondered if he
should tell her that that was more because of their natural metabolisms rather than any kind of
underfeeding. Bakura barely seemed to notice, after being roused to eat something, and Yugi decided
to save them all from her mother henning. It wasn’t that bad, but for Kaiba it probably seemed like
some exquisite form of torture.

“Er… Mrs Weasley thank you for the meal, but we’re all so tired… if you could show us to our
rooms I’m sure we’ll all be more awake and hungry later,” Yugi said, with his best puppy dog eyes.
Marik looked startled and then turned away, his shoulders shaking suspiciously. Even Kaiba’s lips
twitched in what could have been a smile. Since Marik had never been present for any of Yugi’s
‘panda bear’ moments as Joey had dubbed them, he was just as taken aback as Mrs Weasley, but
recovered much quicker.

“Oh, of course! I’m so sorry, I forgot that it’s such a jump for you!” she said, bustling around the
kitchen and helping Bakura to his feet. Kaiba rose without any help, although there was a slight wobble that denoted how tired he truly was. “This way!” she said cheerily, leading them out of the kitchen and up the stairs. “We’ve put you just down the hall from Harry and Ron. The other two will be here at the end of the week and will be in the room next to yours, Yugi,” she said as they drew level with two doors on the left. The first door had a label reading *Marik and Ryou* in both English and hieroglyphs. Marik raised his eyebrows at that but didn’t question it. Mrs Weasley took no notice as she helped Bakura in and laid him on the bed. He mumbled some form of thanks, curling up on one of the beds and going back to sleep. She then led him and Kaiba next door.

The first thing Yugi noticed was the label. In English was *Yugi and Seto*. Underneath that, was the same again in hieroglyphs (with Kaiba’s name spelt *Set*) but also another cartouche, this one empty of nothing except the Eye displayed on each of the Items. Yugi stared at it, wondering who had put that there.

*This is old magic* Yami stated, sounding as startled as Yugi. *They have included me in the protection spell.*

Really? Yugi stared at the seemingly innocuous label, more confused than ever. Kaiba was waiting for him strangely enough, for the first time not hurrying him along. Mrs Weasley had taken leave of them already and Yugi wondered when she had left.

Yes. I don’t know how, but I know that they have. Whoever did this, however, did *not* include the Spirit of the Ring. There was something odd in Yami’s voice, an undercurrent that Yugi had never heard before. Once upon a time he would have called it anger, but now he recognised it as an odd accent that the Pharaoh would slip into at times. Not quite the same as when he spoke Coptic, and he had never been able to pin it down, but it was always there when he was angry or confused.

Deliberately?

I don’t know. There was a pause before he continued. But from what I felt earlier I *would say that it was*.

“Finished?” Kaiba asked when Yugi stepped forward and he blinked.

“Huh?”

“You zone out when you’re talking to your other personality,” Kaiba stated, verbally underlining the last two words. Yugi stared at him as he swept past. Kaiba had never once acknowledged Yami, treating him instead as if he were merely some other personality of Yugi’s. He had even once sent him a pamphlet on Dissociative Identity Disorder, a rare gesture of concern on the older boy’s part. And now… it was the closest that Kaiba had ever come to admitting that Yugi shared headspace with someone, let alone accepting that Yami was in fact someone completely different to him. Except…

Except Kaiba had known about the technology issue. He appeared to know about these Tomb Keeper Clans that the Ishtars didn’t and Yugi had *seen* the way he looked at one of Mrs Weasley’s sons. It was the same way he looked at an opponent, calculating how to get past them and their various strategies. There was a lot that was not adding up about Kaiba all of a sudden and Yugi was going to get to the bottom of it.

Kaiba was already sat on one of the beds, laptop set up and briefcase at his feet. Their luggage had already been brought up and was sat under a bed each. Yugi flopped onto his bed and, despite feeling as if he were attempting to prop his eyes open with matchsticks, turned towards his rival.
Allow me Yami said softly, nudging him slightly towards his soul room. Get some rest. Yugi internally nodded and allowed his partner to take over his body, slipping immediately into sleep the moment he reached his soul room.

Yami would fill him in later.

The once long dead spirit of the Pharaoh blinked rapidly as he and Yugi switched places. It was always odd, being alive again. The sensation of breathing was always novel for one who hadn’t needed to for five thousand years, but there were other things to concentrate on. If Kaiba had noticed the switch, he didn’t give away any signs, continuing to work at his computer. Yami used this small reprieve to take stock of his surroundings and the state of Yugi’s body.

Tired was the first sensation to come to him, followed immediately by wrong time. The modern world was strange- not too long ago they had been leaving in the morning and it felt as if it should be early evening and yet it was midday. Ra was still high in the sky. The room they were in was simple, if drab. Not too much bigger than Yugi’s bedroom at home but with two beds crammed into the space rather than any other kind of furniture. He wondered if all the rooms in this house were the same size, or if this was one of the smaller ones. Shaking off that thought and mentally checking on his host (asleep and most likely not waking any time soon), he turned his attention on Kaiba.

“You know something about this world.” Where Yugi might have phrased it as a question, Yami did not. He might not be a king anymore, nor have any memories of his past, but his instincts still screamed that something was off here. And he hated to give any advantages to his opponents, even the benign ones. Kaiba scowled, still looking at the contraption on his lap, but he had stopped typing. He then, very deliberately, placed the laptop to one side slowly. It was odd that Kaiba gave such care to take his time- a sure sign that he did not want to give any clear answer to the many questions that his companions had.

“You know something about those glyphs on the door.” Another statement and no answer. Yami narrowed his eyes- Kaiba was trying to deflect, which meant that either he was forcing the man to confront something he had been avoiding for years (not unlikely) or he was under some oath not to talk about it.

“A trade then,” Yami offered. “I'll tell you about the spell on the door, you tell me how you knew of these... others.” Kaiba eyed him for a moment in silence, an odd tension between them. It was unlike anything Yami had felt in Kaiba’s presence. Usually it was the feeling of facing a rival, or eternal frustration that he was dismissing something that was right in front his eyes, clear as day, once again. This time, it felt almost as if his rival felt threatened by him. Yami recoiled slightly, startled that Kaiba would be afraid of him. That was new. He then abruptly stood and faced the window above the small table that separated the beds.

“I know Bill Weasley. He’s a guardian and tutor of my cousin.” The tone was sharp and Yami blinked. He hadn’t been aware that Kaiba had a cousin. He was the kind of person to keep all members of his family close, even Mokuba. Yami briefly wondered if Yugi knew about this, but then dismissed it. Neither of them were close, certainly not close enough to know about any family squabbles that might be within the Kaiba family.

“You never said anything about them.” Kaiba scowled, still resolutely not looking at him.

“Dad never spoke much about his family.” Yami stared. It was not an address he had ever heard from Kaiba- in fact he had never heard him speak of his birth family at all. Then again, he had never thought to intrude- the fact that the Kaiba brothers were orphans was information enough to know
that it would be incredibly rude and intrusive to ask. “

Apparently, he and his brother had a falling out many years ago.” Silence followed this and Yami realised that this was all he was going to get out of Kaiba. Besides, this didn’t seem like it was their business.

“The spells on the door are for protection. It uses your name to ward off any and all unwanted attention and prevents those from entering who don’t have permission,” Yami said, giving a brief explanation of the wards on the doors. Kaiba finally turned towards him and scowled.

“Then why put one with an eye in it? I know that isn’t a hieroglyph.” Yami raised an eyebrow at him and he somehow frowned harder, eyes hard. He then turned away muttering about crazy rivals and flung himself on the bed in an uncharacteristically graceless movement, sweeping the laptop up with him. The odd tension in the room had dissipated and Yami sighed, laying down. For a moment he had thought that Kaiba was finally listening and now he was just as closed off as he had been before.

But I have some answers he thought to himself as he put together the small pieces of the puzzle that Kaiba had given him. Granted, they were not much but there was enough there to get a rough outline of the bigger picture. So, one of these others must be related to Kaiba and be from the area that was attacked. He couldn’t be certain, but it made logical sense. Kaiba had only relented when the location and names of these others was mentioned. He was also fiercely protective of his family and, even if they knew and accepted magic while Kaiba didn’t, he would go out of his way to look after them. Especially considering that he had so little of them left. He couldn’t be sure which one though; after all they only had names so far and no pictures.

Sighing softly, he closed his eyes. It was time to allow Yugi’s body to rest and he could mull over this new puzzle all he liked in his labyrinth of a soul room.

Harry shifted uneasily in his seat. It had been a week since the foreign students had arrived, and he got the feeling that Hermione had been annoying them to no end. Especially Kaiba, who had started to immediately leave the room if he saw her in there or she walked in. Then again, he had gotten the feeling on the night that they met up with them all that Kaiba was a pretty solitary person and would not appreciate his friend’s curious nature. Yugi was far more polite, blushing most of the time when Hermione asked a slightly invasive question, along with Ryou, although Marik had a tendency to ignore her when he felt like she was getting too intrusive.

He had also noticed that they were all a little odd. Ryou had a tendency to switch between quiet and shy and completely manic. At one point, when Hermione and Ron had been interrogating him on life in Japan he had suddenly shot up, shouting what he assumed were swear words at them in Japanese and stormed out of the room. Yugi too, had some odd behaviours, zoning out occasionally and being startled when someone asked him a question. It seemed to happen the most often when they were all crowded around an Extendable Ear trying to listen in on the Order. Kaiba and Marik were the least odd in regards to behaviour, although Kaiba had made it a point to avoid Bill for some reason. Not that it mattered too much- Bill seemed constantly tired from flitting between England and Egypt in preparation for the other two who were supposed to join them today. Tomorrow they would all be leaving for London and the Hogwarts Express.

Since the last two exchange students were arriving today, it had been agreed that that was when they would go to Diagon Alley. The others didn’t mind, and Harry got the feeling that they were glad that they had the opportunity to catch up with sleep. It wasn’t such a big time difference between England and Egypt than it had been for those coming from Japan, although Harry had been surprised to find out that not only was Marik Egyptian, but also that he was a part of the Clans that made up the mysterious group of Tomb Keepers. It didn’t matter how much Hermione asked- neither he, nor
Bill, would give away information about what this meant and the rest of the Order were rather vague about it as well. Harry got the feeling that they didn’t know either.

Mrs Weasley was bustling about the kitchen, clearing away the last of the breakfast plates as the four in question talked amongst themselves. Harry watched them carefully but couldn’t work out how it was they had managed to fight off the Death Eaters. At times they seemed surprised by what magic could do, but never caught off guard that magic existed. No one could tell him how they had fought off the Death Eaters in the attack and none of them were big on talking about it either. He had at first assumed it was because it had been a traumatising event; then he had suddenly got the feeling that it was more because they just weren’t going to talk about the magic they used to do it. It seemed the Order couldn’t get it out of them either since most of them seemed disgruntled after their long talk with them about it.

“All done Harry?” Mrs Weasley asked, grabbing his empty plate before he could answer. He nodded giving her a smile anyway and then turned towards Yugi, mind made up. It wasn’t as if they were in any kind of rush since the others weren’t here yet.

“Excited about today?” Harry asked him in a lull in their conversation. Yugi blinked and then grinned at him. The older boy had dressed down a little today, having divested himself of his usual thick buckles and chains, wearing a thinner band around his neck and a button-down shirt rather than the tight-fitting black tank top. He had still outlined his eyes with eyeliner though, which really freaked Ron out until Hermione had explained punk fashion to him.

“Oh, yeah! We’ve hardly seen anything of London!” he exclaimed, amethyst eyes shining in excitement and making him look even younger. Harry had been surprised to find out that not only was he sixteen, but he would turn seventeen during their year at Hogwarts. He seemed more around Ginny’s age than anything else. Kaiba grunted from his corner with his laptop.

“It’s not that exciting. It’s just a city like anywhere else in the world,” he snapped, never taking his eyes off the screen. Marik rolled his eyes pretty hard, glancing over towards Ryou who looked a little bemused.

“You know we aren’t all world travelled business tycoons,” he said, voice heavy with sarcasm. Unlike the others, Marik’s English was hardly accented. Even Kaiba had a slight foreign accent, although he also spoke it the best and had been irritated at having to explain when the others messed up. Kaiba didn’t deign them with an answer and Bakura steered the conversation away from him by turning towards Mrs Weasley.

“What time will we be leaving?” he asked shyly. Mrs Weasley went to answer but was cut off when Mr Weasley burst into the room.

“But what about-?” she started but he shook his head.

“Just gotten news from Bill. Apparently there was another attack late last night- Death Eaters were trying to break into some tomb or another and they’ve spent half the night clearing up the mess. They’re going to meet us at Gringott’s,” he explained in a rush, before gesturing for them all to get a move on. Harry jumped to his feet, already moving towards the hall and ready to go, followed by Ron and Hermione. Kaiba was a bit slower, taking the time to shut his computer down. Harry wondered how he was charging his electronics- how all of them were considering he had seen Yugi busy chatting away on his own mobile phone the night before with the KC logo on the back.

They were all soon ushered out and through the London streets. Yugi and Ryou looked fascinated,
while Marik was glancing around everywhere, attempting to take it all in at once. Kaiba was looking uninterested right up until one kid on the Undergound spotted him and, oddly, Yugi.

“It’s the King of Games!” the boy shouted, eyes wild in excitement. Yugi made an odd squeaking noise and jumped behind Kaiba who looked less than impressed to be used as a shield. However, this shout had attracted more attention and suddenly, they were surrounded by a variety of different people, all clamouring for both Kaiba and Yugi’s autographs. Mr Weasley looked interested but Kaiba was waving them off, irritated as usual. Yugi was trying to placate them while Marik and, oddly, Ryou both were sniggering into their hands as if this was the funniest thing they had ever seen. When they finally managed to extricate themselves and get on a train, Yugi managed to explain.

“Um… sorry about that,” he said, face bright red. “I’m sort of famous.”

“Why were they asking to duel you? You don’t have a wand yet!” Ron asked, looking confused. Harry, however, who had been feeling like he had heard Yugi’s name before, suddenly found the memory clicking into place.

“You’re the World Champion of Duel Monsters!” It came out louder than he meant it to, but since Mr Weasley had carefully put a silencing charm around them it didn’t attract any unwanted attention.

“The card game?” Hermione asked, looking slightly surprised.

“Uh, yeah,” Harry said, blushing a bit at his slip up. “Dudley tried it and then got bored a couple of years ago. He left the cards in my room.” In fact, Harry had found them strewn all over the floor along with a bunch of other broken and discarded toys that Dudley had thrown away into his room while he had been at Hogwarts. Yugi just nodded, looking curious but not wanting to intrude. Ron still looked as confused until Hermione explained.

“It never really caught on in this country but I suppose it’s a lot more popular in the country it originated from,” she said, almost flippantly. Marik frowned.

“Technically, it’s a recreation of a game from Egypt, just re-made with cards rather than stone blocks,” he said rather waspishly, looking annoyed. Hermione blinked, startled and then seemed to realise that she had just insulted him inadvertently, or at least, his homeland.

“Oh! I didn’t know that,” she said faintly, blushing. Hermione had never liked being corrected or lacking in information.

“It’s more popular than you think,” Kaiba interrupted, before things got too awkward. “Ever since Battle City, there’s been an increase of interest in the game, but it’s at its least profitable in Canada and Australia.” Ron stared and seemed about to ask how he knew that before Harry elbowed him in the side. There was a time and a place to explain to Ron, who was just as bemused by this Muggle mode of transport as the others were about the country they were in, how Kaiba Corporation worked but now was not it. They had arrived at the correct station and, after getting the two wizards through the turnstiles, they all piled up and into the Leaky Cauldron. Kaiba’s lip curled up in disgust at the dingy pub but he was hurried through by Mr Weasley, who had seemingly noticed just how late they were.

“Through here!” he exclaimed, showing them into the back alley where the entrance to Diagon Alley was and pulling out his wand.

“Um, this doesn’t look like anywhere to…” Marik started just as he tapped the correct brick and the wall leapt apart to reveal the magical high street. He trailed off, lavender eyes wide. Even Kaiba
looked impressed.

By the looks of things, the others wanted to visit every shop, much like how he had felt when first coming to Diagon Alley, but Mr Weasley somehow corralled them all towards the imposing building that was Gringotts. He supposed that it helped that he was used to seven rowdy children, and had probably had to deal with them all alone at one point, so was used to moving teenagers in one direction with as little fuss as possible. Harry was startled however, by a deep voice that suddenly snapped something in Japanese when they drew close enough to the doors to read the warning carved into them. He turned to find out who it was, but, being at the front of the group next to Mr Weasley, could neither see who it was and, for that matter, see where he was going either and so had no warning as he ran into someone right on the other side of the door. There was a startled yelp, and someone was swearing viciously above him, although he wasn’t able to understand what it was. What he did catch was that whoever he was currently stuck in a tangle of limbs with had a pair of startling red eyes lined with rather smudged eyeliner.

He was suddenly hauled to his feet, right as he heard Bill, who seemingly appeared from nowhere, shout, “Don’t!” It was a strangely commanding tone from the usually easy-going Weasley sibling. The person who had a hold on him- dressed in a brilliant red robe over a white cotton tunic and some kind of linen headwrap that only revealed angry lavender eyes (why do half the foreigners I meet have purple or weird eye colours? Harry found himself thinking rather inappropriately at that moment), the top of a scar running over and disappearing under the right eye.

"Why?" this person growled before snapping something in his own native tongue. Bill was busy helping the poor person Harry had accidently bowled over up, although he didn’t seem particularly hurt, brushing off the navy robe that covered a similar tunic to the one his captor was wearing.

"Because it was an accident," this person said, voice surprisingly soothing and heavily accented. "Let him go Akhefia." There was some distinct grumbling from behind him but he was duly let go as Harry’s victim reached up and shoved his own headwrap down and away, revealing a face startlingly similar to Yugi’s if tanned and that his hair was half tied back rather than gelled into spikes around his head. He gave a soft smile to them, extending a hand to Mr Weasley and thoroughly ignoring his partner who had shoved his own headwear down to reveal a sharp face and a shock of white choppy hair. “It is a pleasure to meet you,” he said. “My name is Atem Menes and my rather rude friend is Akhefia Kheti.”

Chapter End Notes

And finally all the main characters are in one place! I didn't intentionally mean to build these two up so much, but I needed to establish a few things first, hence the slightly filler-ey chapter last week. And as an interesting note, I spell it Atem because the ‘u’ is more of a pronunciation issue (usually silent) and so the difference would make more sense when spoken aloud.

So some more of the Akkadian princesses- er, well, Princess. And no, I'm not going mad in having her speak Ancient Egyptian. Not just for her character, but also Egypt and Mesopotamia had a long history of trading even this early in history, hence the still ongoing argument as to who invented writing. Seriously. Contrary to popular belief, the Ancient Egyptians may not have invented writing per sey, but rather a complete alphabet first and Mesopotamia may have come up with the concept of writing. But, that is a debate for another day and, as I said, still ongoing so we'll leave it at that.
In regards to everyone being tired... I may have based that on my own experiences of travelling long distances. And Bakura's reaction is literally a transcription of my brother when arriving in Brisbane. I think the people there thought he was drunk XD. Anyhow, that aside, I know it is bad for people to sleep due to jet lag, but I have found that having naps for an hour or so does help and lets you enjoy your day if you are planning on doing something.

Sorry Yugi, I had to. Interestingly, Britain isn't really mentioned in any of the tournaments in the anime- there's America and a fair few other countries but no Britain. So I'm using that as a way of showing that it may not have taken off so much in this country, however that's not to say that people wouldn't recognise him. He is, after all, the King of Games at this point and has face off against some international duelists and beaten Pegasus during Duelist Kingdom. Double that with all the publicity that Kaiba has him doing in this fic and I would say that it is a fair deal to say that he would be recognised world over.

For the language issue- considering duelling is shown to be multi-national, they would need a common language to all talk to each other. And, while Chinese is in fact that most spoken language in the world, English is commonly used as a neutral language between different countries (don't ask me why since it's actually third, losing out to Spanish too.) For Marik as well, his family are linked to archaeology, another place where English is commonly used and would probably know multiple languages due to this anyway, along with Ishizu. Kaiba needs no explanation and Bakura is... difficult. In the English (ahem 4Kids) dub, they give him a semi-British accent, however he has different accents in other dubs. I cannot find anywhere to confirm if he is actually half-British as I have seen claimed elsewhere, so I am leaving that issue in bed and going with the same explanation as Yugi- he can speak English because he is a duelist and a common language is needed for international championships. (Also in this, I have made Yugi capable of speaking Arabic since his grandfather is a well known archaeologist and I like to think that not only does he want to follow in his grandfather's footsteps, but also that he would want to work in Egypt and decided a long time ago to learn the local language. That is my mini-canon for this story, not a part of the anime or manga canon).
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Ok, so I lied, I had a little more time than I thought and I couldn't resist. I would say
though, as a warning, updates are more than likely going to be sower after this point as I
still have my dissertation to write so... er... yeah, but I'll try to keep them to at least
fortnightly and give you some warning before I do another update.

Anyhow, please enjoy this newest chapter which sort of came out of nowhere, even for
me!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yugi felt as if someone had just thrown cold water down his back. This was... surreal, weird,
terrifyingly abnormal and that was saying something for someone who had an ancient Egyptian
Pharaoh stuck in their head. Of course, he had known the names of their two fellow exchange
students, but this was unlike anything he had been expecting. Even Marik had rocked backwards on
his feet, looking as if he had been physically struck.

The person who had introduced himself as Atem could have been a carbon copy of Yami, or at least
of what Yugi assumed he had looked like during his own life. Tanned skin complementing three
colours in his hair- although unlike Yugi he had merely pulled it back into a half-ponytail rather than
spike it up, blonde bangs falling into his face slightly with more blonde streaks running through and
back into his hair. Gold glittered at his neck, fingers and ears. His eyes were outlined with kohl,
however it was smudged a bit showing how long they must have been up for. He was dressed in
traditional Egyptian robes, the inner cloth a slightly off white while the outer robe was a stunning
navy blue. The linen of his headdress had pooled around his neck, obscuring whatever hung from a
thin silver chain around his neck, but other than that everything was so familiar. The height (not too
much taller than him), the red eyes, the voice, even the faint scar that was showing on his left wrist
that Yami had.

It took Yugi more than a few moments to notice his companion, who had finally released Harry from
his tight hold. He was taller than Atem and bulkier- Yugi was willing to bet that there were some
killer abs hiding underneath those robes. His hair was as white as Bakura’s, an odd contrast to his
deeply tanned skin, just a shade or two darker than Atem’s. Gold winked at them from his wrists,
although not in as much prevalence- only a few coils of bracelets and rings on his fingers. His outer
robe was a stunning red rather than blue and he looked far less friendly, not helped by the scar
running under his right eye. Yugi shuddered at the thought as to how that might have happened.

Out of all of them, it was Kaiba who recovered first. He made a non-committal grunt and then eyed
up the other boy- presumably Akhefia, since the only other person present was Ron’s older brother
Bill.

“I assume you’re the grunt then,” he stated, only to receive a scowl in return.

“Do I look like one of Pharaoh’s guards?” the boy snapped back, voice rough and angry. He looked
about as willing to be here as Kaiba was. Yugi noted the odd phrase- Egypt didn’t have a king
anymore and certainly no Pharaoh’s. Marik, however, made an odd noise and suddenly threw
himself on the floor, muttering something in quick and fast Arabic, too fast for Yugi to catch. This
seemed to startle Atem enough to step forward and place a hand on his shoulder. A few more words of Arabic and he was helping Marik to his feet. It was then that he gave the taller boy a conspiratorial wink before turning to the others.

“My apologies for Akhefia. It has been a long night,” he said, his English careful and accented with the soft tones of an Egyptian native. His speech was also incredibly formal- Yugi wondered where he had learnt it, especially if he had spent his whole life among the Tomb Keepers.

“Ah, yes, we heard,” Mr Weasley intoned, having not caught any reactions from them. Yugi gently poked Yami at this point- the Pharaoh had gone so quiet he had wondered whether he had disappeared back into the Puzzle. He felt him jump slightly before he received some rather baffled and confused feelings; clearly his friend was just as confused as he was. Rarely was the Pharaoh struck speechless but here, in this place, it seemed to be happening more and more regularly. They were interrupted from answering anything by the arrival of a small creature- most likely one of the goblins that they had been warned about earlier in the week.

“This way please,” it snapped at them and Akhefia sent it a glare which would have made Kaiba quail had he been looking in his direction. Yugi made a mental note not to get on the wrong side of this one- cranky from a long night or not, he definitely looked like someone Yugi had avoided many times in the past when the sense of this person is going to hurt me reared its ugly head. They turned and followed the goblin further into the bank and towards a desk manned by another goblin. A sign over the counter read ‘Exchange desk’.

It didn’t take long for them to exchange currency, although the exchange rate made little to no sense to Yugi. He, Marik and Ryou had put in 20,000 yen each, giving them 27 Galleons, 4 Sickles and 28 Knuts while Kaiba, with his limitless amounts of money, had put in 50,000 yen- something he called ‘pocket change’. That had given him 69 Galleons, 1 Sickle and 3 Knuts, along with a disgusted look on his face at the exchange rates.

“There’s about 146.32 yen to the pound. How do you go from £341.71 to 69 in your exchange rate? Do you not have inflation in your stupid little world?” He snapped at Mr Weasley as they left the counter and allowed the other two to gather their own money. By the sounds of it, even less than his own which made him wince. He wondered whether it would have been better to have just bartered some of the gold that they wore rather than go through the conversion rates, a thought that seemed to be shared by Akhefia, who appeared to be cursing up a storm behind them. Mr Weasley just gave Kaiba a confused look as he gestured them towards the door. Harry, Ron and Hermione didn’t seem particularly surprised- apart from Ron who had seemed to be under the impression that they were all as rich as Kaiba when they had first produced money.

“What do you mean there’s over a hundred yen to the pound?” he asked, only to receive a scowl from Kaiba. Yugi decided to take pity on him- it was a good distraction from the continual thought nagging at the back of his mind that there was something wrong with this whole situation.

“It’s the conversion rate,” he said. “The pound is a relatively strong currency, so it generally converts well into other currencies but it’s all to do with the rate of inflation and strength of the currency within and outside of the country that you’re in. Um… Kaiba would have a better idea of it, but he does have a point that the conversion rates for Wizarding Money are weird.”

“That’s because they’re converting it into English Pounds first and then into Wizarding Currency,” Kaiba growled, eyes furious. “Meaning that not only do we lose out moneywise, but also that they can slice off some of the profits of that conversion rating since they don’t appear to adjust the currency conversion vs demand for that currency inside and outside the country.” Yugi stared at him, feeling as confused as the others.
“Meaning?” Marik asked, looking unimpressed.

“Meaning they’re stealing,” a gruff voice spat from behind them. Yugi jumped, not having realised that the other two had caught up with them. Before he could elaborate on what he meant, they were rushed out of the bank by a rather harassed looking Bill, who was glancing uneasily about him. Yugi noticed that the surrounding goblins were giving them dirty looks.

*Perhaps they should not have mentioned stealing* Yami intoned quietly. Yugi very nearly jumped again but managed to contain it to a barely concealed flinch as Akhefia swept past, muttering obscenities in his own language as he went.

*Are you alright?* Yugi asked.

*I will be. It was… a shock.* Well, he wasn’t wrong there.

Their first stop was robes, which nearly had Marik spitting his own obscenities after trying to convince the woman that he could just wear his old Rare Hunter robes for his school uniform which did not go down well. Bakura looked as if he were in seventh heaven when they reached the book shop and Yugi felt that even the Pharaoh felt more at home in this relatively normal part of the wizarding world. Biting books aside. It was here that they were confronted with the issue of electives- the four of them, plus the other two surprisingly, had chosen Ancient Runes but they all had a different second elective. Bakura had signed up for Divination, while both Atem and Akhefia along with Yugi himself had opted for Care of Magical Creatures. Kaiba had immediately signed up for Arithmancy as soon as the option was given and Marik had pleaded out of a second elective on the grounds that he had never been to a real school before (it had been the single most brilliant piece of acting Yugi had ever seen considering if the wizards had given even half of an effort into their research they would have known that Marik had been allowed to attend Domino High with them since the end of Battle City).

They were just leaving the apothecary when a tiny girl, who seemed to be all of about ten years old and dressed in traditional Egyptian robes of a rusty red colour, suddenly ran out of the crowd of people in their direction.

"Baba! Baba!" she was shouting as she leapt, crossing the last three feet of ground in the air and into the waiting arms of Atem.

"Nofret? What are you doing here?" he asked, speaking louder than earlier so that Yugi could actually understand him. The girl, apparently Nofret (and what an odd name that was, which he was fairly certain dated back to the 4\textsuperscript{th} or 5\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty), just tugged on his robe, babbling something that sounded like Arabic but wasn’t quite.

*It’s Coptic. She’s asking him to come with her. She frightened by something* Yami translated, sounding alarmed. Yugi had to admit that it was odd- what was another Tomb Keeper doing here? And what was so urgent that she was dragging her friend away from them? Akhefia’s face was carefully blank, so Yugi couldn’t even tell what he thought of this. Bill, however, looked more alarmed when another woman, also dressed in white cotton robes and her head wrapped, looking more like you would find someone in the desert than you would in the middle of London, appeared out of the crowd. She grabbed the girl by the shoulder, her grip deceptively soft as she said, in pleasant if lilting English, "Manners sister. The others do not understand." It was then that Yugi noticed the gleaming bejewelled dagger clutched in her other hand.

"Haphiri," Atem said, glancing up from the younger girl, frowning. "What are you both doing here?"

"Are you not happy to see us brother?" the woman asked, an odd smile playing around her lips.
before they were pressed into a thin line. She then switched back into Coptic, snapping something out that was almost a hiss. Atem stiffened as Akhefia suddenly swore visiously. Oddly, it was Bill’s reaction which was the most telling- he paled almost to the point of going grey in the face.

What did she say? Yugi asked, feeling the confusion coming from his partner. Yami gave what was the equivalent of a mental hug.

I’m not sure what she meant. She said, he’s here. The Serpent King is here.

They were dead. They had barely been in the country for a handful of hours and they were dead. If Voldemort got his hands on any of this information, they were dead. Hell, Bill was convinced he was dead. Why was she here? Why had she brought her sister? Why couldn’t they just be finished shopping at this point?

Atem seemed to sense that he was freaking out as he turned towards him with a soft smile. “Nothing to worry about at the moment. Right?” This was pointedly aimed towards Haphiri. Well, he could see why she would claim to be related to him- both she and her sister shared the same pointed face and odd hair colour as Atem. Nofret had blonde streaks running through her dark hair while Haphiri the same but a deep dark red. But that didn’t detract from the fact that they were dead.

Haphiri seemed to sense that the prince was not entirely happy with her presence- she gave a soft smile and a bow of her head, nothing like the terrible grins she liked to give to him. The ever-present dagger was held tightly in her left hand, and she seemed to be gripping it all the more tightly right now.

The Serpent King. The other name she gave to the foreigner. The one she’s so terrified of. And anything that scares her… Bill swallowed the lump in his throat. Listening ears, he had to remember that. This was not the tombs and not the city. There were others here that could understand them and not all were friendly- the boy who had introduced himself as Ryou Bakura was looking suspiciously more sadistic than usual, hand in pocket. Akhefia seemed to be attempting to stand as far away from him as possible.

“I’m sorry what’s going on?” Dad asked, looking confused. So, Bill did what he did best- plastered a smile on his face and gave his father a bare faced lie to spare him the truth of the matter.

“Nothing much. Haphiri and her sister wanted to let us know that the Death Eaters were spotted around their home once again,” Bill said, something that the Order already knew about. And then, just for effect, “And to see their brother off, of course.” Yugi was giving him a strange look and Kaiba’s face was that odd blank that screamed he wasn’t buying it but wasn’t going to call him out on it yet. Marik was the only one of the transfers who actually looked a bit confused. Harry, Ron and Hermione were looking just as alarmed and confused as they had at the beginning of the conversation. They had briefly left them earlier after the bank to gather their own supplies and it was agreed that they would meet back at the Leaky Cauldron except they had finished early. Bill wished they would have stayed on that course.

His father, however, was mollified enough by this answer. “Oh!” he said. “I am so sorry, I didn’t know! Is everyone alright?” Haphiri seemed taken aback by Dad’s sincere enthusiasm and concern. He got the feeling she wasn’t used to it- she certainly wasn’t when he first met her, and he had no idea what her life had been like when her heart still beat.

“Yes, everyone is fine. Luckily, no one was seriously hurt in the attacks,” Haphiri said, the English sounding odd on her tongue. Bill was used to her speaking in either Arabic or Coptic and very rarely an odd language that was more than likely Akkadian. He hadn’t even known she could speak

...
Thankfully, this allowed them to move to the last shop of the day: Ollivander’s. For a brief moment, Bill wondered if the Princesses would be coming with them, but Haphiri made a quick and quiet excuse to meet them back at the Leaky Cauldron, allowing not only for her and her sister to leave, but also Dad along with Harry, Ron and Hermione. They did attempt to protest but, since none of them were in need of a wand and the shop was still incredibly small, they were easily corralled out and towards the relative safety of the pub.

Now all Bill had to deal with were four suspicious teenagers and two on guard Tomb Keepers.

“So, are you going to tell us the real reason those two were here or keep us all in the dark?” Kaiba drawled out as they approached the shop. Bill swallowed and wondered what on earth the correct response to that was. He was just glad that Kaiba had waited until the others were gone before confronting them on the appearance of the Princesses.

“It is nothing you need to worry about,” Atem said quietly, eyeing his cousin carefully. Kaiba seemed to pick up on the ‘stay out of things that you didn’t want to be involved in all those years ago’ tone. His face twisted in disgust but let the subject drop. Bill noticed that both Akhefia and Necrophades had dropped the knives hidden on their person. Yugi, however, still looked as if he wanted to ask questions but, thankfully, the arrival of Ollivander interrupted that thought.

“And who do we have here today?” the man asked, appearing as always from the depths of his shop. Only Atem, Akhefia and Marik didn’t jump, used to people appearing out of shadows no doubt.

“Late transfer students,” Bill explained quickly, hoping to get this over with as soon as possible. The four from Japan looked unhappy by that description but Bill could care less as Atem suddenly swayed alarmingly on the spot. He leapt forward, intending to help Akhefia steady him, but, thankfully, he managed to catch himself on the edge of Ollivander’s desk. Bill caught a brief glimpse of a broad blonde man dressed in a trench coat through the window, before he was distracted by Yugi’s worried voice.

“Are you alright?” he asked, alarmed. Atem, gripping Bill’s arm with a strength that belied his small frame, gave him a thin smile.

“Ah… I am sorry. I believe I am more tired than I thought I was,” he said, the English tripping every so often. Even though Bill knew the prince was capable of several different languages, English was one he knew he struggled with. That and the fact that neither wrote in English would be interesting for the upcoming year but, he supposed, that was what translation spells were for. Ollivander didn’t seem bothered too much and simply gestured towards the ever-present rickety chair in the shop, which Atem gladly took.

If that was fatigue, I’ll eat Ron’s socks Bill thought, eyeing him carefully. Akhefia was glaring out of the window and Bill turned to see what he was looking at as Ryou stepped up to try out some wands. The blonde man he had seen earlier had been joined by two others- one with spikey brown hair and another with a short bob of red hair. The three looked out of place in the middle of Diagon Alley dressed in Muggle clothing, made all the more alarming by the tiny green gemstones glittering from somewhere on their person. Akhefia was already holding a knife and looked about ready to charge out of the shop to confront them.

“Don’t,” Bill said, in Arabic. Marik turned to look at them just as Ryou’s newest attempt blew up a shelf of wands and he was distracted once again.

“Why the hell shouldn’t I?” Akhefia snapped, only to be cut off as Atem snagged his sleeve and
shook his head. He was pale, obviously affected by this in some way. Bill wondered if that was why Haphiri had left— that this ancient magic, even to her, had such a negative and lasting effect on those in her family. Akhefia didn’t look happy at having been stopped but acquiesced to the prince’s whims. It was something he noticed him doing a lot— there were not many who gave the Thief King respect, but Atem had never treated him as anything other than an equal. It was probably why they were so close, despite Mahad’s continued protests.

“Bill?” Atem said quietly, just as Marik stepped up, now that Ryou had found his wand. Bill nodded in understanding. If they were looking for a fight from the Tomb Keepers, then they would be in for a shock. Taking a deep breath, he stepped away and, under the distraction of Marik attempting to find a wand, slipped out of the shop.

The world was spinning alarmingly, but Atem ignored this as he watched Bill approach the three strangers. This world was strange— cold too, even for summer. He tugged discreetly on his robe to wrap it around him further, despite now being indoors. The four other foreigners were currently wrapped up in getting their wands, although Atem could have guessed what kind they would get. He fingered his own wand, hidden in his sleeve along with a few of his own weapons. Both his and Akhefia’s wands were unique to the rest of the Mages, not only because they were created of wood from outside Egypt, but also because they were unique even in wand-making, that Aten was aware of. His own wand was made of Ebony with hair from his ka as well as… something else. Mahad hadn’t been very clear on that. Akhefia’s was a little more straightforward— made of African Blackwood with a core made from Thestral hair and a scale from Diabound, a combination that had had the local wandmaker tittering away about all the connotations to death. Atem hadn’t exactly been surprised.

The other four mages would be just as odd in their choices he could feel. Already, Ryou Bakura had been selected for a Cedar wand with Unicorn hair core and Marik by the looks of things had just been selected for a Birch wand with Dragonscale core, rather than heartstring. Ollivander seemed very interested by that and wandered over to them before approaching either Yugi or Kaiba.

“Perhaps you would like to go next, to recuperate from your long journey?” the soft-spoken man asked. His voice was gentle but Atem could sense the overriding curiosity. This man was crafty but not cruel. At least, not intentionally. He slipped his wand from its previous hiding place, showing it to the man.

“Neither myself nor my companion are in need of wands. We have our own,” he said, internally cursing this odd language. There were so many ways to say one thing and the words were strange on his tongue, but he persevered. Ollivander looked intrigued, especially by the protective hieroglyphs along with several cuneiform spells etched in tiny pieces of gold leaf on the wand.

“May I?” he asked, hand outstretched already. Atem paused but decided that this was hardly going to cause an issue. He was already well aware that his wand was odd. So, he carefully placed it in the man’s palm, keeping an eye on it all the while. Haphiri had put those spells on it to ensure he wouldn’t be able to break it, back when he had been younger and too curious for his own good (and hadn’t that turned out well, considering he had very nearly snapped it in half by falling on it in the middle of the Nameless Pharaoh’s tomb).

“Oh my,” Ollivander said in surprise. “Ebony, 15 ½ inches, unyielding. And this core…” The man paused and eyed him over his hand, which was currently holding the wand close to his eyes. “I have never seen a wand like this.” Atem held out his hand and the wandmaker reverently gave it back, not answering him. The dizziness was slowly fading, meaning Bill had accomplished his task somewhat successfully. He vaguely wondered if he had cursed them, as he watched the man re-enter the shop.
Ollivander had seemed to realise he wouldn’t get an answer as he was currently looking over Akhefia’s wand.

“Hmm… another interesting combination. Blackwood, 17 inches and incredibly battered by the looks of it.” The wandmaker looked none too impressed and Atem hid his laugh in a well-placed cough. Akhefia didn’t much care about the wand, and it showed in the number of nicks and scrapes on it. The only reason it wasn’t broken already was Nofret’s continued protests to his adamant intention to wreck it— not that Atem was going to tease the other boy about his obvious soft spot for the ghostly thirteen year-old. Contrary to popular belief, he did have some self-preservation. “Core of Thestral hair… and snake scale?” Atem heard the hiss before he saw the head poke out of Akhefia’s sleeve. Yugi yelped as Marik recoiled back.

Clearly, a lifetime avoiding snakes did endear one to them.

“Diabound’s,” Akhefia snapped, giving the curious snake’s head a swift stroke and it retreated back into the robe, deciding that nothing interesting going on after all. The wand was swiftly handed back and the other two were tested for their own wands. In the end, Kaiba ended up with a Hawthorn and White Dragon heartstring and scale wand (Atem resisted the urge to snigger) and Yugi with a Black Laurel and Sphinx hair wand that Ollivander pulled from… somewhere. To be honest, the lie from earlier seemed to be coming true. He really shouldn’t have sat down, but it had been hard to resist when the world had been spinning sickeningly around him and the air filled with the presence of dark magic.

They finally exited the shop, the street thankfully devoid of the three disciples and most of the crowds of people, considering how late in the day it was. Bill had assured them that they would be going back to the ‘safe house’ as soon as they joined up with the other three and his father, which Atem was thankful for. On the other hand, it also meant reuniting with Haphiri who, as soon as seeing them stumble into the dingy little pub, immediately got up and wrapped him in a hug. The reason for this was immediately evident when she spoke.

“The girl does not stop asking questions,” she hissed in his ear. Atem, having long gotten used to the sensation, swallowed back the constant need to shiver in the presence of that blade. Instead, he carefully wrapped his arms around the semi-corporal princess and simply decided to silently laugh into her shoulder. Something that was not appreciated. “It is no laughing matter!”

“Of course not,” Atem said, only half serious. It was rare for the elder of the two sisters to be so riled up. “But for someone so used to politics, should you not be skilled in ignoring such people?” Haphiri gave him a glare as she pulled away, only to be replaced by Nofret, as energetic as always and surprisingly adept at keeping a corporal form today, although Atem got the feeling that that was because Haphiri was helping her somewhat.

“What did you get?” she asked, attempting to weevil her way into the satchel hung at his side where his shrunken new school supplies were being stored. Atem waved her off, before pausing and holding out a hand, eyebrow raised. Nofret gave him an innocent gaze, right up until Akhefia snorted behind him, at which point she scowled and tugged the wand, money pouch and Quidditch Journal out from where she had hidden them about her person. Yugi, who had been passing them at that particular moment looked startled and the ever-present ghost following him gave the girl a disapproving look, most likely mirrored on his own face. Nofret merely poked her tongue out at him before flouncing away, most likely to pilfer something else off some poor unsuspecting patron of the pub. Sighing, Atem shook his head as Haphiri took off after her sister, the two disappearing through the wall as he approached the table. Only Kaiba had noticed that the two were not exactly alive, as the only one to have witnessed them do so.
“Ah, my apologies, but according my sister you… misplaced these,” he said, holding the items out to the table at hand. The three students immediately looked alarmed, snatching their items back before patting down their pockets to check that nothing else had been taken. Before any could ask he simply explained, “My sister is something of a kleptomaniac. Just so you are aware for the future.” Akhefia wasn’t even hiding the smug expression on his face and Atem would have smacked him over the head for that, if it wasn’t so funny. Bill, however, had his head in his hands and appeared slightly mortified. Mr Weasley looked merely disapproving.

“Have you not taught her better?” he asked, at which point Akhefia’s hand flew to his pocket and Bill stiffened behind him. Atem, grabbing Akhefia’s arm to stop him from doing something stupid and noting the horrified look on Marik’s face, shook his head slightly and concealed the laughter at the idea of telling off a 5000-year-old ghost for tendencies learnt before death, even with his own jurisdiction.

“I believe father has tried,” he said, which wasn’t a complete lie. His father had, in fact, attempted to ask her not to rob the tourists blind, which had worked… for about a month before another group went to visit the tombs. Mr Weasley looked only slightly mollified and Akhefia simply grumbled under his breath as he slid the knife back into its proper place. Bill cleared his throat.

“Well, I believe that, since we’re done for today, we should be heading back,” he said, slightly too cheerfully. “After all, we haven’t had any sleep for 24 hours.” This seemed to prompt the others into jumping up and moving quickly, gathering their things and rushing out of the door, apologies given as they went. Atem didn’t mind. So long as they reached a bed soon, it would be fine.

He did, however, note the three motorcyclists who sped off the moment they entered the underground.

Chapter End Notes

So er, my apologies if I have either confused or (more likely) gotten the whole currency exchange rate stuff wrong but, I did my best. Maths isn't my strong suit, but neither is it for the Harry Potter world, especially if you consider the exchange rate on Galleons which are unlikely to exchange well with any other currency than Pounds. Since it seems that Galleons etc. are used world-over in the wizarding world and we never see it converted to anything other than pounds (and I'm taking cannon only from the books, not the films etc.), it would make sense that you would lose out exchange-wise if you converted money anywhere other than the country that you live in. (Also, there needs to be a reason why people who don't seem to have jobs cough-Malfoy- cough have so much money.)

Also, this chapter sort of came out of nowhere for me. I didn't initially plan on writing anything to do with Diagon Alley, especially for Harry and his friends but then it seemed weird to me that the exchange students would be allowed out but not them so, here they came and then... didn't do much (except last chapter). I also always intended to gloss over the whole wand thing. It makes sense to me that those who live with magic would have wands to cover for themselves with the wizarding world and I didn't want to linger on it with so much else going on in this story. So, if you're disappointed by that then, I'm sorry. Also, I did a lot of research for the wands, wood types and all for a part I
wasn't going to dwell on (why brain?) but, it was interesting so there's that.

Also, hi plot point from chapter 1. We shouldn't be seeing you for a while.

So, on the topic of there being essentially three of the 'same' people. I am writing this from the dub of Yugioh which, I know is not the best, but is the only part (other than the Abridged series) that I am completely familiar with. And in it, when the Pharaoh goes to the afterlife, there doesn't seem to be any repercussions for Yugi, which is something that would occur in the Harry Potter universe if he were only half a soul. This being the case, and the fact that prophecies are extremely vague, I took advantage of and a plot bunny that ran off with the idea of 'what if there were multiple ways for the Pharaoh to have been sent off to the afterlife?'. After all, it has been 5000 years. And, in the Harry Potter universe this is a very possible outcome- see the whole thing about the fact that technically both Harry and Neville are the 'Chosen One', even though the Harry Potter books lay it out like Harry solely is the only one capable to defeating Voldemort. I mean, Neville or anyone born at the end of July could have in their year, it would just mean that Harry would be dead for real rather than survive through a technicality. Hence, this story was born. I'm sorry that I can't really make it any clearer than that, otherwise I will be giving spoilers to the rest of the story!

Anyhow, hopefully you enjoyed this chapter!
Hi, and surprisingly here on time is Chapter 5! I will say though, that I will definitely not be updating next week and maybe even not the week after, so at the latest the next update should be 30th August. My apologies for that, but I have a dig coming up this weekend and then I have a whole bunch of research/trips for my dissertation in the week after that, which doesn't leave a lot of time for writing. I also would like to get back on top of writing this so that I have a couple of chapters ready for any more eventualities like this, or where I inevitably hit writer's block, so you shouldn't be left hanging for too long.

Anyway, other than that, I hope you enjoy!

The train carriage was silent as they sped through the countryside. There was no sound except that of Kaiba tapping away at his laptop, but Yugi found he didn’t mind so much. Harry had wandered off with some of his other friends when Hermione and Ron had gone off to perform their prefect duties and no one else seemed to want to sit with the four odd newcomers. Marik was taking this time to catch up on his sleep and Ryou had his nose buried in one of their many new school books- his Divination one by the looks of things. Yugi himself had been going through his deck, but after three hours even that was getting old. He resisted the urge to ask how much longer the train would be.

I wonder where the other two went off to Yugi mused to Yami. The Pharaoh was quiet, lost in his own thoughts and shook himself off at Yugi’s interruption.

I’m not sure but they seemed very keen to get away from us he replied. Yugi bit his lip, thinking that his friend was right. They had arrived on the platform, only to meet up with Atem’s sisters who had fluttered out their goodbyes in Coptic, the elder of the two wrapping him in a hug before he was half attacked by the younger of the two. It had been funny but, when Yugi had been about to approach and ask if they wanted to join them, they had seemingly melted into the crowd. He had tried asking Marik what that was all about, but the young Tomb Keeper was strangely tight lipped about the whole affair. He didn’t really seem to know where he stood with them.

They were distracted from their musings when Kaiba suddenly cursed and slammed his laptop shut, loud enough to make Ryou jump and Marik awake with a start.

“What on earth is up with you?” Marik asked, disgruntled that his nap had been interrupted.

“It just shut off! Three hours on this blasted train, with no battery issues and it just stops,” Kaiba growled, face stormy. Yugi blinked and then checked his phone, which had been charged to full using the solar powered charger Kaiba had brought with him. It too was dead.

“But that doesn’t make any sense,” he said, tapping the start button, despite knowing that it wouldn’t do anything.

“According to Hermione, it’s because of all the magic,” Ryou said, but he didn’t sound very convinced. Kaiba looked just as disgusted by that description as he rooted around in his luggage for
something. Marik just frowned.

“Well, if that were true, wouldn’t all the technology we use not work? We’re constantly surrounded by Shadow magic and it has never affected technology like this.” He was looking almost as disgusted as Kaiba. Considering that he had only spent a handful of years with technology, he didn’t look thrilled to be reliving his years in the tombs.

*There must be some kind of magic at work that stops your phone from working. May I?* Yami asked and Yugi gladly relinquished control over to him. Watching from spirit form— which was always a weird experience— he was able to note that Hermione had just slipped in through the door. Right as Yami poked at the enchantments on the train, making the entire carriage take on a strange fuzzy light before reverting back to normal.

“Oh! What did you do?” she exclaimed, looking around the carriage as if the effect was going to appear once again. In what had to be the fastest switch they had ever done, Yugi found himself back in his body and gasping slightly for air.

“Sorry” Yami murmured as Yugi attempted to catch his breath.

“Ah, I’m sorry!” Yugi said, giving her his best abashed face. “I was curious because all our technology stopped working all of a sudden!” Hermione blinked, before understanding dawned.

“Oh, yes, well technology doesn’t work at Hogwarts. I’m surprised you had it working even this far into the journey,” she said, her voice clearly emanating ‘I told you so’.

“Except for the fact that my tech has worked perfectly fine around all other kinds of magic,” Kaiba snapped, who had been fiddling with his own phone, apparently in the process of taking it apart. “Your excuse that it’s due to too much magic is bullshit.” If looks could kill, Hermione would have been dead five times over considering the looks she was getting from the rest of the carriage, not just from Kaiba. Hermione, however, looked confused but was stopped from answering as Ron appeared behind her.

“Hey, apparently one of the transfers lost their pet…” he trailed off, noticing the tension in the air. “Er, what happened?”

“Nothing, Kaiba’s just upset that he can’t get hold of Mokuba,” Yugi said quickly. It wasn’t exactly a lie— just not the whole truth. But he also didn’t want to answer any awkward questions regarding the Millennium Items. They had agreed amongst themselves that these wizards had no need to know of them or the power they wielded, a sentiment that seemed to be shared by the two Tomb Keepers that had joined them. Hermione looked mollified by this as Ron just shrugged.

“Oh, well then we’ll—”

“And what do we have here?” a voice suddenly interrupted, causing both Ron and Hermione to become rather tense. Into the compartment stepped a thin-faced boy with slicked back pale blonde hair and two of the thickest boys Yugi had ever seen. They seemed more like gorillas rather than people.

“Malfoy,” Ron spat as the other boy sneered at him. Yugi squirmed in his seat, unhappy by this turn of events. He didn’t like conflict at the best of times, but this boy had clearly only come here to cause it.

“I heard that the old man had invited some filthy Mudbloods from overseas,” the boy— Malfoy— drawled. “But I didn’t think he actually had.” He was staring down at Kaiba’s half dismantled phone
with the expression one would give to a piece of dogshit their pet had left on the carpet.

“'And you are?'” Kaiba bristled, already at his limit of idiots for the day. Malfoy drew himself upwards- as if that would make a difference to someone who was easily six foot and towered over everyone-, turning the sneer towards him.

“Draco Malfoy,” he said, in a tone that indicated he thought less of Kaiba then he did of dirt.

“Is that supposed to mean something to me?” Kaiba sneered right back. Malfoy had stepped into playing a dangerous game with someone who was used to ignoramuses on a daily basis. The boy’s face twitched in irritation.

“My father-“ he started but Kaiba cut him off.

“I couldn’t care less about your father. I’m Seto Kaiba, CEO of Kaiba Corporation and I won’t be spoken to in such a way,” he spat, eyes narrowed at the boy. Malfoy’s face went white in rage; he raised his wand and was presumably about to attack Kaiba when something long and white suddenly launched itself at him from under Ryou’s seat.

Three things seemed to happen all at once. Ryou jumped up onto his seat, Malfoy attempted to get away, lurching to the left, but was cut off by a tanned hand which had almost casually reached out and caught the snake’s head, fangs extended and spitting venom towards Malfoy. The blonde boy whimpered, turning to see who this new adversary was, only to come face to face with blood red eyes. Atem gave him a long cool look before shaking his head.

“Looks like Diabound smelled a rat after all,” was the only comment he made. The snake thrashed angrily in his hand, attempting to get away but, strangely, not biting him. Malfoy staggered away from him, mouth opening and closing in horror, before turning tail and running out of the carriage, his cronies following him. Ron, who was pressed right up against the wall of the compartment was staring at him.

“Where the bloody hell did that come from?!” Ron half shouted. Atem ignored him, as did the snake since Akhefia had rounded the corner.

“Why were three idiots running down the train?” he asked, in a tone of voice that stated he really didn’t care. Atem simply raised the snake, which was considerably calmer now that it’s master was in sight.

“Make sure Diabound doesn’t eat anyone,” was the only answer he got. Akhefia merely shrugged and allowed the snake to slither back into his robe through his sleeve. Yugi noted that the pair were dressed in more western clothing now- Atem was wearing a loose cotton shirt with black cargo trousers, while Akhefia had black jeans and a t-shirt on under his signature red robe.

“You have a pet snake!” Ron squeaked and Yugi was suddenly reminded that that was why he had been there in the first place. Because Akhefia had apparently lost him, although hadn’t bothered telling Ron what exactly he was looking for.

“What’s it to you?” the older boy growled, as happy as ever. Ron made an odd noise before fleeing down the corridor, Hermione following close behind. Atem looked mildly confused before giving an odd shrug and then turning to Kaiba.

“Ah, here,” he said, picking up Kaiba’s laptop, much to the other boy’s protests. Pulling a marker from a pocket he quickly scribbled something over the top and, one murmured spell in Coptic later, handed it back, suddenly working. Kaiba stared at it for a moment, before narrowing his eyes.
“What did you do?”

“There is a spell here, stopping all Muggle technology from working unless the wizards allow it. It is a counter spell we made to prevent this,” Atem explained. He was then suddenly inundated by requests from Marik and Ryou to fix their things too. Atem looked a bit alarmed but politely agreed, casting the spell over their phones, laptops and duel disks too. Then he turned to Yugi.

“Was there anything that you wanted to work?” he asked politely. Yugi stared for a moment, still trying to take in the last few minutes, but then shook himself off and shyly held up his phone.

“Ahh, yes please. Um, just let me find my computer and duel disk,” he said. Atem simply gave him a soft smile and a nod, already working on his phone. When Yugi had finally located his other things, Atem was finished with his phone. He quickly worked through the other things before doing the same for Kaiba. Yugi looked them over, noting that this spell seemed much like the protection spell over their door back in Grimmauld Place. There was his name, and the odd cartouche representing the Pharaoh, along with a brief line of neat hieratic next to it.

What does it say? Yugi asked the Pharaoh. He felt him glance over it over his shoulder.

_Exactly what he said it does. Our names along with permission to allow it to be used. By the feel of it, it also stops others from using the technology without your permission as well so it would only work for others if you gave it to them for use_ Yami explained, one ghostly finger tracing the lines gently. It was so weird how close Atem’s handwriting was to that of his. The other two boys had given their leave, explaining that they would most likely arrive in the next couple of hours and they still had a few things to do along with getting changed. Yugi made a face at the thought of the black robes folded in the trunk that the lady at the shop insisted they all needed, cut slightly longer on him to accommodate for any switches with the Pharaoh- it would be odd if they swapped and suddenly his robes were too small for him. It wasn’t too noticeable, and he had given the excuse, jokingly, that he might grow some during the year which had given the friendly witch in the robe shop a laugh at the very least.

Kaiba was eyeing the glyphs on his own tech with an odd expression but had made no comment. Unlike them, he had also had Atem use it on his calculator too- Kaiba refused to use medieval methods for his Arithmancy class. Yugi wondered what he was thinking. Yami had told him what he had learnt that first day in the country and it was glaringly obvious that Atem was the cousin Kaiba had been talking about, but it was impossible to get anything more out of him. He barely even treated him like family- more of an unwanted relative that he just couldn’t get rid of. But every so often, Kaiba would get this strange expression on his face, like he was considering something, but Yugi didn’t want to pry. It really wasn’t any of his business.

“So, now that our stuff works, anyone up for a duel?” Marik asked.

The train compartment was silent as they slipped into their new robes. The black robes of the wizards felt different to the usual Mage’s robes that Atem was used to wearing but so far that was fine. He and Akhefia hid their regular clothes underneath them- the school had tried to insist on some kind of uniform in case the robes opened but Atem had ignored them on principal- they were not here to make friends. In fact, the only reason they had come at all was sat three carriages down. To think that his father would insist on this after having ripped his own family apart… sometimes Atem wondered how much they would have to pay for what had happened all those years ago.

Haphiri was sat quietly in the corner. No amount of modern magic had any hope of keeping her out from where she wanted to be. She was studiously watching the world go past the window and Atem
could appreciate that—having spent his whole life living in a desert, the overflowing amount of green
was overwhelming at times. He had spent the first two hours after leaving London merely staring out
of the window, wondering why this place was so blessed by the gods while his own people
struggled to grow anything of their own. That was, until it started raining constantly and he
wondered if such a blessing could also be a curse.

“So, what now?” Akhefia snapped, allowing Diabound to explore. This time they kept the door shut
so that he couldn’t escape so easily, not that Atem was sure it would do them any good. If the snake
particularly wanted to get away, it would.


“Akhefia wasn’t listening,” Atem teased, but he hid the growing apprehension he was feeling. The
Sorting would mean the possibility that they would all be split up, and it was difficult to tell where
they would each go. Bill had given them a brief overview of how the Sorting worked and where
each person, depending on personality of all things, would go. The Four House system didn’t sound
awful, but the way that the children were split was almost… cruel. *They think themselves better in
the world but constantly divide themselves from within* Atem had thought. The Egyptian Ministry
had also given them this warning— their own school had never bothered with such a system, since
they worked so closely with the Mages, but had warned them—along with Bill—that the rest of the
world did not think the same way. And they had also been clear about the manipulations of
Dumbledore as well. *Not that I was in need of such a warning. He was hardly hiding his attempts to
force us here.*

Mage magic was one of the few magics that the Western world of magic could barely understand. It
was something practised very rarely and, honestly, most British wizards only heard of it once they
became Unspeakables within their own Ministry. Bill had stated that he had been helped by not only
one of the teachers at the school, but also one very odd Unspeakable witch who occasionally was
able to use Shadow Magic to warn off anyone attempting to get into certain areas of the Department
of Mystery. Atem had never met her, although she certainly sounded like an interesting character.

“You know what must be done?” Haphiri asked. He nodded, and she gave a soft smile. “Good.
Remember, Severus will help you.” And with that, she was gone. Akhefia eyed the now empty train
seat warily.

“And how exactly does a wizard help us?” he asked to the empty air, grumpy as always. He had
been ever since his father had forced him to accompany Atem, although he couldn’t say he himself
was so upset. Akhefia was a good friend, despite the other boy’s kleptomania and prickly exterior.
He also didn’t hold him to the same standards his father did—after all, Atem knew the difference
between the past and the present and the presence of Yugi only served to support that. He was also
silently glad that Mahad had agreed to not mention that Yugi was here. He did not want to see his
father’s reaction, especially not after the news that the Puzzle had been solved eight years ago by
someone else.

“Not sure but I think Haphiri wants to adopt him,“ Atem mused aloud, not voicing his thoughts.
Akhefia seemed to have picked up on them anyway, making a face but keeping silent. The fact that
Severus Snape, a man that Atem had never met, was the first person she had sent Bill to after their
initial meeting spoke volumes. He still recalled the first time he had ever met Bill as a grumpy eleven-
year-old. The fact that he had almost dropped a tomb on the man’s head had probably not helped
with any first impressions, despite the whole incident being an accident. Akhefia, having heard the
story second hand, had laughed so hard that Atem had been worried he would choke to death before
he had finished.
It didn’t take long for the train to pull up to the station. They were guided to the carriages by the three students they had met only the day before- it had been decided that since they were older they would be sorted separately and therefore, should arrive earlier than the younger students so that they could meet with Professor McGonnagal first. Atem had yet to figure out what the point of that was, unless it had something to do with trying to avoid embarrassment with Kaiba over arriving with a group of eleven-year-olds.

Harry was looking rather confused when they clambered in, staring at the Thestrals that were pulling them. His friends were staring at him like he was crazy when he mentioned that there was something that was pulling them and Atem internally rolled his eyes. There was no need to shame someone who had clearly seen death not so long ago, let alone been marked by it for his entire life. The others also seemed quite capable of seeing them, although he decided not to point out that the only reason they could was because they spent so long hanging around with a ghost amongst other things, and therefore it didn’t particularly matter whether they had seen death or not.

After assuring Harry that he was not crazy (Akhefia huffing the entire time), it took very little time to finally arrive at the castle. Atem supposed it was an impressive structure here, but for someone who had spent their life around technological marvels and the architecture of ancient cities, it actually seemed pretty normal. And small, for a school, although he supposed not everyone was forced to learn magic while being dumped in various tombs of varying sizes and traps. He kept quiet about that observation, instead deciding to watch his cousin instead. Kaiba had been staring at him, eyebrows drawn together and clearly still wanting to talk about his ‘sisters’ but Atem had so far brushed him off rather successfully. It wouldn’t last forever though.

Passing through the wards was an interesting experience. Not as nauseating as being around Orichalcum, but definitely not a pleasant experience. Luckily, he was able to hide that far better than he had he day before and, while he wanted to blame his reaction on fatigue, he knew it truly hadn’t. He had been warned when he had started studying magic: the more he practised, the more dangerous it would be for him. He had had to beg for years before his father would let him be taught some basic spells by Mahad originally, and that had only been after he had accidently set fire to half his room. Haphiri’s only reaction had been to inform his father that it was hardly surprising. Atem’s magic was directly linked with the past- to her, to the Puzzle and to a destiny that he couldn’t fulfil. Being so close to that problem, so close to the Item his father craved for him, only compounded the issue. To have Set here too… It made him wish that Haphiri and Nofret were able to stay with them, rumours be damned.

Once they had entered the Entrance Hall, they were left in a small alcove as the younger students were gathered in front of the doors where Harry, Ron and Hermione had disappeared through. Atem assumed that inside was the Great Hall and the opening feast that Ron had been raving about on the way over. As far away from Akhefia as he could possibly get. Atem wondered what his issues with snakes were.

“It is a pleasure to meet you all,” the grey-haired witch in front of them was saying. “When the First Years have been sorted, you will be called into the Great Hall to do the same. From then on, you will join the others in your House-“

“I’m sorry?” Atem asked, startled. The professor looked annoyed at being cut off and opened her mouth, about to say more but Atem carried on talking, not listening. “It was agreed with Dumbledore that we would have our own dormitory, Sorting aside.” It had been a concession that had been made like drawing blood from a stone, but it had been done for a good reason. Atem had no wish to keep the other poor children awake at night and he was not going to let the old man back out of it. McGonnagal blinked, looking startled and suddenly unsure of herself. She was saved by a tall, pale man with dark greasy hair appearing over her shoulder.
“The transfer student’s dorm has already been prepared. Those that wish to stay with their House are welcome to if that is what they want,” the man said, voice dripping with a condescension that was incredibly well feigned. McGonnagal obviously didn’t catch it, twitching slightly in annoyance.

“Of course, Professor Snape,” she said, voice tight and body stiff. Atem gave the man a quick once over and wondered how much of his appearance was a mask, and how much was the truth. Considering the waves of magic that were drifting from the man, not much of his outward appearance was reflective of his true nature. With that cleared up, he simply waited as Yugi talked nervously with his friends about the upcoming sorting. If he listened particularly closely he might be able to understand the Japanese, but instead shifted uncomfortably to the side, wanting to get away from the gaze of one very suspicious ghost. Unfortunately, this meant almost walking into Kaiba.

“You never answered my question,” his cousin stated, voice somehow even quieter than his friends. Akhefia, who was leaning against the wall and glaring out at the rest of the world, twitched but stared resolutely ahead of him, listening but not interfering.

“What was it that you wanted me to answer?” Atem asked, feigning ignorance. He was given a glare that he ignored.

“Those girls were not your sisters,” Kaiba hissed, fists clenched. Atem paused and blinked at him, wondering.

“Perhaps not in this life,” he said carefully, eyeing Kaiba’s reaction. If his cousin noticed the change in languages, he didn’t openly show it.

“And what is that supposed to mean?” Akhefia made a noise that could have been a cough or a concealed laugh- Atem was willing to bet it was the latter. Instead of deigning this with an answer he rapidly returned to English, noting the return of Snape.

“Is it time for the Sorting?” he asked, voice pitched loud enough that the others would hear but not enough to carry further than the man approaching them. Yugi and Ryou both jumped, looking incredibly nervous. Atem couldn’t blame them- how did you explain to a hat that not only were there two people living in one body, but also that it please stay a secret? As much as he would like to be a fly on that wall, he was also glad it wasn’t him. He had enough secrets of his own.

They entered the hall, watched on all sides by the student body. He noticed the banner for Slytherin House was a silver serpent and raised an eyebrow, wondering how appropriate it was to laugh. He had no illusions as to where Akhefia would end up and he got the feeling that his friend was going to enjoy creating merry hell throughout the school, starting with its most jaded house.

“When I call your name, you will sit on the stool and the Sorting Hat will sort you into your House,” McGonnagal said, holding a mostly rolled up piece of parchment. He supposed that it had the names of the younger students on it as well. “Bakura, Ryou.” The boy with the Ring went slightly pale and swallowed loudly as he rose to the stage. Now will they sort him alone or as part of a unit with Necrophades? Atem wondered. The tear on the rim of the hat opened.

“HUFFLEPUFF!” it bellowed and Atem internally nodded. Host it was then. But how would that hold up for him and Akhefia?

“Ishtar, Marik.” The hat considered him for a while before deciding.

“SLYTHERIN!” The blonde-haired boy politely handed the hat back to the Professor, but Atem caught the look of blatant terror in the Tomb Keeper’s eyes.
“Look after him,” Atem murmured to Akhefia right as McGonnagal called, “Kaiba, Seto.”

“SLYtherin!”

“Kheti, Akhefia.” Akhefia gave a short grunt and dropped unceremoniously on the stool.

“SLYtherin!” The hat actually took longer than Atem thought it would.

“Menes, Atem.” Atem swallowed any rising nerves and sat on the stool. He could see Ron glaring away at Akhefia right as the hat dropped over his eyes.

And what do we have here? Another old soul? Atem blinked at the voice of the hat. Speak for yourself he thought back to it and felt the thing laugh in his head. It was strange. Ah, well spotted little prince. But where to put you? Cunning enough for Slytherin but certainly not ambitious enough. Atem rolled his eyes. His only ambition was living to his seventeenth birthday and that was it. He had already accepted that that was unlikely to happen anyway. Clever, but knowledge is not what you are looking for either. Loyal, yes, very loyal to your friends and subjects and certainly hard-working… But you’re also brave. Foolishly brave by the looks of this. The hat suddenly poked a memory and Atem shuddered, breath catching in his throat. Pain, pain, agony of the knife sliding in, Haphiri’s tears damp on his face- Leave that alone! Atem snapped at the hat, mentally yanking the memories from the hat’s proverbial grip. It twitched, irritated. Well, now I certainly know where to put you it stated grumpily.

“GRYffindor!” There was cheering from the table of the golden lion and Atem, stepped off the stool, careful not to stumble. He passed Yugi just as the other boy’s name was called. He felt cold, the memory of a night from before he was born still stuck at the forefront of his mind. He sat in the proffered seat next to Harry as quiet speculations were whispered around him. It didn’t take long for the hat to make its decision.

“GRYffindor!” Don’t sit next to me, don’t sit next to me, I don’t want to know how being dead feels like… Thankfully, Yugi dropped down opposite him, next to Hermione. Dumbledore then stood, eyes twinkling with that annoying, knowing spark.

“Now that all of our new students are sorted, please, dig in!”

Chapter End Notes

And now everyone is finally in one place (except Bill)! Don't worry, Bill will return, most likely in the chapter or so. For now, he has been replaced by our favourite Potion's Master.

Speaking of Sorting, it took me a while to decide where everyone would go. For some characters it was easy- Ryou, who we don't see much of in the Dub, is pretty loyal but since we don't get much of a feel for him aside from half of Season 1 and bits and pieces from Season 2 (and I am aware that Season 1 is dubious at best in canonicity) I took a bit of creative licence. That, and I have accounted for Yami Bakura as well in this which will become a bit clearer in the future. Marik was also somewhat easy as well as Yugi-Marik in this is only just out of manipulating others and while he is working on becoming a better person, the Hat seems to take from stuff in your past rather than you as an actual person now. Yugi, because... well, it's Yugi. Anyone stupid and/or brave enough to stand in a burning warehouse to put a piece of jewellery back together when
he could have quite easily picked up the pieces and put them back together later in the hospital is pretty much dumped in Gryffindor, the House of doing before thinking (ahem, I mean courage and bravery). Akhefia went to Slytherin because I like causing havoc.

Weirdly enough, I had a minor argument with myself about where Kaiba would go. Now I know that the main argument would be 'but he's pretty manipulative and ambitious straight into Slytherin', but Kaiba uses this as a front to keep people out rather than it being his true nature (or at least that is my interpretation). And Kaiba is incredibly protective of family, although this is usually mostly just Mokuba. In fact, he very nearly ended up in Gryffindor, but I decided in the end it would be more interesting to stick him with Akhefia for a bit and see where it went from there. Atem and Kaiba, while the more natural choice, seemed to me a bit too easy and this story is not about what is easy (also Kaiba by virtue of last name, got sorted first and therefore, the only reason he would have ended up in Gryffindor in this story would have been if he asked to go with his cousin and so, this was a miscalculation on his part as well).

Also, hi Draco. Do not expect special treatment from me. And yes, Umbridge is here, but we shall get to her next chapter.

Well, I hope you liked this chapter and I'll see you in the next chapter when I get to it!
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Ok, so technically this is a day earlier than I said it would be, but I felt that since it's been a while, then I can make an exception this week. Should be going back to usual updating times once a week, every Thursday after this, and I'll let you know if there'll be any difficulties once again later on down the line.

Other than that, please enjoy this chapter and I hope it has been worth the wait! And thank you for bearing with me these last couple of weeks!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Marik had never thought that he would ever hate the colour green. Green was the colour of life, of fertility and food and the precious gifts given by rain. It was a colour that he had lived without for so many years, it had been startling to first view the lush green fields set alongside the Nile on his first trip to Cairo. It had been so long ago, but sometimes he remembered it as clearly as if it were yesterday. He had drunk in that glorious colour, so vibrant in the bright midday sun and had decided then and there that it was his favourite colour. In this house however, it most certainly was not.

The common room was a terrible sickly green colour, the upholstery on the chairs a deep emerald that was washed out in the terrible light. It should have been warm from the fire in the common room, but Marik could only feel cold, as if it gave off no heat at all. It was the kind of dungeon-like area that his darker half would have loved. And therefore, Marik found that he hated every facet of it.

The other Slytherins were eyeing them all up with suspicion. Despite the fact that three out of six of the transfer students had ended up in Slytherin, the only one they truly seemed to accept was Akhefia. The thief- and he was a thief considering that Marik had watched him steal several of their fellow housemates money purses- was currently sat next to the fire, his snake on full display. The only person who looked unhappy with this was the blonde boy from the train carriage.

"So, it was you who owns that… thing," the boy drawled, lip curled in distaste. His tone indicated that he really wanted to say something completely different, while he stood in such a way that stated he would agree with whatever the other boy said. Marik had the feeling that since the house's mascot was a snake, they simply assumed that because Akhefia's ka was such, that he would agree with their ideals.

Oh, how wrong they were.

"So, you were the one that Diabound wanted to eat," Akhefia stated, just as condescending as Yami Bakura could be. And that wasn't even at his worst. Marik shuddered slightly, swallowing and stepping ever so slightly closer to Kaiba, who was currently watching the show with a carefully blank face. Malfoy's face scrunched in something like hatred, obviously noticing not only the growing attention but also tension in the room.

"You let that filthy mudblood touch it." Something almost like anger flashed across Akhefia's face for a split second and Marik didn't know whether to feel sorry for the boy or be outraged himself. If the Clan leaders heard anyone speaking of royalty like that, he would be executed on the spot. And Akhefia had lived with the central Clan at Nekhen for years. Marik shuddered, remembering the day
that the Memphis Clan leader, Kheftan, had visited a few days before he had left for Britain. Ishizu had still declined teaching and Marik wished she hadn't - how was he supposed to know that the 'important' member they were sending was the heir to the Clans?

"What did you just say?" Akhefia asked, voice deadly quiet and eyes as flinty as Diabound’s. The snake let out a near silent hiss, slithering around his owner's arm and up across his shoulders, in much closer lunging distance than he had been before. Marik wondered what would happen when Diabound was no longer a snake if Akhefia got angry enough. He wouldn't be so unsubtle would he? After all, he had been informed that this was the house of cunning and ambition. Malfoy, apparently, missed the danger he was in.

"You can't tell me your friends with him? A Gryffindor?" Malfoy's tone was mildly disbelieving as if the thought that any knowledge of people from outside Hogwarts should mean nothing once sorted. Akhefia's eyes narrowed further and Kaiba seemed to decide that killing the idiot was below Akhefia, even if the other boy didn't. None of the other students had yet to notice the wicked gleam of the dagger under the boy's robes.

"Clearly, you've never encountered people who have met in the real world," Kaiba drawled, moving to sit in the armchair opposite Akhefia. Marik moved to stand between the two. Might as well show his own solidarity with them, even if he didn't want to get involved. He would, if the idiot decided to carry on causing trouble, but he hoped it wouldn't. He really wanted to put his own issues to bed and he really didn't need any of this right now.

"And what's that supposed to mean?" a boy with a weasel-like face asked, affronted. Kaiba cocked an eyebrow.

"Are you telling me that no one has ever come to this school knowing any other students before? Even transfers and such?" he asked. The boy frowned at him.

"Sometimes, but what has that got to do-"

"Everything. Just because one has been sorted into different houses has no relevance on their bond before entering this school, no matter their age. What difference does it make if a Gryffindor and Slytherin are friends if they have known each other before entering your bigoted world." There were several hisses from some horrified students which Marik couldn't understand.

"You're not going to be in school forever what do houses have to do with anything?" he asked before he could stop himself. Was this really all coming out because the prince was sorted into a different school house? A House he wasn't even staying in, and neither was himself or Akhefia for that matter. They had all been given the choice at the end of the feast and before he could decide the thief had spoken up for him. Kaiba had decided to join them in the remote dorm, while Yugi and Ryou opted to stay in their respective house dorms. They too, had been baffled by the apparent dirty looks being sent in the direction of Slytherin house.

"What do…" Malfoy echoed, mouth hanging open. He didn't seem to notice that Diabound was still eyeing him as a tasty snack for his earlier comments. "Gryffindors are our sworn enemy! They are our rivals in everything! They're all about being friends with filthy mudbloods-"

"Like His Highness?" Akhefia asked almost sweetly, striking as swiftly as a cobra. A couple of sharp inhales behind Marik showed that a few of the smarter Slytherins had caught on. Malfoy, unsurprisingly, didn't.

"Well, if that's what you would like to call him," he sneered and Kaiba made a derisive sound. Clearly, he was unamused by Malfoy's bigotry as Akhefia- probably more-so if what Yugi had said
was true.

"It would be heresy if he didn't. It isn't usually customary to refer to the Pharaoh's son as a, what was it? Filthy mudblood?" Kaiba's tone was almost as sweet as Akhefia's. It was a tone that Malfoy finally caught on to, that meant that he was in trouble. His mouth fell open and he glanced around the common room, looking for some form of support. But, if he had ever had any to begin with, the others were wisely keeping quiet. In fact, Marik was certain he could see a couple of impressed-looking second and third years in the corner, eagerly watching this show-down. Malfoy's mouth moved up and down a couple of times, obviously at a loss as to how to dig his way out of this hole.

"Well, if that's you done with," Akhefia stated, talking as if he were merely commenting on the weather, "to business. There will be some new rules while I am here. By the sounds of it, you've all been taught idiocy and bigotry towards your own kind and have forgotten what the true values of cunning and ambition are. What's the point of wiping out half of your own puny little existence on the earth when there are far more interesting endeavours to be involved in." The smile Akhefia gave the common room was half deranged, the dagger no longer in hiding. The weasel faced boy from earlier scoffed.

"And what are you going to do with that? You'd be hit with spells before you got to anyone," he laughed. Akhefia merely smiled wider.

"You would need a wand and hand to do that. And unlike you," he said, as he stood calmly before the Shadows suddenly coalesced and he was standing right behind the boy. "I don't need a wand to cause damage," he finished, dagger now pressed up against the boy's throat. He used Shadow magic just like that?! That should be impossible! You can't use it like that anymore! Marik's brain screamed at him. Although, he supposed, if they were involved in the Nameless Pharaoh's prophecy, then it was entirely possible that he could do something like that. Weasel boy's face went white in terror and several students took a step or two away from him. Even Malfoy had the sense to look terrified. "Oh, don't worry. I won't kill any of you. His Highness would be most displeased with me if I did- and you don't want to see him angry." This was punctuated with another manic grin, before the dagger disappeared from whence it came. Diabound let out a soft hiss as he straightened up. "And now, I shall leave you for the night. I'll see you all in the morning." It didn't take either him or Kaiba to decide that staying in this dorm was out of the question.

In fact, Marik vowed to not return until Akhefia had done a little damage. If it involved Malfoy, then he might even help…

The dorm that they were given by Dumbledore wasn't bad, all things considered. He was fairly certain that it had been put together during dinner though- the crafty old man had thought that they would be all be staying in the dorms they were given. Atem could have told him that was a terrible idea, leaving Akhefia to play with unsuspecting chauvinistic teenagers, let alone his own issues. Luckily, it looked as if Bill had arrived earlier than expected and was sat in the small common room allocated to them along with the man who had been introduced as Severus Snape.

"Your room's that one." Bill pointed to the door with his name on it, third to the left, protection spell already in place. By the looks of things Haphiri had already gotten to it before him, since there was another layer of spells over the ones for protection. Atem opened the door, giving it a quick glance around. Decorated in red and gold, the colours for Gryffindor. He shook his head and shut it again.

"Will I be able to decorate I wish?" he asked.

"Ask for Dobby. Dumbledore has given him this area to clean when he has finished the Gryffindor dorms. He will be able to help you... redecorate," Snape said. Atem raised an eyebrow.
"Will he help me burn everything designed to bring me to Dumbledore's point of view?"

"Are you planning to do so to half the school?" Atem grinned at the man, noticing the slight twitch of the man's lips.

"If only." He went to join them on the seats. The common room had no fireplace- only a couple of small tables and some armchairs scattered about the room. Bill and Snape had dragged most of them into a sort of circle, but it was clear that it was made to look less welcoming than it could- probably to encourage him to spend time in the Gryffindor common room. Perhaps another day… his exhausted and optimistic side murmured. Considering Yugi and the ghost would be there… most likely not.

"Mr Weasley has been telling me about your… difficulties sleeping," Snape said delicately. Atem huffed, eyeing the potion vials set out before the Potion's Master. Difficulties indeed. "Since his potion brewing skills are passable at best he asked for my help in a little experiment." Atem gave both men a small grateful smile.

"Dreamless Sleep?" he asked as he picked one up.

"My own brew. It is incredibly strong, you will only need a few drops in your drink before bed- any more and you risk addiction. Just like Muggle sleeping tablets, do not take them any longer than three nights in a row without a break." Atem nodded, replacing the vial as he felt a soft breeze on the back of his neck.

"Baba!" He wasn't surprised by the chilly feeling of a ghost falling through him again. Clearly, Nofret hadn't gotten any better at corporeality.

"Troubles, sister?" he asked teasingly as she detangled herself from himself, the table in front of them and the chair. She pouted as she flopped into the one next to him, only to fall through it.

"Gods damn it!" she shouted, pulling herself up once again.

"It does tend to help if one is solid," Snape stated blandly. Atem withheld a snigger although Bill was less successful. Nofret blinked at him, before brightening.

"Oh, yes! Thank you!" she said, attempting to sit once again. This time she managed to stay on the chair rather than in it. "Hello, Severus!"

"Good evening, princess," the Potion's Master said, not missing a beat. "What can I do for you?"

"Oh, um…" Nofret went quiet, playing with her fingers a little and becoming a little translucent. "Haphiri was wondering if you would help her with something? She was wondering if… if modern magic had any way of counteracting Orichalcum?"

"Orichalcum?" Bill asked, surprised and Atem swallowed. "I thought that stuff didn't exist anymore?"

"Oh, it exists. The Minoan has just hoarded most of the world's supply of it," Atem said darkly. He was surprised that he hadn't thought to ask before- damn that hat for bringing up those memories!

"Minoan?" Snape asked and Atem winced. It wasn't really what Haphiri called him- the word she used didn't exactly translate into any modern language anymore and it was the closest known civilisation that they knew he had been attached to. However, Atem had found mention of a stranger from across the sea with an odd green rock in several Mionoan documents that stated he wasn't a part of them. That he was something… older. And that made his history with Nofret all the more
disturbing. No wonder she had been freaking out about those bikers the other day.

"It's… not important," he said. Snape didn't look happy but accepted that that was all he was going to get. He turned his gaze to the ceiling as he seemed to think.

"Orichalcum is a rare substance. As Mr Weasley succinctly put it, many a wizard thinks it no longer exists. However, the Dark Lord himself owned a piece, many years ago. Where that shard went, I do not know and I have yet to devise a suitable defence against it except Occlumency. Which you do not need with your mental capabilities," Snape said slowly.

"The Minoans mental capabilities are far beyond my own, let alone yours or Voldemort's, even helped with Orichalcum." Snape nodded and sighed.

"I will look into it. If the Dark Lord manages to get in contact with this… Minoan, then I will have to report this to Dumbledore," he said, eyes questioning.

"If it comes to that point, it won't matter if Dumbledore knows we warned you or not. This school would be overrun within a month," Atem said gravely. "I'm surprised he hasn't already." It was a disturbing thought. If Voldemort already knew about Orichalcum then it was only a matter of time before he went looking for more. And if he did… if he found the Serpent King, then they would be in greater trouble than if Necrophades decided to unleash its full capacity within the school. Atem didn't really like thinking about the odds of that- there was so much magic here, old and ancient and mostly untapped, that the students didn't realise that far from it being the safest place to be against Voldemort, but rather the most dangerous. Especially with the enemies they had let in within the school ground that would make use of the wayward magic floating about.

Before either Snape, nor Bill could answer that thought though, Akhefia crashed through the door, followed swiftly by both Kaiba and Marik. Bill jumped while Snape eyed the swinging door with distaste.

"Mr Kheti, I don't believe you hit the door hard enough." Akhefia merely growled, throwing himself into a chair, not even bothering to look at his room.

"If that room is as green as your common room, I swear I'll kill the old man myself," he snapped, fiddling with one of many daggers he had upon his person. Atem blinked, wondering what exactly had happened. Thankfully, Kaiba decided to be helpful for once.

"The Slytherin common room is a disgusting shade of green right down to the lights and Malfoy decided that he wanted to attempt to be in charge by insulting others," he said in a bored tone. It was clear that Malfoy's attempt had been pitiful at best considering Akhefia's usual method of dealing with idiots involved much pain. "Out of academic interest, what exactly is the point of referring to those of non-magical origin as a 'mudblood'?" Bill's face immediately darkened and Snape scowled.

"It is a despicable way for pure-blooded wizards to sully the name of those from non-magical families. Unfortunately, it is prevalent within Slytherin House due to the fact that near all of them come from elitist pure-blooded families." Atem raised an eyebrow at that- from the way Bill's younger brother Ron had been ranting, one would have thought all Slytherin's to be like that.

"Would I be right in thinking that those who don't agree with that policy are ostracised?" he asked. Snape merely nodded, eyes dark. It was all Atem needed to know and he simply let the matter rest. Akhefia was seething in his seat- it wasn't exactly hard to guess who Malfoy had been referring to. So, he decided to tackle the only person in their little dorm that was looking particularly uncomfortable. "Marik, you are welcome to sit," he said, gesturing to the chair next to him- coincidentally the only one left, since Nofret had made herself comfortable in the chair closest to the
"It is true that the old fool has decorated our rooms much as I assume they would be decorated if we had stayed in our respective dorms, but I am assured we may decorate them as we see fit. Perhaps in the morning to give the poor House Elf a chance to tidy up Gryffindor House first though?" He sent a pointed look at Akhefia who's scowl had deepened at the mention of the colour scheme.

"Fine. I'm not cruel," Akhefia growled, letting Diabound down to explore. Kaiba looked as if he didn't believe that statement and Atem could see why. Most assumed that Akhefia was that way from how he acted, but he had never looked down on anyone without reason. They were usually validated, since he had spent most of his life living in the slums and then ostracised the moment he came into contact with the royal court. Atem had no illusions to Akhefia's character, but had liked and appreciated the other boy's honesty the first time they had met. Here was another lost soul, held under the assumption that they would act the same as their ancient counterpart and the idea that they could ever be friends was laughable to his father.

It had been wonderful to prove the man wrong.

"If that is all, I will leave you for tonight," Snape said, rising from his chair. "Mr Weasley has his own room here, to keep an eye on you. I will see you in the morning, with timetables for most of you." Atem nodded, watching the man leave. It was clear that they had at least one ally within these walls. He then yawned, gathering the vials in front of him.

"I'll see you all in the morning," he murmured, already on the way to his room. This whole day had been draining, and he got the feeling that it was only going to get worse the longer they stayed here. Akhefai grunted and Bill blinked. Nofret was curled up in her chair, asleep and semi-transparent. Atem smiled at the sight as he shut his door quietly.

At least one of them was going to get a good night's sleep.

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Pain. He was in such great pain, carrying the corpse of his sister through the burning halls of the palace. The thief had gotten into the court, had already corrupted them from the inside. Gods, he was too young for this!

He stumbled, his strength failing. It was all he could do to stop the small body in his arms from tumbling to the floor with the rest of him. Why did it have to be her? Why did she have to die, so quick on the heels of their father? On the others? Truly, the gods had cursed him for his father's misdeeds. He tried to push himself up, on arms that were too weak to hold himself up. He couldn't carry her any longer, but he couldn't just leave her here, where any of the Dark Paladin's minions could come and find her and use her.

Warm arms wrapped around him, gentle to the touch and withholding a sob.

"Why are you always so foolish?" was the short, whispered words from painted lips, before they saw the true damage. Tears streaked down her face as she tried to pry the dagger from his side, but he took hold of her hand.

"It... It's too late now," he whispered, too weak for anything more. "We have to do it now."

"But you'll die!"

"I'm going to die anyway. If we don't do this now... everyone dies." Tears were dripping down her face, falling on his own even as his vision blurred. "There's a spell... father showed me. But I..." he coughed, feeling blood bubbling up and over his lips. "I can't cast it alone. I don't..." Another cough,
more blood. He could almost feel his lungs filling with his life's blood, drowning him from the inside out. The Priestess nodded, taking his hand in her own, grim understanding on her face.

"Say the words. I'll give you the strength." He nodded, feeling more energised as he gave him what magic she had left. He could hear the roaring of the Gods battling the creature outside, even as he closed his eyes to the world. The words were strange on his lips, a mix of Akkadian and Egyptian that he hadn't spoken in such since he was very young. Far away, he could almost hear his mother, singing softly over the haze of battle, could hear his sister crying despite her death.

I will see you again he vowed even as he chanted the spell to seal away his own soul. Even if I will no longer remember you, I will see you again, and we will stand in Ra's light together once more. And with that the spell was finished.

He hadn't thought he could be in more pain than he was. Pain ripped through his core as his soul was torn asunder, ripped from his dying body and thrown to the shadows, gripping to that foul creature that attacked his people. He could see almost everything, despite the agony of his soul. Could see a thief restored from the sands he had been banished to, see a Priest ordering soldiers while running through the halls in search of his leader. A Priestess leant over the body of a young man, weeping in a puddle of golden shards, even as the Priest found her, horror written over his face.

And then... nothing. Nothing but shadows and darkness and pain for eternity.

In a dormitory with five other boys, the body of Yugi Motou sat up, wretching itself out of the red covers that it had pulled over itself, earlier that night. But it was not Yugi Motou who inhabited the body at that moment, gasping for breath that it only needed in this corporeal form.

Yami? Yugi murmured sleepily, mildly alarmed. It took the Spirit some time to order his thoughts, confused and obscured as they were. He couldn't remember the dream, but he could still feel the phantom pain of being ripped apart by the Shadows over five thousand years aching in his slowly healing soul.

I... I'm fine he whispered back. It was only a dream. The small Japanese boy nodded, going straight back to sleep and Yami, too laid back down, trying to remember what it was that had caused so much distress to both him and Yugi's body.

Both were unaware of the screams which woke a completely different, but much smaller dorm, some ways away in the castle.

Chapter End Notes

Ok, so we finally have a chapter from Marik's point of view and some insight into Slytherin House. I find it interesting that the entirety of Hogwarts that isn't in Slytherin are convinced that every single one of them are pure-bloods, when even in the Harry Potter books it's proven that they aren't. Considering the only backstory we get from Snape is limited about his time at Hogwarts (even in the Seventh book, it mainly focuses on his relationship with Lily), it seems curious to me that he seems ostracised by even his own House. And I wondered if that meant that if you happened to be in Slytherin House and were not only not a pure-blood but also friends with anyone of any other house, would that get you ostracised by everyone else? We don't get to see that kind of reaction since Harry is in Gryffindor, and therefore we only really see Gryffindor
reactions to things.

As for Malfoy being the head of Slytherin, even if only by context, well, he threatens everyone with his father's power. Which is laughable when put against anyone in Yugioh, let alone Akhefia of this story who, as you can tell, has very little respect towards idiots. As does Kaiba. This was why this chapter was so fun to write- just waiting for the penny to drop for Malfoy that no, these people are not going to listen to you and neither are they going to be intimidated by a boy who's only real power comes from his father. It's a lesson I want them and Slytherin House to learn because it seems that most of the House's occupants aren't cunning/ambitious as they are following in the footsteps of their families.

Also, hi Snape. I hope his characterization doesn't feel too off in this chapter. Out of all of the teachers/members of the Order of the Phoenix, Snape is the only one that I think the characters of Yugioh would be able to deal with. A man who isn't blindly following a clearly manipulative old man, questions what information he is given and is suitably disgusted to find out that Dumbledore has been grooming Harry to be the perfect weapon to use against Voldemort. He might be the most morally ambiguous character, but he is also the most interesting in that regard because, unlike the others, his only real goal is to protect Lily's memory- Snape gets used a lot by everyone and no one likes to acknowledge that. So I decided, I wanted to give him some volition of his own, as seen in this story where he is actually allies with someone, rather than allowing himself to be used by various different factions.

Right, rant about Snape over.

Other than that, I hope you enjoyed this chapter and I'll be back next week with a new one!
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Ok, so I lied (again), because, like an idiot, I forgot that I was not in the vicinity of my laptop tomorrow for some dissertation research that may or may not have been planned for many weeks... I totally forgot. But, since I have actually prepared for this situation beforehand in the last couple of weeks for just such an occasion, you may have this chapter up early!

Anyhow, my forgetfulness aside, I hope you enjoy and as always the notes will be below!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Are you sure you’re alright? Yugi asked the Pharaoh once again as he yawned his way down to the Great Hall. He was following Harry and Ron, who looked just as sleepy as he felt, although they knew the castle like the back of their hands since they had been here far longer. They were pretty good for company, especially since the only other person to have joined him in Gryffindor House had ditched them for the other dorm. Yugi didn’t know how to feel about them claiming his friends were evil, purely by being in Slytherin House, and had been grateful to Hermione when she had stated that they couldn’t make assumptions based on the Sorting Hat.

I’m fine, really the Spirit reassured him as they entered the Great Hall but Yugi could sense that Yami wasn’t feeling completely recovered from the night before.

Must have been some nightmare he said back, before dropping into a seat next to Harry. The food on offer was typical British fare: a mix of eggs, bacon, sausages, toast, cereal and some kind of large black sausage cut into slices. Yugi decided that he didn’t want to try that and opted for some cereal and toast. He would much rather have had his grandfather’s miso soup, but it was unlikely he was going to find any of his usual favourite foods on a British boarding school’s menus. Yami might have been up for trying the odd sausage, but Yugi would admit that he was rather less adventurous than the teenaged Pharaoh.

“So, Yugi, how was your first night?” Hermione asked, half hidden behind a book that was balanced on a milk jug. Yugi blinked, distracted from his conversation with Yami and then smiled at her.

“Oh, it was fine, thanks! It’s still a bit strange being so far from home though,” he said, glancing around and wondering where the others were. As if the thought had conjured them, the doors to the Great Hall opened and in came the others minus Ryou, all of which made a beeline for the food on their table. Yugi, was slightly blindsided though, when Ron suddenly glared at Marik and Kaiba as they sat next to and opposite Yugi.

“This isn’t your table,” he growled at them, only to get an eyeroll from Kaiba.

“There is nothing in the school rules that states that outside of certain important feasts, students must sit at the House designated tables,” he said as he swiped some bacon and toast for himself. Marik had only grabbed toast and was busy spreading jam on it. Ron looked about to say something when he was cut off by Atem, who somehow still looked tired.
“Does it truly matter? They’ve all been friends since far before coming to this school, why should they be split up now by your constricting system?” he asked, nibbling around some toast. Akhefia seemed far too engrossed in the pile of eggs, bacon and hash browns on his plate to be bothered to add in his own thoughts. It was probably a good thing too, from the glare he was sending Ron’s way.

Atem’s words seemed to cut off the conversation as the other three turned back to discuss the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher and, from the sounds of it, complain and belittle a different teacher who taught Potions. In the meantime, Ryou arrived and Marik shuffled up to make room for him. The other Gryffindors were still staring at them but seemed less offended by Ryou’s presence than the others.

“How’s Hufflepuff?” Yugi asked as Ryou reached for his own breakfast. The white-haired youth smiled as he buttered a slice of toast.

“Oh, it’s fine. Everyone is super friendly, and,” here he paused before quickly switching to Japanese, “and he didn’t decide to make any appearances.”

“Maybe he thinks it’s boring?” Marik suggested, already finished with his own breakfast. They were however, surprised when a new voice chimed in.

“I wouldn’t rely on that assumption.” Yugi blinked and turned to look at Atem, who seemed just as concerned with the world around him as he had been a minute before. Akhefia, however, was giving him an odd look over the table as he fed his snake bits of bacon. It took him a moment to realise that everyone was looking at him. “What?”

“Since when did you speak Japanese?” Akhefia asked, eyebrow cocked. Atem suddenly flushed, and bit into a slice of toast he was finishing, mumbling something that became unintelligible. It was only then that Akhefia started to snigger at him, which left Yugi just as lost as he had been a moment earlier. Kaiba was giving his cousin a long considering look, before deciding that it wasn’t worth it, returning to his laptop that he had pulled out and was presumably working on Kaiba Corp. business. Before any of them could inquire any further, Atem was saved by the arrival of Professor McGonnagal with timetables.

“For the Gryffindors,” she said, eyeing the others but saying nothing about their seating arrangements. She handed out Yugi and Atem’s that were identical, before moving down to Harry, Ron and Hermione.

“Professor is it true that students can sit anywhere when it isn’t a specified feast?” Yugi heard Hermione ask and could practically feel the distaste coming from Kaiba.

“Yes, it is Miss Granger.” The other two had their mouths hanging open and Yugi found that the red-head looked particularly gormless. He got the feeling that they were really not going to get along with Kaiba. Especially since they had yet to notice Kaiba’s continued use of technology. The black-haired professor from the night before arrived with Kaiba, Akhefia and Marik’s timetables, showing that they shared Potions, Care of Magical Creatures and Ancient Runes with the Slytherins and that was it. Yugi wondered what he was supposed to do with his free slot after History of Magic that morning. Ryou’s timetable was structured even further away from their own.

“Well, most of us share a free period last thing on a Tuesday and we share a free with Ryou last thing on a Friday,” Marik noted. “Anyone up for joining us in our common room? The elf this morning assured us we can make it as big as we want, and the castle gave us an extra room for duelling!”
“Really?” Yugi asked excitedly. He hadn’t seen the separate dormitory that had been set aside for them if they wanted it, but Yugi had decided that Atem looked as if he needed the space. Besides, he had been curious about the Gryffindor dorm and he had been assured that, if it was ever needed, he could always move. Marik was nodding while Akhefia looked as if he could think of far better things to do with his time.

“That sounds like a good idea,” Atem said, glancing over his own timetable. He shared a look with Akhefia who just seemed to sigh and lean back in his seat, looking mildly unhappy with how this was turning out.

“Fine. Now, if you don’t mind, I have some idiots to put in order,” he growled as he stood from the table. Then, almost as if the air had just swallowed him, he was gone, reappearing on the other side of the hall behind Malfoy. Marik looked simultaneously alarmed and intrigued as Malfoy jumped about a foot off the bench, face white as a sheet.

“Um… what just happened?” Yugi asked but never got an answer as Hermione had suddenly spotted Kaiba’s laptop.

“Excuse me, how did you get that to work?” she asked, sounding alarmed.

“I reversed the charm that stops modern electrical components from working,” Atem said simply, not paying much attention, eyes watching Akhefia.

“But that’s impossible! The amount of magic here should cause them to overload!” she exclaimed. That did seem to distract Atem, as he turned to her with a frown.

“Where did you hear that?” he asked, sounding confused. Yami too, seemed intrigued by this concept. “If that were true, nothing would work at home either. But it does, and I have been to the wizarding section of Cairo, where they are quite capable of using electronics on either side of the wards.” Hermione looked surprised while Ron was looking confused.

“But… if that’s true, why does nothing work in the magical world in Britain?” Harry asked, eyebrows drawn together. “It would be really handy to be able to use a phone instead of having to keep writing letters by hand.” Well, at least one of them would admit that no technology was somewhat ridiculous.

“There is a spell that was placed around wizarding Britain, preventing this,” Atem said with a shrug. “I’m not sure how long it has been in place.”

Can you tell? Yugi asked as Yami seemed to experimentally (with more delicacy than he had on the train) poke at the wards.

I would have to know which particular spell was cast. And there are multiple spells here, not all of them this modern magic either. Yugi could hear the frown on the spirit’s face. It would be unwise to appear in spirit form here. Anyone even mildly sensitive to the Spirit World would be able to sense us. So that was why Yami had yet to appear next to him. And perhaps why Atem didn’t consider Yami Bakura’s silence to be a good thing.

He really hoped that he was wrong though.

Harry found himself watching the transfers throughout History of Magic that morning, even if it was something just to not have to listen to whatever it was that Professor Binns was going on about. Kaiba, like Hermione, was making notes except on his laptop rather than on parchment, while
simultaneously doing something with his business that seemed to involve many emails. Harry was still confused as to how he had internet service this far from any server, although he supposed if he owned all of Kaiba Corporation, he was most likely using his own satellites and service. Yugi seemed to have given up and was playing with his phone under the desk while Atem, for all intents and purposes, looked to be asleep.

It was actually rather impressive how the older boy managed to look like he was making notes while unconscious.

Harry wasn’t sure how to feel about the two Tomb Keepers that had joined them since only a couple of days before. Akhefia seemed constantly angry at the world, while Atem just got more confusing the longer he spent any time with him. He was polite enough but was secretive in a way that had his instincts screaming that he knew something they didn’t. It didn’t help that Bill also seemed to be keeping secrets if his behaviour at Diagon Alley had been any indication. In fact, they still didn’t know what had happened that day.

Hermione had told him off for wanting to say something, but Ron had agreed that something was off with them. Even after meeting Atem’s sisters, the kleptomaniacal one notwithstanding, it was hard to pin down what it was that made them so confusing. They had seemed afraid of something but assured them that it was fine. They seemed alert to any attack, which he understood if they were being attacked as often as they were, but about what they couldn’t grasp. Sirius had mentioned that Voldemort was looking for a weapon, that they thought that he might be trying to find it in Egypt, but Bill had been adamant that there was nothing there to find.

Hermione elbowed him in the side, a sharp look indicating she wanted him to pay some modicum of attention to what they were doing. Sighing he reluctantly returned to making the barest minimum of notes—really Harry learnt more History of Magic from his textbook than he ever did in the actual lessons. It didn’t help that Professor Binns kept picking the most boring and obscure topics for them to study. After all who cared about the Goblin Rebellions from god alone knows when, while things were peaceful between them now?

Eventually, both Yugi and Kaiba seemed to get bored enough that the usually stoic teen started up some kind of virtual Duel Monsters game with Yugi across both their laptops, and Harry got to see firsthand the pairs duelling tactics. He was surprised that they seemed to be running off of Duelist Kingdom rules—both only had 2000 Life Points, were able to summon monsters of every level and required no sacrifices to summon them unless otherwise specified. And was it Harry’s imagination, or was Yugi suddenly sitting up straighter in his seat? Yugi was saved from being questioned only by the ringing of the bell, that seemed to wake Atem with a start. He and Ron were halfway to the North Tower for Divination when a quiet voice spoke from behind them.

“Um, excuse me? Could you tell me the way to Divination?” Harry turned to see Bakura, books held in one hand and bag slung over his shoulder. He seemed to have shrunk into himself as he usually did when feeling particularly shy.

“Er, sure. We’re on our way there now,” he said gesturing for the other boy to follow them. Bakura blinked and then offered them a soft smile, no evidence of the near violent personality that appeared at times. Harry wondered if he had some kind of condition—Multiple Personality Disorder or something like that. He never seemed to be aware that he was acting any differently at the time but sometimes, there were moments when Bakura was more awkward around them, usually after one of these episodes. So perhaps he was aware that he switched personas?

The Divination classroom was just as stuffy as usual and Harry settled down at his and Ron’s usual
table, ready for another nap. He had resigned to failing this class already and was merely waiting for Professor Trelawny to once again tell him how he was going to die painfully. Bakura had slipped away to sit with a fellow Hufflepuff at a different table after thanking them for their help in getting to the classroom. It was odd that he didn’t seem to be trying to make friends in his own house- sticking primarily with the friends he came with and keeping everyone else at an arm’s length.

It was telling enough.

Professor Trelawny swept in then, beads jangling softly amongst her shawl, eyes just as wide as they had been last year. Her gaze swept over them all and she launched into one of her many long speeches about the ‘Far Seeing Eye’ or whatever it was that she talked about. That was, until her gaze fell on Bakura, at which point she cut off mid-sentence and her face paled.

“My boy… a great darkness follows you,” she stammered, backing away minutely. Bakura’s face, too, was pale. “A great darkness indeed, an evil that has almost taken this world before-!” She was cut off as she stumbled over a stray pillow, almost crashing into Harry and Ron’s table. Harry jumped up, alarmed, to steady her. Like many, he knew that most of what Professor Trelawny said was fake at best and drivel at worst. Unlike others though, Harry also knew that Trelawny did in fact, give some accurate prophecies that sometimes overtook her. This was neither- it was as if she was enthralled in something, terrified and yet captivated. For a moment, Harry almost thought he could see some kind of form behind Bakura- a shadow that was almost but not quite the same as that of the other boy.

“Professor?” he asked, looking away from that shadow, a sense of dread falling over him. It was the first day of classes- it usually took his bad luck longer to strike. As if broken from a trance, Trelawny turned to look at him, blinking owlishly, the effect amplified by her huge glasses.

“Ah, yes my boy?” she asked, seemingly confused. A hush had fallen over the class, all of them wondering what had just happened. Harry glanced back over to Bakura, who didn’t look any different and that odd shadow was gone. It didn’t even seem that he had changed into the other persona.

“A- Are you alright?” Harry stammered, baffled by this change. Ron looked alarmed, having never seen this side of their Divination teacher. Trelawny gave him a wobbly smile.

“Oh, yes,” she said, patting his hand where it was on her arm. “Yes, perfectly alright. Now, back to our lesson…” It was as if nothing had happened at all. Harry sank back into his seat, wondering what on earth that had been about. There seemed to be a lot of odd occurrences happening around them for the past few weeks. New students. Voldemort looking for secrets in places that seemed to unearth new branches of magic. The odd personality changes between Bakura and Yugi and the appearance of these Tomb Keepers. It was like there some great secret that they were all hiding from them.

And Harry was determined to get to the bottom of it.

This school was incredible for all that it wasn’t meant to be. Yami wandered the corridors, using this hour that Yugi had to explore the school as he did the many corridors of his labyrinthine soul room. It was strange- usually the further away from the Puzzle he got, the more the connection between himself and Yugi felt strained but here, the bond was just as strong as if he had been stood next to him. If he concentrated hard enough, he could follow along with the game of Senet that the young Tomb Keeper was in the midst of teaching Yugi. It was a game that Yami himself knew how to play, in that way that he understood Coptic and could read hieroglyphs.
After the dismally boring lesson, that both he and Yugi had given up on and instead agreed to a game of Duel Monsters on the laptops with Kaiba, they had been invited back to the other boy’s common room. Since it wasn’t technically a House common room, and since Yugi could move there whenever he wished, there was nothing that their teachers could say. An interesting loophole Yami found. He hadn’t had much interaction with his doppelganger, but he seemed just as wary as them as they were of him. It made Yami wonder what his life must have been like, living under the thumb of the Tomb Keepers.

Yami was no fool. He knew that there were other ways in which to fulfil the prophecy. Ishizu had shown him one way, but there were more than likely many others that he could have taken over the years. It just so happened that he had chosen to save Solomon Mutou that fateful day, had allowed the pure soul that was Yugi’s to put his Puzzle together. It was a conscious choice, one of few that he had been able to make in those days, not one made at random. But Yami had only ever met the Ishtars, who were estranged from the rest of the Tomb Keepers and could only wonder at what trials the other boy had been put through.

What punishment he had been given for his choice.

The young Pharoah shook off those thoughts and returned to what he had been doing. This way, Yugi wouldn’t have to rely on the two teens to show him around the castle. They were nice enough, he supposed, but also too curious for their own good. Unlike Yami Bakura, he had more sense than to erupt at them, but it had taken all of his self-control not to do the same to the young girl when she was harassing Yugi. At some point, she must have gotten the message, and had left them in relative peace for the last couple of days, although that might have been because more interesting characters had appeared in this odd play the old man was putting on.

The castle was full of odd and interesting magic. There was earth magic, shamanistic magic, this odd modern magic, even a bit of Shadow magic. There was a part of him that was curious how it had gotten here, but then he was slightly blindsided by a strange questioning part of him that wondered where a different type of magic was. He shook off those thoughts- it didn’t do to dwell on forgotten memories. It was happening more often of late, feeling that things were familiar and being unable to pin down why. It was far more interesting to poke around with the different types of magic here, to see who could and couldn’t see him. He had already passed several older students and a couple of teachers, along with the man he presumed was the caretaker. None of them had noticed him but, when passing through the dungeons and the classroom there, a dreamy eyed girl with blonde hair had smiled and waved at him to the bewilderment of the others at her table. The greasy haired teacher from the evening before had given him a long look out of the corner of his eye, but made no motion to acknowledge that he was there.

And now he was at a spot somewhere on the seventh floor, staring at a rather odd painting of a rather deranged wizard attempting to teach trolls to dance. Outlined beside it, was the shimmery outline of a door covered in a multitude of spells. We’ll have to keep the Shade away from this place he thought to himself, poking at the wards. The Shadow magic was strong here, used to conceal this room while the earth magic was capable to shift the room into whatever the user wanted it to be. He had noted at least three different forms the room could change into and was about to nosy into another when the ghostly form of Professor Binns drifted around the corner.

“Mr Menes do you not have a class to attend?” the man asked, peering at him over ghostly spectacles. Yami blinked, staring at the man for a moment, taken aback. He was used to being mistaken for Yugi- by Anubis, his friends had thought he was Yugi for a while! To be mistaken for a completely different person was… odd.

“I…” Yami was at a loss for words, not least because he couldn’t quite wrap his head around
English. He had used it often enough in Yugi's body, but he had all the knowledge that Yugi possessed along with his own few scraps of knowledge. It didn't mean that he didn't get caught out sometimes. “No, I don't. At least, not at the moment.” It had been a long time since he had stuttered. Binns blinked at him a moment before nodding. He then turned to the door that Yami had been inspecting.

“Found the Room of Requirement, have you? A very useful room if I don’t say so myself,” the Professor intoned, sounding just as interested as he had in the subject of his lessons.

“Is that what is it called?” he asked, curious. So, someone did know this room was here.

“Yes. I believe it was put in place by the Founders although it is debated as to which one it was. Most hypothesise it was either Ravenclaw or Gryffindor, although there is one lowly debate that Slytherin put it here.”

“The Founders? They are the ones the Houses are named after?” he asked carefully. The ghost nodded.

“Yes, the four Founders, Godric Gryffindor, Rowena Ravenclaw, Helga Hufflepuff and Salazar Slytherin. The Houses still live up to the values they taught even to this day. However, I don’t believe anyone has sat at other House tables since the Founder’s days.” Binns sounded almost wistful. “It is a nice change to see.”

“Hm,” Yami hummed. “It must be.” Binns nodded once more and turned to go. It was then that the ghost almost seemed to do a double take before floating away.

“Ah, Mr Menes I am glad you feel pride in your people, but please remember that it is school rules to wear robes at all times.” Yami stared as the other ghost floated away and through a wall, wondering what he looked like to all those that had seen him that day. For the first time in five thousand years, he felt cold outside of a mortal form.

Chapter End Notes

You know, it's really hard for me to write Ryou Bakura, because we know so little about him from the Dub. So, my apologies to any of you manga readers out there if my characterisation of him gets a bit iffy at times. I know it hasn't been brought up yet (and may never will), but I thought I would cover that base before we got to it. It may also cover why he has so little time spent on him in this fic, but I will admit that that's a failing on me because when I have more than x amount of characters to work with (usually about 4) I get a bit flustered in trying to remember each character, their quirks, their respective points of view etc. And just to make it harder for myself, I usually don't have a plan either (hence the inevitable writer's block), only bits a pieces I know I want to put in and then suss out later where they will go.

Anyway, my rubbish planning skills aside, I do find it interesting that nowhere in any of the Harry Potter books does it say that it is against the school rules to sit at any other House table. In fact, going off of the films, this is even more likely since Luna (who is in Ravenclaw) spends most of the time sitting at the Gryffindor table. Although, that might be because the filmmakers forgot that she was in a different house. And knowing the cast of Yugioh, they are really not going to care about House prejudices over their own close ties. It's also way more fun that way.
In regards to the timetables, past about Third Year, it's really hard to tell how long, which days and when each class supposedly is. In fact, free periods aren't actually mentioned until after OWL’s, but that doesn't really make a lot of sense considering the fact that Hogwarts only has a limited number of teachers, hours and students. So, if the timetables seem a bit odd, my apologies. I sort of Googled the Fifth Year timetables a lot and then, combining a few of the ones I saw, made my own timetables for each student (and almost made the mistake of giving both Atem and Akhefia identical timetables before remembering that, no, despite what the films think, the Gryffindors don't spend all their lessons with the Slytherins).

Now, onto a slightly more serious topic. Harry's views in this, and potentially other chapters, may cause a bit of... uneasiness for some people. Now, I don't mean this as in, these are my opinions I'm sticking on Harry, just that I'm writing this on the basis that Harry spends three quarters of every year since he was eleven in the Wizarding World, which doesn't seem to believe in psychology or mental illness (hello, 'Mad-Eye Moody'). So, when I write Harry calling MPD a 'condition', which sounds mildly callous to me, that isn't my way of thinking. While I don't personally suffer with MPD, I have had my own fair share of brushes with mental illnesses, usually depression and anxiety, hence my writing this little paragraph. So, my apologies if this, or any future unintentional callousness on Harry's or someone else's part, cause offence. They are not my ideas or feelings on the subject, it is simply a teenager's uninformed opinion on the matter- and we know that Harry has many of those.
Chapter 8

So we are back to normal updating times! Minor warning for this chapter: if you are a bit squeamish, skip the end of this chapter. There is a small gorey scene and if you're easily upset and/or triggered by implied torture and bodily mutilation, then skip it. It's fine but I feel the need to give the warning anyway.

Anyway, hopefully this trend will continue and I hope you enjoy this chapter!

Yami had been oddly silent since second period. He had wandered off somewhere and returned looking a little shell-shocked, almost as if he had forgotten that he was in spirit form. If Atem noticed, he didn’t react, instead merely putting away the board and pieces of their Senet game. It had been interesting, and he wondered if he would be able to borrow the board and entice Yami into a game later. It would probably be nice for the Pharaoh to play something familiar that wasn’t Duel Monsters. But that couldn’t happen until he started talking to him again.

They were currently sat in the dungeons, focusing on Potions. The Professor turned out to be one Professor Snape, who Harry had been rather vocal about the night before once described to him. Yugi found that he could see why. The man seemed to pick on his new dormmate a lot, although it was odd that he seemed to keep an eye out for… something. Yugi wasn’t sure what and he attempted to poke the Pharaoh once more to elicit some kind of reaction from him. This time, Yami did respond, sitting in spirit form on the empty bench next to him. Unlike the others, there had been an odd number so Yugi had gotten a desk all to himself. Kaiba had been unwillingly dragged into being partners with Hermione, despite the House differences, Harry was sharing with Ron and Atem and Akhefia were sat together, although it seemed Yami’s look-a-like was preventing Akhefia from deliberately blowing his cauldron up. Marik appeared to be taking great delight in tormenting Malfoy.

My apologies Yami said, watching Yugi work. Your teacher from this morning mistook me for… ah, him. Yami vaguely gestured towards where Atem was working and it was odd, seeing the Pharaoh like this. Usually he appeared similar to Yugi, dressed in the same clothes that Yugi was, but in this school, he looked more like Atem than ever, dressed in what must have been his kingly apparel, his skin the same tan even if he was translucent in this form. It was interesting for him, from an archaeological standpoint, but he supposed if the Spirit didn’t know it would be something of a shock. It was also odd that Yami seemed unable to say Atem’s name.

Oh, I wondered. Yugi paused, concentrating for a moment on ensuring the mandrake roots he was cutting were identical. Are you sure you’re alright? You’ve been off since we arrived.

I’m certain Yami said, giving him a reassuring smile. I did at least manage to find out that only a certain few are able to see me and presumably Ryou’s dark side as well. Although… Yami trailed off as the teacher suddenly loomed over his table. Yugi jumped, blinking up at him as the man leaned over his cauldron.

“Potions,” Snape said, a slight sneer on his face, “requires full concentration Mr Mutou.” Was it his
imagination or did the Professor’s eyes flick over to where Yami was sitting? Could the Potion’s Professor see him? Yugi wasn’t sure how to answer that when, suddenly, he was saved by a loud explosion from behind Snape. The man in question turned swiftly on his heel, barking as he went, “Kheti!” Akhefia was standing rather nonchalantly by his smoking cauldron. Or at least what was left of it.

“Yes Professor?” he asked innocently. Snape’s face contorted in fury, and Yugi noticed that quite a few Gryffindors were leaning forwards, waiting for something. The Potion’s Master swept over to the ruined cauldron, picking up a vial or two of unused ingredients, his face slowly becoming a blank mask.

“Is there a reason you decided snake fangs were a required ingredient in a Shrinking Solution?” he asked almost delicately. Akhefia’s face was just as innocent-looking as before, although he had somehow managed to explode his potion without catching either himself or Atem, who didn’t look particularly pleased to have to clean the desk. Diabound popped it’s head out from under Akhefia’s collar, tongue tasting the air.

“Is that what were we making sir? I’m sorry my English is a little rusty on the reading side.” Snape gave him a long penetrating look and the Slytherins seemed to be holding their breath over something.

“Detention Mr Kheti, where you will learn to brush up on your English,” Snape said silkily, waving his wand at the mess. It disappeared as the teacher swept away in a billow of black cloak, snapping, “the rest of you have ten minutes to finish your potions and have them on my desk in time for clean up!” The effect was instantaneous. The Slytherins immediately jumped back to work, whispering among themselves, with Malfoy looking particularly displeased. The Gryffindors were sulking, muttering angry words under their breaths and Akhefia was looking triumphant.

What do you think he achieved with that stunt? Yugi wondered, speaking loudly enough mentally that Yami would hear him. The Pharaoh was watching the teen with narrowed eyes, enough so that Akhefia turned and winked in their direction.

I believe that he just gathered himself some followers while distracting the teacher from questioning you about me Yami mused out loud, seeming to consider the other boy’s actions. And by the looks of things, he wasn’t alone in the planning of that. Yugi blinked, turning to look at their table again, even as he added the last ingredients to his own potion. Snape had already swept over and banished Harry’s, he didn’t exactly want the same treatment. Atem, too, was working on his potion, but oddly enough, the older teen had seemingly palmed the remaining snake fangs off the table. It seemed that it wasn’t just Akhefia he had learnt from.

The two of them almost ran from the classroom afterwards, Atem off to their DADA class, while Akhefia was already pestering Marik and Kaiba on their way to Herbology. Yugi didn’t fail to notice the dirty looks they were gaining from one Draco Malfoy but not from the rest of the Slytherins.

I think you might be right Yugi murmured, joining Harry, Ron and Hermione on their way out.

The underground temple was cold at night, colder even, than the desert above. Most took refuge within their own homes at this time of night, but one man slipped through the corridors. It had been a short ritual the past few nights, to clear the air of the Shadows that were stirring, ever so slowly, in preparation for their king’s return. The torches on the walls flickered as he passed, but this didn’t trouble the man in the slightest. He had roamed these halls for years- a little darkness was nothing when one spent the majority of their life underground.
Upon reaching the temple, he knelt at the alter in prayer. The temple was not as grand as it ought to be. The depression within the country and the incoming waves of new religions over the years had left the bigger temples destitute. Even now, most of their people had forgotten their roots and the true gods as their ancestors had known them. It was appalling to the man that they could forget their heritage so easily, and yet lay claim to artefacts they no longer remembered how to use. It had been the job of the Tomb Keepers to preserve this heritage, to upkeep the role of the High Priests amongst others. That his family had been so blessed by Pharaoh Set, to ensure that this heritage persevere even throughout the hardest of times, and keep the deceiver, the Akkadian witch away.

He reached the alter and knelt in prayer, whispering to the God Ra to watch over his children lost in a cold land, so far from his healing light. He prayed for them to be strong, even while they were under attack from forces that thought themselves superior to Mages taught the delicate art of the Shadows and studied under the many scrolls left to them and salvaged from the great fire at Alexandria. A fire that may have been started by them in the first place. After all, one could not have this kind of power falling into the hands of the Romans— the folly that had been Alexander the Great and his Macedonian forces was lesson enough to attest to that. Others, too, were praying here and he could see from the corner of his eye, Ashayt with her head also bent in prayer at the foot of the statue of Seth. Not unusual for a member of the infamous Thief Court.

She jumped after he approached her, but unlike others, simply nodded her head to acknowledge his presence. Months spent ferrying herself and three others across the harsh desert, only to be found half-dead of thirst by the Tomb Keepers had hardened her and earned her a respect that was unparalleled by the others in her group. Not that that meant much.

“Have you checked the fortifications? Without Akhefia here, it is your job,” he asked. She scowled fiercely at him, her eyes blazing with hatred.

“I am aware. No signs of an attack by this ‘Lord Voldemort’, although we caught a few of his followers scouting the old temple.” She paused, the corners of her mouth twitching into a gruesome smile. “Don’t worry, we returned them to their master. However, they may be missing a few… pieces.” He grimaced at the thought but, in times such as these, one must use every available resource. They no longer had Prince Atem’s vast magickal reserves to help with upkeeping the wards, nor the Magician’s help. Mahad had left to follow his prince, taking his apprentice with him. Not even the white dragon had stayed here, no matter his pleading on the matter. Surely, it would only be a matter of time until the witch made her move— not even death had stopped her terrible crusade and it had cost their young king his life.

It had nearly cost Egypt so much more.

Ashayt left him to his prayers, not even bothering with any parting words and for that he was grateful. Respect she might have from others for her grim determination and fierce loyalty, but he had always found her grating. Not to mention she had brought… scum into the Clans. It was bad enough that his presence had been found once again, that their prince had given him a pardon was near… unthinkable. He loved the prince dearly and wished the best for him, but sometimes, Atem was just too unyielding for his own good, especially when it came to those he saw as friends. He couldn’t blame him, the poor boy had too few of them and, of those he had, far too many had already been dead for thousands of years. Kneeling now in front of the statue of Horus, he prayed for the healing of the prince, his continued health past even when the scribes stated he would not live. The signs were there, had been even before he had left, and he prayed that he would not die there, in a strange and foreign land so far from those who loved him.

“So typical, to find you here,” a voice stated, breaking the silence of the temple. He started, his prayers broken off as he looked around. The temple was suddenly deserted, the other worshippers
either gone or taken, he didn’t know. The only other person in the room was a man with long green hair and oddly coloured eyes. One a soft golden brown, the other a startling green. There was no way to determine his age- there was an ethereal agelessness about him that was completely unnatural and the lump of green rock about his neck, carved with a six pointed star, only furthered this vision.

“Who are you?” he demanded, alarmed by the man’s fluent Coptic. It was rare to hear it spoken by outsiders. The man gave a smirk as he stepped forward, inspecting the carving of Horus.

“No one of importance. But you,” the man glanced sideways, eyes narrowed slightly, a smirk on his face. “You haven’t changed one bit. Akhnankhamun.” A chill ran down his spine. No one dared speak his name, it was heresy to see the Pharaoh as anything less than a god on earth.

“What is it you want?” Akhnankhamun asked, wary now. This was no mortal man, no friend of theirs. The man before him seemed to consider him for a moment.

“Many things, however none that you can help with.” There was a pause and then the stranger smiled, dark and cruel. “But there is something you can give me. After all, we both know how this plays out don’t we? The penitent father prays for absolution, desperate to spare the son of his sins yet failing anyway.” Akhnankhamun shivered and took a step backwards, away from this creature that was almost stalking him.

“You know nothing,” he spat, angry and afraid. He would not let anything happen to his son! He had failed him in his past life, he would not do so again. Not to the Thief, nor the witch or Necrophades and certainly not to this man.

“Don’t I?” The man’s smile only became all the more vicious. “Perhaps a history lesson? Or, to be in line with your people’s customs, a game?” He raised an arm, showing the Duel Disk that had appeared there, although like none he had ever seen before. Unlike the Kaiba Corp design that was so close to a diadhank that Akhnankhamun had wondered who had designed them, this one was shaped more like a weapon. An axe or, more chillingly, a scythe.

“I will accept a game with you,” Akhnankhamun said. “But I will choose. And when I win, you will leave and never return.” The stranger’s smile grew.

“I can agree to that. And if I win, I shall have your soul.”

The voice was there again, echoing around the room. It was probably just sleep deprivation- he had been working through the past couple of nights so that he could have a proper conversation with Mokuba at a reasonable time of day and keep on top of his work. Seto Kaiba had never been called a slacker. However…

“Set. Set, please…” He hadn’t been called that since both he and Mokuba were little. It was the way his father pronounced his name, never adding the ‘o’ their mother had added to the name. “Set… You have to warn him!” The voice was getting more frantic, and Kaiba decided that it was truly time to get some sleep if he was tired enough to be hearing voices. He ignored the fact that the voice was familiar, despite never hearing it before. He ignored the tingling sensation in his fingers, the warmth in his heart and the faint glow from his deck, sat as usual on his bedside table. Climbing under the sheets, still fully dressed in his uniform sans the robes, he stubbornly closed his eyes against it, fully turned away from the deck.

It’s nothing more than an illusion. In a few hours the sun will be up and you’ll be going down to breakfast where you can phone Mokuba. There isn’t anything calling to you. The words might have been more convincing had he not witnessed the odd number of things that had occurred today. Like
Atem’s clear trouble sleeping from the night before, brushed off the next morning. The stupid ghost that followed Yugi that he’d been adamant was nothing more than a figment of his imagination until forced to go to this school. The way Akhefia shifted throughout the school, manipulating their house to his way of thinking and cutting off the bigots from the rest. The way Professor Snape held a mask firmly in place, so well that the students truly believed that such acts were the man’s true form.

Kaiba knew illusions and masks. He himself had worn one, right up until the Spirit of the Puzzle that Yugi had named ‘Yami’ had Mind Crushed him. It had forced him to put things back into place that he hadn’t wanted to look at. To go back over that meeting, all those years ago, meeting his cousin for the first and only time. As his eyes slipped closed, he could almost visualise it…

Egypt was hot. He had never really appreciated how hot, until coming to the country and he was already irritated by it. He hadn’t been CEO of Kaiba Corp for too long and he had one more loose end to wrap up before he could truly break all ties to his past. The twelve-year-old straightened in his seat, enjoying the sensation of power this gave him. At last, he would finally be rid of the family that had cast he and his brother to the wayside. It didn’t matter that the relatives that had squandered their inheritance were on his mother’s side- his father’s family, too, had abandoned them. Just much earlier.

Roland, the man he had hired and a capable security manager, opened the door, ushering in two people. The first, a red-head, clearly new to this job and wide-eyed at the place he had been brought into. Next to him, was a shorter boy with long hair in an annoyingly familiar three colours. If it hadn’t been for a slightly different bone structures, eye colour and skin tone, this boy would be a twin to the annoying little runt by the name of Yugi Mutou in the school the investors had forced him to go to. Red eyes were watching him closely, almost too closely for any twelve-year-old. Both sat in the chairs set out for them, Roland leaving without having said a word. Seto liked that about the man.

“So, you are my cousin Set,” the boy said, his voice only a few decibels lower than that of the runt. Seto scowled, not liking this boy presuming to call him by his father’s nickname. He had buried it, and he was not going to let this boy run this meeting.

“It is Seto Kaiba to you. Set Menes is dead,” he stated clearly. The red-head looked alarmed as he turned his stony gaze on him. “And who is this idiot?” he asked with a sneer.

“B-Bill Weasley,” the man stammered, looking in over his head.

“Bill is no idiot, just new. He is my… tutor in subjects that you wouldn’t be interested in,” his cousin stated. “And what does Seto Kaiba want from us?” Seto narrowed his eyes- this boy was just as intuitive as himself. Why couldn’t all investors be like him?

“That you have no right to us. And you can tell your father that too.” All he got from that underlying threat was a raised eyebrow. His cousin seemed unfazed by tactics that had had business tycoons sweating in their seats.

“I see.” The boy got up from his seat, tugging at Bill’s sleeve. “Then we shall follow your wishes. Come along Bill.” Seto got the distinct feeling that he had let him down in some way and it oddly made him feel guilty. But no, he was not going to let this boy get away with that. The only person who could be close to him was Mokuba; this boy had done nothing to earn that kind of recognition!

“I’m going to need a name!” Seto called out to them. “So I know exactly who to blacklist,” he said, giving the boy a cruel smirk when he saw the raw hurt in the other boy’s eyes. There might even have been a glimmer of tears. He received a scowl so fierce he almost recoiled, while the red-head-Bill- frowned, looking disapproving.
“Atem.” And with that he was gone in a swirl of cream robes and flying hair. The choked sound of that single spat word haunted Seto for hours after they had left and he couldn’t understand how. The meeting hadn’t gone anything like he had imagined and why did he get the feeling that his cousin, this Atem, had been hoping for something else? Some other offer from him? But what could some archaeologist’s son in the backwaters of nowhere want from him? And where the hell had he learnt to bargain like that? Seto had only recently himself mastered the art, realising that the best way to get what he wanted was to act like it was in his grasp already.

But this time, it felt like he had let it slip away right through his hands...

Kaiba sat upright in bed, the old feelings of guilt and bitterness still stuck somewhere in his head. He mentally growled, shaking the last remnants of the dream away, taking note of the sunlight streaming through blue curtains. He didn’t know how all of their rooms had windows and he didn’t much care—sunlight meant it was daytime and that meant that he had work to do. After the disaster that had been the day they arrived and the complete non-sequitur of the day before, he was determined to put these stupid feelings behind him. So what if he had disappointed his cousin? Atem and his family had disappointed him, he had no right to make Kaiba feel this way. He had meant what he said that day: Set Menes was dead. There was no bringing him back to life.

Kaiba angrily stripped, washed and changed into fresh clothes, readying himself for the day. It didn’t matter that it was still too early, there was plenty of work left to do on his laptop even if he did have another pointless History of Magic lesson that day. It had been arranged so that he only had half-days on Fridays in the case that he might need to leave for the weekend. It didn’t really matter to Kaiba since he would leave when he damn well pleased, but he had allowed the Headmaster to feel as if he had had some control over him. It would help in the long run when he pulled the rug out from under him later about how he had no control over any of them and that this school was not only ridiculous but also dangerous for its students.

A couple of hours later, Kaiba was heading downstairs for breakfast along with the other three. After an awkward start, Marik seemed to be warming up to Akhefia (no doubt due to the other’s propensity for chaos and violence), while Atem was quiet. Unlike the day before though, it wasn’t subdued, merely content. No doubt his cousin was amused by the two ruffians planning on terrosising the blonde idiot some more that day, concocting some non-magical scheme for when they finally met the toad of a teacher. Rumours were that she had already given Harry detention for speaking out of turn and that her classes were not only dull, but useless as well.

Well, if those two wanted to cause chaos in that political mess, who was Kaiba to stop them? Atem certainly wasn’t.

He eyed his cousin, even as they sat down, trying to put together the image from his memory and the young man now. There was something that Kaiba couldn’t quite put his finger on as different about him. The aura around him was the same, he was still as calm and collected as ever but those brief flashes of emotion were gone, any softness given by leftover baby fat long since gone from his face. In fact, Kaiba would even say he looked a little drawn, as if he wasn’t eating properly which didn’t make much sense when one considered that he ate well enough at meal times. It wasn’t an obvious unhealthiness, but for someone who had seen him before, it was there.

At the moment the three idiot Gryffindors and Yugi joined them, the post was just coming in. Amongst them was an owl with a letter from Mokuba—no doubt his brother was excited to use this archaic form of communication despite the fact that they had technology that enabled them to talk every day- and a falcon that carried a rather large package. It dropped it right in front of Atem, who looked startled to see it there.
“Shehbui?” he stated, startled, at the same time the voice from the night before screamed “Set, don’t let him open it!”. Kaiba, near defened by a scream no one else could hear, was far more concerned by the dark staining on the packaging. A rather distinct staining that could be nothing good. He reached out to stop his cousin from opening it here at the table, for some reason following the woman’s voice, but it was too late. Atem had already pulled the string from the package, letting the paper, and subsequent cloth wrapping fall away and out rolled a severed human hand. Atem immediately recoiled, his face filled with a horror that Kaiba had never seen but had felt only once before. Akhefia swore in what must have been several different languages and there were several shouts of disgust from around the table.

Kaiba was the first to reach for it. He had seen that the hand held something, a note of some kind or another. He gently tugged it out, trying to touch the hand as little as possible. The skin tone was a deep tan, the fingers covered in golden rings. It didn’t take much for Kaiba to guess where it had come from. He quickly scanned and read through the note, handing it to his cousin to decipher while he studied what had been sent with it. The second object the hand had held was a card, supposedly a Duel Monsters one but the effects box was blank. It was green, denoting it as a spell card but that wasn’t what caught his eye about it. It was the image.

In the centre of the card, caught as if behind steel bars constructed of a glowing six-pointed star, was a man who shared the same facial structures and eye shape as Atem. A man, who was staring in horror at a stump raised to his face level and Kaiba swallowed heavily, exchanging glances with Akhefia even as the teachers swarmed to the table, the words of the letter ringing in his ears.

To the victor goes the spoils. I will have your soul next, Pharaoh. The Serpent King.

Chapter End Notes

Ah Akhefia, you just have to manipulate the situation for your benefit. It's why you're so fun to write :). Also, I'm sorry that I've spent the last couple of chapters on one day- don't worry this is the last chapter like that and I'm going to be skipping some time over the next couple of chapters because, while this story does move at a snail's pace, it does need time skips too ;)

So, next elephant in the room. I reiterate my point from Harry last chapter: some of these views are not my own. Case in point: Akhnankanon (yes I spelt it differently). The way I see it, you can see moments of these views in Ishizu and Marik's flashbacks of their time spent underground. Their father is blatantly ostracising Odion for merely being an outsider. So, it made me very uncomfortable to have to write from that perspective but it must be done. It also made me uncomfortable to have to re-read it because, goddamn it Akhnankhamun why you have to be so discriminatory! And it's not that bad (unlike some of what the Ministry gets up to later) but I felt like apologising the whole way through writing it and then reading it. However, before someone goes 'why did you do it?', it's due to the fact that I'm trying to write a character who, not only is forced to grow up in a secular environment, but also has memories of how things used to be, what actually happened in the past. And then, trying to put that into a 'modern' context, which was hard and I had to think 'what would Atem's dad really be like through all of that?' And the answer is... not great. He's not actively a terrible person, he's just bigoted like the pure-bloods in Harry Potter and frustrated that his son is having none of it. Add to that, that Akhnankanon in Yugioh is not as pure as we think- look deeper than
'Akhnadin created the Items', Akhnankanon let him go out there and create his own worst enemy. Unintentionally, but he knew his brother had the Millennium Spellbook, knew that it required a sacrifice of some kind and that these Items would be powerful. And let him go anyway. Ancient Pharaohs did not have the same moral compass as we do today.

So my apologies if anyone is particularly offended. They are not my views, they are the characters and hopefully I have made that clear enough in the explanation.

So, hello Kaiba, it's the first time we've had your perspective. It was interesting writing him and having his reaction sort of hard to write because Kaiba's seen gore before- I am going with the manga's killing of Gozaburo by committing suicide. And jumping out of a window is not a clean death. And also, it's happening to someone he doesn't want to admit he cares about- writing it required many read throughs. And again, apologies for the mildly graphic imagery.

Anyway, hopefully I haven't put you all off and I'll see you next week!
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Right so we are finally back to normal updating times, although as a warning I am now back at uni so updates may be slower and if I find I am struggling I may change the updates to once every other week rather than weekly. We shall see. But other than that, no new news from this end so I hope you enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The week following the incident at breakfast was minor chaos, both inside and outside of the school. No amount of sweeping under the rug could deny that an attack had occurred. Bill found it slightly fascinating that the Ministry tried- first they attempted to pin it on Sirius and, when that failed for obvious reasons, attempted the pass it off as some barbaric custom. It was truly unsettling how truly chauvinistic even someone as relatively harmless as Fudge could be, giving into the bigoted purists and letting himself get paid off. Umbridge, too, was looking unhappy and had been doubly so when Atem was pulled out of classes for a couple of days. The first to recover, the second to straighten things out back home.

The Tomb Keepers, however, were a mess. Not only had their ruler lost his soul within the temple- sacrilege all of its own- but his body had been desecrated in a truly gruesome fashion. All for one man’s sadistic message. Bill had spent most of that day with Atem, studying the remnants of the game played and lending a helping hand whenever needed. It had been why he had been assigned here- Haphiri had needed someone on the inside to keep on eye on her adoptive ‘little brother’.

Bill had never gotten out of her why she wasn’t allowed in the underground city and stopped asking after being dumped in several different tombs. Finding one’s way out of the Nameless Pharaoh’s tomb had nearly killed him and he decided that the answer wasn’t worth it in the long run. Not when he had come to care for Atem like his own brothers, not when he could see that his own people’s attitude towards him kept him isolated from real human contact. It was one of the reasons he had befriended Akhefia- the other boy just didn’t care about social standing, or links to the past. And as time crept ever onwards, Atem grew weaker by the day, the inevitable end foretold by a prophecy that Bill hadn’t put much stock in until the evidence started to creep up on them, meant that time was rapidly running out and stunts like this were not helping.

Eventually, after returning to the school and seeing Atem back to lessons with strict instructions to go to Snape should he start feeling too off, he made his way back to the place that this had all started. He hadn’t been expecting to be met with an argument.

“What was the meaning of that?” came a young male voice from up ahead, unusually angry from the person it belonged to. “How did he get through the barriers?”

“I believe that is your department, Magician,” Haphiri hissed back, and Bill could see how angry she was. Shadows were creeping along the ceiling, engulfing the room slowly while they licked at her form. “You know as well as I, that I have no access to the Sacred City.”

“And I wonder why that is?” Mahad’s voice was sarcastic, furious. Mana was sat on the steps at the far end, holding a terrified looking Nofret, her green eyes hard. It was rare to see the two magicians like this, angry and silent rather than calm and bubbly. But the attack had them all on edge and Bill
knew that he had to put a stop to this, whatever it was. A rivalry that stretched back five thousand years between a foreign princess and the Royal Magician and ex-wielder of the Millennium Ring was the least of their problems right now with Voldemort breathing down their necks, Atem’s wavering strength and now, the appearance of the Serpent King. He had thought he had given his disciples enough warning a few days ago, when they had been scouting Diagon Alley.

Clearly, he had been wrong.

“Don’t you dare, you lowly-“

“Enough!” Bill shouted, causing the two arguing to jump. “We don’t have time for petty rivalries.” Mahad bristled, about to add something but Bill cut him off, knowing he was playing a dangerous game with two people who were not only quite capable of wiping the floor with him but, given enough incentive, would. “The magic that was used wasn’t Shadow magic. There was no Shadow game instigated on the temple grounds.” That caused the room to still and Nofret let out a whimper.

There was a reason that he hadn’t been told anything about this stranger and Bill had worked out for himself that it had something to do with Nofret. Whatever had happened five thousand years ago had revolved around her. And the implications that came with that were unpleasant at best.

“So it was the Stranger,” Mana whispered, holding the princess tighter. How she was able to, Bill didn’t know although he supposed it had something to do with the fact that they were both dead.

“We don’t know for sure, but there are remnants of Orichalcum in the area.” He paused, seeing Haphiri’s eyes narrow even further, turning them into burning slits.

“A threat then. He wants the soul of the Nameless Pharaoh and doesn’t care which side he gets.” Bill blinked, wondering what she meant. A split soul couldn’t survive-not without dark magic- most likely it would shrivel up and… It felt like water had just been dumped down Bill’s back. He had known that Atem had some link to the past, had known that it had something to do with why he was sick. Knew that most wouldn’t be able to tell but wondered why no one who did, did anything about it. Except… except Snape had given him books on soul magic, had shown him that not only was it Dark magic, but could have vile and dire consequences for the uninitiated.

“He wants Atem,” he whispered. Mana flinched and Mahad looked as if he was grinding his teeth with how frustrated he looked.

“He will not have him. Not Atem, nor Set, nor the boy with the Puzzle,” Mahad vowed. “I will not fail my King again.” It was said with a finality, one that could not be taken lightly. Mana looked simultaneously sad and resolute, her face set in grim determination. Bill blinked but decided it would be better for his health (and sanity) to not ask what they were on about. Haphiri had been involved in whatever had happened with the Nameless Pharaoh all those years ago, as had Mana and Mahad but none of them had explained the how or why. Bill got the foreign princess stuck in a foreign land under attack- where the two magicians came in he wasn’t sure but figured that they had worked under the House of Life, serving the Pharaoh. Must have been a good one for them to be loyal to him so long, no matter how young he was Bill had thought many times in the past. Haphiri currently looked as if she was sucking on a lemon, clearly frustrated that there wasn’t anything she could do; grand proclamations were against her nature.

Bill sighed internally. It was going to be a long week.

The arrival of the weekend could not come sooner for Harry. Not only had all the drama with Atem and the severed hand been circling the school, the whispers about his supposed lies were still following him. He felt bad for the other teen, even if he hadn’t seen much of him this week. He had
disappeared throughout Tuesday and Wednesday, then had skipped half of his lessons throughout the last two days. Not to mention Harry’s own detentions, which Atem was supposed to join him in for skipping DADA the rest of the week. Akhefia, too, apparently had been given detention for swearing at her over the suggestion that the incident at breakfast had been some barbaric custom of their culture but had never turned up for them, much to Umbridge’s fury. Even Kaiba had been grinding his teeth at that and Yugi had looked downright offended.

“How could they just write it off as a custom? That’s not just offensive, it’s borderline racist!” he had fumed, much to wide agreement around the table. It hadn’t stopped the rumours though, many of which were now throwing Atem under the bus with him, which Harry just could not wrap his head around.

“It’s because if they admit that the Prophet is wrong about this, they’re scared that it’s wrong about you too,” Hermione said gently, that Saturday morning at breakfast when Harry voiced this concern to her. He frowned, unhappy about that but supposed that she was right. The Ministry was so far in denial about Voldemort, accepting that this attack had been done by him was impossible for them without admitting that they were wrong, and he and Dumbledore were right, was tantamount to political suicide. Hermione was biting her lip and glancing down the table to where Atem and Akhefia were sat. Atem seemed to be picking at his food as he had been doing so since Tuesday. “I hope he’s ok.”

“Yeah…” Harry agreed, suddenly no longer interested in his cereal. “At least I don’t remember what Voldemort did to my parents.” Well, mostly, and he didn’t think that Voldemort had desecrated their bodies. At that moment, Snape swept down from the main table and paused by them. Harry frowned in confusion as they spoke quietly between each other and then Snape swept away again, looking as much like an overgrown bat as ever. “What was that about?” Hermione shrugged.

“Maybe he wants him to make up for those missed Potions lessons?” she suggested but Harry was already shaking his head.

“Snape can’t stand Gryffindors. Why’s he being so reasonable to Atem?” Harry didn’t want to be suspicious of the other boy- his father had just been attacked and he had received a piece of him on top of that. But Snape was a Death Eater- spy for Dumbledore or not. He had no reason to speak to the other boy except to gloat. So why was he being so tolerant of him when he picked on every other Gryffindor? It was obvious why he would do so for Akhefia- if the other boy got more conniving he would practically be running every other house in the school. And Snape loved to gloat about his Slytherins to anyone. Ron was nodding to Harry’s reasoning but Hermione was having none of it.

“Because he’s a teacher?” she snapped. “What does it matter whether he’s being reasonable or not? If you want to swing it that way Harry, then why would he ostracise someone that’s obviously close to one of his Slytherins? And we don’t even know that it was Voldemort!”

“Who else would it be?” Ron asked, mouth still fill of bacon. Hermione sighed and shrugged.

“I don’t know but… I’ve done some research in the library and it just doesn’t match anything the Death Eaters have done. They’ve never bothered to mutilate the corpse or send parts to family members. The only person who was rumoured to have done anything like that was Sirius and even then, it was only supposedly found on the crime scene. And we know the truth about that one.” She was frowning, confusion written all over her face. “And… well, they haven’t actually said he’s dead.” Harry stared at her.

“You think he’s still alive? After that?” he asked, slightly disbelieving.

“Maybe. He’s most definitely incapacitated, and we know that the Tomb Keepers have been fending
off the Death Eaters, so I don’t understand why they were infiltrated now unless…” she trailed off
suddenly gaining that look that meant she had just caught onto something.

“Unless?” Ron asked.

“Unless the reason they weren’t attacking was because someone was stopping them,” she murmured,
eyes narrowing as she glanced down the table. “And if that person was removed…” Harry
swallowed, realising where Hermione was going with this.

“Then it would open a perfect opportunity for Voldemort to get what he wants.” He paused and
waited as Atem suddenly got up and swept past them, face blank. He had been looking like that all
week and he very nearly barrelled Yugi over in his rush to get out of the Great Hall. “You think
Atem’s the reason why the Death Eaters weren’t able to get whatever Voldemort wants?”

“It makes sense. After all, they were late when we went to Diagon Alley due to another attack and
it’s only now that he’s here that they’ve been able to get through,” Hermione said. “Although, I
suppose it could just be coincidence.”

“Hey guys,” Yugi said, sitting down next to Ron. His smile was slightly dulled, probably due to the
fact that his fellow foreign Gryffindor was avoiding them. He had learnt that Yugi didn’t like conflict
at the best of times. “What are you talking about?”

“Nothing,” Harry said quickly, shooting Ron and Hermione looks to go along with what he said.
There was no reason to get Yugi involved, even if he was also on Voldemort’s radar. The boy might
have been older than them, but it was obvious that he couldn’t deal with the constant threat of being
targeted. Harry knew what a bullied person looked like- he, himself, had been a victim of his
cousin’s bullying and he was going to spare Yugi from the reality of this war as much as he could.
There was just something about the other boy’s constant optimism that made Harry want to protect
him.

“Oh,” Yugi said, sounding very much like he didn’t believe him. He went quiet and Harry very
briefly caught the movement of something behind him. But, like the many times before, he couldn’t
quite catch sight of what it was. When he brought this up to Hermione she had simply given him an
odd look and stated that she had never seen anything, and Harry had been quite ready to agree with
her, right up until Luna had started waving at things that weren’t there. Even Ginny had commented
on how it was odd, even for how eccentric Luna could be. He took her opinion on that- it wasn’t like
Harry knew her all that well himself, but if she was acting even stranger than usual, then maybe he
too wasn’t going mad. After all, she could see those odd skeletal horses too that Akhefia had named
as Thestrals. “So, what are you guys up to today then?” Yugi asked suddenly, jerking Harry out of
his thoughts.

“Library,” Hermione stated. “I’ve got some personal research to be getting on with.”

“Me and Ron were thinking of going out to the Quidditch pitch and practising,” Harry said and Yugi
blinked.

“The big pitch with the funny hoops?” he said. “I think Kaiba wants to use it to set up some duels.
He’s already booked it.”

“What?” Ron sputtered, resurfacing from him breakfast again. “He can’t do that!” Yugi shrugged,
digging into his own breakfast.

“Professor McGonnagal didn’t mind and Professor Dumbledore said that there probably wasn’t
anywhere else we’d be able to play, not counting the mini stadium in the dorm.” There was an odd
spark in Yugi’s eyes and Harry was suddenly reminded that this boy had not been sorted into Hufflepuff. He had wondered about that for a while, since Yugi seemed too meek to be a proper Gryffindor and had figured at first that he was more like Neville and brave in some other way. Right up until, after eavesdropping on their conversation a couple of days ago, Marik had laughed right in their faces and stated that anyone who was crazy enough to agree to duel on crumbling piers had the supposed ‘right’ kind of stupid bravery that Gryffindors apparently valued. Kaiba had then stated that they were all idiots for assuming that everyone in their house was brave just for being brash and stupid.

Sometimes, Harry really couldn’t stand the business tycoon.

“What do you mean, nowhere else to play? It’s just a card game,” Hermione asked, slightly rudely. She didn’t sound all that impressed. Yugi blinked and stared at her a moment before he suddenly grinned.

“Oh, that’s right! You don’t really have hologram stadiums in Britain do you?” he said and then laughed slightly. “Sorry, it’s just been so long since I played it on a table.” Yugi was rubbing the back of his neck bashfully, the perfect picture of mild embarrassment. “It’s just that, I agreed to face Kaiba again and since his deck involves a lot of dragons, there isn’t really the space in the dorm. And Atem and Akhefia have agreed to come down.” He paused then, eyes going to the table. “Actually, I think Kaiba’s dragging Atem down. But you’re all welcome to come watch if you’d like!”

“Er, why does it matter if Kaiba’s deck has a lot of dragons?” Harry asked, feeling a bit apprehensive. Yugi gave them a fiendish grin that could have rivalled the twins.

“Well, why don’t you come and see?”

“So… how’s he doing?” Mokuba asked on the other end of the phone, blurring slightly as the terrible service was disrupted, not by magic, but the rolling hills around them. Kaiba mentally growled, vowing to work on that before Christmas so that it would be able to be fixed before he returned to this ridiculous place. Or perhaps, even before that. Instead, he sighed out loud and looked up at the ceiling. Mokuba had already known about their cousin, had understood why Kaiba had cut them off from him, but it wouldn’t stop him from caring. It somehow, didn’t stop himself from caring, no matter how much he tried to cut himself off.

The ridiculous allegations by the government here was ridiculous, the views of the students fluctuating between sympathy, apathy and outright disgust and incomprehension and even the teachers were starting to get into it. McGonnagal kept attempting to talk to Atem, something that was clearly not appreciated as his cousin had taken to avoiding her, Sprout was apparently trying to get him to sit down to tea and Snape had simply issued some mild orders to come and catch up on his Potions lessons because ‘I won’t have you become just another dunderheaded Gryffindor’. According to Akhefia, that one had already known about their cousin, had understood why Kaiba had cut them off from him, but it wouldn’t stop him from caring.

It somehow, didn’t stop himself from caring, no matter how much he tried to cut himself off.

“As well as anyone who was sent the severed hand of their now soulless father,” Kaiba muttered sourly. He didn’t like this caring part of him for Atem. Over the past week, he had stuck by his cousin, ditching certain classes to keep him company here in the dorm under the guise of working on
his company and occasionally challenging his cousin to rounds of whatever games he wanted to play. So far, he had yet to persuade him into Duel Monsters but they had played a lightning round of Capsule Monsters which was close enough. But, belatedly, Kaiba had realised that putting that kind of attention into his cousin meant that he cared for him in some way- the kind of way he had tried to force himself to forget all those years ago. Maybe it was trying to make up for disappointing him then, maybe it was something else. Kaiba just wished it would stop.

Mokuba made a soft sound of empathy and Kaiba wished once again that his brother was here. Mokuba had always been better at feelings than he was. Hell, he even got along better with the Geek Squad than he ever had- Yugi so far was the only one he could tolerate and that was only because of the Spirit of the Puzzle. He had already decided that he was going to challenge the runt to a game later that day and ban him from switching for this match. That darn spirit made Atem uncomfortable. What the hell are you thinking? Kaiba spat at himself, shaking off that thought. Mokuba had been talking about something and he had completely missed it.

“It’s ok big bro,” Mokuba said when he had (slightly embarrassedly) admitted he had missed what was said. “You’ve got a lot going on. Between me and Roland, we’ve got this covered and we’ll keep sending you all the important emails, reports and stocks.” Kaiba allowed himself a small smile- it was good to know that even after all they had been through, Mokuba could still read him like a book. In a way, this experience was good for him but Kaiba still felt guilty for suddenly dumping the majority of the responsibility for Kaiba Corporation on his young brother’s shoulders, especially at such short notice. But as soon as he had heard Atem’s name, he just couldn’t stop himself. Some inbred sympathetic mentality that had been buried for years had reared its ugly head and he found himself doing things he wouldn’t normally do.

It was rather like how he kept getting caught up with Yugi’s lame friends. Speaking of which…

“I’m going to have to go. I promised to face Yugi later and this time I’m going to crush him,” Kaiba stated. Mokuba perked up, grinning. A few words later and Kaiba was logging off the chat and leaving his room. He stretched out the kinks in his back caused by long hours sat in a chair, feeling refreshed. It always made him feel better talking to Mokuba, although now he had to deal with figuring out time-zones which was a pain. But he wouldn’t disturb Mokuba’s sleep. Kaiba paused outside of Atem’s door, thinking. It was silent in the dorm and most other people would have assumed that it was empty but, if Kaiba pressed his ear to the door and concentrated hard enough, he could just about hear faint whispers, indicating that his cousin was indeed in his room and apparently talking to someone. He wondered if Bill had returned but shook off that thought. The red-haired imbecile was hardly someone to be worried about- after all, he had been doing a better job of looking out for his cousin than he had.

Kaiba rapped on the door quickly, before he could talk himself out of the stupid notion that the empathetic part of him wanted. He immediately cursed in his head, but it was too late now. The door slowly opened, and he was greeted by a rather worn out Atem, dressed in comfortable sweats and a red shirt, hair messy, most likely from lying on his bed.

“Yes?” Atem asked, sounding confused to find someone at his door.

“I booked the Quidditch pitch for Duel Monsters,” Kaiba started, feeling awkward for the first time since he had been eleven. How did one ask without outright demanding something? It had been a long time since he had attempted something like this. He paused trying to work out what to say next. What would the runt say? “Are you… Do you want to come with me?” Kaiba shuddered at how uncertain he sounded but Atem merely blinked, not saying anything about it.

“I…” he paused and Kaiba thought he heard someone else speak from within the room. Atem bit his
lip and looked down before taking a deep breath. When he looked up, his eyes were more determined than they had been in a while. “Let me get dressed.” Kaiba nodded, relieved that nothing had been said about his incredibly awkward invitation. A few minutes later and Atem opened the door once again, this time dressed in dark jeans, a blue t-shirt and sleeveless hoodie, hair pulled back into a small bun just above the back of his neck, blonde bangs left in front of his face. He also had a duel disk strapped to his arm. Kaiba raised an eyebrow, turning to go.

“So you do play Duel Monsters,” he commented. Atem gave a short laugh, pushing the door open.

“Of course. I think Father would have been more surprised if I didn’t.” He paused and Kaiba realised that was the first time he had spoken of his father since the incident and the first halfway fond thought he heard about the man. It was… interesting. Then his cousin seemed to shake himself off and shrugged. “Although, I haven’t played in a while. It gets a bit boring when your only opponent is Akhefia and you always beat him.”

“Well, excuse me for not being able to beat the current Egyptian Duel Monsters Champion,” Akhefia stated, appearing from… somewhere. Kaiba hated it when the thief would just appear- he was usually better at spotting such tricks of sleight of hand, even if the other boy did have Shadow magic to help him.

“I believe Marik is the new champion,” Atem said conversationally. “I haven’t gone to any official tournaments in a while.”

“Jee, I wonder why,” Akhefia said, rolling his eyes. Kaiba felt slightly lost but didn’t press. This was the most animated Atem had been all week. If being around the thief and the small amount of the Geek Squad that were here would help him feel better, who was he to go against that? After all, he allowed Mokuba to hang out with them occasionally.

When they finally reached the Quidditch pitch, Kaiba found three extra spectators than he had expected. He had been keeping the fact that he had booked the pitch to only those in the know. He hadn’t wanted any of the (surprisingly) many Duel Monsters fans in the school to get wind of another rematch between him and Yugi. However, he had forgotten about how friendly Yugi could be to others. Clearly, he had invited Harry, Ron and Hermione, although the girl had her nose stuck in one of several books stacked on the seat next to her. It was obvious that she had no wish to be there and had simply been dragged along by her friends.

“Let’s get this started,” Kaiba stated, glad to be back in his usual clothing. Even Yugi was dressed in his normal school uniform and many belts and buckles. “I’m facing you first, Yugi.” The shrimp made a face and Kaiba lowered his voice right before they could switch. “And I want to face you not your unwelcome resident.” Yugi blinked and stared at him, mouth slightly open in surprise.

“Um, ok?” he said, obviously put off by Kaiba’s demand. It was time to see what the shrimp was made of. He knew that Yugi had faced opponents without the Spirit’s help before, but he had never been witness to any of them and wanted to take a measure of what he was capable of now. Kaiba was about to turn to take up his position when Atem suddenly cut in.

“Actually… I was wondering if I could face you first,” he stated. Kaiba turned to stare at him. He had never seen Atem’s deck and he was certain that he had never seen his. His cousin smirked and raised his duel disk, his deck facing out towards Kaiba. “After all, neither of us have seen the others deck. Should be interesting.” Akhefia muttered something under his breath that sounded suspiciously like ‘rather you than me’. Kaiba shrugged intrigued.

“Sure. Then I can wipe the floor with both of you.” Atem seemed to grin even wider and turned to face the other end of the pitch.
“You can try,” he threw over his shoulder, already walking away. Kaiba growled and ejected the holographic projectors as the others cleared the field. The three spectators waved the others up from the stands and then there was no one except him and his cousin left on the pitch. Well, this was one way to face his cousin in a match.

“Ready to lose?” he taunted Atem, drawing five cards at the same time his cousin did. Atem simply grinned and gestured for Kaiba to draw first.

“I believe it’s time to duel, cousin,” he shot right back and Kaiba smirked, drawing his first card. His cousin had no idea what he was getting into. And he would crush him just as he had done to all his other opponents except Yugi. This would be an interesting duel.

Chapter End Notes

Ah, Bill don't worry, I'm surprised how bigoted the world can be too. And I mean this for the Harry Potter universe- the Wizarding World treats everything outside of it's own culture with, at the very least, demeaning attitude and at worst outright contempt and, yes even that dreaded word, racism. And yes, that is correct since the dictionary definition for racism is 'prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior' and immediately, hello Lucius Malfoy, Umbridge, Voldemort and a great helping of other characters in the Harry Potter universe ( also, Oxford dictionary, please find a less uncomfortable way of phrasing that.) Even the Weasleys, nice as they are, can arguably fall into this category. Some of the first things we hear Mrs Weasley say, are wondering at the obliviousness/abilities of non-magical people, without considering that her own culture happens to be at least a hundred years behind that of the culture she is belittling- this would be a case in indirect bigotry though since she isn't outright trying to be condescending. And quite honestly, it a bit frightening to think to what lengths they could push that in the Fifth book, the epitamy of fearmongering and denial of the HP canon.
But let's put real world politics to this side and not consider its applications to our childhoods and focus on this chapter.

Oh, Harry, why do you have to spend the last two years you (technically) spend at Hogwarts being such a suspicious and paranoid ball of angst? Blame it on Voldemort, or the clear PTSD and survivor's guilt he's suffering (again, Dumbledore/wizarding world, you suck at psychology- send this poor boy to a therapist!), but Harry very obviously has issues throughout OotP and HBP. Honestly, I'm surprised that Harry came out the other side as any kind of functional human being... wait, hand focus on this story. Sorry, apparently, today is the day of tangents. Anyway, since Harry still hasn't got the message that Snape isn't out to kill him despite saving him at least twice and protecting him on multiple occasions, let alone is risking his life to spy on Voldemort for Dumbledore, we must have him be constant alertness Harry. And Harry tends to have a problem with separating Snape the person, from Snape the Death Eater and horrible teacher. So, anyone Snape likes, instantly gets dumped into the bin with all the other Slytherins because Harry's view is currently very black and white. We have good, we have bad. Black or white. Which, when faced with the Yugioh gang, is not going to hold up for very long and especially not around Atem, Akhefia or Kaiba.

Sorry, I really can't help the Snape rants. It's frustrating when even the author, who
wrote this character in such a way that all of the pros outweigh the cons which, even when put in context actually write themselves out anyhow, is pretty lukewarm towards him. JK Rowling, if you wanted to base Snape on your own chemistry teacher and not have him end up universally liked by the majority of your fanbase, do NOT write his entire backstory to be: abused by parents, abused at school, neglected by those higher up, used by a Dark Lord during his lowest moments, ditched for only half a good reason by his only friend (Lily, we will need to talk about not letting anyone explain themselves and cutting them off- this is why your ex-best-friend ended up a Death Eater!), then used the rest of his life and forced to live under a façade and teach in the very same school he despised, full of all those lovely traumatic memories and, then, to top it all off, force him to teach the son of his ex-bully who already hates you because of all the stories about him and is the epitome of 'rubbing it in your face that you didn't get the girl'. So, yes, I will use Snape as I please because he honestly deserves better treatment.

So, one last thing. I am not going to be writing out duels in the usual format aka explaining them to the enth degree. This is for two major reasons: one, unless you're really into the game and mechanics then you'll probs skip them and I have a hard time keeping track of that and two, it would take me far too long to plan out a duel, write it, check it and then write the rest of the content for that chapter. Also, there will come a time when I will abandon the game mechanics completely because, this is a magic school and Atem and Akhefia are more used to the traditional way of duelling, why the heck would they be content with cards? So there's that and I will also be liberally making up cards because I do not have an encyclopedia of every card in existence and since the writer's of Yugioh were able to give Dartz an OP deck then I will take the liberty to add in my own cards thanks. Also, it's way more interesting that way.

Anyhow, my apologies for the rather depressing start to these notes and I hope you enjoyed this weeks chapter!
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

My apologies that this took an extra week, but I'm afraid that things got a bit busy this past week. It's been my first week back at uni so things have been a bit hectic coupled with a few maintenance issues and... well, let's just say that time for writing went out of the window. So, in an attempt to prevent this, I'm going to say that I will be updating every other week, making the next update 18th October. Don't worry, I will be making a note in each chapter from now on when the next chapter will be up or if it will be delayed for any reason.

Anyhow, please enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Harry had heard of Duel Monsters before. In fact, he had tried out the few cards that Dudley had left on his floor a couple of times but without a handbook, or other players, he had never quite grasped the game. Nor had it captured his interest that way that Quidditch had. This however… this went against anything he had ever seen in the Muggle world. At some point, Bill had joined them and looked just as amused as Yugi, Ryou and Marik looked.

The creatures were huge and so realistic that, had he not known they were projections beforehand, would have thought that they were actually in the stadium with him. He could see why Yugi had stated that they wouldn't have had room indoors- Kaiba’s deck seemed to be full of, if not dragons, then particularly large beasts. So far though, he had yet to summon his signature monster according to Yugi, who was attempting to explain the game to them. Ron had his mouth hanging open since the game began and even Hermione had put her books to one side to watch. Harry briefly wondered what anyone up at the school thought if they could see the holograms but was soon distracted as Atem summoned a monster that was some kind of magician. Yugi sucked in a breath in surprise.

“Looks like the Dark Magician has more than one master,” Marik said jokingly, an odd glint in his eyes. Harry frowned wondering what he meant.

“The Dark Magician is known to be Yugi’s signature monster,” Ryou explained quietly, just as the monster wiped out Kaiba’s XYZ Dragon Cannon through the use of some spell card that either increased Atem’s monster or decreased Kaiba’s- Harry was lost trying to follow the hard and fast moves the cousins threw at each other. It seemed to him that most of what endeared people to this game was the spectacle- and from what he was seeing, he could hardly blame them. From the dramatics of the players, the quick tactics and the huge explosions generated by the technology Kaiba had developed, there were plenty of Muggle children that would be drawn to the game, along with quite a few teenagers too. He hadn’t been blind to the number of fans Yugi and Kaiba had amongst the muggleborns after all.

“I take it that it is a rare card?” Hermione asked. Yugi shrugged.

“Oh, well, it’s not that rare. It’s just... weird seeing someone else use it,” he explained. “Even weirder than the fact that Atem seems to have quite a few cards in common with me.” Akhefia made a derivative noise.
“Don’t worry, His Royal Highness has been a part of the duelling circuit since before anyone ever heard of Yugi Mutou,” he stated. “Besides, he has quite a few cards that I know you don’t.” Harry blinked at the nickname but, if Marik and Bill’s reactions were anything to go by, it was a common one. Atem had never struck him as particularly arrogant, even if his duelling personality seemed to exude that. “In fact,” Akhefia continued, turning towards Marik, “I’m surprised you never heard of him during your Rare Hunter days.” Marik immediately cringed and Yugi stared at the other Slytherin, seemingly confused.

“Well?” he asked, right as there was a sudden roar that split through the air and a massive burst of light. On Kaiba’s side of the field, an immense dragon had just been summoned that was such a pale blue it was almost white. Akhefia made another odd noise, one that was a lot less obvious in whatever he was trying to convey.

“What the bloody hell is that?” Ron asked, cutting through Harry’s question and derailing their thoughts.

“Kaiba’s signature monster, the Blue Eyes White Dragon,” Yugi stated. “He has three out of the only four ever made.” This was furthered by the fact that Kaiba had just done something that enabled him to summon two more of the massive beasts. If Atem was fazed by this, he wasn’t showing it. In fact, he appeared to be grinning, as if this had been the plan all along. “And I think Kaiba may have just fallen into a trap.”

“Yeah, no kidding,” Akhefia muttered. “I’m going to guess he’s got either the King’s Seal as a face-down card or maybe even the Ritual of Light and Dark, but he doesn’t have any of the right cards on the field for that.”

“The what now?” Harry asked, lost once more. Even Ron, normally the tactician of the trio, looked lost.

“They’re two very rare spell cards,” Marik said, eyebrows raised almost into his hairline. “At least, I know the King’s Seal is… I’ve never heard of the other one but the King’s Seal can only be used on the Dark Magician or Dark Magician Girl.” As he was explaining this, Kaiba launched an attack on the Dark Magician. Atem’s grin only seemed to grow ever bigger and one of the three face down cards suddenly flipped up, showing the purple of what Harry had come to know as a Trap, along with an image of what looked like some sort of mirrored wall.

“I activate Mirror Force, and deflect your attack right back at you!” Atem shouted and Kaiba cursed. Hermione was frowning.

“Wait, he’s had that card on the field a while now. Why not use it earlier?” she asked.

“Tactics,” Ron answered, eyes wide. “If he knew Kaiba had those dragons in his deck, then he’s probably just been stalling until he summoned them and was waiting for an opportunity to face them.” Yugi nodded his agreement on this, watching the match avidly now. Kaiba reluctantly ended his turn, looking particularly sour about it, despite having done something to stop his monsters from being blasted from the field. It appeared he had noticed this too by the way his eyes had narrowed. Atem smirked at the card he drew, smile smug.

“I believe that this is the end, cousin,” he said, for once confident in the way he pronounced that English. Clearly, it was the language used within duelling circles, if it was as international as Yugi had made it out to be. “I activate the Spell Card Cost Down to summon my Dark Magician Girl!” Akhefia made an odd choking noise and muttered something that sounded like “He’s toast,” under his breath. “I then activate King’s Seal!” Even Kaiba seemed surprised by this as one of the cards on the field flipped up. “By sacrificing my Dark Magician and Dark Magician Girl, this allows me to
summon my Master Magician and Magician’s Apprentice!” Yugi was leaning forwards so much, Harry wondered how he was yet to topple off the stands. The odd purple robed magician and busty blonde girl that had just been summoned were suddenly enveloped in light and out of this appeared a man in golden armour over white robes and a girl, also dressed in golden armour over a short white dress and black tights appeared. Both had the same facial features as the two monsters before with slight differences- both had the same tan skin as Atem and Akhefia, and both had brown hair, although the Magician’s was hidden underneath a white headdress. “I then place two cards face down and activate Mage Power! This raises my Master Magician’s attack from 3000 to 4000.” Marik whistled and Harry blinked.

“So… does that make his monster more powerful than Kaiba’s?” he asked. Marik jumped and then seemed to remember that they had no knowledge of the game.

“Oh yeah. Blue Eyes has 3000 attack points, so it’s capable of destroying Magician’s Apprentice since she only has 2500, but now the only card Kaiba has capable of beating that Master Magician is his Blue Eyes Ultimate Dragon, but that can only be summoned if he has Polymerization in his next turn. Which is not going to save one of his dragons right now,” he stated as the Master Magician blasted one of them from the field in a beam of golden light. “And that’s Kaiba now down to 800 Life Points. Best he can hope for is that he can find something this turn to at least stop an attack, or Polymerization. And by the looks of things…” Marik said, watching as Kaiba seemed to gnash his teeth together. “I would say that that hasn’t happened.”

“But why couldn’t he just attack Magician’s Apprentice?” Ron asked. “She’s got less attack points and it’ll mean that Atem will have less Life Points than Kaiba at that point.”

“Yeah, but you don’t know what his face down cards are. So, you would either have to be confident enough that you have a card to negate that card’s effect, that none of the card’s face down are traps or just incredibly desperate,” Akhefia stated, almost condescendingly. “The only duellist I know who takes the third route is Joey Wheeler, who only survives because he’s lucky. And even then, it’s usually with at least some form of back up.”

“This is also Kaiba we’re talking about,” Marik noted, right as Kaiba seemed to take the bait at last and, after laying down one face down card, attacked Magician’s Apprentice. For some odd reason, Harry could have sworn the dragon looked almost apologetic as it did, if dragons even could look in such a way. It was odd that it had been programmed that way, since he hadn’t seen it do so before.

“He hates his dragons being destroyed.”

“I activate Magical Cylinder!” Atem shouted and another trap was revealed. Harry watched as the blast of white lightning shot into one purple cylinder and then right out of the other- in Kaiba’s direction. Kaiba violently swore as the blast took out another dragon and suddenly, the holograms lowered, Atem’s Magicians turning to give him a bow before disappearing too.

“Wait, I’m confused, what just happened?” Harry asked, startled.

“Atem won,” Bill suddenly chimed in. “Magical Cylinder negates the attack and then inflicts damage equal to the monster’s attack back at your opponent.” Ron turned to stare at his brother who shrugged. “What? He was still the reigning Egyptian Duel Monsters Champion when I first started working with him. I had to learn quick to understand what was going on in the tournaments.” Harry supposed that was true, although he still didn’t really know what Bill did out in Egypt. It had first been explained to him as a correspondent for Gringott’s, although Bill had later stated he mostly worked with the Tomb Keepers. It hadn’t escaped his notice that Kaiba seemed to know him too, although he supposed that that was probably something more to do with Atem and him being cousins than Bill’s job. Yugi, who had been quiet ever since Atem’s final monsters had appeared on the field,
suddenly jumped up, eyes alight.

“I have got to duel him now,” he stated, voice surprisingly excited. “I’ve been dying to see Master Magician! There’s only three of those cards in the world and Pegasus doesn’t have them anymore!” Marik suddenly seemed to cringe again.

“Er, yeah… about that. There’s actually only two now.” Yugi turned to stare at his friend who seemed to have the decency to blush red in embarrassment. “Arcana may have destroyed one, so you couldn’t use it against him. I may have… told him it was the only one in existence.”

“Marik!” Yugi stated, aghast. The idea of destroying a card seemed to be some sort of blasphemy in his book. “At least tell me you know what happened to the other one?” Marik just shrugged, looking at his feet.

“Not really. I knew Egypt’s Champion had one and we had another… but I don’t know what happened to the third. Lost probably.”

“More like hidden,” Akhefia muttered. “That card doesn’t just work for anyone. Same reason why no one else can work with the Dark Magician so well in tournaments.” Harry stared at him wondering what that meant. It wasn’t as if the cards were alive, was it? Before he could voice that thought, Akhefia, seeming to realise he had something too much, stretched and grinned towards Bakura. “Well, now that that’s over with, what about you? Care for a duel? I heard you were fifth in the KC Battle City tournament.” Ryou seemed to simultaneously pale and blush red at the same time.

“I-I r-really c-couldn’t,” Ryou stammered. “Um, I sort of… l-lost my deck.” Akhefia raised an eyebrow, seemingly in disbelief and Ryou flushed further. “I don’t have it on me.” Akhefia just shrugged and glanced at Marik who happily took up the silent request and both disappeared just as Kaiba stormed up, followed by an amused Atem.

Well, it seemed that at least Atem was feeling better after that.

For the first time since he had been sent his father’s hand, Atem felt at peace. It had been so long since he had had such a challenging and fulfilling duel, that it had been nice to fall back into old habits. The new duel disk was interesting and it felt almost like they were playing real Shadow duels, rather than the new version of the game made by a heartbroken millionaire. He had never met Pegasus in person, although from what he had heard from the elusive ghost that was Shadi, he didn’t particularly want to.

Then again, he had never wanted to meet the ghost either.

The rest of the weekend had passed in an odd blur of playing Duel Monsters and placating Mahad in having to face off against Yugi and, occasionally, the ghost that followed him about. The magician had been on the fence already about facing Kaiba, right up until Atem had pointed out that it had been his idea to face him to begin with, let alone facing the man who used to be his king. Mahad’s face had taken on an odd expression when he had said that, but Atem refused to hear anymore. The past had had enough influence on his life.

He was wandering the halls of the school, absentmindedly poking at the different magics he felt between classes, when he felt more than saw the disturbance at the end of the hall. It was coming up to lunchtime during his free period, after having escaped from Yugi’s efforts to coerce him into another game and had just turned the corner to face what appeared to be a toad dressed in pink harassing a rather terrified-looking First Year from Hufflepuff.
“I promise Professor! I was just taking Chloe to the Hospital Wing!” the girl was sobbing, clutching a note to her chest as the toad leered down at her. It took Atem more than a few moments to realise that the toad was actually the persistent DADA Professor that he had been avoiding after her less than savoury remarks on his people and their way of life. He scowled mentally but kept his face blank as he approached. It had been a long time since he had seen such evil than he had in the last few weeks, and this was just another example of it.

“Is there a problem, Professor?” he asked out loud, most likely seeming to appear from nowhere to their eyes. It was somewhat handy to have a thief as a friend- they taught you all the ways to make yourself invisible to the naked eye. Umbridge- if he remembered her name correctly- jumped, clearly startled by his appearance. She then rearranged her features into what was supposed to be a reassuring expression, but was ruined by the curl of her lip that marked her disgust at his presence.

“Mr Menes,” she simpered. “This is none of your concern, as you are neither a Prefect nor a consistent student.” Atem raised an eyebrow.

“Actions of injustice are always a concern of mine, Professor,” he stated and gave her a small smirk. “It comes with being a Tomb Keeper.” He saw the tick under her eye before she could give him a smile, but he ignored whatever she was about to say next. He didn’t give time to those who didn’t deserve it. Instead he gave the girl a softer smile, kneeling to be on her level. “Can you tell me what the matter is?” he asked her gently and the girl gave him a wobbly smile in return, nodding.

“Professor Snape sent me to take Chloe up to see Madam Pomfrey, because her cauldron exploded, and she got hurt. He gave me a note, see!” She held out the slip of paper in her hand that clearly held the definitive spidery scrawl that he had seen before on a couple of notes between the Potions Professor and Bill on occasion. He gave her a reassuring smile and stood, taking the proffered note. “There, you see. I believe that Miss…” he paused and the girl piped in, stating, “Amelia Carthage.” He smiled. “Miss Carthage has a valid reason to be out of classes.” He held out the note to the toad but not close enough that she could put her stubby fingers on it. He would not allow her to harass students, and certainly not children. It didn’t help that Amelia was so close in age to Nofret- he could only imagine the carnage if Umbridge spotted her. Umbridge frowned at him and made an attempt to snatch the note but was cut short by the bell.

“Nevertheless, you had no business interrupting something you did not understand,” she snapped, making another attempt to grab the note, him moving it a little further away. It was rather entertaining to watch her face go red.

“I understood perfectly, Professor. Miss Carthage was excused to see her friend to the hospital wing after an unfortunate accident. You cornered her on her way back to class, so that you could interrogate her for your corrupt Minister and your own sick pleasure.” He moved the note a little further away from her third desperate grab and Umbridge’s face turned from red to near purple in frustration and now anger. “I shall take Miss Carthage back to the dungeons to collect her things, I think.”

“No, you will not!” Umbridge half shrieked. “How dare you speak to a teacher in such a manner! How dare-!”

“Not only that, I believe that your attempt will also have put her in trouble with the one Professor the school hates and will most likely take off points from any other House other than Slytherin, allowing your corruption with the Malfoys to get ever closer,” he continued, not allowing her to get one word in. This caused her to totter slightly, overbalanced by another unsuccessful lunge and the shock of what he had just said. She turned bulging eyes to stare at him, practically inflating with rage. “I shall take Miss Carthage back to the dungeons to collect her things, I think.”

“No, you will not!” Umbridge half shrieked. “How dare you speak to a teacher in such a manner! How dare-!”
Do they not teach you manners in that barbaric backwards tomb?” Atem stiffened, but simply took Amelia’s arm gently and began to steer her away. “You will turn back this instant! I am the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic and I am the one in control here!” Ignoring her still, he began to walk away. “Detention Mr Menes! Another two weeks!” Nothing. He would not give in to her, but he could hear her trotting behind them, following them down the corridor. Other students were starting to stare, watching the enraged Professor follow the foreigner through the halls, screeching like a banshee. “That is it! Stu-” Atem stopped, hearing the shriek from the flash of light from behind him. Surely, she wouldn’t be so idiotic...

“How dare you raise a weapon against my Pharaoh!” Mahad shouted, staff raised and eyes hard in anger. He sighed- there would be no explaining this away with holograms. They had just entered the Entrance Hall and were approaching the stairs for the Dungeons when Umbridge had finally snapped. He could see many of the students staring at the man who had seemingly appeared from nowhere, but most of all, he had spotted the trio who had just met up once again in the entrance to the Great Hall, eyes wide and staring. They would know Mahad from the weekend and know that he was meant to be nothing more than a hologram.

“What on earth…?” Umbridge stammered, having taken a few steps backwards, before straightening. “And who are you? How did you get in here? I am the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic and in his name, I demand an answer!” She had her wand held high but Atem could see the fear in her eyes. Could see that she knew that the man in front of her would not hesitate to strike her down. He sighed.

“Mahad… leave the toad alone. She is less than the sand beneath your feet,” he said, tired already of this. The bigotry here was something he had never faced before, and it was tiring, being around it all the time. She was simply one more example of why they avoided the Wizarding World in Britain.

“She raised a hand to hurt you,” Mahad stated, not moving from his position. “To harm innocents.” The Magician had not turned but Atem knew he was talking about poor Amelia, who was shaking now. More students had piled into the Hall to see what was going on and now the others were there, Marik holding Akhefia back from doing something stupid no doubt. Even the ghost was watching the spectacle with an air of interest, layered with disgust at the disgrace of a woman parading as a teacher.

“Leave her Mahad. If it will ease your mind, you may stay and escort us to see Snape,” Atem acquiesced. Mahad paused and then nodded, lowering the staff and turning to kneel, left foot forward in the ways of old.

“As you wish, my Pharaoh.” Atem nodded and turned, ignoring the squeaks of the woman behind him, aware of his new shadow. This would change things now, but he couldn’t begin to regret his friend’s actions. Mahad was a constant in his life- one of the few he had left here. And he had been present too, all those millennia ago when Egypt had been threatened, giving up his life for a king who had been shattered before his very eyes, much like the Pendent used to cast the spell. He could hardly begrudge him for trying to fulfil a vow five thousand years old and to protect his new friends at the same time.

Snape did not look happy when they finally reached the dungeons, but a quick explanation had everything smoothed out and soon, Amelia was gone along with her things, skipping off to lunch without any House points lost. Atem stayed behind, not yet ready to face what had just happened.

“You’ll have made an enemy of her,” Snape commented, waving his wand to clear away the remaining mess. Atem sighed and nodded.

“I know, but I couldn’t let her attack the children,” he stated, staring at the door where she had left.
Snape made a non-committal sound.

“Dumbledore would have us let her have her way. To allow Voldemort to grow arrogant,” he stated, almost as if commenting on the weather. Atem narrowed his eyes, turning to face the man, frowning.

“So he’s going to sacrifice the children of this school, allow her to take what she wants, just to lure out the mad man you are all so afraid of?” He couldn’t keep the disgust out of his voice, even if he had wanted to.

“I believe the Headmaster sees it as a justifiable action,” Snape said coolly, but Atem could see that the man felt as disgusted as he did.

“Your Headmaster is a fool. It was no work of the Death Eaters that took my father,” he snapped, and Snape merely blinked. He swallowed back the lump in his throat- no matter their issues, he had been his father and not a terrible one most of the time. Atem had felt pressured and smothered, but never unsafe. Never unloved. And now…

“There are some books in the restricted section you may find useful,” Snape said, pulling out a slip of paper from his robe. “Give this to Madam Pince.” Atem blinked and then took the paper, noting it was a permission slip for the restricted section in the library with Snape’s signature on it. He gave the man a grateful smile in thanks and nodded. “Now I believe that it is time for lunch,” Snape said, one dark brow raised. Atem nodded.

“Yes, I believe it is. Shall we Mahad?” The Magician stepped out from the corner of the classroom in which he had been standing and nodded.

“Yes, my Pharaoh.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh Marik, whatever am I going to do with you? Writing the beginning of this chapter was a lot of fun and then I got stuck, because the second half suddenly nose-dived once again so I hope you all enjoyed the brief lighter moments of this story! To be honest, we’re starting to get into the heavy stuff and we are only one week into the school year- hence why Umbridge has yet to make it to High Inquisitor, which if I remember the timeline correctly, she doesn’t get until October/November time.

For those who think Umbridge might be a bit off character in this chapter, I wrote it this way for two reasons. One: even this early in the year she is already trying to influence the minds around her and, considering the Ministry is currently living in the Malfoy’s pockets and therefore Voldemort’s, it isn’t outside the realms of possibility that Umbridge would start picking on students she suspects might have sympathy for Harry, no matter the house. And two: Umbridge lives for attention. She has to be paid attention to, and become threatened by those who are obviously more powerful than her- hence her actions towards Harry and Dumbledore. Atem, however, can see straight through this and would know that the easiest thing to do in this situation is simply to ignore her. Not going to detentions (because, you know, she legally can’t drag you there), ignoring her bigotry towards you, not paying attention to words obviously meant to rile you up. The only reason Harry gets the best of her in the book is because he leads her out to people that are neither afraid of her or intimidated by the Ministry- considering how they treat centaurs, this isn’t surprising (and one stroke of genius from Hermione). So her
going to attack Atem isn't outside plausibility since she is desperate to show this person she can't control that she is supposedly in 'charge'. And immediately gets punished for it.

As for Mahad… he's kind of hard to write and kind of not. It's hard because I'm trying to write the reactions of a spirit so old he can remember everything that happened to his best friend, now currently not in a single piece, and is under pressure by others but most importantly himself, to prevent this from happening again. So hence his impulsive move to reveal himself to Umbridge. After all, we already have one player making threats towards Atem, how can he be sure that this crazy woman will not do the same considering she was just about to attack his king? That aside, I find it hard to write Mahad because of how gods damned calm he always is the Dub. So writing him riled up seems out of character, even if he does have moments of emotionality in this show as well. So, my apologies for that if you don't like the way I have written him so far.

Well, a bit shorter this week, but I hope you all enjoyed this chapter and I will see you all on the 18th!
And I'm back when promised! Next update will be 1st November. I'm sorry if every other week is annoying for some people, but I have been so busy these past few days that I'm glad this chapter got finished last week despite a short bout of writer's block. Between lectures, assignments and dissertation writing, it's sort of been manic. But don't worry- I'm doing my best to stick to the two weeks updates and if there will be a delay, I'll post a short note telling you what's going on and when the next chapter should hopefully be out by.

Other than that, please enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Yami carefully watched as Atem returned to the hall followed by the figure of Master Magician. The man was the very same as the supposed hologram from the weekend and now his suspicions were confirmed. He had sensed some shift of power from the last few cards Atem had used but had refrained from commenting. It was common here that the odd piece of wayward magic wasn’t that unusual, however it had felt more deliberate than a random act and now he had proof. Unlike normal though, he stayed in the shadows rather than simply standing behind Yugi- there was no knowing who could and couldn’t see him in Spirit form here. And just as he had suspected, the Magician’s eyes briefly met his before diverting away and down in respect.

Yami? He jumped at the quiet query from Yugi.

Yes, Yugi? He asked. There was a long pause as they both watched Atem join Akhefia at the end of the Slytherin table. The other students there were giving him a wide berth as the boy appeared to be near vibrating in anger, the flickers of shadows curling around him. Was it the mind playing tricks or was the snake bigger than it had been? Kaiba, too, was sat at the Slytherin table for once, now sat next to his cousin for the first time since the beginning of the year. It was odd, seeing them together after Kaiba’s clear animosity towards him since they met.

How did Atem summon a Duel Monster? I didn’t think you could do that outside of a Shadow Game his young partner queried and Yami could hear the worry in his tone. They had been manipulated into coming here and since arriving had discovered nothing but more secrets and some mysterious malevolent force that had attacked the Tomb Keepers and mutilated Atem’s father. He had indulged Yugi’s curiosity and now he wondered what would have happened if he had not. They had been so close to figuring out what to do about his past but now… now they were stuck in a place far away from the Tablet and embroiled in an entirely new crazy scheme.

I’m not sure he was summoned Yami mused, considering the pair. The Magician, who he had heard named Mahad, was stood a single pace behind Atem, slightly to the left, staff always at the ready. He was surveying the hall with eyes that missed nothing. I felt nothing before he appeared, and nothing from Atem. I think he came of his own volition.

You mean that monsters can just summon themselves? Yugi asked, alarmed. Yami shook his head at him from his corner.
No. There’s something different about him to our previous games Yami observed, turning to meet his partner’s eyes. It’s possible that some of the more powerful monsters have personas of their own. Yugi gave a short nod and then turned to join in the conversation with Marik and his three new friends, who were looking rather confused. Yami sighed and turned, moving to leave the packed hall and very nearly walked right into the form of Atem’s elder sister. Except, now, she was dressed not in the cream robes he had seen her in before, but a dress made of such fine silk it was near translucent. Over her hair she wore a golden headdress, the band of which held the Sennen Eye, much like the crown that rested upon his own brow. She was watching him keenly, dark eyes narrowed, considering. She then turned and beckoned for him to follow.

Yami paused, and turned to glance over his shoulder, wondering if anyone else had noticed her. There was something odd about this- how had she gotten in and why did no one else see her? Atem wasn’t looking in their direction, Yugi was distracted and Kaiba was eyeing up the rest of their table with some form of consideration. The only pair of eyes that was watching them came from the Magician, who didn’t look pleased but made no move to alert his master. Yami didn’t know anything about this woman but he decided that it wouldn’t hurt to find out what she wanted. After all, she was related to their ally after all, and Atem had so far proved himself trustworthy to a point.

Haphiri led him through the Entrance Hall and out through the front doors. It was currently sunny outside, a rare last moment of Ra’s giving light before he would disappear for the Winter here. Yugi had tried to tell him about the concept of snow, but he had always avoided emerging at the sight of frozen water- it was an unnatural state for the element to be in. As soon as the sun’s rays hit her though, Yami noticed that she too wasn’t quite there. Much like himself, it was possible to see what was behind her through her. He blinked a moment and stopped, staring a moment. The only other spirits that he had met were Yami Bakura and Shadi- neither of which were exemplary examples of his past.

“Are you coming?” He jumped at her voice, noticing that she too, had stopped and was waiting for him, one eyebrow raised expectantly.

“Who are you?” he asked, deciding to move no further until she had explained herself. He was not going to risk Yugi’s life by moving too far when it was obvious that they were surrounded by enemies here, and he was certainly not leaving him to the mercy of that dung beetle of a woman.

Haphiri tilted her head ever so slightly, considering.

“In life, a Princess of a foreign kingdom, no longer in existence today. In death, merely a woman trying to look out for the remains of her people.” Yami narrowed his eyes, waiting for more. That was hardly an answer. She blew out an exasperated sigh, turning away. “I was named Haphiri Enheduanna, for the gods An, of the sky, and Hapi, of the Nile River, Princess of the Akkadian Empire and a High Priestess of Isis under the Pharaoh Akhnankhamun.”

“I wasn’t aware that a princess of such a kingdom would be named for foreign gods.” She gave him a sly smile but nothing else. He sighed and tentatively descended the stairs. If she had been a Priestess of the goddess Isis, then he supposed that his people must have trusted her but there was just something… off about this whole situation. Why would a princess of a foreign kingdom carry an Egyptian name and worship Egyptian gods? Perhaps one of her parents had been from his homeland but then, surely, they would know? Then again, there was barely any evidence of his own reign left on the earth, merely three tablets and his own tomb to his knowledge. Yugi had attempted research into his reign but without a name, age range and with only the barest idea of where and when they were looking, it had been next to impossible, even with Ishizu’s help.

“What is it you wanted?” Yami asked carefully as they reached the edge of the lake. Haphiri didn’t answer at first, instead kneeling down at the water’s edge, dipping her hands into the water. It was
then, that once again, Yami noticed the small dagger at her side. It was ornate enough to be in the possession of a noble or royalty, but the design was of Egyptian origin, not Akkadian. He wasn’t sure exactly how he knew that, but he did in the same way that he could speak and understand Coptic and duel so well. It was just ingrained somewhere in his amnesiac mind.

“I see that Mahad has decided to join you at last,” she commented, distracting him from his thoughts. Yami blinked, wondering what that meant. She turned to look up at him, a sad smile on her face as she patted the ground next to her. Yami shook his head minutely- it was clear that she had already lied about who she was to them, there was no knowing what else she was holding back. She blew out a soft sigh. “I know what you’re thinking. How can someone like me be related to Atem if I am already dead?”

“I was wondering how I can trust someone who has already lied to us,” Yami snapped. Haphiri merely blinked and turned back to the river.

“It was not to you I was lying.” Her voice was hard as she seemed to be staring at something only she could see. “There is a dark and evil force approaching. One that would happily strip all of their souls and rewrite the world to his own ends. His desceiples were in the Alley that day, if you remember?” Yami did remember, the strange warning she had given that had put Atem, Akhefia and Bill Weasley on high alert. So she had simply been hiding? But why would she continue to hide it elsewhere? Unless they were constantly being watched… “They are not watching you here,” she supplied, as if she could hear what he was thinking. “The magic of the Orichalcos cannot give it’s user the ability to use any other magic, let alone attend a foreign school. The most they can do is lie in wait in the village and watch from afar.”

“So, you know who they are?”

“Not their names,” she stated. “But their faces… yes, I could tell you that. Then again, they do not blend in well here. You should be able to spot them for yourself.”

“Then why bring me out here?” Yami asked, frustrated at how little she was giving him. He needed to know! If this could be dangerous for Yugi, then he needed to warn him so that they could inform their friends back in Japan. But, if Haphiri heard his frustration, she didn’t act on it. Instead she simply looked down into the lake, tickling at the tentacle of the squid that lived there.

“Is a girl no longer allowed to catch up with an old friend?”

“What?” Yami asked alarmed, ever more so at the foreign word that suddenly left his own mouth, clapping a hand over his mouth as if that would stop his lips from forming anymore. How could he know her? How could she know him? She had named a Pharaoh, but that didn’t mean anything to him. It could have been at any time, truly. And he had never spoken this language before, of that much he was certain, and yet the words left his mouth as easily and simply as Coptic. He had understood Haphiri just as much as if they had been speaking Coptic or Japanese.

But there would be no more asking questions, because as soon as the word left his mouth she was gone. Vanished into thin air, almost as if she had never been there, leaving him alone on the shores of the lake.

For the first time since they had arrived, Nofret actually felt far more like a thirteen year old than she had in… well, many thousand of years. Hogwarts was wonderful! There was no limit to what she couldn’t do here and, even better, no one around who had enough time to tell her no. It wasn’t exactly something that a Princess ought to be doing- her grandmother in life had shrieked it at her often enough- but Nofret had never exactly been left around many people that particularly cared
what she did. As a child, she had been shipped off to live with her grandmother as something of a political hostage, only returned when Haphiri had agreed to place herself as the exchange, but then to be thrust into a world where she was equally as ignored (the exceptions being so few and far between they hardly mattered too much) and barely able to speak the language of what was purported to be her home country. By Tiamat, she didn’t even know what their mother looked like!

Nofret’s relationship with their father was equally as fraught. He was far more interested in their brother- the heir to his kingdom- than he ever was with his daughters, and even less so with the spare that hadn’t been born as boy. Her brother had attempted to spend as much time around her as he possibly could, but the age gap of three years was immense all those years ago and she had barely remembered him at first. Let alone, that she got his name wrong for a good three years before anyone had cared to correct her! But she had never minded. She could be as childish or mischievous as she wanted, since no one could tell a Princess no, and never see any consequences until either one of the Palace priests or one the Millennium wielders- usually Akhnadin- caught up with her.

She shivered at the remembrance of that man. Even five thousand years removed, the memory still brought her chills. Oh, she knew what he had done. Could remember with clarity the moment the knife had stabbed through her heart, thankfully in the wrong target. And even now, death seemed too good for the man who had betrayed his own family throughout the years and plotted to put his rather unwilling son on the throne instead. The bitter irony being, that had he simply done nothing, his son would have ended up Pharaoh anyway.

That spell had never been designed for the wielder to survive.

Shuddering off that thought, Nofret happily skipped her way down the corridor, blissfully aware that it was something no self-respecting thirteen-year-old would normally be caught doing. It helped that she looked a lot younger than she actually was- a trait that ran something chronic in their family, a relic from a mother she couldn’t remember. Haphiri liked to tell her she had inherited their mother’s eyes and somewhat her hair colour- perhaps the reason their father had avoided her like the plague that had ravaged throughout Egypt’s outer villages in her youth. She liked being acting childish though. It helped people to underestimate her and sometimes even forget that she was in the room while discussing something important. Rather like the young blonde girl the students called ‘Loony Lovegood’. She simply smiled and acted in a daze, all the while collecting information around her and perfectly aware of the image she was putting across.

Seers were like that sometimes.

Nofret wasn’t sure how she knew that as she ran down another corridor, aimlessly following the slightly dark trail of magic that would inevitably lead her either to Baba or Severus Snape, but it was some ingrained sense that was screaming it to her. It was a natural talent of hers, to guess the abilities of those around her. It had been helpful while stuck in the Akkadian court, and ever more so once returned and the old Pharaoh died. Not that he had been that old but… well, poison had never been ruled out. Personally, she wouldn’t have put it past the complete witch that their grandmother had been to have not have had a hand in Akhnamkhamun’s death. And after that… she swallowed heavily at the reminder of him, the Minoan, the Serpent King. A man with odd-coloured eyes and cursed by the gods of the skies, by Anuand Enlil and Enki of the Northern and Southern Skies, to walk the lands, ever-ageless. And he had wanted to marry her, to rip her away from her family and live with him in some great mansion granted to him by the crumbling royalty of the Akkadian Empire. She didn’t know how he had managed it considering she was certain he had drained several of the court members there of their souls and harassed Haphiri to near half-madness, but he had not only done that, but also ingratiated himself with Grandmother.

Don’t think about it. Just think on where you’re going she whispered to herself, and continued her
swift dance down the corridor, passing Akhefia, the blonde Tomb Keeper and Set on her way past. Only Akhefia returned her wave, before Set broke off from their group, hanging back for a moment, and they disappeared into the Great Hall for lunch. Humming, she slipped through the crowd of students, waving again to Baba and the irate form of Mahad as she passed and slid down the stairs and into the dungeons. She was glad that Haphiri was currently distracting the Spirit. She wasn’t quite sure she was ready to face Pharaoh just yet.

The corridors down here were far less crammed with bodies, since this was the end of a teaching period for Potions, people getting as far away from the ‘bat of the dungeons’ as fast as they could. Perfect. She would have a whole hour of him all to herself, a thought that made her so happy she continued skipping all the way to the door to the classroom, bypassing it and right to the painting that covered the Potion Master’s private quarters. She raised a hand to knock and then paused, concentrating. Corporeality was Haphiri’s speciality- she loved scaring people by walking through walls after touching them- but it was something that Nofret had never been very good at on her own. She had far too much fun as a ghost and being invisible was a natural state for her anyhow. She liked being able to make herself visible and such, but actually solid? Far more difficult.

It seemed it was an ability that eluded Pharaoh too though, much to her amusement.

After a few moments of intense concentration, including one indulging moment of sticking her tongue out of the side of her mouth and screwing up her face in a way that had had her brother in stitches and infuriated Grandmother to no end, she was finally able to make at least her fist solid enough to produce a single knock. There was a long moment of silence before the painting, depicting an old man with shoulder length white hair and fading red robes snoozing at his desk and surrounded by vials of potions and a small cauldron, swung open to reveal one Severus Snape. She was greeted with a raised eyebrow.

“And to what do I owe the pleasure, Princess?” he asked slowly, no doubt mentally checking that the coast was clear. She could have told him that, but she didn’t begrudge him for being thorough. There was a reason Haphiri liked him after all.

“I just wanted to ask a few questions,” she said, giving him her best disarming smile. Severus simply opened the door a little wider, a clear gesture that she was welcome in despite it being completely asinine to a ghost.

“Take care not to fall through the chairs,” Severus stated dryly, moving back to where he had presumably been sitting before, on a comfortable looking armchair by the fire, a cup of tea and book resting on the small coffee table beside it. She pulled a silly face at him before moving her concentration to attempting to sit on the sofa. It didn’t work the first time but, a few curses and three attempts later, she manged to settled quite comfortably, cross-legged, on the sofa. Severus was silent all throughout the mini drama occurring in front of him, although Nofret could swear that there was a glimmer of a smile on his lips and there was definitely amusement in his eyes.

“Finished?” he asked mildly. She sighed and then gave him a smile- it was fun to undercut people’s expectations of her. Severus liked to give quick, witty and dry responses made to annoy the other person, so she simply grinned right on through them, making them compliments rather than slights on her imperfections. It was boring being perfect after all.

“Yes, very much so!” she beamed and then readied herself for the next question. “I was wondering how far you had gotten with our little project?” she asked. It had been a quiet idea, something slipped between the three of them out of Bill’s ears- he would never have approved. Severus had been slightly more intrigued and had been working on it in all the spare time he had- what little he had between the two other masters that demanded all of his time. It had her wondering when he had time
to sleep- considering the dark circles under his eyes that he must have been hiding somehow, the
answer was not much. It had her tempted to force some of his dreamless sleep on him herself. That,
or make a visit to Dumbledore’s office later today. Hmm, that’s not a bad idea.

“A little. I find it intriguing the things one can do by mixing magicks. However, I wouldn’t want to
craft too many spells that way,” Snape stated, glancing towards the book next to him. It was written
in what must have been some ancient language of this island since she wasn’t sure what it said and
was rather worn. There also appeared to be several notes made in some of the margins. “It would be
hazardous to one’s health.”

“What magicks have you been working with?” Nofret asked, curious.

“Several. There is little point in attempting to work with Latinised magic as is taught here- it is far
weaker and younger to be able to contend with the magic of Orichalcum. I have been attempting to
work with some older runic magicks, more specifically Druidic and Shamanistic magicks. It is
something I have something of a… natural talent for outside of Potions.” Nofret nodded. It made
sense- the man was a natural Legilimens, so working with those older magicks would come far easier
than if someone naturally gifted with Latin magic attempted it. “Your sister has been working on a
few of her own mixed spells, although I am certain only fools or the desperate would think to use
a mix of Akkadian and Egyptian magick.” Severus looked rather perturbed at the idea and Nofret
pressed her lips together to hide a laugh. If only he knew.

“Bill’s been looking into earth magic, although if he wanted to do that I think he would be better off
speaking to the elves, if there are any left here?” she asked carefully. She had heard of the House-
Elves, but had yet to meet a true elf. It had been something she was looking forward to, but rumour
had that they had died out. Severus gave her a sharp look, calculating mixed with something else.
She wondered if he had an idea of the heritage that ran through his veins.

“There are no elves left. He would have better luck looking for the fey than elves,” Severus sniffed,
voice careful. Oooh, that must mean there are pure-blooded elves somewhere Nofret thought with a
smirk and Severus’ face immediately clammed up.

“Oh! I’ll pass the message on!” she said brightly, jumping to her feet. “Anything else?”

“Yes. You might want to give this book to your brother. Dumbledore was… borrowing it from the
library,” Severus stated, pulling a book out from… somewhere. It was a trick of Druidic magic to
hide something in plain sight and have another magic user completely unaware of it until it was
brought to their attention. It had been how they hid their sacred sites from those who hunted them
throughout the years and even she was susceptible to it. And, by the looks of things, Severus had
made sure the wards were set so that even someone of her brother’s abilities would be unable to tell
where he had picked up the object, even if some guesswork would give him the basic idea.

The fact that Dumbledore had a hold of this was rather disturbing though.

“What else does he have up there?” Nofret wondered out loud, tucking the book carefully under her
arm, concentrating on not dropping corporeality so as to keep hold of the thing.

“Other than several tomes on Horcruxes and a fair few ancient amulets? Nothing of interest to nimble
fingers,” Severus said mildly, before standing himself. “Now, I believe lessons start soon, and if you
wish to be out of sight, you’ll want to run that somewhere Dumbledore won’t be able to get his
hands on it.” She grinned at him and nodded, turning and skipping out of the door.

Now she most definitely had to visit the old coot’s office.
Akhefia slipped out of Potions as quietly as he could, nodding to Snape on his way out. The professor was currently needling into one of the Slytherins- one of Malfoys minions by the looks of things- for, not only exploding his cauldron, but causing his skin to turn green in the process due to whatever chemicals the moron had dumped into the cauldron. He made a mental note to rib them for being too *patriotic* to their House later, but he had something more important to do right now that couldn’t wait for later. And, loathe as he was to admit it, it was something that had been made as a vow to Akhnamkhamun before he had been unceremoniously shoved out the door as an extremely reluctant guard to his precious Prince.

Running down the corridors was rather fun though. This castle was a marvel for the average student, but to a thief? It was the perfect playground, full of traps, moving parts and hidden corridors. He was aware that most liked it for it’s magical quality but he loved it for all the little nooks and crannies that one could hide something away in. That Room on the Seventh floor was a rather obvious one (and hadn’t there been an *interesting* number of things that he had made several mental notes to check out later, including that one fragmented-soul-holding-diadem), but there were oh so many more subtle ones. For every broom cupboard, there were a few loose bricks, so carefully placed that if one didn’t know what they were looking at, would be missed. And Akhefia *always* knew what he was looking for.

Which made this run nothing less than child’s play. Slipping round the caretaker? Easy as strolling down the corridors of his home. Avoiding the cat? A few well-placed treats and a small fuss took care of any resentment she might hold against rulebreakers. Didn’t any of these children respect Bastet’s creatures? Perhaps he ought to introduce some of the more loathsome Slytherins to some of Sekhmet’s followers. They would learn humility *very* quickly. That thought allowed him a grin as he reached his destination- namely one door to a horrific pink office covered in fake versions of Bastet’s faithful minions.

At this point in the day, it was Umbridge’s planning session- meaning she was currently not teaching classes. He only had half an hour to do this: to avoid suspicion he needed to be able to get down to Herbology on time. Snape would cover for his absence should she try anything. After all, Professor Severus Snape was not known for suffering those who pissed him off. Akhefia reined in the anger that wanted to spring up, and schooled his face into a mirthless grin.

This was going to be fun.

Umbridge looked up at the intrusion into her office, startled at the presence of a student. When she registered who he was her face twisted into something strangely uglier than it already was.

“What are you doing here?” she snapped, eyes narrowed. “What are you doing out of class?” Her voice was just as grating up close as it was in the Halls or classrooms and Akhefia gritted his teeth against the instinct to snarl at her. Instead he allowed the grin to grow wider and Diabound to slide, ever so silently, up and out of his robes and around his shoulders.

“I came to have a little… chat about some earlier behaviours of yours,” Akhefia said playfully, slowly stroking Diabound’s head. Umbridge stiffened, her face contorting somewhere between horror and outrage.

“You would dare to threaten me?” she half-shrieked.

“Of course. After all, you and your Ministry have already threatened the Tomb Keepers,” Akhefia said, still pleasantly. “After all, it was your own Minister of Magic who said, and I quote, ‘these people live in barbaric circumstances and rarely understand civilised methods of punishment’. A rather *uninformed* opinion, unfortunately for him.” Akhefia paused and then allowed the grin to fall into a dark smirk. “And for you.”
“Oh really?” Umbridge threatened, puffing up. “And how is the Minister so uninformed?”

“Well, from the reports that Mr Weasley and another correspondent of ours have been collecting, I rather imagine they are already in a meeting with Fudge already. The Tomb Keepers are rather angry that you would think so low of their Pharaoh after all.” Umbridge sniffed and then, as if only just processing the words, frowned.

“You think that Cornelius will be bothered by some savages being made aware of your vulger practices?” she snapped derisively.

“Oh, he will be. After all, his Senior Undersecretary attacked their Prince and current acting head of the Nekhen and all other Tomb Keeper Clans, in his name.” Akhefia resisted the urge to laugh as her expression morphed right back to horror. “And both His Highness, Prince Atem of the Nekhen Clan and High Priest Mahad of the House of Life, have given me express permission, should Fudge fail to, and I am most assured he will, punish you, to do that which he won’t.” He finally allowed the Shadows to spread, fingering one of the knives in his sleeve.

“W-What is this?” Umbridge spluttered, jumping to her feet as the Shadows enveloped them. “What do you think you are doing?!”

“This,” Akhefia said slowly, feeling his Ka rise from his shoulders, no doubt seemingly to triple in size to Umbridge, “is a Shadow Game. And this is how you will find your punishment.”

Half an hour later, Akhefia was strolling into Greenhouse 3 and taking his place next to Kaiba who glanced to the side, Marik looking rather nervous next to him.

“Where the hell have you been?” Kaiba snapped, under his breath in only the way one who has absolute control of the pitch of their voice could.

“Just taking care of a few loose strings. Also, Atem has invited us all to his room later. He’s probably up there with Yugi already- apparently Umbridge has just recently taken ill,” Akhefia said lightly. He felt, more than saw, Marik stiffen on Kaiba’s other side and grinned.

It had truly been fun.

Chapter End Notes

You know at some point I’m going to write a part for Yami that is not explicitly confusing and/or shocking but until then... er, sorry Yami. It gets better eventually, I promise. Ahem.

So, the plot dump that was Nofret. I found it very interesting writing from her perspective, although it did require a whole bunch of research into Ancient Mesopotamian gods, which may or may not have been around in the Akkadian Era and were actually worshipped by them. Considering these deities were used by, but not limited to: Sumerians, Assyrians, Akkadian etc. it can get really confusing. But, we managed somehow and if I got a couple wrong, my apologies.

As for the discussion of different magics, considering we are using Shadow magic in this (and some Merlin may have inadvertently crept in until I forced myself to stop- but
you're welcome to look for it ;) ), and we know that House-Elves and Goblins have their own kinds of magic, it stands to reason that one would be able to use some form of them. It's also interesting that no one seems to think to mix any of them together, and it would be in Snape's character to do so- doubly so considering we know he's quite capable of making his own spells (which begs the question how this man was never acknowledged for his skills- so far we have: youngest Potions Master, spell creator and Legilimens/Occlumens. What was the wizarding world doing in the sixties?). It's also fun to think of what magical creatures are not mentioned in HP, why that may be and what kind/how powerful their own magic would be.

It would also not surprise me if Dumbledore was keeping all the books on the subject, since we know he removed all books that even gave Horcruxes a passing mention.

As for Umbridge... well, you have to have some comeuppance for attacking a member of royalty. More about that in the next chapter I promise.

Anyway, notes over and I'll see you all on 1st!
I am SO sorry this is a day late! I really did plan to get this up for yesterday but the end of the chapter was giving me so many problems and I wasn't well at the end of last week, when I was planning on finishing it up, which didn't help matters! Anyhow, a day late but I promise the next chapter will be up on 29th November! I have two assignments to do but I've also managed to get back on top of my schedule so it may be a day late again if worst comes to worst.

Anyhow, my poor organisation/ health aside, I hope you enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Fudge was shifting uneasily in his seat and Bill resisted the temptation to laugh as Kheftan and Haphiri were sat on either side of him, staring Fudge down. The silence was so loud and the tension so thick that one could almost cut it with a knife, if they were so inclined. He watched as a bead of sweat slowly made its way down Fudge’s face, the man twirling the ever-present bowler hat in his lap, no doubt trying to work out how he had ended up in this situation. He shifted once more, coughed and then sat up straighter, making a noise like he was trying to clear his throat.

It sounded more like he was being strangled, if Bill were honest.

“And what can I help you with today?” Fudge asked, attempting pleasantness, but clearly knowing that they were not here on pleasantries. Haphiri very much looked like she wanted to stab Fudge and be done with it right there, but Bill had warned her that it would win her no favours with Kheftan, who already knew of the many… **rumours** that circulated Nekhen.

“As you are aware, Minister,” Kheftan started, voice even and careful, pronouncing each word clearly, “that we entrusted into your care three of our young Tomb Keepers, including our dearest Crown Prince.” Bill watched as Fudge swallowed, probably suddenly regretting some of those articles getting printed. “Mr Weasley, here, is our… correspondent and your ambassador. However, some of his reports regarding the activities sanctioned by this… **teacher** you appointed are… disturbing.”

“Disturbing?” Fudge squeaked. “I have heard nothing but good reports-“

“From who?” Bill asked before he could stop himself. Haphiri sniggered quietly from his left and Fudge looked insulted. Deciding that he had already started digging, he might as well carry on. “As promised, I joined as an ambassador for both the Wizarding World and the Tomb Keepers, and quite frankly, Umbridge’s actions are so far… underwhelming. She’s ostracised herself already from half the staff, is generally disliked by most of the student body and I won’t start to repeat some of the rumours I’ve heard about her teaching methods.”

“It is almost as if she wants to ensure all the poor little children don’t… live,” Haphiri chimed in almost pleasantly. Fudge snapped his head round to look at her, probably in an attempt to stand up for the toad, but then wilting as he looked right into the carefully blank face of an Akkadian Princess used to snakes in court.
“Professor Umbridge is most qualified, I assure you,” Fudge whimpered, quickly turning his attention back to Kheftan. “As you said, Mr Weasley, they are merely rumours. And I can doubly assure you that she is most concerned with the safety of all students at Hogwarts.” Haphiri narrowed her eyes but Bill grabbed her wrist under the table, minutely shaking his head. Now was not the time to bring up the blood quills.

“And yet, she is still disliked in a manner quite unlike any other teacher at the school. Not only that, a mere hour before we arrived here it was reported to me by a reliable source that she attacked the Crown Prince,” Kheftan said, voice still soft.

“Now that I can assure you is nothing but a rumour,” Fudge stated, but another bead of sweat was happily joining the first down his face.

“Mahad is no liar,” Bill said flatly. “Not that it will make any difference. It may have slipped mention before, but I can assure you the Mr Kheti is an integral part of Palace security. By now, Umbridge will have been punished accordingly.” At this, Fudge truly did swell up in anger.

“You presume-!”

“Yes,” Kheftan cut through him. “You people may see us as nothing more than… what was said in the Prophet again, Mr Weasley?”

“Savage backwards barbarians who live outside of civilisation in the desert.” Kheftan nodded.

“Nothing more than savages, but I can assure you that we do not take such personal attacks lying down. Due to the indisposition of Pharaoh, the Crown Prince is currently the acting Head of State. I merely act in which way he sees fit, as does Akhefia. If he sees nothing wrong with his actions, there is nothing that I can do to reverse such an order.” The silent it would be sacrilege was left unsaid.

“Our Prince has been merciful in merely allowing these despicable claims to lay to rest, but I am less inclined to be so. Especially in light of this attack, so soon after men under this Lord Voldemort has spent the majority of the Summer attacking our people.” Fudge’s face screwed up and Bill internally sighed. Well, at least this would be somewhat entertaining.

“Now, look here,” Fudge hissed. “You-Know-Who is not back. I don’t know what kind of cock-and-bull Dumbledore has been feeding you, but I can assure you that he is dead!”

“And yet, I clearly remember seeing men dressed in dark cloaks calling themselves Death Eaters attacking my brother in the name of a Lord Voldemort, not two weeks ago,” Haphiri stated casually. Fudge jumped, clearly having forgotten she was in the room. “I believe one of them went by the name of Lucius Malfoy… a benefactor of yours yes?” She gave him one of her signature terrifying grins as Fudge recoiled. “Quite coincidental that he claims to have been under your mind-control curse and kept all of that wealth isn’t it? And has his own personal little spies in this school that are supporting your Senior Undersecretary?”

“W-What do you think you are suggesting?” Fudge stammered.

“Oh, I’m not suggesting anything at all,” she said, keeping eye contact with Fudge. Kheftan was looking mildly miffed at having his spotlight stolen- or perhaps that it was Haphiri who was pointing out that which he had only been implying. Considering where she grew up and learnt politics, Bill had practically had to insist that she come since the Tomb Keepers would never have deigned to do so. “I’m merely saying it’s wonderfully convenient that your pest has a little pet able to whisper right into your ear, with the correct weighting of coinage too.” She then stood, breaking the spell she had ensnared the Minister in. “I shall take my leave of you boys. The smell of corruption is too overwhelming for me.” And with that she was simply gone- not that Bill was fooled.
It wasn’t as if she needed to be visible to still be present.

“Minister Fudge,” Kheftan stated, ignoring the fact that Fudge was still staring at the spot Haphiri had once been. “As Vizier of the Tomb Keepers and in the name of Pharaoh and Our Prince, I must insist that all those journalists who have slandered our people are either brought to justice or handed over to the Tomb Keepers to be judged.” Fudge made a small noise of protest, mouth open no doubt to talk but Kheftan just carried on speaking. “Along with this, I demand that any and all upcoming articles be sent on to me to be proof-read to ensure such happenings never occur again. And, be assured, we will be monitoring every avenue of news you wizards put out to the world.” Kheftan had ensured he was looking Fudge straight in the eyes as he said this. “I would also suggest against giving into anymore monetary bribes from known past Death Eaters- you never know whose money or blood you are taking into your hands.” With that closing statement, he too rose and left the room, leaving Bill the last one in the room. Fudge stared at the vacated seat a moment before turning to Bill, eyes narrowing.

“Now, see here, you have to explain that they cannot demand these things!” Fudge insisted. Bill got the feeling he saw Bill as an easy target due to Percy’s involvement here.

“Mr Fudge, I am merely an ambassador. Nothing I say will have any effect on political decisions that are based on poor choices made by your Senior Undersecretary,” Bill replied, raising an eyebrow at him. Fudge swallowed and shook his head.

“Suggesting corruption! Really! There is nothing-“

“I’ll stop you before you voice that thought,” Bill cut in, standing up. “Fudge, I would like to remind you that I do not share my brother’s quite frankly poor view of the world, and neither are you going to win me over by slandering the people I have been working closely with for the past five years and trust far more than I do you.” He paused before continuing. “You might also want to remember that all walls have ears. And not all of them are in your favour. Think of that, the next time you attempt to discredit an uncomfortable truth.”

And with that, Bill too, took his leave. He was not hopeful for any changes though.

Yugi wriggled uncomfortably in his seat, staring across the room at the closed door of Atem’s room. He was camped out in the Palace dorm, as Akhefia had jokingly termed it once and the name having stuck, sat in one of the many mismatched chairs that were placed in the common room. They had most definitely redecorated since he had last been here: gone was the plain, rushed lackadaisical look, and now was an odd assortment of each member’s tastes. The original six chairs had grown to ten- three squashy armchairs that were originals to the room, two business looking chairs that could only be Kaiba’s influence and the rest an assortment of wooden chairs covered in pillows or floor cushions. There was also a low-slung table of Japanese origin in the middle of the room- the floor cushions laid out around the fireplace that had appeared and another small but distinctively Egyptian table nearby. Yugi got the feeling that Atem spent many evenings there by the few books and a couple of abandoned mugs containing the dregs of what smelt like vanilla chai. The walls were still painted red, but it seemed cosier rather than the clear oppressive sign it had originally been.

He sighed and shifted again, despite the comfort of the chair. He couldn’t get over the feeling that something big was happening- had already happened and that they were about to get dragged into a whole new weird adventure. Except, this time, his friends were thousands of miles away and he had no one to rely on except Kaiba and an only-recently-to-be-trusted Marik. Sure, they had both moved on a lot from when Yugi had first met them- Marik in leaps and bounds since having his dark side banished- but it still didn’t detract from the fact that both had attempted to kill him at one point or another. And Yugi still wasn’t sure where he stood with Kaiba. And then there was poor Ryou, who
was just trying to get by without the interference of the evil Spirit of the Ring. It was curious that he hadn’t caused any trouble yet, but that didn’t mean they should let down their guard. Only that he was more than likely up to something new.

And then there was Yami. The Pharaoh had been acting strangely since lunch, quieter than usual and contemplative. It made Yugi wonder what had happened when he had wandered off midway through lunch. He hadn’t been the same since they had gone down to Potions, rattled by something which had not helped his concentration any and lost him 10 points from Snape before Crabbe had melted his cauldron. The most he had commented on, was the fact that Akhefia disappeared sometime in the second half of the lesson and they had yet to figure out where he had gone. But since DADA was not on… Yugi could guess. And now they were here, having been dragged there by Atem who had stated that there was something that they all needed to talk about. And then had promptly disappeared into his room with his little sister who had been waiting for them.

**She isn’t his sister.** Yugi jumped as Yami suddenly materialised next to him, face carefully blank.

“She isn’t?” Yugi asked out loud and then flinched, realising that he really ought to answer Yami telepathically. There was no knowing if Master Magician could hear them. Yami shook his head, glancing towards the door and then closing his eyes. He was silent a moment before elaborating.

**She cannot be. Both she and Haphiri are dead.** Yugi felt his mouth fall open at that.

*But they could still—*

**They are as old as I am.** Yugi cut himself off, staring at his partner, who looked away. *I met with her sister during your lunch hour. It was… frustrating, but the only thing of consequence I learnt from her is that she once knew me. And that they were once Princesses of the Akkadian Empire.*

Yugi blinked, and then blinked again, trying to think that through. He had heard of the Akkadian Empire, had read about it in passing when trying to research as far back as Yami may possibly have been from. But…

*I didn’t think the Akkadian Empire stretched that far back* he said numbly. Yami merely shrugged.

*I cannot answer that* Yami said sadly. Yugi swallowed, feeling bad- this was clearly not the time to be bringing up the fact that his friend had no clue as to his origins. *I can only repeat what she has said. But… she mentioned something else. Something about how our new friend’s father had his soul stolen.* Yami would most likely have continued but at that moment, Ron’s older brother Bill suddenly burst through the door, startling them both. He seemed to blink a couple of times at noticing them.

“Um… am I interrupting something?” Bill asked but his voice was oddly light. “I was just looking for Atem or Mahad.”

“How?” Yugi asked, confused. And still feeling slightly off kilter from the last few minutes. And what had he meant about interrupting? Bill had never given any indication before that he could see Yami… but, he supposed that that didn’t mean he couldn’t. He was, after all, the ambassador between the wizards and Tomb Keepers- who knew what amount of knowledge had been given to him? How much they trusted him?

“Oh, haven’t you…” he trailed off as Atem’s door opened, revealing Master Magician, his face set in its usual blank expression.

“Hello, Bill,” he said, voice giving nothing away.
“Mahad,” Bill inclined his head towards the man and Yugi stared. This was Mahad? The Magician had a name? Did all the monsters have names or just those with apparent autonomy? “I was looking for Atem.” There was a pause before Master Magician- Mahad apparently- bowed his head and opened the door a little more. Bill nodded and gave Yugi a brief wave. “This won’t take long!” he called over his shoulder and then was gone, the door shut incredibly quickly behind him.

*What was that all about?* Yugi wondered. Yami merely shrugged his shoulders, seemingly just as surprised as he was, then narrowed his eyes, considering.

*I’m not sure… but I suspect we’ll find out soon. I was under the impression that Bill was supposed to be meeting with the Minister for Magic* Yami stated. Yugi blinked.

*How’d you know that?*

*Hm?* Yami glanced over to him from where he had been eyeing the door.

*That Bill was meeting with the Minister? I didn’t hear anything about that.* Yami opened his mouth and then abruptly shut it, looking bewildered.

*I… don’t know* Yami admitted slowly, surprise etched into his features. It was an odd expression to see on the Pharaoh- it made him look younger, closer to Yugi’s age than ever. Sometimes, it was easy to forget that Yami had still been a teenager when he died. Yugi wondered how Yami might have known something like that. Did it have something to do with the meeting with Haphiri? Some inane knowledge passed on telepathically? But that seemed a bit too outlandish, magic school that they were sat in notwithstanding.

*Maybe you just overheard someone talking about it?* Yugi suggested. *And just forgot?* The Pharaoh grimaced and Yugi internally flinched- Yami took great pride in remembering everything since he and Yugi had made peace in Duellist Kingdom. After all, what else did he have to forget but the very few interactions he had with the outside world? But a lot had been going on around them recently, so it wasn’t too outside the realm of believability to think that he had simply overheard something between the teachers or Tomb Keepers and just subconsciously picked up on it. Plausible, but Yami wasn’t looking convinced.

*Maybe* he reluctantly agreed, just as Akhefia, Marik and Kaiba returned from Herbology.

Marik was not looking forward to this conversation. It would be a revelation that he wasn’t entirely sure Yugi, the Pharaoh or himself would be ready for, if it was to go where he thought it would. He preferred knowing the basics and spending his time driving Malfoy up the wall. So far, a number of the Slytherins had started to think for themselves- mostly the younger years- and some among the first years had started forming their own little study groups that were made up of several different Houses. The older years however, were still as stubborn as ever and it was fun to run circles round them with Akhefia and sneaking different unpleasant substances into various pieces of clothing Malfoy owned. Needless to say, he would be writing home for a new set of dress robes.

Marik sat himself down in one of the office chairs Kaiba had requested, if only so he could keep moving despite having to be sitting. It was always fun to spin on the things and Marik wouldn’t let anyone make fun of him for doing so- after all he had never had the childhood fun of spinning in an office chair before. Kaiba took the other one and Akhefia flopped into a chair nearer the fire, Diabound hissing in what appeared to be a near miss of being squished. He was not a fan of the weather slowly getting colder and even Marik was a little wary of the whispers of an early snowfall, despite it being barely October. Frozen water still freaked him out a bit. Yugi had taken one of the
armchairs and the Pharaoh was sat on a nearby floor cushion, looking as much like the ruler he
would have been in life as ever. Kaiba appeared to be blatantly ignoring him as he seemed to do
when the Spirit appeared outside of the Puzzle. The common room was silent, an odd occurrence
since usually there was at least Kaiba calling someone on the phone or Akhefia shouting through one
of their various duels or games. Sometimes, Atem would even join in and Marik would sometimes
forget his awkwardness around the Prince.

It wasn’t as if Akhefia ever treated him differently.

As if thinking about Atem had summoned him, his door suddenly opened and Bill, Atem and the
Master Magician that had been introduced as Mahad appeared. Bill gravitated towards the armchairs
and Atem sat in a chair next to Kaiba. Mahad merely stood in the background, somehow blending in
with the wall despite wearing a completely different colour to the wall. Marik found himself feeling
both awkward and intimidated at the same time. What was he supposed to say? The current Pharaoh
was soulless, Atem had been attacked, Kaiba was acting weird and the Pharaoh was near running
away from any interaction with Atem. Even now, he looked about three steps away from vanishing
back to the Puzzle, despite the fact that everyone except Yugi appeared to be pretending they didn’t
see him. It was also interesting that both Atem and Kaiba were sat as far away from him as it was
possible to get.

“So,” Bill started, clapping his hands together. “How’s everyone getting on?” Marik stared at him a
moment.

“That’s really what you’re opening with?” he asked incredulously. Bill raised an eyebrow.

“Might as well get the official report out of the way first. Dumbledore’s curious as to how you’re all
settling in.” Marik frowned and noted that Mahad looked less than pleased in his corner. Clearly,
they were not the only ones who were far from fans of the Headmaster.

“Considering we knew nothing of their world before arriving, we’re getting on fine,” Kaiba snapped.
“Surely he can see that in his own school?” There was a note of condescension in his voice and Bill
grinned. He was obviously just as aware as to how ridiculous that statement was.

“I’ll be sure to tell him,” he said brightly and Atem snorted into his drink. Marik wondered when he
had gotten it- he hadn’t walked out of his room with a drink.

“So, on to why Akhefia just robbed Umbridge of her soul?” Marik asked brightly and Yugi gaped at
him. Bill blinked.

“I would have thought that one was obvious?”

“For the uninitiated,” Marik said, gesturing to the others in the room. Yugi turned to stare at him,
ready to jump into something, until Bill shook his head, rolling his eyes.

“Sure. As you know, I’m the ambassador between the Wizarding World and Tomb Keepers and
usually too busy trying to dig these two out of trouble,” Bill said, gesturing towards Atem and
Akhefia- the latter merely looked pleased at being the cause of so many problems. “Akhefia
technically belongs to the House of Life as a guard, but he usually works under Atem, son of
Pharaoh Akhnankhamun.” Even Kaiba blinked in surprise at that one, turning a moment to look at
his cousin who shrugged.

“Uncle Akhnadin never really fit in. Everyone kept… watching.” The way he said watching implied
more as if they were waiting for something to go wrong. Marik wasn’t at all sure of anything to do
with Kaiba’s parents, least of all his father who had apparently been a member of royalty within the
Tomb Keepers, but he got the feeling that there was more to the story than just being uncomfortable with everyone expecting something of you. He wondered if that was the attitude the other Clans had towards himself and his sister.

“Right, well, anyhow the reason we’re all here is because Voldemort is after the power of the Millennium Items. And the Ministry is in denial that he has actually returned hence all the… er… reports.” That was one way to put it Marik supposed. Bill shifted uncomfortably for a moment before taking a deep breath. “I personally called for you all to be here because Snape may have just found some evidence that Voldemort is looking for more than just Shadow Magic.” Atem sat up straighter in his chair and Akhefia let out a low hiss.

“When did he find out about this?” he asked. “Nofret didn’t mention anything…”

“Last night,” Bill said. “Considering her… history with the person in question, I rather doubt he would have mentioned it.”

“So, he is about,” Atem said flatly, voice devoid of emotion. Before Marik could ask who they were talking about, Bill gestured for them all to be quiet, face grim.

“Ok, so backstory. You may have heard that Harry defeated Voldemort fourteen years ago, however what most people don’t know is that at the same time Voldemort had an ally who conveniently disappeared before we could track him down. Even Snape had no idea who it was, only the substance that he supplied Voldemort.” Bill was oddly pale and Marik found himself feeling uneasy too. Whoever could get around Professor Snape was a person Marik never wanted to meet. “I only learnt who he was when working with Atem and the Tomb Keepers of Nekhen. It wasn’t until recently I realised this was the same person.”

“But how could they have a history with Nofret if they’re still around?” Yugi asked and Marik blinked. He flushed when he realised everyone had turned to look at him. “It’s just… she’s dead, isn’t she?” She is? Marik thought, wondering how he could have missed that. Then again, he hadn’t exactly been paying too much attention to the two women who claimed relation to Atem. He had been too intimidated by one member of the royal family, let alone more.

“Yes,” Bill said bluntly. “But if we’re taking that approach how is the Nameless Pharaoh currently sat in this room?” Somehow both Atem and Yami flinched at the same time. It really was uncanny how similar the two were- honestly Marik wasn’t sure he would be able to tell them apart of Atem dressed as him until either of them opened their mouths. Yugi stared at Bill, mouth open in surprise.

“You…?”

“Err, Yugi, I think everyone in here can,” Marik said awkwardly. Yugi just continued to stare but closed his mouth, allowing Bill to continue.

“Anyway, this person is older than your friend.” Bill held up a hand to waive any questions Yugi looked about to pounce on him. “We don’t know how old. The most we know is that he originates somewhere in the Mediterranean. The oldest culture we can associate him with are the Minoans, Mycenaens and Akkadians, along with Egypt. And even then, he doesn’t belong to any of them. We only know about that he was referred to as The Serpent King.” Yami sat up at that, having apparently recovered quickly from the shock of realising that he was actually a part of this conversation.

“So, that’s who you were afraid of in Diagon Alley,” he observed and Marik jumped, not expecting to actually be able to hear him as well, let alone in Coptic so fluent that Marik was slightly jealous. Then again, he had never heard the Pharaoh speak in his native tongue, so it was an odd experience.
as well. Yugi was staring at his partner in confusion but Bill just nodded, clearly able to understand.

“Yes, he was. Well, technically he sent his followers to Diagon Alley but essentially yes he was.” Marik tried to think back to that day, several weeks ago now, trying to remember if there had been anyone acting out of the norm. It was hard- everyone appeared to be strange to him- but he did vaguely remember three people in modern clothing outside the wand shop that Bill had been harassing before they left. Each had been wearing strangely unique duel disks. By the look on Kaiba’s face, he wasn’t the only one remembering that detail. “I don’t personally know too much about him other than the fact that he’s simultaneously really old and extraordinarily hard to find. There’s less evidence for him than the entire Shadow Era.”

“Being around that long, he would know how to blend in,” Kaiba muttered, frowning. Then, almost as if something had occurred to him, he reached for his laptop, face smoothing out for a moment. “It wouldn’t be possible that he’s more involved in the non-magical world than the magical one?”

“Probably,” Bill admitted, watching Kaiba curiously who now had the laptop open and was typing furiously. Marik wondered what he was up to.

“Three days ago, Mokuba sent me an emergency message telling me that some strange company he’d never heard of before had been attempting to buy up our stocks. I have a program up, since people have tried that route to owning the company before.” He didn’t mention that that was how he had gotten control of Kaiba Corp, so it made sense that Kaiba had put up defences to stop people from ousting him the way he had Gozaburo. “It’s called Paradigm. And the owner of the company is completely nameless.” Finally finished, Kaiba turned the laptop showing an image of a man was a strangely ageless face, long green hair and dichromatic eyes. He was dressed in a modern purple business suit and hung around his neck was a necklace formed of a large green rock with a six-pointed star inscribed in it. Something about him made the wariness Marik had been feeling increase tenfold. “This is the only image I could dig up and that involved some major hacking of his company’s programming.” Bill was staring at the image, face grim.

“That’s him. The only other name I know him by is Dartz,” Bill said, sounding alarmed. “And it seems he’s out for more than just the Tomb Keepers.” Marik wasn’t entirely sure how to read the look that passed between Bill, Atem and Akhefia, but he got the feeling that there was more to this than they were willing to let on. And by Yugi’s expression, he wasn’t the only one.

Chapter End Notes

So, the ending of this chapter really got to me because I didn't want it to be a complete plot dump (too early for everything to be explained), but I also needed the Yugioh gang to know about Dartz before we got too much further into the story. And then trying to keep everyone someone within character and not completely OOC was really hard for me. Coupled with being plagued by writer's block over this particular chapter, and hence it got delayed (twice). So, er, I hope it's not too disappointing. I'm not completely satisfied with it, but I'm confident in where I want to end up with all the characters by Christmas (both in and out of universe, although I think we'll reach Christmas before they do XD) and a bit after that. At the moment, I'm just trying to see where the characters take me which doesn't help when you don't have a complete plan in place.

Anyhow, poor planning skills aside, I will admit I did enjoy making Fudge sweat. he's such an incompetent politician at this point in the HP universe, completely in denial
about Voldemort being back and trying with all his might to slander what anyone who's says otherwise, like Harry and Dumbledore. Which, yeah, it's fine for Dumbledore who's been through shit like that before but to a fifteen year old? That is so outrageous I'm not completely sure where to start. Double on the fact that this is an important exam year for Harry, who is still suffering from PTSD and survivor's guilt from the previous year and Voldemort's resurrection, along with suffering from having his mind invaded several nights a week and I'm amazed Harry got through the year with only the complaints that he was 'really whiney'.

As for Kaiba knowing that Dartz was attempting to buy a majority in his stocks, that part never made sense to me in the show. I mean, canonically, anime and manga, Kaiba literally gains hold of the company by buying a majority in the stocks- why would he let anyone else do so? Pegasus got away with it because Kaiba was off soul-searching in the very trippy season 1 and in season 4 he did it again to get Kaiba's attention and even then, it was noticed before he bought too much up. So how the hell did Dartz do it without just illegally stealing it all? Hm, may have just answered my own question, but even then, you'd think Kaiba would have security against that. So, I just wrote that plot hole out because to hell with that plot contrivance in the show.

So, I hope you all enjoyed this chapter and I shall make every effort to have it up on time on the 29th!
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

So, I realised that with my mountain of uni work just waiting to be done, that it would benefit me (and you) to update this now. So to make up for the lag last time, here is a chapter a day early! And hopefully, I will have the next written up in time for the update on 13th December!

I've also noticed that for some reason, AO3 has decided to delete the line under words, so my apologies if the differentiation between English, Arabic and Akkadian has just gone out the window. I will at some point try to go back and fix that but I'm a bit too busy at the moment.

Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was something going on with the transfer students. Harry couldn’t pinpoint the moment his suspicions started screaming at him, although he was certain it had something to do with Umbridge’s absence. She had been gone for nearly two weeks now and in all that time, Yugi and Marik had been sequestered away, muttering between each other. Occasionally they were joined by Ryou but the albino haired boy usually spent much of his time alone in the library. Atem had taken to eating with Kaiba and Akhefia at the Slytherin table, barely speaking a word to his fellow Gryffindors which gained him some dirty looks, usually quickly averted once the culprits were spotted by his near constant guard of the Master Magician. Ever since the day Umbridge had tried to attack him, the monster had been there, constantly on guard of his master, much to Atem’s bemusement. He appeared to have attempted to dismiss him several times to no avail so had simply rolled his eyes and accepted it.

Kaiba was just as cold as ever, although he did appear to have warmed up to his cousin and friend more than he had to those he had arrived with. It was odd- Yugi had frowned in their direction several times, appearing confused as to what had caused this sudden closeness of the three, besides the obvious attachment between Kaiba and Atem. Marik didn’t appear so confused but he was wary of most others and tended to avoid the Gryffindor table when Atem neglected to join them. He usually spent those meals with Ryou at the Hufflepuff table, playing some trick or other with what Yugi had referred to as Ryou’s ‘alter ego’ as Harry had come to know it. Hermione had looked surprised at hearing that and then sympathetic. It wasn’t as if Hogwarts had any sort of psychiatric help if Ryou needed it- Harry had wondered himself sometimes and Hermione had been horrified to learn that he hadn’t gone to see anyone for help with his own problems from confronting Voldemort and witnessing Cedric’s death.

On the upside, Umbridge’s absence did mean that Harry was able to get back on top of his homework, catch up with all of the Quidditch practices he had missed and was finally able to take breaks that actually were breaks, rather than frantic catch-up sessions due to the long hours Umbridge had him carving *I must not tell lies* into the back of his hand. It also meant he no longer had to listen to Umbridge mutter under her breath about the utter disrespect of the three Tomb Keepers, plus Kaiba, who continued to refuse to turn up to either her lessons or detentions. Atem hadn’t returned to DADA since the incident with his father even if he had returned to all his other
classes, including History of Magic.

Harry had seriously considered following his example until Hermione had snapped that it wasn’t such a good example to take and he hardly had the political backing that Atem had to get away with it. After all, persecuting Atem and Akhefia was not working out so well for the Ministry. Apparently, the Tomb Keepers had fought back in outrage at their comments and were demanding the sacking of Rita Skeeter, along with the right to read all prospective articles. Along with that, Malfoy was looking particularly sour - it turned out someone had gotten hold of the information that Lucius Malfoy had been… ‘donating’ money to Fudge and he was currently under fire for fraud and bribery. According to Ron, Mr Weasley was ecstatic at the opportunity to finally thoroughly raid the Malfoy Manor to find out how deep the corruption went and Kaiba had already offered the services of some of his own personal detectives to help.

“You’d never believe where sleazy aristocrats think they can hide all their dirty secrets,” was all he’d said to that from behind his laptop when asked. Akhefia had been sniggering into his work, ink splattering the page.

And so, Harry came down the morning of the first Hogsmeade weekend, finally free of homework for the first time since term started, feeling pleasantly happy and looking forward to getting away from Hogwarts for a while. As amazing as the castle was, it had started to lose its charm when cooped up for hours on end, pouring over all the work he had been behind on. Even his Potions work had improved, despite Snape consistent antagonising of him. He slid down into the seat next to Yugi who was already thoughtfully munching on some toast and reading through a magazine one of his friends in Japan had sent him. Ron had been fascinated with them - the lack of moving pictures was bizarre to his magical friend, despite the fact that he couldn’t read Japanese.

“Morning,” Harry greeted, reaching for the bacon. Yugi murmured back his own greeting, seemingly in a better mood as they were joined by Hermione and Ron, who was practically bouncing in his seat.

“I can’t wait to get to Hogsmeade. No more prefect duties for the day!” he exclaimed, piling his own plate high. Hermione rolled her eyes and cracked open her latest research book. She had taken to researching the Tomb Keepers in her spare time, or at least, what she had of it between studying. If Yugi had noticed, he hadn’t said anything, and she usually only had time within the Common Room, so the others were still thankfully oblivious. Harry wasn’t sure he wanted to know what their reaction would be.

“Hogsmeade?” Yugi asked, glancing up from his magazine.

“Yeah, it’s Hogsmeade weekend,” Harry confirmed, “Didn’t you get a permission slip?” Yugi blinked and then nodded.

“I think so. I know Kaiba just signed his since he’s emancipated and so his own legal guardian and I had to translate it for Grandpa. He’s not so good at reading English than speaking it,” Yugi said. “I just didn’t realise it was today.” He paused and glanced over towards the Hufflepuff table. “I wonder if Ryou’s father ever signed his?” he mused out loud.

“Huh?” Ron asked round a mouthful of food. “Why wouldn’t he have?” Yugi winced, closing his magazine.

“Um… Ryou’s father is not usually around. He does a lot of digging in Egypt.”

“Oh,” Harry said, feeling sorry for the other boy. Ryou seemed nice enough - he was fairly quiet and rarely, if ever, joined them at the Gryffindor table, preferring to keep to himself. He supposed it was
probably hard for him to make friends with his personality issues. “So, are you coming with us?” Changing topic seemed the best thing to do. Yugi thought for a moment before nodding his head, eyes bright.

“Yes, I’d love to!” he said. “It’s not as if I have anything else to do.” There was a slight note of sadness in his voice and Harry wondered if the others had ditched him or something. It had seemed more like Yugi was avoiding Atem, rather than the other way around, but he wasn’t sure. And it was sort of hard to ask the other boy without being glared at by his constant bodyguard.

A couple of hours later and they were all ready to go, lined up and being checked out by an unusually grumpy Filch. Marik wandered up behind them, with Ryou who confirmed his father had eventually signed the slip, sniggering.

“He’s grumpy because Akhefia’s won over his cat,” the blonde said, grinning wickedly. Harry stared, mouth agape. Even Fred and George were in awe of the other boy’s skill.

“We’ve never been able to get around Mrs Norris,” Fred said, beaming.

“We just have to know how,” George followed up. Marik just shrugged but Harry got the feeling he knew how Akhefia had managed to get the fickle cat to like him. It wasn’t long until they were through and out to the carriages, ready to take them down to the little village. Marik had wrapped up well, despite the fact that it wasn’t even cold enough for snow, but Harry supposed that the weather here was probably very different to what he was used to in Egypt. Both he, Yugi and Ryou had opted to dress in their muggle clothing and Yugi was garnering some odd looks for his punk style choices. That or it was the thick buckle and chain he wore round his neck constantly. He didn’t think people were used to that yet.

Marik’s excitement at Hogsmeade was infectious and Harry found himself remembering his own first time here, despite that it had been under the Invisibility Cloak. Yugi was very interested to hear that story while Marik made huge gestures and at one point even smacked his hands over Ryou’s ears, who went from bemused to murderously angry in a near split second and the ensuing shouting match had them missing out on the entire story. When Ryou demanded a retelling, Marik dragged him into Zonko’s.

“You get the feeling he doesn’t want Bakura to know about the cloak?” Ron asked, staring at the metaphorical dust the pair had left behind them. Yugi shrugged.

“Would you want Akhefia to have an invisibility cloak?” he asked. “Ryou wouldn’t steal your things but his… alter ego…” Yugi trailed off and shrugged once more. Harry swallowed at that thought—Akhefia already had the creepy enough habit of appearing in places you least expected him. He didn’t want to imagine the other boy with access to his father’s cloak.

When the troublesome twosome had finished in Zonko’s, curiously absent of any sign of the aforementioned thief, the six of them ended up meandering towards the Three Broomsticks. They had mentioned the Shrieking Shack but Marik couldn’t stop giggling at the thought of a ‘haunted’ house and Yugi had just buried his head in his hands at his friend’s antics, so they had skipped that part. Marik had also made it known that he was currently very cold so Hermione had suggested butterbeer as a way to warm up. It was on the way there, that they came across what appeared to be a very loud argument between the two cousins.

“The hell do you mean that’s normal!” Kaiba was shouting and even Yugi looked startled at the raised tone of voice. Rounding the corner, they could see that Kaiba was looming over his cousin,
using all of his six-foot-two height while Akhefia was sat on the low wall outside the pub, looking bored. Master Magician, unlike the others, was still dressed in his usual robes and golden armour, leaving Harry to wonder if the Monster could feel the temperature. The other two Tomb Keepers were wrapped up as much as Marik and even Kaiba had swapped his intimidating trench coat for a form fitting, yet still completely Muggle, overcoat. He also looked none too pleased with whatever he had just found out.

“It’s nothing,” Atem said firmly, voice raised no louder than normal speaking level, frowning just as fiercely back. It was one of those rare occasions that Harry noticed how truly short Atem was- his presence usually made him seem taller and the jewellery somehow made him seem older than sixteen. Compared to Kaiba though, his diminutive height was all the more noticeable.

“That’s not-” Kaiba appeared to realise he had an audience as he scowled and suddenly switched languages as well as lowering his voice. Atem merely blinked, scowled and then, very deliberately, turned on his heel and walked away, swinging the door of the Three Broomsticks only slightly too hard. The resulting bang sounded very much like a rejection of whatever Kaiba had been angry about. The business mogul turned to Akhefia who lightly jumped off the wall and shrugged.

“Don’t look at me,” he said, turning to follow his friend. “His Highness doesn’t listen to me either.” There was something odd in his tone, something Harry just couldn’t quite grasp and he got the feeling that they were being left out. He glanced sideways towards Hermione, whose attention had been caught by something on the floor. When Harry turned back towards the argument, the other two had disappeared and suddenly, returning to Hogwarts felt like a much better option than entering the usually welcoming pub.

“Come on, don’t let Kaiba ruin today,” Marik said, although even he seemed more concerned than before. He, Yugi and Ryou shared a look, before they turned to drag them all into the pub. But Harry couldn’t help but turn back towards the spot where Kaiba and Atem had been standing.

There, splattered almost innocently on the ground and near invisible in the brown dirt, were several spots of what looked suspiciously like blood.

The tight feeling in his chest hadn’t dissipated after a week. It was right there, a constant nagging pain right under his ribcage, feeling very much like someone was wiggling a knife around under there. It made Atem rather glad he was boycotting certain lessons now. It didn’t help that Seto had been there for that rather unpleasant coughing fit in the middle of Hogsmeade, but he couldn’t complain. He had known that this moment was coming for sixteen years. Freaking out now was not going to help in the long run.

But he could see how it had affected the others. Even Akhefia was sticking a little closer than usual, making that tight feeling turn into guilt very quickly.

They had known that it was getting worse, that it would most likely be exacerbated with the new close proximity to the Spirit and his chosen. For a moment, if he closed his eyes, he could still hear the Clan leaders raving about the audacity of some foreigner solving the Puzzle, while Atem had been quietly relieved. He knew his history and his nightmares told him enough that he wanted nothing to do with their prophecy. He could have hugged the Ishtars for practically giving him a double way out. It was just that this was the price.

The pain wasn’t so bad that he couldn’t function- it had hurt worse breaking his arm falling from his horse at age six. It was also fading, albeit slowly, aided somewhat with potions from Snape. The Potions Master had raised an eyebrow when Seto had half dragged him into his office and demanded something to help once the entire situation had been laid out to him, the odd annoyed twitch at the
mention of *destiny* and *Pharaohs* aside. Nofret had also been hanging around far more often, spending an inordinate amount of time in the Palace Dorm with them, tearing through the books Atem had gotten from the Restricted Section and those that she had filched from Dumbledore. So far, all they had been able to discover was that Dumbledore suspected that Voldemort had several Horcruxes and had recently helped himself to a heavily revised history of the Nameless Pharaoh. Nofret had laughed herself silly at some of the ideas put forward by the book and even Haphiri had gotten a smile or two.

Really, anyone who was fooled into thinking that he was nothing more than a creationist myth ought not to be writing books.

Atem quietly stifled a rising cough and glanced back down at the essay he was supposed to be writing. Both he and Akhefia were currently sat in the library. Supposedly, he was meant to be in Transfiguration but Atem had never seen much point in changing one thing into another. It was just a little too convenient and enabled the wizards and witches to get away with not advancing as far or as fast as the world outside of theirs. As a caveat to this however, he was currently working on a Transfiguration essay and he knew that he could just get Mahad to ask Yugi for the next assignment. He wasn’t blind to the fact that the young duelist was currently avoiding him, most likely at the Spirit’s behest. The knowledge that they had all known that he was there and could see him had come as something of a shock. Akhefia shot him a look across the table, his messy hieratic only getting all the more smudged.

“You know, you’re going to have to tell the shrimp at some point?” he said, eyes narrowed. Atem sighed and placed the quill down, eyeing his essay with a critical eye. It wouldn’t get him any top marks, but it would do.

“I know.” There was a beat of silence before Akhefia threw his own quill down with a huff.

“*Umbridge woke up from her Penalty Game,*” the thief stated, sounding annoyed. “*It would seem that she’s learnt nothing except not to mess with us.*” Atem frowned and Akhefia scowled harder. “*Dumbledore insisted that we had to have her back, otherwise the Ministry would interfere further.* Kheftan stated that Fudge has been sticking his nose where it doesn’t belong and has been withholding some of Skeeter’s articles.” Atem rolled his eyes. It came as no surprise- the idiot still hadn’t given up the reporter. While he had been handing over articles, there were still a select few ‘reports’ slandering the Tomb Keepers. He had noticed that Haphiri had also been noticeably absent.

“I don’t think Haphiri will allow that to carry on for long.” Akhefia snorted just as Marik, followed by a scowling Kaiba arrived. Neither had skipped Charms like Akhefia had- it would seem that they had all agreed to some kind of ‘Atem-watch’ to go along with Mahad. It was rather frustrating at times, but he appreciated the support. At least until Kaiba had made a snide comment about not wanting to have to stop him from fainting like a girl.

Considering the times Atem had passed out, he was still to figure out what was so girlish about it. It wasn’t exactly a pleasant experience.

“What are you two talking about?” Marik asked as the pair joined them, Kaiba immediately booting up his computer.

“The Ministry being idiots again,” Atem said, returning to his essay and flicking through the core text, still wondering what the point of turning inanimate objects into food was. It wasn’t as if it would taste better than organically growing it oneself. Marik snorted at his answer and Kaiba rolled his eyes. “*And that they’re threatening further action if Umbridge isn’t returned to her station.*” Kaiba did pause at that.
“That sounds more like Dumbledore than Fudge,” he said, clearly unaware of the change in languages.

“That would be because it is. Apparently having her out of the count isn’t good enough for our illustrious Headmaster. He’s using Fudge as a scapegoat,” Akhefia sneered, disgusted. Atem couldn’t help but quietly agree with him. If Umbridge was allowed to get her grubby fingers on the entire school, with Fudge’s permission, then the resulting backlash when the wizarding world truly discovered that Voldemort was back, would fall on their heads rather than Dumbledore’s. It made Atem wonder how much of this scheme was crafted by the old man and how much was the Ministry burying their heads in the sand. From Kaiba’s scowl, he had come to the same conclusion.

“That old man is asking for a death sentence,” he muttered and something cold slipped down Atem’s spine. A death sentence… but if he were to die by any other means than old age, he would choose the way he would go out… Surreptitiously, he glanced towards Mahad who nodded, slipping away. It was useful that his old friend could read him so well. As, it had to be said, could Akhefia, who caught on just as quick.

“He’s going to ask Snape.” It wasn’t a question. Marik glanced up at that, eyes wide and Kaiba stopped work once more. Atem just sighed and nodded.

“It makes sense. It is not as if Dumbledore would let himself be taken down by just anyone.” He paused, fiddling with the quill in his hands. “I don’t think it will be anytime soon but just in case…”

“He should be prepared,” Marik said, voice determined. Atem nodded and jumped as he felt a small ghostly cold hand slip over his. He turned to find Nofret curled up next to him, magenta eyes wide.

“I don’t want him to be used anymore,” she said quietly and Atem got the feeling she didn’t just mean Snape. But there wasn’t much he could do to help the man other than warn him and, hopefully, manage to prevent as many of the old man’s plans before time eventually caught up with him.

Akhefia could sense that something was wrong the moment he opened the door to the Palace Dorm later that night. A thief always knew when his things had been disturbed and, while whoever had been through their stuff had tried to be discreet, Atem’s constant shai mugs were in a different order than that morning. An ordinary person may not have noticed, but Akhefia certainly did. He paused in the doorway, listening.

Nothing. Silence. If he concentrated with the Shadows long enough, he could feel the three pulses of life that were his dormmates- Kaiba’s defiance, Marik’s determination and a dying golden glow that was always Atem. Thankfully, it was somewhat brighter than it had been since the previous weekend. Other than them, no one else. A slight disturbance that was Mahad but there was an echo of magic here that was distinctly not Shadow Magic.

Akhefia growled and stalked through the room, carefully placing the filched books from the library on the desk and eyed everything once again with a fine-tooth comb. Mugs in a different order. Kaiba’s office chair just slightly too far to the left. A pile of books that was distinctly three books too short. And a crackle of magic that echoed that of the servants who came to clean…

“Dobby!” he half whispered half growled and there was a crack as the elf appeared, bulbous eyes somehow wider.

“Yes, Thief King sir?” the elf squeaked.

“Which of you was here?” he asked, and Dobby blinked.
“N-No-one sir. The House Elves be too scared to clean your dorm sir!” Akhefia frowned. It was not Dobby’s signature that he could sense- he had gotten to know the elf pretty well in the little over a month that they had been in this blasted place.

“Funny. Because it’s not you I can sense that took our books,” Akhefia stated, making sure that it was just the books that were missing. He would ask the others in the morning if they were missing anything personal as well. There would be no good in Dumbledore learning anything pertaining to the Shadow Era. Dobby squeaked again, one of his many misshapen hats threatening to come off as his head whipped around to look round the room.

“I don’t know who was here, sir!” Dobby wimpered, frightened. “But Dobby will do his best to find out!” And with another crack the elf was gone and Akhefia was free to see which books had been stolen. It didn’t take all that long.

It would appear that Dumbledore had stolen back the book on the Shadow Era- that one didn’t matter too much since it was full of rubbish anyway- and two tomes on outside magic. Namely, that the ones on Druidic and Akkadian magic. The Druidic magic didn’t concern Akhefia too much- the only person he knew that would be able to use it was Snape- but the missing book on Akkadian magic was… troubling. The Akkadian Empire had truly fallen some 4500 years ago and with it, all spellcasters capable of practising it. To mix it in with other magics was volatile. Akhefia would know- he had seen what it could do and the thought that someone five thousand years ago had been desperate enough to mix it with Shadow Magic was scary enough. While Latin magic had nothing on that of the Shadows, he didn’t want to see the fallout of a single botched experiment with it, mixed or not.

From experience, he knew that it would most certainly not be pleasant.

Chapter End Notes

Hi, Harry it's been a while. And look, I managed to skip forward several weeks! In theory, this and the next chapter are now somewhere around Halloween to the beginning of November. I'm not really going to mention Halloween- it's not really a large part of this story and it's not really celebrated like it is in America or the UK in Japan, so it didn't have a place here. But, just thought I would mention it in case anyone was lost as to where exactly we were in the year. Fun fact- in Egypt Halloween isn't celebrated at all except in Cairo and again, not like it is in America. By the end of next chapter, it's the beginning of November. Don't worry, cross cultural festivities will be addressed but Halloween was not one of them!

And we're also back to Dumbledore bashing. Honestly, it kind of is an obvious step for someone as devious as Dumbledore to plan his own way out as he does. At this point in HP canon, we don't know that by next year Dumbledore will have gotten himself cursed and basically force Snape to kill him off but it does still make sense that he would use the only dubious teacher in the castle to do it. After all, what better way to confuse your following than using the ex Death Eater? I actually had a conversation with my brother about Dumbledore and how, in recent years, I have had a 'falling out' with the dodgy old man who plays people like puppets for his own gain. And, since many of the Yugioh characters have some political experience- namely Kaiba, Yami and Marik- it would make sense that they would be having none of it.
Well, I hope you liked this week's chapter and, yes, I did delete the author's note! See you on 13th December!
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

So, I have a treat for you this month. Since I'm (sort of) up to date on most things, this month we are returning to weekly updates! This may continue into the new year for a bit (first couple of weeks most likely since I won't be at uni) but I will let you know when we return to the bi-weekly updates! But for now, Merry Christmas! Hope you enjoy our gift!

Expect the next update 13th December! And I promise by the New Year (not the next couple of weeks) that I will have attempted to fix the formatting on here for the different languages, especially now that I've added some more xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yugi jumped as an argument broke out around him Thursday morning at breakfast. For the first time in three weeks the others had all joined him at the Gryffindor table, including Ryou who had shyly asked to sit with him some five minutes prior. He, too, looked startled as Marik, hands waving dramatically, dropped into the seat next to Yugi, spouting what sounded like Arabic curses. He eventually stopped cursing and began to actually talk, still in Arabic meaning that neither Ryou nor Harry, Ron or Hermione could understand him.

“So, what did the old man take?” he asked Akhefia who had sat two seats up, opposite the table on Atem’s left while Kaiba sat at his right opposite Yugi, strangely as far away from Ryou as he could get.

“Books mostly, although you mentioned something about a missing amulet as well?” This was aimed towards Atem who was already reaching for the toast and butter. Yugi had yet to witness the teen eat anything other than toast for breakfast. It was strange being amongst them again. He had been avoiding them for a while for Yami’s sake, so the Pharaoh could put that odd day into some form of context. It made sense that the Tomb Keepers knew about him- the revelation that they could see him was one too many after his conversation with Atem’s ‘older sister’. Yugi was curious why they referred to him as such but had refrained from asking. He was worried enough about Yami’s state of mind.

Atem nodded. “It was a gift from Haphiri so I wouldn’t want to be him when she finds out. She might even stop haunting Fudge for a while.” Akhefia sniggered at that, Marik joining in, while Kaiba rolled his eyes, reaching to help himself to breakfast round the ever-present laptop.

“When is Weasley coming back?” he asked, returning to whatever Kaiba Corp needed from him that day. Yugi wondered when Kaiba slept: strangely the usual bags under his eyes were much lighter. It would appear that staying away from the office was doing the young CEO some good.

“Next week.” Atem replied, his eyes on a book in front of him. Marik and Akhefia had moved on to well-timed flicks of food towards an approaching Malfoy who was hit twice by Marik and three times by Akhefia before snarling and walking off, muttering something under his breath about his father.

“Like he’s going to be able to do anything!” Marik shouted after him with a laugh. This was
punctuated by a hiss of agreement from Diabound who was poking curiously out of the collar of Akhefia’s robes. It sounded almost like mocking, if snakes even could do so. The cousins shared a look and an eyeroll and Atem winked at him before burying his nose back into his book.

“What just happened?” Ryou asked quietly and Yugi shrugged. Since being out of the loop, he was just as clueless as Ryou was. He got the feeling, backed up by Yami, that the Tomb Keepers were purposefully keeping Ryou out of things, most likely due to his own troublesome Spirit if they even knew about it. And while Marik sometimes updated Yugi when he remembered to, in public he had been avoiding the others too- what for, Yugi hadn’t quite sussed out but by the looks of the suspicious older Slytherins, this was another one of their tactics. Kaiba appeared to be keeping out of the House politics for now but he was quite happily helping with the continuous search through Malfoy Manor. Apparently, several dark Objects had already been dragged up and Kaiba’s detectives had just found a new room under the lounge.

Oddly, when they got up for Charms, they were followed by Kaiba who was supposed to be heading to Transfiguration. When Yugi shot him a confused look, the CEO just sent him a glare and Flitwick said nothing when he settled in his seat. Yugi wondered when Kaiba’s timetable had changed again. It wasn’t as if Kaiba took much note of his timetable and the teachers had just seemed to accept when he turned up to classes rather than argue with him. McGonnagal might argue with Snape about it for a bit, but Yugi got the feeling the Potions Master won out most of the time. It wasn’t as if Kaiba was missing out and he was certainly smart enough to catch up with anything he might miss out on.

This trend continued, with Kaiba completely missing his double Transfiguration and joining them in History of Magic, much to Atem’s continued disapproval by the looks of things, and they both disappeared off somewhere during DADA after lunch. Umbridge, newly returned to her post that morning after spending three weeks in the Shadow Realm, caught on immediately, but oddly said nothing even if she gripped her wand a little tighter. Later, during Herbology, it was Akhefia who joined them, offering to help Sprout with the plants who looked bemused but didn’t say no. Yugi was about to ask what was going on, but Ryou asked for help with the biting plant and the moment was gone.

It wasn’t until they were all joined back together in Potions, except for Bakura who had taken over and run off during Ryou’s free period, that Yugi was able to make any kind of sense over what was occurring. When they all crowded into the dungeon, Nofret was casually sat on Snape’s desk, swinging her legs which were every so often disappearing into the desk. If she cared that the three they had met up in Diagon Alley knew she was a ghost, she wasn’t showing it. Instead, at Snape’s aggravated shooing motion, she flounced over to Atem’s desk and repeated the action there.

Why is she here? Yugi wondered towards Yami, who had been just as baffled as he was. First, that they were interacting with them again, and now that the ghost had reappeared.

I’m not sure. Nothing good by the looks of things Yami murmured from his perch on the empty seat next to Yugi. Kaiba had attempted to move once but had been dragged back over by Hermione who had picked up on the fact that, not only was Kaiba a genius, he was also very good at potions and she could occasionally use him as a scapegoat when Snape picked on her or Neville. Sometimes, Yugi wondered what the point of the Houses were if all they did was highlight one trait when it was clear that everyone owned them all, just in different variations. Harry’s idea that he had had the wrong kind of bravery had been kind of disturbing when Marik had felt the need to tell him, through sniggers.

They were working on Calming Draughts now and Yugi quietly started to work on his, not wanting to garner the prickly Potions Master’s attention. All things considered, Snape wasn’t a terrible
teacher, but he could stand to lighten up a bit on the students and not be seen to be favouring his House so much. Sometime during the session though, under the scrutinizing eyes of the surprised class, Nofret slipped away from Atem’s desk and skipped her way over to Yugi but her eyes were fixed instead on Yami. Close up, Yugi could see the resemblance to Haphiri- they both shared the same angular faces and nose, but unlike her sister’s angular dark eyes, Nofret had wide magenta coloured eyes. She smiled and leaned on the desk, eyes sparkling with mischief.

“Hello,” she said quietly, probably so no one could hear them despite the silence in the room. Then again, if the others could hear over the bubbling of their cauldrons and quiet mutterings of passed notes, then Yugi would be surprised.

“Um, hi,” Yugi said, startled. He had only ever heard her speak in Coptic before and even then, had barely interacted with her. She had seemed mostly shy, half hiding behind her ‘brother’ and somehow solid rather than translucent as she was now. She nodded to his greeting and then her eyes slid slowly towards Yami, tilting her head as she did so, looking rather much like a bird of prey.

“You don’t have to be invisible you know,” she said blithely. “Severus won’t mind.” Yugi blinked and he could feel an echo of his own surprise from Yami. He vaguely wondered if Snape knew she referred to him by his first name.

“I wasn’t aware that was an option,” Yami said and Yugi twitched at the odd sound of hearing Yami out loud. It was still a strange sensation after only truly hearing him in his head when not in control of Yugi’s body.

“Of course!” There was still that spark of mischief in Nofret’s eyes and Yugi wondered what she was up to.

“Um… not to be rude, why are you over here?” Yugi whispered, trying not to gather any more attention. Every so often, certain students would turn to stare at her, namely the trio from Gryffindor. The crease in Harry’s forehead spoke volumes of his suspicions. Nofret giggled and Yugi prayed that Snape wouldn’t decide to take her interest in them as an excuse to come over and banish his potion like he had Harry’s that first day.

“No reason. Although…” she dragged the word out, glancing first to the ceiling, then over towards where Atem was working, “you wouldn’t mind watching over Baba would you? He’s been feeling run down and I hate watching him overwork himself.” Yugi blinked and Yami cocked his head in a movement strangely reminiscent of the one Nofret had made a moment before.

“Why do you call him that?” Yami asked.

“Hm?”

“He isn’t your brother, but you never call him by his name either. Why do you call him that?” Nofret hummed, considering her answer as Yugi stirred his potion, wondering where Yami was going with this. Eventually, she just shrugged.

“Habit. He reminds me of my own brother.” There was something wistful in her voice, her eyes downcast. Yugi blinked and exchanged glances with Yami. The Pharaoh just shrugged, unsure himself how to react to that answer.

“It’s fine. We’d be happy to help,” Yugi said in lieu of continuing this line of conversation. He supposed that five thousand years would mean that one would meet someone close to a person you once knew. Perhaps that would also explain Atem…
“Thank you!” Nofret chirped before turning a skipping her way back to Atem’s table.

_That was... illuminating._ Yugi sent to the Pharaoh, wondering what exactly she had meant by *run down*. Yami nodded.

_A little, yes._

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It was the middle of the night when the Mark burnt, warning Severus that the Dark Lord had need of him once more. Even half asleep, his body knew how to slip into the robes of a Death Eater, his shields carefully rearranging themselves into the necessary order to keep any and all knowledge of his own private projects out of Voldemort’s hands. A quick swig of water from the tumbler left on his bedside table and he was hurrying away, through the darkened school and out into the night.

He arrived at the Malfoy Manor to what appeared to be chaos.

Severus had been to the Malfoy Manor many times in the past, both as a Death Eater and as a guest. Lucius had supposedly taken him under his wing when he had finally finished Hogwarts, allowing him to stay away from the hell that had been his home with his father (now deceased) and it had seemed as a blessing at the time. When Severus passed his Potions Mastery Exams, he had been able to afford to move out simply from the meagre salary as a freelance Potioneer and some frugally saved funds leftover from the grant given to him each year during Hogwarts—his first taste of true freedom before being lashed to a new master under Dumbledore. When Draco had been born, the Manor had been filled with the organised chaos of a party, celebrating the birth of a male heir to the family and it had been the first time Severus had felt truly disgusted to be a Slytherin. Cunning and ambition had kept him alive—none of these people had known or felt that before, did not know the true value of the skills they supposedly valued. This chaos however, was nothing like he had seen before.

Macnair was lying on the ground, blank faced and staring at nothing, at the feet of a man that Snape had only seen in a book that Nofret had gotten her hands on for him. The sly ghost had decided he needed to know the origins of the strange rock that so entranced his previous master, and so he had found the book placed on his desk just before the last lesson he had taught before dinner. The fact that she had decided to talk to the ghost that followed Mutou around like a lost puppy was not lost on him and he had found himself curious as to why the Tomb Keepers held such distaste for her and her sister. But that was not something he ought to dwell on here and now.

Severus pulled his shields tighter around that nugget of information, harnessing the gift from the leftover traces of forgotten blood within his veins gave him, and praying to the goddess of the earth that they would hold up to this man. The rest of the Death Eaters were backed away, in a combination of cowering fearfully or standing defiantly, wands shaking in hands that were supposedly steadfast against this… man. He looked more a beast to Severus, mismatched eyes sharp as he took in Severus' arrival, the smile widening on his face.

“So, this is your spy within the school,” the man said, voice smooth and accentless. Like his age, it was impossible to determine where he may originate from. The Dark Lord, stood quite happily next to this creature and basking in the fear of his followers, nodded, stroking Nagini’s head.

“Yes. Come forward Severus.” Severus stepped forward obediently, kneeling before the pair of them as was customary, disguising his fear. It was just one more person to embroil in the multiple schemes he kept becoming a part of. And unlike the previous one, he had no choice in this. The green rock around the stranger’s neck almost seemed to glow as he appreciated how this newcomer seemed fearless in his presence, face blank of all emotions.

“My Lord,” Severus said. “You called.” He hid the sarcasm— it was the middle of the night and he
had classes to teach in the morning and Umbridge to deal with once again.

“Dumbledore’s plans?” Voldemort hissed.

“The Order have made no new moves against you,” Severus reported truthfully. “His guests continue to distrust him as well.”

“Good.” The stranger then stepped forward, a finger being placed under his chin so that Severus was forced to look up into those mismatched eyes. He resisted the impulse to shudder and recoil in disgust at the oily presence this man held. He could see why orichalcum made Atem so nauseous.

“Your soul is a strong one,” the man observed, and Severus merely blinked, not quite meeting his eyes. It was a gift, to be able to appear to be meeting someone’s gaze but not quite. It shook off the effects of Legilimency almost as well as Occlumency. “You would be valuable in the upcoming battle.” Voldemort hissed, this time in displeasure.

“Severus is invaluable. He is the only one of these useless idiots that Dumbledore truly trusts.” There were murmurs of discontent behind him and Severus knew that he had just become top of several Death Eaters lists to discredit. This would take some careful planning and caution.

“And I would not ask for his soul to be given just yet. His position is… unique.” The man then held out something towards Severus and he swallowed thickly, eyeing the small innocuous piece of orichalcum attached to a chain. An offering that Severus was not meant to turn down. “I and your Master are in need of those Items your new… students have hold of,” he was told as Severus forced his hands not to shake as he took the proffered ‘gift’. “You are the only one that will be able to wield the Orichalcos. When their souls are mine, you are welcome to offer the remnants of this pathetic group to the Leviathan.” Severus blinked at the man’s switch to the Old Tongue. How had this man known that he would be able to understand him? Severus felt his fingers inadvertently grip the necklace tighter briefly, before relaxing them, bowing his head to the man once more.

“It is an honour to work for you,” he said dutifully. Voldemort was strangely unaffected by the fact that his life had been so easily offered up by his supposed ‘ally’. The Dark Lord does not know the Old Tongue as he would have us believe Severus realised and then quietly thanked the goddess for that. That made this only slightly easier. The man nodded and withdrew.

“I am Dartz, king of Atlantis,” he declared. “By wielding the Orichalcos, you prove your cause worthy.” Severus very carefully did not react. Much older than Minoan he thought, slipping that claim away. He then gestured behind him and a young man, bulky and blonde dressed in Muggle clothing and a trench coat stepped forward. Around his neck was a lump of the same green rock.

“This is Raphael. He will go back with you to this school. Ensure the Headmaster suspects nothing.” Severus nodded, rising and eyeing this newcomer with interest.

He knew exactly what he would do with this one.

Akhefia wandered down to breakfast on Friday morning, irritated about Nofret’s intervention the day before. What need was there to drag the shrimp in, other than giving him necessary information? It may have helped that Akhefia was quite happy skipping lessons whenever Atem had been. He sat down, back at the Gryffindor table, to find Atem with a serious expression on his face, a slip of paper in his hand. The spidery writing was familiar.

*The Serpent King has made a new move. One of his disciples is here, hiding as the new History of Magic teacher.*
He glanced up towards the teacher’s table, immediately spotting the idiot, who had thankfully not noticed them yet. Blonde, bulky, purple trench coat swapped out for a similarly coloured robe over regular clothing. Akhefia scowled as the man suddenly glanced their way, subtly moving so that Atem was hidden behind his own bulk. They were similar in height- Atem was only a few inches shorter than himself- but for once he was glad for the prince’s slight stature. People often assumed that he was weaker than Akhefia due to how petite he was- it was amusing watching those assumptions be proven wrong. Gently poking with the Shadows, Akhefia swallowed against the disgusting presence of that damned stone.

It was obvious when this new teacher noticed Yugi’s entrance, following the supposed ‘Golden Trio’ into the hall, chattering away happily with them. His eyes narrowed as he spied the Pendant, eyes flicking only briefly towards where the Pharaoh was hovering behind his chosen.

“I’m guessing we’re taking meals in the palace Dorm now,” Akhefia said casually and Atem nodded. Under his natural tan, he was pale and Akhefia wondered if it was the presence of the orichalcum, the remnants of last week’s attack or the knowledge of the disciple’s master that was making the prince nauseous. Kaiba too plopped down, opposite his cousin and between Yugi and the Trio, much to Potter’s disgust. Apparently he had already noticed the new addition to the table, or perhaps Atem’s lack of appetite.

“Who’s the new teacher?” Kaiba asked, eyeing them from across the table. Marik had stopped scarfing down food on Akhefia’s other side, eyeing the table on the dais with curiosity.

“Dartz’s disciple,” Akhefia answered. “We’re taking meals upstairs now.”

“Do we know which lesson he’s taking?” Marik asked while Yugi turned to look towards where Ryou was sat on his own, Necrophades hovering in the corner. Diabound hissed from his place around Akhefia’s neck and he gently stroked his ka, reassuring him. This time would be different and they would do their best for Ryou as much as they could. Thankfully, Dumbledore gave a clap when most of the school appeared to be in the room, answering their question.

“Good morning students!” he said cheerily, that damned twinkle in his eye showing that he was up to something. “I have some very sad news. Professor Binns has very recently retired after realising that he has been dead for many years.” *Bullshit* Akhefia thought and could tell he was not the only one in their group who had similar thoughts. “Luckily, I have managed to locate a replacement in time for your lessons today. So please join me in welcoming Raphael Schiavone as your new History of Magic Professor!” There was a moderate clapping and Akhefia glared the idiot down as his attention returned, once again, to the Gryffindor table. He appeared startled by the looks he was getting from himself and Kaiba, the suspicious glances Marik was sending his way and, all the way over at the Hufflepuff table, the considering look Necrophades was sending his way.

*That cannot mean anything good* Akhefia noted and nudged Marik, nodding towards the currently possessed body of Ryou Bakura. Marik blinked and then nodded, understanding immediately what was needed. It wasn’t like Akhefia could tangle too much with Necrophades- he didn’t need more reasons for the Tomb Keepers to attempt to throw him out for the Pharaoh’s displeasure.

Atem had decided to skip Transfiguration again and Akhefia slipped down to the dungeons to speak with Snape during his planning session, not caring that he was currently missing DADA. It was a pointless lesson anyway and he didn’t understand why more people weren’t boycotting the lessons. Who cared if the witch had been announced to the clearly made up position of High Inquisitor? Fudge was already in enough trouble with the Tomb Keepers and it wouldn’t be long until the student body started to rebel against her, the further she tightened her grip. The idiot was delusional from what he had heard.
Snape did not appear surprised at Akhefia’s presence in his office. Sat on the desk, in a box covered in multiple spells, was a necklace holding a minutely glowing green stone. Akhefia narrowed his eyes at it as Snaoe sat his quill down.

“Dartz is working with Voldemort for the moment,” he said blandly and Akhefia nodded.

“Is he trying to recruit you?” he asked, keeping that thing in his eyesight.

“Apparently so. He offered me the ability to give the Death Eaters to the Leviathan.” Akhefia blinked, turning to stare at the Potion’s Master.

“The what?”

“ Mythologically, a large sea serpent, thought to have originated in conception within the original Hebrew reading of the Bible.” Snape paused, thinking. “What Dartz’s Leviathan is, I am not sure. What I do know, is that Raphael is here on his orders and that he claims to be the king of Atlantis.” Akhefia raised an eyebrow, curious. Atlantis was one myth that Akhefia had never put much stock in but, considering they had yet to track down where the Serpent King originated from, it wasn’t too farfetched. He was certainly older than either Noreft or Haphiri. “Are either of the princesses around?”

“Nofret’s about,” Akhefia said, waving that concern away. She wasn’t the one to worry about. “Haphiri may be more of a problem.” Honestly, Akhefia had no idea where the ancient Princess had gone- Atem claimed that she was currently having fun with Fudge but Akhefia had seen her popping back every so often this last week to keep an eye on her ‘brother’. Snape hummed in agreement.

“How is your usurping of Malfoy going?” he asked, changing topics and Akhefia grinned.

“Well, I should thank Fudge for his incompetence. Several upper year Slytherins have just jumped ship since Malfoy Senior was arrested yesterday and many of the younger years have joined our side anyhow. Whoever starts the rebellion is going to have a shock at how many of the supposed ‘Dark’ house is willing to join them.”

“Most likely Potter.” Akhefia huffed, rolling his eyes.

“Is there anything that boy doesn’t stick his nose in?” Akhefia asked, annoyed. It hadn’t escaped his notice that his little female friend was reading up on the Tomb Keepers, even if they thought they were being discreet.

“The truth?” Snape had raised his own eyebrow and Akhefia snorted. From what he had heard, that wasn’t outrageous. Accusing Snape in his first year, blonde twit the second, listening to morons in his third and being manipulated throughout his fourth. It sounded more like he just stumbled across the truth when it was far past the time that his supposed ‘suspect’ had proven themselves opposite everything his suspicions had been. Admittedly, he was close with Malfoy, just off the mark by a generation.

Soon it was time for him to return to the Dorm for Atem and his own supplies for Ancient Runes-which was damn near impossible for those who did not read Akkadian and Akhefia spent most of the lesson stealing Atem’s notes- and managed to track Dobby down to let him know they were going to be taking their meals in the Palace Dorm Common Room now. One lunch and another boring lesson on Charms later and Akhefia sat himself in the first History of Magic class he had attended since the first week of term. Goblin wars were never his thing, but it would be interesting to see what this moron would be attempting to teach. He also positioned himself as close to the door as possible- no need to make too much of a scene if he was going to leave. Marik joined him in the seat
next to him- Kaiba had neglected to join them, instead using this time to talk with his brother and
catch up with Kaiba Corp work.

It wasn’t long before this Raphael made his way to the front- Akhefia refused to refer to him as a
Professor.

“From today, we shall be changing topics to study,” Raphael stated, voice almost monotone and
Akhefia was startled to spot a strong ka watching sadly within the Shadows. He wondered how
someone with such a pure ka had fallen so low. “We shall be studying the Shadow Era and it’s
connection to the Akkadian Empire.” Akhefia stifled a snigger in a cough, sharp eyes coming to fall
on him with a look of distaste. “Is there something you think is funny, Mr Kheti?”

“Yeah, I’m wondering how wrong you are going to be,” Akhefia sniggered. “But please, go ahead.”
Raphael narrowed his eyes and whispers broke out behind him. Good, the idea that this lesson and
those ahead were going to be nothing, but bullshit was planted. Marik was just rolling his eyes,
already doodling.

“Now the first topic we will be looking at involves the first Pharaoh of the Shadow Era- the
Nameless Pharaoh.” Akhefia allowed his head to bang on the table, just loud enough to be heard by
the entire classroom. Raphael twitched but ignored him, continuing on. “It is important to remember
that all kings from this era were cruel and evil people, using such Dark Magic that they almost
destroyed the world.” This time it was Marik who disrupted him, by dropping his pencil and making
an odd strangled sound.

“Is he being serious?” Marik squeaked, eyes wide.

“Serpent King’s idiot,” Akhefia muttered, already gathering his things. It hadn’t been five minutes
and he already knew where this was going. “Come on, he’s just going to spout Dartz’s rhetoric.” He
enjoyed the surprised twitch from Raphael as both he and Marik stood, stuff gathered.

“And where do you think you are going?” Raphael snapped, unnerved enough to be openly staring
at them.

“Out. There’s no point in listening to an idiot spout bullshit history,” Akhefia said happily, stroking
an agitated Diabound who had been put on edge just from the presence of orichalcum in the school.
“I would also warn you, I’d be careful how much of it you teach. You never know what ghosts
might wander by to prove you wrong.”

And with that, he left the classroom, basking in the muttering behind him. It wouldn’t be long before
he took another trip down to the Slytherin Common Room- like hell was he allowing
this to go
down. That, and he didn’t particularly want to witness Haphiri’s wrath again.

Chapter End Notes

Oh Harry, one day I will stop bashing you. Until then... I’m having fun! It is kind of
funny how Harry spends most of his time annoyed at Malfoy for being prejudiced while
doing exactly the same thing himself, to the point where he does literally just accidentally
stumble into the truth. Case in point, first year, despite being told by multiple people that
Snape is helping protect the Philosopher's Stone, he doesn't believe it right up until he
finds Quirrel rather than Snape with the Mirror of Erised. Then, second year, (the closest
he got) he has to literally be told by Malfoy under Polyjuice Potion that he hasn't got a
clue who has been doing anything. Third year I'll give him a pass- everyone thought Sirius was guilty- and Fourth Year he got manipulated by Barty Crouch Jr the whole time. Even so... track record is not looking great there Harry. It's only into Fifth (when he stops whining so much), when the 'enemy' is completely obvious that Harry actually starts looking into the truth, and even then only when Dumbledore starts paying attention to him. It's probably why people like to play with it- fifth year is the most politically charged year, right on the cusp of war with the Ministry in denial and certain people quite happy to pull the strings behind the scenes.

Malfoy Senior here has no chance against Kaiba. It's kind of funny thinking about how this would be seen- Mr Weasley mentions many times how they keep raiding his house and can't find anything and Draco does mention that there's a hidden room under the floorboards, a fact that Kaiba would find considering he isn't the type to leave any rock unturned. He would also be aware of the pawning strategy that Malfoy employs- 'selling' any suspicious items to Borgin such time that suspicion leaves him where he would 'buy' them back. I was actually laughing thinking about that and the fact that it means Draco loses a whole load of political clout within Slytherin House- he only owns it since his family is favoured at the time and powerful. As soon as that goes, he's left adrift of the lifestyle he once knew and that's where his character actually gets interesting because he has to learn to fend for himself in a world that no longer respects him or his family name. It's what drives him to desperation in the Sixth book to attempt something outside of his nature- think about it, we've never seen Malfoy intentionally aim to kill someone. Endorse it, yes. Actually carry it out? He has henchmen for that, an easy way to wipe your hands of the blame. He's now forced to actually get his hands dirty and he's found that, actually, he really doesn't want to go through with this and he may have been wrong this whole time.

And I just tangented. Ahem.

I have mixed feelings about Raphael. On the one hand, he's been manipulated by Dartz since he was very young, spoon fed lies like there's no tomorrow and completely unaware of his leader's shortcomings. On the other hand, he comes off as a hypocritical moron (a fact that Little Kuriboh makes great fun of in Yugioh Abridged and I love it) since not only does he backtrack a lot, he also spouts rhetoric that Dartz gives him without questioning it. So, I had to think what someone who knew the truth (sorry Yami) would do and, since it's Akhefia, how he would use it to his advantage. I shall be coming back to this- Raphael you can't get away with this forever!

Anyhow, ranting over and I hope you enjoyed this week's update!
Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Ok, so technically five hours early, but I have WAY too much to do in the next few days, so I decided to post this now. Expect the next chapter on 21st. I know that's not technically a Thursday (it's the Friday), but I have a whole load of stuff coming up with uni, my family and working right up until Christmas, so I'm deciding to extend it an extra day just to give myself a bit of breathing space. I'm already pulling all nighters for uni work, so please forgive me for the extra day.

Anyway, please enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It had been a rather strange week for Yami and his partner. Since the week before, they had been joined once again, briefly, at the Gryffindor table by the Tomb Keepers and Kaiba, Nofret appeared to be spending more time around the Hogwarts grounds while her sister was nowhere to be seen and a new teacher had been appointed. Then, Monday morning, Yugi had been apprehended by Marik on his way down to the Great Hall and dragged off to spend breakfast and subsequent meals in the separate dorm in what could only be a thinly veiled move by his fellow Tomb Keepers to get Yugi to move out of the Gryffindor Tower. Yami wasn’t fooled by the dark thoughts of Yugi’s fellow dormmates- it was obvious this had nothing to do with House rivalries and all to do with the arrival of this new staff member.

Curiously, all four of them were skipping out on even more lessons. He had learnt, by listening in at the library during one of his many wanderings of the school, that both Akhefia and Marik had walked out on the first History of Magic lesson taught by this Professor Schiavone and not returned since and the cousins, too, were noticeably absent from their morning session. Yugi had been confused by the lessons that Raphael had been giving. It was apparent the Slytherins were dubious from Akhefia’s reaction towards this man’s teachings and Yami felt inclined to join them. How this man could claim to know more than people who had spent their lives around two ghosts who had been around during that time period and remembered it was baffling to him. It was a ploy towards something, but whatever it was, Yami had no idea. But he could guess.

The other Tomb Keepers had been tight lipped about their new findings about this Dartz persona but Yami could tell that he put them on edge. If he were to hazard a guess, this would be the man that stole the Prince’s father’s soul and sent him his hand as a twisted gift. And with the appearance of this new teacher the night after one of Snape’s meetings with the so-called ‘Lord Voldemort’ there was no longer any doubt that their new enemy was working with the wizard. But why, Yami couldn’t figure out.

He had studied this magic that Yugi was learning and there was nothing more to it than he had sensed when facing those Death Eaters back during the Summer. He would have asked Bakura but the other spirit was currently avoiding him, far more interested in using his host to explore all the forbidden corridors and areas of Hogwarts, no doubt soon to take a wander through the Forbidden Forest too. But the magic Yami could sense around the new Professor’s neck was… darker. Older. Older perhaps, than even him. And that was troubling in its own right- why ally with someone so much weaker than you unless you were simply using them? It wasn’t implausible. Voldemort might
think himself a threat, but, in reality, compared to the power of the Shadows he was nothing more than a child screaming that the world wasn’t fair. It would be nothing for Yami to manipulate him, given the right tools and mind-frame, let alone someone who had something against the world. And most people didn’t have someone like Yugi to stop them from taking advantage of that fact.

Yami jumped when a small hand suddenly slipped into his. He had been hovering by the fence during Yugi’s Care of Magical Creature’s class, watching them interact with whatever small animal the teacher had brought in that day. Yugi was happily playing with the little stick-like creatures, joined in a group with Atem and his new friends from Gryffindor, watched over as always by Mahad. Akhefia was off to one side of the group, sending his own condescending smirks right back to the pale blonde boy that kept appearing to torment the Gryffindors, although he also seemed to have lost a lot of support since the beginning of the year. His own group consisted of his two lackeys and a girl right now.

Looking down, Yami was surprised to find the small form of Nofret clinging to his arm, not really looking at him. It was a strange sensation: he had never been able to touch anything in Spirit form but then again, he also had very few interactions with other spirits. Bakura was rarely around whenever he wasn’t using poor Ryou and even in this castle, the ghosts tended to stay away from him. It was really only Nofret that had shown any interest and even then, it usually left Yami confused. She seemed to be aware that she had startled him as she looked up, grinning.

“Hello,” she said, eyes twinkling, in that strange language her sister had used before. Yami still didn’t know what it was, but after some consideration he had decided that it must be their native Akkadian. And somewhere, buried within his lost memories, he too had once spoken the language, lending weight to their claim to having known him.

“Hello?” Yami said, unsure what to say. It was odd, being acknowledged by someone other than Yugi when not in control of his partner’s body. Nofret giggled, swinging a little and tugging lightly on his arm.

“How have you seen the lake?” Yami blinked, cocking his head to the side, curious.

“Yes, Your sister spoke to me there once before. Haven’t you?” Nofret shook her head vehemently.

“I haven’t had time. This place is just soooo big!” This was followed by another giggle and Yami raised an eyebrow, allowing himself to be pulled away.

“I would have thought one used to palaces would be used to navigating large buildings, let alone when one is capable of going through walls.” Yami said, finding himself amused by her antics. There was a definite gleam of mischief in her eyes and he let her drag him away from the lesson. If Yugi got into trouble, he was able to return to him in an instant and besides, they were in a lesson and surrounded by allies. He trusted Mahad would protect Yugi along with his master. Nofret just shrugged and, just like that, he found himself on a merry jaunt around the castle.

Once they had visited the lake and Yami had mentioned the Room of Requirement, Nofret had demanded to be shown. He was fairly certain she already knew about these places- he wasn’t blind to her nefarious ways, most likely bloomed from a lack of discipline in life- but indulged her. Unlike her sister, Nofret was easier and less confusing to be around. She wasn’t demanding, she didn’t throw out confusing new information that now appeared to be wrong and she didn’t ask for more than he was willing to give. He was, however, aware that she was quite capable of wiggling her way around his stoicism and get him to do things that he hadn’t even done with Yugi’s gang, like helping her hide from the Bloody Baron. Yami wasn’t sure exactly what she had done while the ghost’s back was turned, an odd flick of Akkadian magic, but it had certainly annoyed the formidable ghost and
he found himself laughing quietly along with her.

It was… odd. Different. And strangely familiar.

In the blink of an eye the hour had passed, and they were wandering down towards the dungeons to meet with Yugi and the others for his upcoming Potions class. Only then did Nofret skip away, waving as she went to join Atem and Akhefia at their table as Snape started the lesson, not even blinking twice at her presence.

**Where did you go?** Yugi asked once he had gathered his ingredients for the day some time later. Yami found himself blushing slightly, looking down.

**Ah, my apologies. We were… around.** Yami found himself unable to explain his actions for the past hour, not truly understanding them himself. It was out of character and nothing like a Pharaoh ought to have been seen doing. For a brief moment, he thought he could almost hear a berating voice, lecturing on that very subject, but, as usual, before he could probe that fragment of memory too thoroughly, it was gone. Confusion bled down his link with Yugi and Yami truly had no answer for him. There was just no explanation for what had just happened.

Harry kept one eye towards Yugi’s corner, eyes narrowed, wondering what it was he had just seen. The strange ghost girl that had claimed to be Atem’s sister had just wandered in with a… shadow. There was no other way to describe it, a shadow with what appeared to be red eyes every so often. He had been noticing a flicker around Yugi since the beginning of term, more frequently around Ryou, but he had played it off as nothing more than a trick of the light in the dungeons right up until the week before when Nofret had been sat halfway *in* Snape’s desk. Then, he had thought harder on those odd flickers and, now that he had decided to pay attention, could see that they were much more than figments of his imagination.

It made him wonder how no one else had seen them.

Carefully, so as not to catch Snape’s attention, he nudged Ron gently, one eye towards the Gryffindor-Slytherin pairing of Akhefia and Atem in front of them. Ron jumped and swore as he sliced his caterpillers into several mismatched chunks, but thankfully not loudly. Neither of the pair in front made any motion to indicate they were curious about this and Harry was silently thankful that Ron swore often in Potions.

“Have you noticed anything strange about Yugi?” he whispered to his friend as Ron set about trying to salvage the mess he had just made. Ron blinked at him and then glanced back towards where Yugi was working alone as usual. He was looking confused about something.

“No,” Ron said and then frowned. “Why, you think he’s up to something?” Ron had been sceptical about the transfers considering so many of them ended up in Slytherin and sporadically turned up at their table. Add to that, that many of the lower year Slytherins were no longer cowering in fear of Malfoy and some could even be seen in study groups with Ravenclaws or Hufflepuffs, and Harry could see why his friend was worried. It would seem that Akhefia and Marik were having more of an impact than was comfortable on the most hated House in Hogwarts.

“I'll explain later,” Harry muttered as Snape swept over, inspecting their cauldrons. He sneered at Harry’s, the concoction a putrid yellow rather than the desired green but Harry had given up caring about Potions a long time ago. It wasn’t too far off the colour it was meant to be anyway. He turned to Atem’s but said nothing, merely raising an eyebrow and stalked away, off to pester Hermione and Kaiba. The business mogul looked particularly aggrieved to be sharing space with her—Hermione appeared to be questioning how he had gotten his Potion to the perfect shade of green while hers was...
still a shade or two off. This wasn’t an uncommon occurrence: Hermione was annoyed that she had
finally met her match as the smartest student in Hogwarts. It probably annoyed her more that Kaiba
simply didn’t care rather than he was better than her.

The next forty-five-minuets were excruciating but, persevering, Harry managed to make it through
and was for once one of the first out of the door. Which was the only reason why he heard the quick
whispered conversation from the shadows, from behind a convenient suit of armour.

“I don’t know how long she can last. The orichalcum is corrupting her more every day,” Akhefia
was saying, for once in English rather than in their annoying habit of speaking in one of the various
languages they employed to keep Harry and his friends out of the loop.

“But he must have been working for Dartz for years if he trusts him here,” Atem replied, sounding
confused by whatever Akhefia was talking about.

“I know. I can only think that he has been resisting it somehow. It would appear that he’s capable of
seeing her, but not the corruption.” This elicited some ferocious cursing in their native tongue from
Atem.

“He stole a Mage from us!” Harry recoiled from the dark anger in Atem’s voice, cut off by a harsh
cough and Harry was reminded of Hogsmeade and the blood on the ground. Akhefia cursed and
then, the reason why they were speaking English became apparent as a soft silken voice interrupted.

“Perhaps this would be a conversation best left for behind closed doors. You never know who might
be listening in.” Snape’s voice was flat, but Harry recoiled away from it as if he had been shouting.
How long had the Potion’s Master been there and why? The lesson had just ended and Harry swore
that Snape had still been sweeping between the tables like the overgrown bat that he was. Another
harsh cough that sounded decidedly… wet and Akhefia made a startled noise.

“Might be in need of your Potions.” For once, Akhefia sounded… scared. Before he could be
spotted Harry rushed away, wondering what it was that he had just overheard. He didn’t stop until he
reached the Gryffindor Common Room, forgoing dinner completely in his haste to see the
Marauder’s Map. He was going to need to know where all the transfers were and whether there were
any eavesdropping ghosts if he was going to have this discussion with Ron and Hermione. It took
only a moment to unravel the map, but what he saw made no sense. Harry frowned, bending over
the map, at a loss over what was in front of him.

There was a knock at the door to the dormitory and the door swung open, revealing Ron and
Hermione as if summoned. In his confusion over the transfers, Harry had missed them on the map.
Not that it mattered- he needed a second opinion on this.

“Harry?” Hermione asked, sounding concerned. “What’s going on?”

“I…” Harry paused and shook his head, holding out the map. “I think something is going on with
Yugi. And I think it has to do with the Tomb Keepers.” Hermione frowned, taking the map and
sitting next to Harry on his bed. Surprise crossed her face when she spotted what Harry had seen.

“Are you sure the map is…?”

“It hasn’t been wrong before,” Harry said firmly, and Hermione stared, glancing back at the
parchment in her hands.

“What?” Ron asked. “What’s going on?”

“It’s Yugi. I keep seeing a shadow following him, except up until recently I thought it was just my
eyes playing tricks on me,” not to mention neither of you would have believed me” Harry thought a little uncharitably. “But on the map… it doesn’t have a name.”

“What do you mean?” Ron asked, frowning and glancing at the map over Hermione’s shoulder, blinking when he saw it.

“I mean that the map can’t name it,” Harry said, glancing down at the little label, following the pair of shoes labelled ‘Yugi’, that had nothing but a jumble of letters and a question mark. It was like the map was confused.

“But you can’t Confound the map,” Hermione said. “And Yugi doesn’t even know that spell!” Harry paused, thinking and not liking where his thoughts were going.

“What if he didn’t have to?” Hermione glanced up, disapproving, mouth open about to disagree with him, but Harry cut her off, talking over whatever she was about to say. “Look, we know that he, Ryou and Marik got attacked over the summer, right? But they never said how they defeated the Death Eaters and I’m starting to think that maybe it has something to do with the magic Atem and Akhefia use.” Hermione closed her mouth at that, considering. Yugi hadn’t said anything and the others all spoke in either Japanese or Arabic whenever they were anywhere in their vicinity, but it was obvious that he knew what type of magic they used. “And we all agree that the only reason the Death Eaters couldn’t get into the Tomb Keeper’s stronghold was because of Atem right?”

“Who’s Necrophades?” Ron suddenly interjected. Harry blinked, cut off from musing and glancing down at the map.

“What?” Ron pointed to a label a step behind Ryou’s label. It read Zorc but then suddenly switched to Necrophades as if frightened to stay on that name for too long. He had never seen the map do that before.

“Necrophades?” Hermione sounded surprised, lifting the map to look at it. She suddenly looked frightened. “I’ve heard that name. It was in one of the books about the Tomb Keepers. It said…” she trailed off, eyes wide. “It said that it was a great evil that was defeated years ago.” Harry swallowed.

“How long ago?” he asked. Hermione but her lip, glancing down.

“The Shadow Era,” she whispered. “It was in the Shadow Era.”

“So we ask Bill,” Ron said and Harry shook his head.

“Bill’s been working with them. I don’t think he can help us.” And that was scary- Harry had always seen the Weasleys as reliable. That one of them couldn’t had tilted Harry’s world to the side and he didn’t want to think what that would mean for Ron and his family. What if this secret was dangerous? What if it joined with Voldemort? Ryou wasn’t dangerous but his split personality was unpredictable and if Necrophades was following him then… “We can’t let it join the Slytherins,” Harry said firmly. Hermione was already shaking her head.

“Harry, we don’t know anything about Necrophades other than it’s connotations with a period of history we don’t know much about.”

“But our History of Magic teacher is teaching us about it,” Ron pointed out. “Why don’t we just ask him?” Harry blinked, realising he was right. It was strange- for once the most useless subject in the school might actually be of use. Hermione looked unconvinced but just nodded. Harry thought that she was probably thinking about the rumours of Akhefia arguing with the teacher. But they needed to know- perhaps this Necrophades had something to do with the evil kings of this era?
“It’s worth a try,” Harry said, and Hermione just nodded, seemingly resigned to go through with this plan.

This castle was full of nothing but liars and hypocrites, enough so that it almost made Raphael sick. Looking at these children, all of an age that Sonia and Max would have been had they survived, it was incredible how corrupted they were by the world around them already. Were he Gurimo or Valon, he would quite happily be scything away at their souls. But Gurimo was soulless and Valon was chasing after an impossibility again. Alistair was unstable when it came to anything named Kaiba and so, Raphael had been trusted with the task to cleanse the school, garner those who would be capable of wielding the Orichalcos alongside Snape and destroy those who stood in their way, unable to be saved. Those would be better served as food for the Leviathan.

He glanced down towards the Gryffindor table, the rare appearance of Yugi Mutou sat next to his white-haired friend made him scowl. He yearned to release the innocent from that detestable tainted shadow of a former Pharaoh, perverting the natural order of life and death. Raphael was one of few who could see him, lurking at the edges of the hall, eyes fixed on the form of his host like the parasite he was. Oh, how Raphael wished that he could make his move now but knew that was not his mission. The Nameless Pharaoh’s time would come.

And Raphael was known to be patient.

The meal was soon ending, and Raphael thanked God for that. It was exquisite torture to sit so close to the one he wanted to end the most- even Snape, who had yet to use the Orichalcos gifted to him, chafed against the orders of the Headmaster to not touch the witch. Soon, when Dartz had finished using the idiot touting himself as some ‘Dark Lord’ and fed whatever was left of his soul to the Leviathan, Raphael planned to personally turn this one in too. Wanting to get away as soon as possible, he rose from the table ignoring the questioning looks and comments thrown in his direction. The teachers kept trying to get close to him and Raphael made it known that he was not interested. He only had to get through this year and that was it.

Wandering down a nondescript corridor, Raphael allowed himself to breathe and glanced behind him to where he knew he would find Eatos. She gave him a warm, encouraging smile as always, but then her eyes widened in surprise. Before Raphael could react, a hand gripped his arm, throwing him bodily into the wall. Shocked and breathless, Raphael glanced up from his position on the floor to find a woman, dressed in traditional Egyptian robes glaring down at him. Her features were fine but her narrow brown eyes were hard, face framed by midnight black hair streaked with red, oddly not covered by the headdress that was draped around her shoulders. In one hand she carried a golden dagger.

“So,” she said quietly, voice filled with venom. “You are the disciple of Dartz.” Raphael blinked, glancing behind her to find Eatos was gone. Not cowering, not captured just gone. It was the first time since the wave that tore his life apart that she was nowhere to be found.

“So, you are the disciple of Dartz.” Raphael blinked, glancing behind her to find Eatos was gone. Not cowering, not captured just gone. It was the first time since the wave that tore his life apart that she was nowhere to be found.

“Who are you?” Raphael asked, staggering to his feet, trying to figure out how a woman as slender and small as she was had thrown him with such force. Unlike others, who once noticing his bulk backed away, she simply glared harder, face like ice.

“Perhaps you ought to ask your master,” she hissed. “Outside of this building.”

“As if you know anything about Dartz,” Raphael began and then found the dagger at his throat, surprisingly sharp. Once again, he found himself on the back foot.

“Do not speak that foul serpent’s name in my presence. I know all about him. I wonder if you do.”
Raphael swallowed, feeling the dagger bite into his neck and those brown eyes narrowed, watching the blood snake down his neck. “Do you know it is he plans, or do you just follow blindly, like sheep?”

“Do you?” Raphael shot back, wondering where she was going with this. The woman rolled her eyes, the dagger not moving an inch. It was no idle threat- he had faced many morons with knives before in the employ of Dartz and he knew when one was serious. Her hand didn’t shake, she did not faulter, she did not appear to even pay too much attention to it. But there was a deliberate force behind it, once that promised his death if he moved even a millimetre in any direction.

“He plans to raise a behemoth from the sea and destroy the world,” she snapped.

“Cleanse,” Raphael corrected, and she huffed.

“Destroy. I’ve heard his rhetoric before. My grandmother bought it just as you did, right up until she lost her soul to him. My uncle gave him an estate and paid for it with his soul and his empire. My son…” She stopped, and Raphael was alarmed to see tears in her eyes. *Her son?* She looked barely twenty. For a brief moment, her form flickered, and Raphael twitched, almost into the knife, drawing more blood.

But if she isn’t corporeal how is the dagger? *Do not try to tell me what you were told his plan is.*

“You still haven’t told me your name,” Raphael stated, wanting out of this situation. Silence. Time stretched on as hard eyes stared at him, judging him and that made Raphael mad. What did she know? What could she know about loss and evil in this world? If her family had been taken by the Orichalcos, it meant they were cruel and corrupted, not worthy to be in the new world Dartz was building, where pain and loss would never be felt again. His master, who had lost all of his own family too. He pulled up a hand, gripping her wrist, forgetting for a moment that she was dead and therefore his hand would go right through it. What surprised him the most though was that even in that moment of incorporeality, the dagger did not drop. “Harm me, and you will join them,” Raphael spat, hiding his alarm. Fury burnt through ice and the dagger suddenly slashed and Raphael gripped his face, blood dripping between his fingers from the cut on his cheek.

“Perhaps I ought to let you join yours.” Raphael froze, staring at her, a chill creeping down his spine. “Be glad that it is the grace of the Prince of Nekhen and future ruler of Khamet that is the only thing between you and your death.” She fingered the dagger, oddly clean despite drawing blood only moments before. “It will not stop me from causing you pain however.”

“Revenge won’t make anything better,” a voice chimed in and Raphael turned to find Kheti leaning against the wall, snake coiled around his shoulders. Behind him hovered Eatos and Raphael wondered why she would have gone to *him* for help. “Take it from someone who knows.” The woman made a noise of discontent and suddenly, the dagger was sheathed.

“Sometimes you test my patience thief.” Kheti grinned but his eyes were still grim.

“I try.” The woman huffed and was suddenly gone in a swirl of robes, disappearing down the hallway. A moment later, Kheti was in front of him, looming over him, an odd expression on his face. “I told you that you were spouting bullshit history. Perhaps I should have shouted it louder.” Raphael blinked, confused.

“What are you on about?”

“You have no idea who she is do you?” Kheti’s head was tilted, bemused. “And yet you claim to know all about the Shadow Era?” Raphael glared, scowling. Kheti just shrugged. “If you can’t recognise Haphiri, how can you claim to have any grasp on what happened back then?” Raphael
recoiled and then glanced down where she had disappeared.

“Haphiri? Enheduanna?” Kheti sniggered as an answer and Raphael frowned at him. If there was one person that he had been tasked to recruit, he had just messed it up. How was he supposed to recruit someone who hated his master? “You know her?”

“She pops in from time to time.” He was dismissed with a wave of his hand. “The other Tomb Keepers aren’t exactly a fan of her.” Raphael blinked.

“Of course they wouldn’t be. She murdered their precious Pharaoh.” Kheti actually froze then, blinking rapidly, processing that. And then, almost as if in slow motion, the teen threw his head back and burst into peals of laughter.

Chapter End Notes

Aw, look Yami, I managed to write a fluffy scene for you after all. My apologies if he seems a bit OOC in this bit, but we so rarely see him act like the teenager he is. Canonically he dies at 16 but we never see him act like a teen. I get that in those days, 16 was middle aged but biologically the body is not fully developed yet. So, I made him act like a teen and gave him some breathing space in this story. I was feeling bad that every time we get round to Yami, I’m just confusing the hell out of him.

Harry, one day you shall not stick your nose in other people's business. Unfortunately for you, that day is not today. We will return to this I promise, because unlike Dumbledore (and JK Rowling I'm sorry I know he does at the end of OotP but we haven't reached that point yet!), I plan on holding Harry accountable for his mistakes. And er, yeah, he doesn't actually see any consequences in getting involved in areas he ought not to until the fifth book where Harry's mistake gets Sirius killed (amongst other things).

I hope I didn't make Raphael too OOC. he's a really hard character to write because he's just kinda… bland in the anime. His main motivation being Dartz killed his family but doesn't know it (actually, his motivation makes less sense than Alistair's, since his family got killed by a wave. Admittedly made by Dartz, but still. A wave. And he blames the world... I can't be the only one confused) and that's about it. His most interesting moment is when he 'sacrifices' himself to throw Yami to safety when the building is falling down around them and then goes after them for revenge for his fallen comrades. Before that though... annoying hypocrite that is hard to characterise. So, er, I did my best to make him somewhat interesting.

Anyhow, I shall see you again on 21st and I hope you liked this chapter!
Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

And I managed to update this on time and earlier than I thought! Expect the next update on 27th and we might get to Christmas for the characters by Russian New Year's! But since this will be the last update before Christmas, Merry Christmas to you all, and Happy Holidays to all those who don't celebrate Christmas! Either way, hope you all have had a great year!

To anyone who has read any of my other stories, I might have a Christmas surprise waiting as an update on them, but we shall see. I am, in fact, very busy over the next few weeks XD

Anyhow, hope you enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“This is a terrible idea,” Harry said, sat in the dingy bar of the Hog’s Head. It was interesting being in the pub Hagrid tended to spend his evenings in, but on the other hand Hagrid had also managed to be sold a dragon’s egg by a disguised Quirrel and Voldemort. Hermione gave him a covert thwack on the shoulder as the group tumbled through the door, a collection of Gryffindors, Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws. Then, a few minutes later, a couple of second year Slytherins snuck in through the door, followed by a few others who happily greeted those in their study groups. Harry noticed the looks of alarm on some of his year-mates faces, especially Ron’s but Hermione looked deeply interested. Doubly so as, outside of everyone’s notice except his, Ron’s and Hermione’s since they were facing the door, Atem, Akhefia and Marik slipped in, strangely absent of Atem’s bodyguard.

It took Hermione three attempts to get everyone’s attention and Harry shifted uncomfortably.

“Um, well, I suppose you all know why we are here,” she started, clearing her throat awkwardly. Harry had the sneaking suspicion that she had suggested this to put him and Ron off prying into the Shadow era and asking the strangely elusive History of Magic teacher in their attempt to help Yugi. The alarming discovery that there were seven Egyptian Items, bearing the mark of the Eye of Wedjet that sounded suspiciously like the pendant around the small teen’s neck, that held dark magic had nearly caused Harry to steal the thing off his dormmate’s bedside table. Hermione had prevented this by pointing out that Yugi would most likely notice and that, after some gentle prodding by his clever friend, the fact that it was a gift from his grandfather and had not taken it off since he solved it. Apparently, it had once been a puzzle that took Yugi eight years to solve. “We need to learn how to defend ourselves with the return of… of V-Voldemort.” Harry was proud of her, despite the flinch from half the room.

“How do we even know that he’s back?” shouted a voice from the crowd. Harry noticed that the Slytherins in the group were watching intently, and he wondered how long it would take for this to make its way back to Umbridge.

“Because Harry saw him!” shouted someone else as Harry nudged Hermione.

“This is never going to work. Even if they don’t think I’m a nutter, the Slytherins are just going to report this back to Umbridge,” he whispered, and Hermione frowned.
“Harry-” she started but was cut off by one of the Slytherins piping up from their station next to a third year Hufflepuff.

“My dad’s seen him. He got forced back into the Death Eaters.” A strange silence fell as some seemed to realise that Slytherins were among them. Hermione blinked, and Harry stared. He had never heard of anyone being *forced* into the Death Eaters. He noticed that the boy was shaking, bolstered by his friend’s grip on his shoulder. He glanced backwards, seeking confirmation and Harry only just caught the subtle nod from Akhefia, which seemed to give the boy further courage. “He only wanted further freedoms for wizarding culture to grow, especially since Mum wasn’t averse to learning.”

“You’re a half-blood?” Harry asked, surprised. He had been under the impression that all Slytherins were purebloods, something he was sure he wasn’t alone in. The boy nodded, eyes slightly wide.

“Yeah,” he half whispered. “I am.”

“What freedoms did your Dad want?” Hermione asked gently, curious. Wizarding culture wasn’t spoken about too much and even Ron looked slightly nonplussed by the boy’s suggestion.

“To keep our religions and ideals alive. To teach the muggleborns about our culture and preserve our traditions which have yet to fall out of favour.” Harry blinked, surprised. Teach? Not enforce or oppress but educate? How did someone like that fall into line with Voldemort? Several of the other purebloods, even in other houses, were shifting uneasily, looking away to the side.

“Then why did he join with You-Know-Who?” asked a scowling Ravenclaw.

“Because Voldemort was the only one who was talking about this stuff!” exploded a different boy, a fourth year Slytherin who stood up suddenly, eyes blazing. It was clear that he had most likely been holding this in for a while. “No one talks about how we have been oppressed by the influx of muggleborns into our society! We don’t all hate muggleborns, but you have to admit that our traditional ideals have dwindled or changed. And no one talked about making changes to preserve the celebrations of Yule, or Beltane or the Soltices, let alone anything from before the Roman invasion and Latinised magic!” Harry became aware his mouth had fallen open and Hermione was suddenly scratching down notes, interested. He noted the pride in Akhefia’s face at the back and Atem’s satisfaction. But *how does this help them?* “We don’t talk about it and that means that good people, like John’s father, ends up falling into the wrong crowd! How any who are not a pureblood in Slytherin are ostracised inside and outside our house! Why even-!”

“Neil!” the boy- John apparently- cut off the tirade and the older boy twitched, flushing slightly.

“Sorry,” he muttered sullenly. “It’s just… you guys don’t know what it was like, living under the thumb of the Malfoys and the shadow of Voldemort.” He sat back down again, staring at his feet.

“You’re right,” Harry said, surprising himself. He noted the looks of surprise from the Tomb Keepers at the back, Marik’s incredulous expression and internally scowled. “I had no idea…” He trailed off, glancing to Ron who just shrugged.

“We celebrate both, Yule with family, Christmas with everyone else,” he said, and Fred and George nodded, looking thoughtful.

“Then why-?”

“This isn’t the point,” Hermione suddenly interjected, cutting him off, glancing over her notes. “And Harry’s correct, you are right. Hogwarts doesn’t teach us about wizarding culture and it isn’t until
Third Year that you can even come to Hogsmeade…” She trailed off and then shook her head.

“Well, perhaps we can build on this.” She took a deep breath and, after glancing at Harry, turned back to the crowd. “We all know that Umbridge isn’t going to teach us any Defence. We know that she thinks of us as a threat. I was going to suggest that we start a group, one that is taught by Harry, who has faced Voldemort before.” Harry twitched but Hermione ignored him. “But we should also address this concern. If you can think of anyone to help, perhaps we can also start a section to help teach those of us who are uneducated on wizarding culture about it.” There were some quite murmurs through the crowd, nods from the Slytherins and Harry blinked, wondering why she would tell them this.

“Why should it be Harry who teaches us?” Zachariah Smith, who had been frowning the whole time, suddenly piped up. “Why not a teacher? You say he’s faced You-Know-Who before but how can a Fifth Year know better than someone qualified?”

“Harry can make a full-bodied Patronus,” Susan Bones chimed in then. When Harry turned to look at her, she blushed. “Auntie told me about it after your Hearing.”

“Really?” There were a few more appreciative and awed murmurs through the crowd and suddenly, the meeting carried on from there. Excited whispers and enthusiasm for Hermione’s quick addition to their group and soon they were arguing over a name and a way to get in contact with each other. For the latter issue, Hermione had already come up with a way to do that through a charmed coin system and a (secretively) jinxed list that ensured they would know who, if anyone, ratted them out. The former, however, caused some form of contention. A suggestion from Ginny for Dumbeldore’s Army almost won out until a sardonic voice floated from the back of the pub.

“Naming your group that is just asking for the Ministry to oust the Headmaster,” Akhefia said, eyes rolling. Harry frowned.

“We all know you don’t like Dumbledore,” he snapped and Akhefia almost looked like he was thinking of lunging for him before Atem laid a hand on his shoulder.

“Dumbledore may not be our… favourite person,” the Tomb Keeper said, unflappable as always, “but he has a point. The Ministry is looking for any excuse to ignore the threat of your Dark Lord and lay the blame at the Headmaster’s feet. I am happy to endorse a group including the points brought up here, but it will have to be under a different name.” The Slytherins were nodding enthusiastically along with some of the others from Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw while Ron was muttering about how he was a ‘snake-sympathiser’ under his breath but Hermione nodded, agreeing with their fellow Gryffindor. It was sometimes easy to forget Atem had been sorted into the lions rather than the snakes considering he surrounded himself with them.

“What would you name it?” Hermione asked and Atem simply shrugged his shoulders, turning slightly towards the Fourth Year Slytherin, Neil.

“What do you propose?” he asked, and Neil looked surprised at being addressed. He thought for a moment before answering.

“Dagda, for the god,” Neil suggested and there was a brief murmur once again through the group. Harry wondered who on earth this Dagda was, but many were nodding. “Or, well, maybe Dagda’s Cauldron?”

“Why the cauldron?” Hermione asked curiously.

“Dagda is one of the many different gods and goddesses’ traditional families follow. My father follows him for his teachings on agriculture since we own a farm, but Mum tends to follow Epona,”
Neil rambled slightly. “But Dagda is associated with magic, knowledge, wisdom and Druidry; his cauldron is magic and bottomless.” Hermione looked fascinated while Harry was sure he was just more confused but Atem smiled, nodding. Harry had no idea what farming had to do with what gods you followed- he himself was not particularly religious and the Dursleys never tried to teach him anything so his knowledge was limited to whatever small scraps he remembered from Primary School- but figured that it had something to do with the Wizarding culture that he had no idea about. He glanced sideways towards Ron as Hermione became swept up in a discussion with Neil about his suggestion for a name. It seemed that that was what they would be called from now on.

“What’s he talking about?” Harry whispered to his friend, who shifted slightly.

“Well, some wizards and witches still follow the old religions and gods, usually the more traditional ones. We don’t really follow any of them, although Mum does sometimes ascribe to Ana when she’s despairing at us.” At Harry’s blank look Ron flushed slightly. “She’s like a mother goddess, one of the major ones, I think. I dunno about Dad- he’s always too interested in Muggle stuff.” Harry nodded and would have asked more, except Atem had gone oddly pale as the sky was suddenly flooded with green light. Before anyone could react, red eyes rolled back and Atem collapsed on the floor before either Akhefia or Marik could catch him, just as people started to scream.

The original plan had been to head over towards the Shrieking Shack for Yugi to finally have the promised duel with Kaiba when they had first gone to Hogsmeade. Hermione had asked if Yugi wanted to join her and her friends in the pub known as the Hog’s Head, something to do with a meeting to set up a new group, but Yugi had gently turned her down, explaining how he really just needed a break from all things magical. Not exactly the truth, but it would be nice to not be around any of the crazy currently going on and returning back to his gamer roots, a feeling that he found mutual with Kaiba who had already challenged him prior to Hermione’s invitation.

They had ended up agreeing on the Shrieking Shack since that was the least populated area of Hogsmeade apparently and, hopefully, too small for any significant crowds to form once people spotted the holograms. Since other students had started noticing that their technology worked, others had been asking if they would tell them how to get their phones or laptops working but Marik had strangely turned them down before Yugi could say who to ask. The snow, that had apparently come early that year and had settled about 10cm deep, crunched under their feet and Yugi was glad his boots were thick enough to keep his toes warm. Being small meant getting cold much quicker than the others. Even Kaiba was bundled up, although the three Egyptians had abandoned them for the promise of warmth amongst other things at the meeting. Ryou had joined them, the Spirit of the Ring nowhere to be seen- Ryou had stated that he claimed to be bored but that he was slowly getting better at keeping him from forcing him out, a feat he had never been able to do before. Apparently, he had had a run in with Akhefia- which was strange in and of itself since the other boy avoided Ryou like the plague- who had strangely offered the advice that it was his body and that a tenant had to respect their landlord. It was an odd piece of advice, but something Ryou seemed to have taken to heart which made Yugi happier that his friend felt more confident on his control over Bakura. It was strange facing Kaiba instead of it being Yami. He was so used to hovering behind his partner’s shoulder in Spirit form as the former Pharaoh duelled their biggest rival, but they had put together a deck yesterday that suited Yugi slightly more. It didn’t feel right to use the God cards, since they were technically Yami’s, so they had set those aside and built a deck more tailored to Yugi’s style rather than Yami’s or their’s combined. If Kaiba was surprised by the change in his deck, he didn’t show it and at times it felt like he was being analysed under the CEO’s blue stare. A few people had cottoned on to what was happening after Kaiba had summoned his Blue Eyes, but when the man in the dark cloak appeared, Yami was suddenly at his shoulder, away from the tree he had been leaning against at Kaiba’s insistence so that he couldn’t help Yugi, despite the fact that they
could talk telepathically.

*There is some kind of magic here… The same that hangs over your new Professor* Yami hissed, eyes glaring towards the robed figure. Unlike any of the others associated with the Orichalcos that Yugi had seen, he blended in far better with the wizards, except for the unique green duel disk on his arm. A small glowing green rock was hung around his neck. He was silent as they acted through the last few turns, Kaiba having stopped grinding his teeth at his slow but inevitable defeat the moment the stranger appeared. Those few who had been watching had suddenly collapsed into the snow and Yugi sincerely hoped that they were merely unconscious, but it wouldn’t be long until hypothermia set in for them. So, he and Kaiba came to the silent agreement to end this as soon as.

Duel complete, they turned simultaneously to face the new threat, Yami taking over in the process. It was the first time that the Spirit had had control of his body properly for months and being in Spirit Form was almost a novel feeling. He had started to forget how it felt to not feel the wind on his face when outside. As if summoned, Raphael melted out of the tree line, two other strangers at his back, glowing orichalcum of their own about their person. Behind the original stranger, Snape appeared, face carefully blank, but around his neck was the rumoured necklace that Marik had warned him about.

*This is the work of Dartz* Yami observed, eyes narrowed. Kaiba just scowled, pretending like he didn’t see his Head of House- to be fair, if Kaiba was as obtuse as Harry, he probably would have missed the form of the Potion’s Master in the shadows of the trees, observing silently as was his duty.

*But what does he want?* Yugi wondered, watching as the robed man stepped forward, hood falling back to reveal the face of a man in his thirties, dark haired and with a scruffy beard, fanaticism written across his features.

“Welcome, Pharaoh,” the man bellowed, “to the last duel you’ll ever see.” Was it Yugi’s imagination, or did Raphael roll his eyes? Distracted, Yugi almost missed Yami accepting the offer, a near imperceptible movement of his hand to Kaiba, requesting that he stay out of this. Kaiba simply stepped backwards, ready to observe. It was a strange dynamic they had- Yami jumping in first, Kaiba analysing and, somehow, they ended up working together in the end to defeat the enemy. Or in Marik’s case, liberate him from his dark side.

This duel started like normal. Sure, the man- Gurimo they discovered- was a strong duelist, but nothing they hadn’t faced before and he didn’t have the advantage Marik had had of God cards. Unfortunately, it also meant that Yami was facing him with Yugi’s deck, one not completely suited to the Pharaoh’s play style which tended to use dramatic flair to hide his true moves. Yugi preferred slower attrition, but they had to make do. But then, it changed when the man pulled out a spell Yugi had never seen before.

“And now your end is nigh!” Gurimo declared, eyes blown wide in eager anticipation. “I play the Seal of Orichalcos!” The world tilted, sickly green light exploding outwards and Yugi somehow felt sick despite technically no longer having a stomach. If Yami felt this, he gave no outward expression of it, watching as the glowing circle trapped him and Gurimo within it, a green dome forming over them, separating them from the outside. And then, Yugi recognised the sigils in the outer ring as a six-pointed star suddenly drew itself over the ground, the same symbol appearing on Gurimo’s forehead, red tinting his eyes.

*This is what took the Prince’s father* Yami silently confirmed and if Yugi ducked behind his friend, Yami was gracious enough to not react as Gurimo spouted what they already knew. Loss meant the loss of a soul.
How can we even beat something like this? Yugi wondered faintly and Yami tightened one hand into a fist.

We will. We’ve figured this out before. We shall do so again, or Ra help us all.

Pandemonium had broken out in Hogsmeade. Harry ran out of the Hog’s Head, following the Master Magician who had appeared out of nowhere with Magician’s Apprentice in tow, carrying the prone form of Atem in his arms and through the street, wading through the tide of fleeing people. Akhefia had directed the Slytherins, along with any others he could get his hands on, back to the castle and Marik had gone with them- the thief however had stayed, dagger in hand and snake hissing in disapproval.

“What’s happening?” Harry asked, staring in the direction the light had come from. He could hear someone ranting about Muggles in Hogsmeade, another screaming over the motionless body of a friend and he forced himself to look away, swallowing. Praying they weren’t dead. “Is it the Death Eaters?” Green meant the killing curse, Harry knew that, but Akhefia was shaking his head.

“You wish it was Voldemort,” he growled, every muscle tense and eyes darting around. “Where the hell is Mutou?” Harry jolted, and Hermione gave an odd sob behind them.

“He said he and Kaiba were going to duel, near the…” She didn’t have to finish, the horrified expression telling enough. Ron tripped, staring at her wide eyed, realising what Harry just had. The green light had come from the direction of the Shrieking Shack. And the two Japanese duelists had gone there, most likely taking Ryou with them. Akhefia cursed and took off at a run, Magician’s Apprentice not far behind him. Master Magician said nothing but set off in the same direction, pace far slower, careful of the teen in his arms. Harry wondered how he wasn’t tired yet- Atem might be small but he was also in pretty good shape, despite the petite frame and couldn’t be that light. He took a moment to debate where to go- after Akhefia or stay and help Atem’s faithful bodyguard. The decision was ultimately made for him.

“Go.” Harry jumped at the single, solemn word, spoken softly from the figure next to him. The Magician inclined his head towards the Shrieking Shack. “Go.” Harry nodded and, without wasting another moment, sped off after the others. Hermione and Ron hung back, obviously deciding to stay and help protect Atem from whatever was causing this, should it come back again.

What Harry wasn’t expecting was for a slender arm to suddenly appear out of the trees and forcefully drag him into the shadows, just as he drew close to the duel. He struggled a moment, trying to cry for help but a pale hand was clamped over his mouth, muffling all noises. When he finally went limp, the arms let him go and Harry was confronted with- Snape. Stunned, Harry couldn’t do anything but stare, unaware that the Potion’s Master was so strong. Snape merely raised a single finger to his mouth and said nothing, turning away from him and towards where the duel was happening. Harry noticed that the man was wearing an odd necklace with a green gemstone in it that he had never seen before.

It didn’t matter. Yugi needed him.

The scene that met Harry was… bizarre. And that was saying something for a person used to the Wizarding world by now. Encircled by a strangely familiar green symbol, Yugi was facing down a stranger in robes that were similar to a Death Eaters, except Harry couldn’t see any Death Eater, willing or otherwise, stooping to wearing a Muggle contraption to play a Muggle card game. Except… something was off about Yugi. His whole aura was commanding, not unlike Atem, his eyes somehow narrower and did he suddenly get blonder? Perhaps the wind had shoved some of those wild blonde bangs up into his hairline, making his unique hairstyle all the weirder. He also
seemed somehow taller, but that might have just been Harry’s imagination.

What wasn’t was when this stranger with Yugi’s face spoke.

“So, it is a duel to the death.” Harry knew Yugi’s voice, had been listening to it for nearly three months now, and that was not Yugi. The tone and inflection was more in line with Atem’s smooth baritone than Yugi’s higher pitch. Akhefia was crouched right on the edge of the circle, next to a blank-faced Kaiba, practically vibrating in his rage. Magician’s Apprentice had oddly disappeared. The thief, near casually, poked the transparent green dome and was met by a shock of green lightening that had him swearing.

“Oh, of course not Pharaoh!” the man laughed, and Harry stared, wondering what that meant. “You and your vessel shall merely be soulless, offered up to the mighty Leviathan!” Something almost like confusion crossed this strange version of Yugi’s face before being smothered, game face back on. But Harry couldn’t follow the game that they were playing, too confused by all that had happened. This was not Yugi, even if he was similar in looks and dressed the same as Harry’s friend, and no one appeared to notice except this stranger. Or perhaps they did but were too afraid of this… this demon to mention it. It was the only way to describe the blank-faced stare that watched as the man screamed at the shrinking circle, seemingly uncaring for the man’s plight. It took only a matter of moments, but it seemed agonising as, somehow, this strange foreign magic ripped the soul from the man and Harry suddenly understood all the unconscious figures he had passed. They were without their souls. The moment the light was gone the man slumped to the side and the demon stepped forward, removing something from the body, seemingly unbothered.

It was just all too much.

“Who the hell are you?!” Harry spat, dashing out of the tress, not noticing the sudden absence of the Potion’s Master, wand raised to the demon’s face. It wasn’t hard- he was one of the few people who was shorter than Harry. And it had the audacity to look surprised, blood red eyes coming to rest on the wand pointed right at his nose. They only reminded him of Voldemort and Harry felt sickened to even be in its presence. “Answer me!”

“Is there a reason he should?” Kaiba asked, sounding disinterested. Harry glared at him and then jumped as a slim hand reached out and gently pressed his wand down so that it was pointing at the floor.

“It is a reasonable question,” the demon said, sounding almost rational, as if he didn’t even see Harry as a threat. “But difficult to explain.”

“And none of your god’s damned business,” Akhefia snapped suddenly, Diabound hissing in agreement.

“Excuse me?!” Harry demanded, furious. Of course it was his business, protecting his friends!

“Just because Dumbledore likes to throw you a bone once in a while, doesn’t mean we are entitled to telling you anything,” the Tomb Keeper snapped back. Harry was about to argue further when he was cut off by a soft groan from behind him. He turned to find the few people who had probably been watching Yugi and Kaiba duel sitting up, looking bewildered, and a pair of ruby red eyes were blinking groggily from their place in Master Magician’s arms.

“Atem! What happened?” Yugi suddenly asked and Harry jumped, turning back to find that, yes, it was Yugi and not the stranger he had faced a mere moment ago. “Did they attack you too?” Atem blinked, clearly still disoriented from his fainting fit and Harry felt sympathetic. Passing out from the Dementors had been bad enough- the way his friends had jumped forwards, this had to have
happened before. And after the last trip to Hogsmeade, Harry had had the sneaking suspicion the older teen was hiding some kind of illness from the world.

“No, he…” Hermione paused, taking in the scene before her. “He just collapsed when that green light appeared. What happened here? And Harry, why are pointing your wand at Yugi?” Her eyes were fixed on his hand and Harry dropped it further, somehow feeling almost like he had been burnt.

“Um…” Yugi shifted awkwardly, glancing around. Harry realised that they were probably not going to get a particularly truthful answer, so pushed ahead.

“Yugi was possessed,” Harry said, staring down at the other boy. Amythest eyes stared right back at him, suddenly hard. It was Kaiba who spoke though.

“Don’t be an idiot. We were attacked by some of Voldemort’s new followers, using ancient magic. Potter caught the end of it and clearly can’t tell the difference when his supposed friend is acting within his duelling personality in order to outwit his opponent.” There was an implied further insult under the ones that the young CEO had actually spoken aloud. Ron and Hermione, while not looking pleased with the explanation, simply nodded but Harry silently seethed. He knew that hadn’t been Yugi, why was Kaiba covering for him? Was the demon manipulating them all? Was Yugi even aware of it? It didn’t seem possible- Yugi was far too innocent to have agreed to let that thing reside in him.

But as they wandered back up to the castle, Yugi’s face didn’t soften once.

Chapter End Notes

You know, it's interesting the Wizarding culture seems to have somehow grown around Muggle culture when the traditionalists are notorious in hating all things Muggle. Funny that. An interesting tidbit here is that I have attempted to use Celtic Gods (usually those that we find in Celtic Ireland, Scotland and Brittany although some can also be found in ancient Gaul) rather than those found in the New Age versions of Druidism etc. that actually originates from the 18th century (long story short, 'Celts' describes a huge variety of peoples with differing ways of life but some similarities, hence why they can be traced to France, Spain, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, Wales etc. and it is still currently debated as to whether the Celts as we think of them actually existed at all but it is also hugely political in certain areas so in the interest of not stirring that up, we'll leave it alone). Dagda is one of the few named Gods of this time, usually found in Ireland and yes, he was a god of agriculture, magic and fertility and carried a huge bottomless cauldron, hence his use here. I was going to use the more infamous Horned God, sometimes referred to as Cernunnos (and then later one of the many visages turned into the Christian Devil), but he doesn't really fit in this context. Ana (also known as Dana, Danu etc.) is one of the three main female Gods making up one third of the traditional 'Mother, Maiden, Crone' typologies, making up the 'Mother' aspect. Epona was a hugely popular goddess who can be found pretty much anywhere, and was actually taken on by the Romans (kind of like Isis in Egypt- the Romans were very good at adopting other people's gods for their own ends), traditionally depicted on a horse.

The calling of the illicit group that Hermione comes up with 'Dumbledore's Army' is probably the single dumbest thing Harry has ever done, and he's not known for being the brightest spark in the box at times. Not only does it implicate Dumbledore as being
the true founder of this little group, but it also has some underlying anarchist themes—doubly troubling for twitchy politicians. Now, I won't blame Harry for this—considering Ginny is the one who comes up with it and no one argues it (I'm looking at you Hermione, 'brightest witch of your age' who should have seen the fall out coming should Umbridge catch wind of this) it's not completely his fault, but it is a stupendous blunder on their part. If this were Game of Thrones, they would all be dead for treason. Not to mention it kinda makes it look like Dumbledore's trying to recruit a bunch of children into his army. Yikes.

I'd like to use this moment to ask if I was the only one that felt like Yami wasn't really playing with his own deck in Season 4? We know that both Yugi and Yami have very different playstyles but do generally use similar cards, but especially in the middle of the season, it feels like Yami isn't using his usual play style- at least that was what it felt like to me. It's not really until the final duel against Dartz that I feel we get that back and even then, that's using Kaiba who he has a very interesting dynamic with. I wasn't joking either- after Season 1 it seems like Yami dives in first, Kaiba observes and then, at the end gives Yami the card/help he needs to 'win'. Happens with Marik, Yami helps Kaiba out with Noah, Kaiba ensures Yami wins against Dartz etc. It's an interesting little nugget that is very fun to play with, especially with two 'Yami's' running around.

Harry... one day. Just one day. One day you shall observe and not make snap judgement decisions. Unfortunately, cannon Harry never does this until book 7, which by then is far too late. But, having him interact with Yami was fun and none of the Yugioh gang is going to put up with his 'I deserve to know everything, even if it's none of my business and said person has told me to shove off several times'. I've discovered he shares a similar trait with Daenerys- despite being treated terribly by his family (admittedly, I don't think the Dursleys are as bad as Viserys, but it is worrying that Harry has learnt to stay out of his Uncle's reach when knowing anything magic related appears), he's incredibly spoilt and entitled. But this is not A Song of Ice and Fire (luckily for Harry), so we'll leave that thought aside. It's just a curious hypocrisy on his part- Harry doesn't like people prying into his business but the moment he gets suspicious of someone, he simply must know. However, unlike JK Rowling, I shall turn briefly into GRRM and punish you for this because darn it Harry, you are fifteen and have to grow up at some point! I'll let you off for certain things that aren't your fault (mood swings from PTSD, the clear need for a therapist or at least someone to talk to) but not everything. Thou shalt not be a spoilt child in my presence.

Hope you liked this chapter and see you on 27th!
Aaand I'm back! So, quick update for those who didn’t know- I took a break from this for several reasons, including the fact that my dissertation is due in this week, which I have been working on like mad. I also haven't been too well both physically and mentally but am working on that. But, good news! I have been working on this while I was away and while I didn't get as much of the physical story written as I wanted, I have planned this out until at least chapter 22ish. I finally got on that along with another story that I have been working on for many years prior to this.

The next update for this story will be 26th- going to keep with the every two weeks updates because I do still have other assignments to work on and dissertation is due Friday! (It's nearly finished so don't worry about that particular one). And it shouldn't be late because I have most of the next chapter written up already xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Atem sighed, keeping one eye out over the small crowd forming in front of the newly posted sign, the other on Harry who was scowling at it. No doubt he and his friends were thinking up some inane reason to make the new club, newly christened ‘Dagda’s Cauldron’ or DC for short, a secret from Umbridge. Considering their reasons for starting it, there was no reason it ought to be- what Umbridge and the Ministry didn’t know, wouldn’t hurt them. He glanced over towards where both Yugi and the Spirit were keeping a shrewd eye on the younger boy. No doubt, it hadn’t helped that Harry was still insisting that Yugi had been possessed.

As if he had anything to talk about.

The dark cloud that Atem had sensed on their first meeting had only gotten stronger over the week, November finally giving way to December and frozen water lying ever more thickly over the ground. Akhefia had started to skip out on anything outside of the castle- apparently snow and the Thief King did not get along. Atem was not fan of it either, but McGonnagal had caught up with him one day to inform him that he was missing too many classes and, unless he was dying, he was expected to turn up to all of them and that Snape was not his Head of House and could not excuse him forever. The temptation to answer that statement had almost been too much but Atem had learnt long ago to keep that card to himself.

Sighing internally, Atem braced himself as he approached the troublesome trio who were whispering amongst themselves. It appeared that Harry was indeed suspicious of how the Toad had found them out- that they were confused on that point made Atem want to bang his head against a wall. Nevertheless, he braced himself for the upcoming conversation.

“What is the problem?” Atem asked, calmly cutting off Hermione’s hissed whisper that, no, it hadn’t been anyone who had signed their names on the cursed list (a reason why Akhefia had subtly cancelled it for both himself and Atem and later amended it for Marik, Yugi, Kaiba and Ryou- there wasn’t anyone that would be in danger should any of their friends find out). The three jumped and Harry frowned.

“Umbridge knows,” Harry spat, furious. “Your friends wouldn’t have anything to do with it?” Atem

“Umbridge knows,” Harry spat, furious. “Your friends wouldn’t have anything to do with it?” Atem
blinked, cocking his head to one side. While it wasn’t a complete impossibility that Akhefia would do so just to mess with them, Atem had made it clear to let it go ahead. This club was far more useful for its inclusion of all the Houses, and if needed they could always disband it whenever they wanted. But certainly not through the corrupt Ministry.

“I can assure you that Akhefia had nothing to do with this. Perhaps the fact that an unusual number of Hogwarts students appeared in a little used back-ally pub?” Hermione visibly flinched, and he could see the dawning comprehension on her face. “After all, did you know all of the patrons that overheard the conversation?” Harry opened his mouth to argue but Hermione elbowed him in the side. For once, even the red-head was on board, looking guilty.

“He’s right. We should have had it somewhere less suspicious.” It looked difficult for the girl to admit to her lapse in judgement but admit it she did. Atem gave her a smile, glad that she wasn’t completely blind to her own faults.

“There is no need to worry about having to creep around Umbridge. There are always ways to get the Ministry to agree. After all, Dagda’s Cauldron is all about learning from your wizarding friends about their culture yes? What reason would Umbridge have to shut it down that doesn’t outright show her prejudice?” Harry stared and Atem allowed the smile to slip into a smirk, sending them a wink. “I’ll speak with her later.” It wouldn’t be a pleasant conversation, but it would most certainly be satisfying to stick her between a rock and a hard place.

He joined Kaiba and Akhefia, both already sat at the Gryffindor table, aware of Atem’s wish to reassure those from Hogsmeade he was alright, and were surprisingly joined by the trio voluntarily. Usually they only sat so close due to the fact that they were friends with Yugi and since Yugi was actively avoiding Harry- an incredible feat considering he shared a dorm room with him- they hadn’t seen much of them during the week. Akhefia didn’t acknowledge them and Kaiba merely raised an eyebrow, but he knew that they were just as baffled as he was. Mahad, ever present shadow that he had become once more, shared a bemused glance with him.

“Atem…” Hermione seemed hesitant and Atem stiffened, feeling that this was about to slip into dangerous territory. “What happened in Hogsmeade… are you feeling better?” It was hard to shut away the urge to flinch at her well-meaning words. The teenagers didn’t know the danger they were putting themselves in, how much danger they would surely face soon. Not just from the ever-present threat of the Ministry and Voldemort but also Dartz, the Orichalcos and Necrophades who was still plotting his next move. No doubt biding his time, although for what reason, Atem wasn’t sure. Perhaps he was waiting to exploit these new threats to the Nameless Pharaoh? The reappearance of the rest of the Tomb Keepers? His father… he shoved that thought away and gave Hermione a small smile.

“But first things first.” Kaiba was throwing him sceptical looks over the table but said nothing of his blatant lies- not that he
looked particularly happy about it either. If Seto felt like voicing his opinion, Atem had no doubt he would be advocating for him to go home too but, luckily, his cousin valued his own feelings on the matter too and so said nothing. Instead, he eyed the Toad from where he sat, eyes narrowed.

“You sure you don’t want to instigate an investigation into her?” Kaiba asked.

“Yes,” Atem said firmly, nibbling at his food despite his lack of appetite. “It seems Mr Weasley is doing our work for us.” After the arrest of Malfoy Senior for his blatant bribery, fraud and exploitation of the government, quite a few different Ministry departments had thrown their proverbial toys out of their prams, wanting to know how far this corruption went. Fudge was unable to hold them off either, not without implicating himself into more trouble after the scandal of having taken the bribe money from Malfoy and facing several of his recent political acts being questioned. It was only due to her ineptness that Umbridge couldn’t see the inevitable writing on the wall- ‘High Inquisitor’ would soon be a position that would be highly scrutinised and instead of being able to change the school into her personal playground, the Board of Governors would no doubt be questioning how far into who’s pockets she was. This would likely be one of the few last decrees she would be able to make freely.

“Let me talk to her?” Akhefia asked, wicked grin already on his face. Atem shook his head, glancing to the side. Umbridge would definitely ban it should he send Akhefia, no matter how much he terrified her. No, this was something he would have to deal with personally.

“No, I’ll be dealing with her. You still have a project to deal with.” Akhefia scoffed but nodded, waiting for Atem to leave the table before rising too. No doubt, Raphael was watching as always.

Atem took the time that he ought to be spending in History of Magic, to walk up to Umbridge’s office. He had been warned about the amount of pink, although it was still a lurid colour. He shuddered, glad that he had a new shadow to accompany Mahad, despite his friend’s discomfort.

“This is a truly heinous office,” Haphiri remarked, delicate nose wrinkled at the meowing of the many cats hung on the walls. Umbridge glanced up at that, alarmed from whatever she had been writing but quickly smoothed her face into what was supposed to be a friendly expression- it made her look like she was about to be sick instead.

“Oh, Mr Menes! What can I do for you?” she simpered, eyes bright with misplaced interest.

“I saw your sign about the clubs,” Atem started with a smile. “So, I’ve come to ask your permission to set up one.” He could practically feel Haphiri curling her lip behind him, but he kept his tone light, polite. It wouldn’t do for her to fear him just yet. Umbridge seemed to almost smile wider, no doubt thinking that he was walking into a trap.

“Oh really?” she asked, all fake simpering kindness. “And what club would that be?”

“It’s called Dagda’s Cauldron, after one of your gods I am told,” he replied, waiting. “We hope that it will help cover some of the cultural misunderstandings between the students from magical and non-magical homes.” He was not going to use their derogatory term for non-magic users that so permeated their society. Umbridge got a gleam in her eyes as she sat back.

“Oh really?” she asked, all fake simpering kindness. “And what club would that be?”

“Hmm, yes, I remember hearing something about this new club,” she simpered, walking right into the trap Atem had laid. “But I’m afraid that I cannot allow it.” Atem gave a show of being startled. Speeches may have been impossible but acting was something he had great practice at.

“Why not?” he asked, allowing some of the stereotypical teenage annoyance bleed into his tone. “I thought you wanted us to get to know each other. Become… closer.”
“Well, I’m afraid I simply cannot sanction any clubs that encourage such violent behaviours,” she said with a smile, clearly trying to goad him into implicating Harry.

“I wasn’t aware that sitting down to learn about each other’s cultures was violent?” Atem gave her a polite smile, face blank of any other emotions. Her face twitched, annoyance creeping in now.

“But it isn’t just a cultural club is it?” she hissed, true venom leaking into her voice. “You and your little friends are trying to undermine my teaching!”

“Practicing the spells that you are supposedly ‘teaching’ is hardly undermining you,” Atem noted, raising an eyebrow. “I believe it counts towards extra credits. Is there a reason you feel so threatened by your students trying to better themselves and each other?” Umbridge sneered at the implication, reaching for her wand.

“How dare you?” she spat. “I am the Senior Undersecretary-“

“Yes, we know your position,” Haphiri stated, cutting her off, bored. “Your Minister was very clear about that when I met him.” She gave her a carefully calculated look at the Toad, leant back, startled and still puffing in anger. Atem wondered mildly if she would explode.

“You! You are one of the people slandering the Minister’s good name!”

“Hardly much of a good name anymore,” Haphiri pointed out, enjoying goading her into this. “Considering it is your own people discovering his little contraband circle.” Atem resisted the urge to roll his eyes. Sometimes, the princess just liked to be dramatic when playing with her prey. “And he’s just lost his most powerful supporter.”

“Yes,” Atem joined in, happy to play along. This would get tiring soon. “Such a shock, hearing that Mr Malfoy has been supporting the Dark Arts all these years. Makes the rest of Fudge’s supporters look... suspicious.” Umbridge paled, catching on suddenly. She had clearly thought nothing of the report that Malfoy had been arrested, probably thinking he would be out soon and that it was ridiculous. Now, however, she was beginning to realise just where this left her. “Curious, that you knew all about the club proposal before we presented it?” he continued, tone light. “And that you just dismissed it out of hand. I’m sure all of those reporters would love to hear why you don’t approve of such an action.” Umbridge flushed but didn’t back down.

“Lies!” she snapped. “All lies! Potter’s been filling your head with them-“

“I don’t believe my brother mentioned Mr Potter,” Haphiri stated casually. “Interesting that you would bring him up however, considering how much you want him dead.” Umbridge actually flinched at that, her face turning a sickly white in shock. Her mouth flopped open like a fish, words lost to her as she tried to regain her composure. Atem let the silence stretch on a moment before giving her a pleasant smile.

“So, Dagda’s Cauldron? I’ll take it that we may go ahead and start advertising it?” he stated casually, not waiting for an answer. “I’ll speak to Professor McGonnagal about sorting out a room for us all to fit. Considering that your new position as High Inquisitor must keep you so busy.” He turned to leave then, waiting for her to try and call him back.

He didn’t have to wait long.

“I gave you no such permission!” she screeched, reaching for her wand. Mahad was already in front of him, staff raised and ready for her attack. “You have no rights to say such things!”

“I believe I spoke nothing but the truth,” Atem stated. “Attack me if you wish. I’m sure those
reporters you think still support you would love to hear such a story. ‘High Inquisitor attacks the Crown Prince and ambassador for the Tomb Keepers’. You’ll have the Egyptian Ministry on you before you know it, along with others wondering if this is how the British Ministry treat their foreign students. And I don’t think your precious Fudge will be able to keep them off you forever. You only got away with it once because I was feeling generous.” Atem narrowed his eyes, taking a step towards her, allowing the Shadows to flicker around him, showing his anger. “Be assured. That feeling is long gone.” Umbridge had taken a step back, cowering behind her desk, realising just where her prejudice had gotten her. He paused a moment before nodding and stepping away, banishing the Shadows back from whence they came.

Outside her office his breath caught, forcing him to cough heavily into his hands. They came away glistening with blood, the taste of copper sharp on his tongue.

“Harry, this isn’t a good idea,” Hermione hissed as Harry continued to rifle through the bag at the end of Yugi’s bed. The other boy was off with Marik somewhere, followed by his constant shadow as showed on the Marauder’s Map spread out on Harry’s own bed where Hermione was sat, keeping watch. Ron was snooping through the suitcase, but neither were coming up with much. Harry got the feeling Ron had only agreed because he was suspicious of the fact that Yugi was friends with so many Slytherins rather than believing him, but Harry knew what he had seen. Currently, all Harry had found was Yugi’s duel disk, several magazines in Japanese displaying Duel Monsters and a couple of books on early Ancient Egypt. Nothing useful.

“Look, Hermione, I’m telling you, that wasn’t Yugi,” Harry insisted, half growling in frustration as he half kicked the bag. There had to be something in the other boy’s things that would prove him right! “Are you just going to sit back and let him be used like that?” Hermione frowned, refusing to join them.

“But you weren’t the only one there! I think Kaiba would notice if Yugi was acting different since he knows him better than we do,” Hermione snapped. “And now you’re breaking his trust by going through his things!”

“Come on, Hermione, you’ve got to admit that they are a bit fishy,” Ron said, glancing between his two friends. “I mean, how do we know Kaiba isn’t covering for Yugi?” He held his hands up as Hermione shot him a dirty look. “Hey, I’m not saying Harry’s right! I’m just saying that I want to be sure!” Good save Harry thought spitefully, taking one last look through the bag to find nothing more than a box covered in hieroglyphs and the same eye symbol as on the Puzzle around Yugi’s neck. It seemed like a clue until a quick peek inside found nothing more than bundles of unused Duel Monsters cards that Yugi kept on him. Truly growling now, considering all Ron had found were clothes, some more books on Egypt and Yugi’s rather impressive collection of buckled jewellery, Harry gave the bag an aggravated kick, shoving it under the bed. He might have cringed about having to dig it back out again if there hadn’t been a distinctive clunk and the jangling of several objects moving about. Harry and Ron shared a quick look before diving under the bed, Hermione suddenly interested and joining them.

Together they pulled out a new bag that Harry hadn’t seen before. It was a shoulder duffle, fairly innocuous looking, had it not been for the sound of moving objects within and that it was heavy. Unzipping it revealed several rather strange objects. Three heavy volumes of Muggle textbooks describing a ‘pseudo-history’ by an Arthur Hawkins, describing the origins of Duel Monsters and their connection to a ‘Shadow era’ in history. Several rolls of what looked suspiciously like papyrus which, when unrolled, displayed lines and lines of hieratic. And two items made of solid gold- a necklace and what looked like an eyeball, both with the same strange eye symbol. They glanced at each other, Hermione immediately grabbing one of the books while Ron picked up the eye.
“What the hell is this?” he asked, looking faintly disgusted. Hermione, having cracked the book open to a random page, appeared to be ignoring them both.

“I don’t know,” Harry said slowly, picking up a second book. Opening it revealed a picture of what looked like a crumbling pillar with a glyph that looked oddly like one of Yugi’s Duel Monsters. A stone soldier. Flicking the page over revealed a photo of the author, along with a rather short co-worker wearing a bandana. He looked weirdly familiar. Harry glanced over to the acknowledgements, thankfully written in English due to the publisher being from America. I would like to extend my thanks to my dear friend and partner on this research trip, Professor Solomon Mutou and his specialism in Ancient Games. “I think it might be a family thing,” Harry murmured, scrunching his eyebrows together. Hermione suddenly gave a squeak.

“What?” Ron asked, glancing up from his perusal of the eye. Hermione was looking a little pale.

“This is talking about the same history Professor Schiavone has been teaching us. But it agrees more with what I’ve been reading about the Tomb Keepers…” Hermione trailed off a moment, frowning. “It’s strange. This is a Muggle history book, but it follows more along the lines of pseudo-history than actual history.”

“Maybe because it’s a Muggle writing about magic?” Harry suggested, curious now. Hermione hummed, nodding.

“Anyway, it’s talking about an ancient battle, between a Pharaoh and a cruel darkness,” she said, trailing a finger over the page. “But… well, here.” She suddenly turned the book around, shoving it towards them. Inside was a picture of a large tablet, covered in hieroglyphs and strange images. The centre piece, however, was of two people—probably mages considering the strange creatures above them—facing each other over a fire. On the left was a tall figure holding a short staff or oddly shaped wand of some kind. On the other…

“Er… why does that look like Yugi?” Ron asked, perplexed and dropping the eye, leaning forwards for a better look. Harry swallowed, thinking that wasn’t the only person they looked like.

“Do you reckon Atem knows?” Harry asked instead. Hermione bit her lip, nodding.

“It would make sense. After all, the acknowledgements thank the Ishtar Clan for their help in the research—"

“What are you doing?” a cold voice suddenly cut through them and Harry, Ron and Hermione simultaneously jumped, turning to look into narrowed red eyes. The baritone voice would almost get them mistaken for Atem, except he was lacking the soft accent that the other boy had, and he was still dressed in Yugi’s clothes. Harry narrowed his eyes, jumping to his feet and grabbing his wand.

“You!” he half-shouted, half a dozen curses at the ready. “What have you done with Yugi?”

“Nothing,” the demon or ghost snapped, anger clouding his voice. Hermione had flinched, quickly dropping the book in her hand as if she had just been burnt. Ron had jumped up to join Harry, face pale. It appeared they both believed him now. “What are you doing going through Yugi’s things?”

“We’re trying to stop you from hurting him,” Harry spat back, narrowing his eyes. The demon half-snarled and was it him or were the shadows in the room suddenly thicker than before?

“And that deserves disturbing his privacy?” it growled. It paused a moment, hands curled into fists, shaking, then shook its head.

“No, Yugi!” Harry shouted, feeling his heart plummet. “You have to fight him!”
“Fight him!” Harry jumped as Yugi’s voice erupted from the body in front of them, eyes back to their usual violet. However, where they were usually bright and happy, Harry thought he could see tears shining in them. “You don’t understand anything! He’d never harm me! But you…” Yugi frowned, somehow equally angry with them. “Why?” he half cried, shaking.

“Yugi…” Hermione started and then shook her head, coming to stand herself. “We’re really sorry, we were just concerned. I know we should have asked but, we’ve dealt with possession before.”

“I’m not possessed!” Yugi shouted. Harry stepped back, surprised. It seemed like Yugi did know about the demon and in fact endorsed it. “I thought Kaiba told you that already!”

“What, your ‘duelling personality’?” Harry asked derisively, but he was beginning to think Hermione was right. They really ought to have waited, or one of them should have been watching the map far more closely. Yugi was silent for a long moment before closing his eyes.

“Fine,” he muttered and suddenly they were faced with those hard, red eyes once more. The change was so fast it was enough to give one whiplash.

“That is enough,” the demon stated, sounding far calmer than before, his tone commanding. He took a step forwards and they scuttled backwards, Harry still with his wand raised. However, he wasn’t sure he would be able to fight him- after all, the Death Eaters hadn’t stood a chance. “You had no right to go through Yugi’s property without his permission and he certainly has no obligation to tell you of our situation. I have been merciful because you are children. Should you have done the same in my day, you would no longer have the hands with which to steal from another.” Those red eyes were pointedly looking at the eye which had rolled to a stop next to Yugi’s suitcase. “But, no longer. You are old enough to know better.” Harry flinched as the demon took another step, feeling about an inch tall as this being, shorter still than he was, dressed him down like he was some naughty toddler caught with their hand in the cookie jar. It bent down and swept the eye up, placing it back into the bag along with the books and pushed them into the suitcase. He then snapped his fingers and there was a crack as Dobby appeared.

“Yes, Mr Spirit, sir?” the house elf squeaked, taking no notice of Harry for once. The demon- or spirit as Dobby had called him- gave no clue as to whether he was bothered by this address. Instead he gestured to Yugi’s things, suddenly packed up neatly. Yugi had never been one to spread his things across the dorm and Ron hadn’t removed the clothes when looking through the suitcase. It occurred to Harry that the bag they had found was most likely packed inside when they came to Hogwarts as he didn’t remember seeing it before, hidden from prying eyes.

“Would you please take this to the Palace Dorm for Yugi?” the demon asked, anger disguised behind cold politeness. “We will notify the Headmaster of our leaving.” Dobby nodded, glanced behind to spot them cowering away but, strangely, said nothing, simply disappearing with another crack along with Yugi’s things. The red eyes turned back to them, narrowed. “Take this advice. Do not start digging through others’ things. You do not know what it is you are trying to involve yourself in and the forces of Isfet are not as merciful as I.” With that last, cryptic command, the demon turned and was gone.

It took Harry several moments to realise he was shaking.

Kaiba huffed in frustration as ink splattered across the parchment, annoyed by this archaic way of imparting information. Essays were nothing new- his reports for Kaiba Corporation were harder- but Snape had tracked him to down to state that several of the teachers refused to accept his carefully typed homework and that all assignments ought to be handed in on parchment. They somehow thought it gave him some unfair advantage. Snape had said nothing of himself but McGonnagal was
one of the traditionalists and was still annoyed he turned up to what lessons he liked.

It irked him that they were stuck in the 19th century still.

Mokuba always enjoyed the owls though, so he continued to put up with it. And it gave him plenty of time to ensure his cousin wasn’t up to anything stupid since he had to put the computer aside for a while to concentrate on writing things out. Out of pure spite, he refused to write in English, instead in kanji and handed them in like that just as Atem and Akhefia did with hieratic. McGonnagal’s face had been entertaining and he had cut her off from arguing by pointing out that she wanted him to write in his third language. No need to mention that his family, before the accident that had stolen their birth parents, had spoken a combination of Japanese and Arabic, leading to English- the language he used primarily for business or in duels- falling down the list of languages he had a grasp of. Atem seemed to find it amusing- Akhefia gave an innocent expression, much like his frequent potion explosions, stating that he ‘really wasn’t very good at translation charms, wasn’t that a shame?’. She was left with either accepting it or causing controversy by calling them out. A controversy she didn’t need considering the political state and media at the moment.

Kaiba scowled as there was a loud CRACK, the tiny house elf that cleaned their dorms and left him coffee every morning before breakfast appeared along with what looked like Mutou’s things. Atem glanced up from his corner, his shai infused with one of Snape’s many useful potions, his nose having been stuck in some book or other. Neither Akhefia or Marik were in the Palace dorm- Kaiba had no interest in what the kleptomaniac and the insane Tomb Keeper were up to, although he gathered that it had something to do with their continued campaign to ferret out the extremists in Slytherin.

“What happened?” Atem asked quietly as Kaiba muttered small curses, flicking his wand over the parchment and banishing the ink splatters his involuntary flinch had caused when the elf appeared. There was little difference between it and the sound of a gunshot after all.

“Mr Spirit told Dobby to bring Mr Yugi’s things here. He caught Harry Potter and his friends going through Mr Yugi’s things!” the elf squeaked. Well, that explained the new door that they had been greeted with earlier, as the dorm extended itself to accommodate another member. It made Kaiba wonder though- ‘Yami’ would no doubt be pissed that those insipid teenagers had stuck their noses where they didn’t belong. Whether the runt had decided to get involved would be interesting or if he had simply hidden behind the Spirit’s back once again. Atem, however, was looking less than forgiving.

“Did they give a reason?” he asked sharply, book set to one side for now. Dobby shook his head, ridiculous ears flapping, eyes wide.

“Dobby didn’t hear a reason, sir!” he stated, frightened. A shadow flickered in the corner and Atem seemed to swallow whatever he was about to say. That or blood.

“I’m going to bed,” Atem said, leaving the elf to his own devices suddenly. He looked pale and ill, more so than usual these days. “Mahad,” he said, addressing the constant presence of the Magician in the room, “keep an eye on Yugi and the Pharaoh, won’t you?” Mahad nodded, face solemn and concerned. The door shut behind him with a loud click and Kaiba decided to turn in now too. No point wasting more time on these ridiculous essays.

Who cared about the applications of messaging charms and the Floo Network when one had a phone?

He checked his laptop one more time before bed, noting several emails from contractors- one of which belonging to an idiot trying to embezzle money off of him-, one from Roland and another
from Mokuba. He opened the email from Roland first. It told him nothing new. The strange company, Paradium, that was owned by Dartz was still trying to buy stock and being turned away. Their reasonings were pathetic- clearly, the supposed Atlantean had never come across a competent businessman and his lackeys were far from moguls in the industry. Mokuba’s email actually brought a smile to his face. His brother was doing well and excited for the end of term when Kaiba would be on the first flight back home. There was no way he was spending longer than needs be in this place.

Well, no longer than to ensure that Atem would be fine over the holidays.

It irritated him that he couldn’t shake off the care that usually only applied to Mokuba, but by now he had come to terms with it. It was one thing to know that someone was gravely ill- another to watch it happen in front of your eyes. Even Kaiba wasn’t so heartless as to be unaffected by watching Atem’s health decline at a rapid pace. Mokuba’s excitement to learn that they had family that hadn’t abandoned them (he may have neglected to tell him the part where he had so callously turned Atem away all those years ago) had been tempered by the news that he had been forced to give after the Pharaoh’s brush with Gurimo. Whatever that magic had been, it disagreed with their cousin more than the presence of the Spirit itself.

Kaiba almost jumped back up when his head hit something hard under his pillow, cursing thoroughly in both Japanese and the rarely used Arabic. He didn’t notice that a few words of a different language left his mouth. Shoving the pillow out of the way, he froze at the feeling of gold against his fingertips. There, sat underneath his pillow as if he had set it there himself, was the glimmering form of the Millennium Rod, Sennen Eye winking in the half light through the curtains.

_it is time Set_, whispered the voice that had been following him since they had arrived in this place._I’m sorry, but the Serpent King’s plots now reach too far. You must claim the Rod once more._

Glowing next to the Rod was the Blue Eyes White Dragon.

Chapter End Notes

I cannot tell you how satisfying it was to write Atem just needling Umbridge for half this chapter. The fact that Umbridge quite readily joins the Death Eaters during the Seventh book points to her having the same ideals as them, along with her ruthless attack on all the Muggle-borns. This is a person that Atem would not put up with, Double that with the fact that during the Fifth book she is convinced that she has absolute power over everyone and everything, simply because she supports Fudge. But now, without the general support of the populace and Malfoy neatly tucked away in jail, she doesn't have that kind of leverage and is only now just realising it. Fudge without Malfoy is a boat adrift- it's hinted that he is heavily relying on Malfoy throughout the entire Fifth book so I may have been cackling internally while writing this the whole time.

Speaking of consequences, hello Harry and your entitlement. You have now found out why you should keep your nose out of other people's business. Sometimes, it bites back. Now, I won't entirely blame Harry. After his experiences with Quirrell and fake Moody in previous years, the idea of a person residing in someone's head and taking over the body is probably rather alarming to him. That Harry and his friends actually encouraged Quirrell in the first book probably left a mark on him, that he was so betrayed by someone he trusted and thought needed the help. And so, Harry's hero complex finally puts him in a situation that he can't defend. And we will be discussing this in the next
chapter, considering Dumbledore likes to soften the sentences of his favourites (I'm looking at you Sirius and the attempted murder of Snape. Also does Lupin know that he did that or is everyone keeping it as a dirty secret? It's never really made clear) and Yami is most certainly not going to let him get away with that. Neither him, nor Harry, are going to get off easy.

So, hopefully this was a pleasant surprise and that the wait wasn't too long or horrendous. I'm doing better and soon this behemoth that I have been working on for two years will finally be written up and done. I shall see you all on 26th and I hope that you enjoyed this chapter!
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

Ok, this is a day early but I need the extra time for my last few uni assignments so I decided to post today! Hopefully you enjoy this as much as the last chapter and I will see you all again on 11th April!

Also, you may notice that some of the earlier chapters have been edited. I'm slowly going through them and updating/editing-going over them but it is a slow process and may take me a while. So don't be alarmed by any changes!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yami stalked through the halls, anger simmering just underneath the surface. Yugi was still hiding away in his Soul Room, a mixture of anger, frustration and betrayal leaking through their link. Yami ensured that his own emotions were kept in check- it was not his privacy that the teenagers had just invaded. Knowing Yugi, it wasn’t so much the potential theft that had upset him so but rather the fact that they had done it under the pretence of being friends. Yugi had had his fair share of losing his things to others, that this came from so close to home would have hurt the most.

It frustrated Yami that Harry had thought he had had the right to sort through another’s things so casually. They had both heard the rumours that Harry and his friends were highly involved in the many incidents that had occurred here in recent years, most notably that Harry had supposedly witnessed the death of a fellow student not even a whole year ago. Yami could sympathise with the boy for that- he may be bereft of memories, but he doubted that he would have ended up in this situation had his past been particularly happy. And he had shared in Yugi’s grief at watching his grandfather’s soul be stolen, back in the days when the line between his own thoughts and Yugi’s had been blurred. What he could not abide however, was how entitled the boy thought he was.

Why wouldn’t he just listen? Yugi asked quietly, feelings turning further towards sadness as each second passed. Yami wished that it were not the day so he could place Yugi’s body to rest in safety and spend the time needed to comfort his partner, but, unfortunately, he didn’t have that luxury. And Yugi was in no mood to be in control at the moment, not with who they would have to face in only a few short minutes as he turned up the corridor leading to Dumbledore’s office.

I don’t know Yami replied softly, allowing some feelings of sympathy towards him. It seems that he just thinks he has the right to do so due to past experiences. It would be something he would bring up with the Headmaster.

They were stopped by the gargoyles but Yami quickly by-passed them, shifting through the shadows to the other side. This appeared to trigger some kind of alarm that Yami ignored. It wasn’t as if he was hiding his presence here anymore. In fact, the Headmaster might be one of the few who was capable of seeing him, right along with the others, Snape and the girl that Harry and his friends had identified as Luna, a friend of Ron’s younger sister. Several traps and curses tried to prevent him from moving further up the stairs, but they were no match against a being as old as he. Compared to those that his own people had placed upon their tombs, these were nothing more than an irritation, shrugged off fairly quickly. His magic was far more powerful than that practiced at this school, older and darker.
And Yami knew instinctively just how to control it.

Dumbledore was frowning heavily when he opened the door to his office. He would have knocked but Yami had once been a king and a Pharaoh did not ask permission to enter. He was not here to speak with the man as a student. This would be a conversation between one leader to another. Dumbledore surely noticed as there was no twinkle in those cold blue eyes of his and the man straightened behind his desk, losing the grandfatherly image near instantly. In the corner, a phoenix watched them from its perch, dark eyes sharp and interested. How this man had won the trust of one of Ra’s creatures was a tale for another time, however.

“You are not young Mr Mutou,” Dumbledore started gravely. Yami gave him nothing, moving across the room until he was opposite him at the desk.

“How observant,” Yami stated, resisting the urge to roll his eyes. “I assure you, however, that I am not using him. Yugi has allowed me access to his body for now to discuss some troubling behaviours in your students.” Dumbledore raised a single eyebrow at that. He wondered if the man cared that Harry quite happily broke school rules on a regular basis. That those rules were supposed to be in place for the benefit of all did not occur to this man it seemed. Not after all Yami had heard.

“That is a serious accusation to make, especially coming from someone in as precarious a position as you.” Yami internally scoffed, narrowing his eyes slightly.

“I am no Voldemort,” Yami snapped, hearing the accusation. “I did not force myself on Yugi. Not that I expect you to understand from what has just occurred today. I reiterate- Yugi is quite happy for me to take this conversation and he will corroborate that for you now, if you so wish.” Dumbledore leaned back slightly, nodding, keeping eye contact.

Yami?

Trust me, Yugi. I won’t let him do anything. He and Yugi had both felt the overbearing presence of the Headmaster trying to wiggle his way into their mind. Yami allowed himself to retreat ever so slightly, letting Yugi take control for a brief moment, but moving no further than slipping out of the body and a pace to the left. Dumbledore’s eyes briefly followed him before settling once again on Yugi. His mental presence also doubled, as if he thought that Yami might have less of an influence just because Yugi was now present.

“Mr Mutou,” the Headmaster started but Yugi swiftly cut him off.

“Yami is doing this with my permission,” he said firmly, only a slight tremble in his voice from his still raw emotions. Yugi had come far from the boy he had been all those years ago when he had first solved the Puzzle, but that didn’t stop the protective instincts in Yami from rising as he faced off against the master manipulator. “He isn’t tricking or coercing me into doing something I don’t want to.”

“I’m afraid I can’t much agree to that with him hovering so close,” Dumbledore said, his tone meant to convey sympathy but really only giving away how far he thought he could go. It was no wonder Harry thought himself to privileged to get away with half of what he did. “Not after the way that he got past the school’s very own defences.” Yugi frowned openly at that. People took his innocent visage to mean that he was some kind of simpleton at times. But Yugi wasn’t a Duel Monsters champion for nothing, even without Yami’s help. He could read an opponent just as easily as he. It was why he had been so drawn to the quiet child, so tenacious and determined to solve his Puzzle. How the fragmented pieces of his mind had latched onto this tiny being and vowed to prevent it from harm, to pay back the respect a man had once given his sanctuary all those years ago. But the final attack on Yami’s shields, constructed around Yugi’s mind, built so carefully to prevent another
Pegasus, was the last straw.

There was nothing Dumbledore could do when he grabbed his prying consciousness and dragged it into the corridor between his and Yugi’s minds. He ensured that Yugi’s own Soul Room door was shut tight, should the old man think he had the right to poke through it.

“Are you satisfied?” Yami asked sharply as Dumbledore glanced about in confusion. “Let me show you exactly where you will end up, should you try this again.” And without another warning he flung open his own Soul Room door, revealing the labyrinth of his mind.

Dumbledore staggered back, turning to look for the door that Yami had already moved away. He had wandered this labyrinth for years, knew its every trick. When moved to do so, he could willingly rearrange it, a trick he had learnt- or perhaps, remembered- in the final duel against Pegasus and the Eye. Until Yami was satisfied, Dumbledore would not be leaving.

“Where are we? What have you done?” Dumbledore asked sharply and then appeared to do a double take. He was aware that here he looked different, no longer taking on the characteristics of Yugi’s body, instead as he had once in life. Unfortunately, there were no mirrors here, so he could only assume he currently looked something like Atem, hence the man’s confusion. “Who are you?”

“I have no name. I do not remember it,” Yami said simply, aware that he had switched out of English. It didn’t matter. Dumbledore understood, the words translated between their two minds. “What I do know is that I was once a Pharaoh of Egypt 5000 years ago. What you are standing in is what remains of my Soul Room. Since you claim to be giving sanctuary to Yugi and his friends and are supposedly making your best efforts to defeat this Voldemort, I will leave this as a warning. Attempt to gain access to Yugi’s mind uninvited once more and you will be trapped here forever. You are not the first to try and I will not stand for such a violation of one who is close to me.”

Dumbledore blinked, turning to look around once more.

“I see,” he said solemnly. “If we could return to my office? I believe you have made your point.” Yami could sense how uneasy he made this man and smirked.

“Oh course.” To Dumbledore it would seem that, in the next moment, they were back in his office. However, as Yami took control once more, he became aware of the sharp pinpricks of a bird’s claws in Yugi’s shoulder. Instinctively, he raised an arm and the phoenix hopped onto the new, and most likely more comfortable, perch immediately, trilling out a sweet song. The Headmaster appeared startled at this but Yami gave him no mind, smiling and gently stroking the plumage atop the bird’s head. “It is an honour to meet you. I have not had the pleasure to see one of Ra’s beloved birds.” Ra held a menagerie of animals, but the phoenix was the rarest and purest extension of his being in the mortal realm. The phoenix gave a soft caw, nuzzling into his fingers. Yami did not notice the soft golden light that jumped between the two, it only being observed by Yugi and the Headmaster who was most perturbed by the change in events.

It had been a long time since someone had outsmarted Albus Dumbledore.

“Well,” Dumbledore started with a soft cough, breaking Yami out of the slight trance he had been in, marvelling at this magnificent creature in front of him. “What was it that you wished to speak with me about?” It was clear that the Headmaster now understood where he stood.

“Yugi wishes to move to the Palace Dorm,” Yami said shortly, leaving no room for argument. “I’ve already had his things taken there.”

“And why would Mr Mutou wish to leave the Gryffindor Dorm?” Dumbledore asked, seemingly startled.
“Because your Boy Who Lived had taken it upon himself to go through his personal items under the delusion that he had the right due to his suspicions of me.” Yami narrowed his eyes, feeling the phoenix turn to watch Dumbledore too with an accusing gaze. “Is this acceptable behaviour in your school?”

“Ah, no,” Dumbledore said, suddenly deciding to return to his usual demeanour. “Unfortunately, Harry has not had any good experiences with those who are not what they seem. Only last year, a favoured teacher of his turned out to be a Death Eater in disguise through Polyjuice potion.”

“And you somehow failed to pick up on this?” Yami asked derisively, raising an eyebrow. “The so-called greatest wizard of your time?”

“We all make mistakes, my dear boy,” Dumbledore said gravely, supposedly repentant. Yami wasn’t buying it.

“And sometimes we make them on purpose.” An irritated expression appeared briefly on the man’s face before it was swiftly tucked away.

“Not this time. His portrayal of Alastor was rather exemplary.”

“I hear he performed your Unforgivable curses in front of his classes,” Yami said blandly. “I doubt even a man as paranoid as he would do so in front of children.” He returned his attention to the phoenix, tired of this man’s games. “What will you do about Harry?”

“What do you think I should do?” Dumbledore asked amiably and Yami scowled. Clearly, if it were up to the Headmaster, Harry would face no consequences for his actions.

“I have already warned Harry that if he had been caught in my time, he would no longer have hands with which to steal. However, times are not so dire as they were then, and he is a child. By your own school rules, he ought to at least lose house points and serve time in detention.” Yugi had had to serve several catch up sessions after school due to the many tournaments and media appearances he had to make, causing him to miss school. He understood that much at least, about the modern education system. That there would be a little more to it than just losing hands was not something Yami was going to point out- truthfully had Harry made such a transgression, it would be hard labour or several lashes with a whip unless it was a tomb he had been caught robbing. Dumbledore did not look particularly happy with the suggestion however.

“But Mr Potter did not steal anything,” he pointed out and this time Yami did turn his attention back to the man.

“Harry and his friends were going through another student’s personal items without permission. I do not see what difference it makes whether they took anything or not,” he snapped, for some reason feeling far angrier than before. As if… such a violation had once occurred to him. The thought was gone as quickly as it came, buried once more under the fog that served as his memories. Hidden once more in the labyrinth, even from him. “They violated Yugi’s privacy. Just because I am the one recounting the events to you makes no difference to their actions.” He let the silent message that he did not trust the man in front of him hang between them, a note that he would not endanger his partner to the likes of Dumbledore. That seemed to startle the Headmaster, who leant back, considering. Eventually, he let out a sigh.

“I will inform you Head of House of this infringement of the rules,” he said eventually and Yami nodded, allowing the phoenix to take off, giving him help in the lift-off by throwing up his arm as the bird ruffled its feathers, readying itself for flight. For a brief moment, an image of a falcon was overlaid that of the phoenix and then even that was gone once more.
“Good.” With that, he turned and left. There was nothing else for him to do here and his partner needed him. It did surprise him, however, when the phoenix followed, leaving the office with them. No doubt, much to the displeasure of Dumbledore.

None of the transfer students had spoken to them in a week, other than Atem who had bluntly given them a slip of paper, allowing the DC to go ahead and a room that McGonnagal had sanctioned for them. Their Head of House had also approached them the day before, bristling in anger and Harry’s heart had sank as he observed her pinched face.

“With me you three,” she snapped. Hermione immediately packed up her things, head hung low. Out of all of them, she had taken the cold shoulder the hardest, muttering that this was what they deserved for what they had done. They had invaded Yugi’s privacy and she seemed unsurprised that they were now in trouble. Harry, however, was incensed. They had been trying to help. Why should they be punished, for trying to keep a new friend safe? He would have thought Dumbledore would have understood after the disaster the year before had been with the fake Moody.

That the ghost could influence the Headmaster so, was chilling.

“Out of all the things!” McGonnagal started once they had reached her office. “Going through a fellow student’s luggage was not one of them! What on earth were you thinking?”

“We’re really sorry, Professor,” Hermione said miserably. “We really shouldn’t have-“

“But Yugi’s in trouble!” Harry insisted, and Ron nodded, agreeing. “Professor he’s being controlled by some kind of evil spirit!” McGonnagal eyed him sternly, her lips thin in anger.

“I’ve heard this story from Mr Menes already when he came to inform me,” she snapped. “I was also informed that it was not any of our business and that this ‘spirit’ was benign, attached to the object around Mr Mutou’s neck, not the boy himself.” Hermione flinched, and Ron blinked. Harry wasn’t particularly bothered- this only proved his point. That the spirit held too much power over them.

“And you’re just going to accept that?” Harry asked sharply.

“Mr Mutou is under the protection of the Tomb Keepers and, since his father’s unfortunate accident, the current leader of the Clans is the Prince, Atem Menes,” McGonnagal stated bluntly. “Their magic is old, complicated and, most of all, protected by the Egyptian Ministry. You are lucky that the Prince sees this as the act of a stupid teenager, rather than a malicious move by someone opposed to them. Do you understand, Mr Potter?” Harry stared but from the frightened gasp by Hermione, she had grasped what McGonnagal was getting at. “As it stands, you three will be serving detention with me for a week and you will lose fifty House Points each. I don’t think I have to make it clear that this sort of behaviour is unacceptable in Hogwarts. Be glad that I do not cancel your new club tonight!”

With that they were dismissed, ordered back to classes. The trip to History of Magic was made in silence.

The first meeting of Dagda’s Cauldron had only been mildly better. The transfer students did turn up but the only one who spoke to anyone in English was Ryou. Several Slytherins, who could only have heard from Marik or Akhefia, had spent the first hour sending them dirty looks between practicing the Disarming spell. It turned out that many members had been performing Expelliamus wrong for years, although the Slytherins were suspiciously good. A Ravenclaw girl named Ellen, who had a friend in Slytherin, had let it slip to Hermione that Snape taught certain students how to defend themselves but clamped up immediately afterwards, eyes wide in shock. Her friend didn’t seem to hold it against her, just gave them a defiant stare and Harry found himself wondering why Snape felt the need to give his House more of an advantage over them. No doubt, it had something
to do with the Death Eaters.

The last half an hour was spent listening to several students from pureblood families describe their home culture. Hermione spent that time scribbling away like mad, deeply interested, while Ron looked merely uncomfortable when discussing it. Fred and George were less so— the pair had become fast friends with Marik and Akhefia at some point and, when not messing with hard-line Slytherins, the teachers began to despair at the new additions to the prankster duo. They happily discussed the differences between Wizarding and Tomb Keeper culture, although Marik was oddly tight-lipped in certain areas. Atem gave a quiet word here and there about it, but they were relatively quiet overall. It was mostly more of a giant discussion rather than a teaching session. McGonnagal had come in for the end of the session, a proud expression on her face, clearly having put aside her earlier anger.

And now they were sat in detention with her. Harry had never had to serve detention with McGonnagal. It was certainly different to what he had expected. Unlike Snape, who had you clean up the Potions classroom, or Umbridge, who liked to have you carve into your hand, McGonnagal first insisted on homework being finished before setting a certain number of lines to be finished within the time. She also ensured that they would be back in the Gryffindor Common Room before curfew. And this was all done under her beady eyes, face displaying severe disappointment. Hermione, being the person that she was, finished early and was given extra work to be getting on with and Harry was told not to slack off when, noticing this, had attempted to slow down in his work. Ron had just sat in silence, other than to ask for help with the Transfiguration essay, which she acquiesced to easily.

It was strange. Like Snape, she seemed to have eyes in the back of her head.

“That’s enough for tonight,” she said when it hit half past nine. “Same time again tomorrow.”

“Professor,” Harry started but was cut off by a sharp look from his Head of House.

“If you are about to try to defend yourself again, Mr Potter, I believe I was crystal clear yesterday.” Harry frowned but decided that it wasn’t worth more detentions. He would rather serve with McGonnagal than Umbridge, but it was frustrating that they were being punished at all. Especially when the lines he was forced to write over and over again were, one does not go through another’s things.

“Harry now really isn’t the time,” Hermione muttered as they made their way back up to Gryffindor Tower, eyes on the floor.

“But Yugi’s-!”

“Yes, we know!” she snapped, “But think about it! The Ministry is in full investigation over corruption and at the head of that is the Egyptian Ministry. And McGonnagal told us that the current head of the Tomb Keepers is Atem, who is currently sheltering Yugi. What do you think he would do, if we continue like this? What do you think the Egyptian Ministry would do if they knew how we were treating someone under their protection?” Harry flinched, staring. It was one thing to be enemy number one of the British Ministry. He hadn’t really been thinking about foreign Ministries. Ron winced as well.

“Mione’s right. We met some of the Egyptian Ministry with Bill back before third year remember?” Ron said and Harry nodded. He had forgotten that. “Well, they’re not exactly the biggest fans of the British Ministry. They think that the Statute of Secrecy is rubbish and the wizarding world is crossed with the modern muggle world out there. I don’t really know about the Tomb Keepers, but if they work with them then I wouldn’t want to get on their bad side.” He grimaced as he thought. “It’s not as if they’ve forgotten all those curses their ancestors put on the tombs.”
And wasn’t that an ominous thought.

“But then how do we help?” Harry asked, frustrated.

“We don’t,” Hermione said simply. “We can’t. That artefact that the spirit is attached to is from Egypt— that’s probably why the Tomb Keepers are protecting Yugi. And if his grandfather was involved with them like that book suggested, then there’s not much we can do because what are three teenagers against international law?”

The rest of the trip to Gryffindor Tower was done in silence. In truth, Harry couldn’t think of any way that they could help their new friend. Whatever that spirit was, it had made it known that it was far from friendly, but since it wasn’t actively attacking them at this point either, he couldn’t prove that it was malicious. Unlike Quirrell, he didn’t think Dumbledore knew about it until it had stormed away in Yugi’s own body. He shuddered to think what noose it had wrapped around Dumbledore’s neck to prevent the Headmaster from doing anything. That Atem was apparently helping defend it was fishy though. The other boy hadn’t been looking well since the trip to Hogsmeade and it made Harry wonder what would happen if the Egyptian Ministry started to think that they were the cause of that.

It was not the most comforting of thoughts to send him off to sleep that night.

_Blood. He could smell blood as he slithered along the floor. Yes… yes, the Master would be pleased. It was here, he could sense it and no number of followers Dumbledore put in his path would stop him. Not after the Atlantean had made him practically invincible…_

_Harry stuck his tongue out, tasting the air. For a moment he caught sight of his reflection, a long sinuous body sliding silently through the halls of the Ministry. That was odd, wasn’t it? Why was he gliding along on his belly when he could simply stand up and walk? Footsteps echoed down the hallway and Harry slithered away, into the darker shadows. Unfortunately, the orichalcum seemed to only work on humans, not animals, so it was up to him to hide. Did he have to? No, but the fewer people who knew he had been here the better._

_The Unspeakable disappeared down the hall and Harry continued. There… yes, fresh meat. Harry had been promised a meal after all… It had been so long since he had last eaten, and he was so hungry…_

_Balding red hair fading to grey turned to face him just as he lashed out. Arthur Weasley’s cry was loud in the silent hallway and beyond him, just out of reach, was the very same corridor Harry had dreamt of for weeks. It was so close… But the human’s cries were loud, despite the venom now surely running through his veins and Harry stuck again, hissing._

_He truly was very hungry._

Harry woke with a yell, before leaning over his bed and vomiting violently, the taste of blood still strong on his lips. He could almost still feel the way Mr Weasley’s body had _crunched_ between his jaws… He shuddered and threw up again, vaguely hearing the shouts of his dorm mates, now back to their usual number.

“Harry!” Ron shouted, at his side in an instant. For a moment, all Harry could do was stare at him in horror as his friend rubbed his back, his hold probably the only thing preventing Harry from dropping off the edge of the bed and into the puddle of vomit below. “What happened?” This wouldn’t have been the first time Harry had woken him up from nightmares- it was the first to make him physically sick though.
“Y-Your Dad…” Harry couldn’t get more out, mouth clogged with the taste of bile and blood. His stomach heaved again but there was nothing left to bring up and he just ended up dry heaving instead.

“Harry?” Ron asked uncertainly, just as McGonnagal swept into the room, wand raised and casting light over the room.

“What is going on here?” she snapped, taking stock of the several students out of bed. Next to her was the pale figure of Neville, who most likely had run out to go get her. “Potter, Longbottom says you’re not well?” A wave of her wand quickly cleaned up the mess, but Harry shook his head, frantic now. Somewhere out there, Mr Weasley was dying, being attacked and devoured by a snake. A snake he had been…

He pushed that thought away, swallowing the fresh bile that tried to make its way up his throat.

“No, Professor, I-I have to see Dumbledore!” Harry cried, swaying as he tried to get up. Ron kept a steady hand on his shoulder, looking mildly alarmed. “Mr Weasley-!

“Is perfectly fine,” McGonnagal said, looking rather unimpressed. “You’ve had a bad dream. Now let’s get you down to Madam Pomfrey, some Dreamless Sleep I think…”

“No, I have to see Professor Dumbledore!” Harry insisted, even as she took a surprisingly gentle grip on his arm to help him along. “Please, it’s important! He’s dying!” McGonnagal gave him a stern look before letting out a frustrated huff.

“If this is another wild story,” she threatened, leading them out of the Tower and, thankfully, in the direction of the Headmaster’s office.

“I swear,” Harry panted, slightly lightheaded. He had no doubt that his Head of House would be sending him to the Hospital Wing either way, but so long as he knew that Mr Weasley was safe… He shuddered and wondered why she had caved so easily. He didn’t ask however, not wanting to test her patience any more than he had. He had seen more of McGonnagal this year than he ever had, what with the number of detentions and Umbridge sending him to her office.

Dumbledore was strangely awake at this late hour, although he was wearing a bright pink nightcap. He raised his head as they entered, Harry realising belatedly that Ron had followed them, his hand still keeping him somewhat upright. He felt bad that he had forgotten about him in whatever strange haze he was in- it was, after all, his father who was injured.

“Ah, Minerva, what can I do for you?” Dumbledore asked, taking in their small group.

“Mr Potter has had a nightmare, something involving Arthur Weasley,” she started but Harry cut her off.

“It wasn’t a nightmare! He was attacked, I saw it! He was somewhere in the Ministry and there was a snake that was trying to get something from there and it attacked him!” Silence fell over the room, McGonnagal disapproving, Ron giving his shoulder a reassuring squeeze and Dumbledore staring at him gravely. It was the Headmaster who broke it.

“Everard,” Dumbledore said, turning to one of the portraits on the Wall. “Would you go to your portrait in the Ministry? I believe Arthur was on duty tonight.” McGonnagal spluttered as the man in the painting disappeared, off to wherever it was in the Ministry Mr Weasley was.

“You don’t honestly believe-!”
“I believe it wise to check,” Dumbledore said, cutting her off. “Now, Harry, this dream. You said you saw the attack. As in standing aside? From above?” Harry swallowed and shook his head, trying to push back the feeling of slithering along the floor, considering which would become his victim. The unnamed female Unspeakable or the man at the end of the corridor.

“No, I… I was the snake.” He shuddered even just speaking the words. It felt wrong somehow. Dumbledore’s face was grave as he turned to another portrait.

“Dippet, if you wouldn’t mind getting Severus,” Dumbledore said just as the other portrait, Everard if Harry remembered correctly, sprinted back into his.

“They’ve found him!” the man shouted, sounding oddly out of breath for an animated painting. “He was bleeding out on the floor, but I shouted until I caught someone’s attention! They’ve taken him off to St Mungo’s!” Harry felt Ron stiffen behind him and he wasn’t sure which of them was more horrified. Ron, for knowing that his father truly had been attacked, or himself for having been an unwitting accomplice and spectator to the deed. Even McGonnagal went pale.

“Minerva, if you wouldn’t mind letting the other Weasley’s know,” Dumbledore said softly, suddenly no longer looking at Harry. “I’ll send a message to Molly and see if I can get hold of Bill. He and Mr Menes returned to Egypt this… well, yesterday morning on some business and it wasn’t clear when they would be back…” He trailed off as McGonnagal turned to leave, nodding her assent, when Snape was suddenly in the room. Harry wondered how he had gotten there so fast except…

“I will tell him,” Nofret said very quietly. “Baba and he will be back soon.” Dumbledore blinked at her, startled and even McGonnagal jumped slightly.

“And you are?” Dumbledore asked. It was the first time Harry had seen the Headmaster look truly alarmed. Had he not known about the ghostly girl? But how was that possible? Snape didn’t seem particularly perturbed, nodding as she turned, disappearing in silence on the spot, not even bothering to answer Dumbledore’s question. That, too, was a first. Harry had never seen anyone treat Dumbledore with anything other than respect, even if it was begrudgingly in Lucius Malfoy’s case.

“You don’t need to worry about her,” Snape said blithely. “Mr Weasley has been working with her and her sister for years.” That did not seem to please Dumbledore, who frowned deeply but said nothing. “What was it you wanted from me?”

“I believe it is time for Harry to learn Occlumancy,” Dumbledore said once McGonnagal had left. Ron had sat in one of the Headmaster’s armchairs, face pale. Harry might have joined him had the fact that the Headmaster not just suggested that he spend more time in Snape’s presence. The Potion’s Master didn’t look particularly pleased with that idea either.

“That will be near impossible,” Snape said with a sneer in Harry’s direction. “The boy doesn’t have the discipline for it.” Harry went to protest when Dumbledore gave Snape a stern look.

“Nevertheless, you will teach him.” There was a note of finality in Dumbledore’s tone, a fact that Snape seemed aware of as he ground his teeth. He then sniffed, probably wishing to argue but not able to stand up to the Headmaster, the coward.

“Fine,” Snape snapped, and Harry found himself being dragged out of the office so fast he wasn’t sure exactly when they had left. Harry tried to ask what Snape was supposed to be teaching him, but it was like talking to a brick wall. The Potion’s Master was moving at such a speed that they very nearly knocked Atem over when they reached the Entrance Hall, both he and a pale Bill half running towards the Headmaster’s office. The prince did stop however, when he caught the look on Snape’s
“What happened?” Atem asked, eyes narrowed. “Nofret said that Mr Weasley had been attacked.”

“Face, as did Bill. “What happened?” Atem asked, eyes narrowed. “Nofret said that Mr Weasley had been attacked.”

“How did she get there, and they get back so fast? Harry wondered, hoping that they would put a stop to… whatever this was.

“Yes, he’s been sent to St Mungo’s already. An attack by Nagini,” Snape said stiffly and Atem frowned, cocking his head to one side.

“Would they accept help from us? Snake bites are not such an uncommon occurrence for us, even those from magical ones.” This was said with a glance towards Bill who looked oddly touched but slowly shook his head sadly.

“I doubt anyone will think of that, and besides it’s the middle of the night. If you want, we can send word off in the morning?” Atem nodded in answer, face serious. It took Harry a moment to realise that the other boy had essentially just offered to take care of Mr Weasley better than the best healers in Britain. Then again, they did live in a country with far more deadly snakes than those that exist in Britain.

“So, what does Dumbledore want with Harry?” Atem then asked.

“He wants Harry to learn Occlumancy.” Bill let out a half-dignified snort of laughter before quickly covering it up with a cough. Atem merely raised an eyebrow, both clearly knowing what Occlumancy was. That they didn’t seem to believe him capable either was rather insulting.

“Sorry, but that… That sounds like a terrible idea,” Bill said with a faint embarrassed blush. “It’s nothing against you Harry but… you don’t exactly fit the state of mind needed for Occlumancy.” He paused and suddenly looked him over with an oddly critical eye. “Especially not tonight.”

“What would Harry need to learn Occlumancy for?” Atem asked, ignoring that comment, despite Harry desperately wanting to know what Bill meant.

“Because he was the one to sound the alarm about what happened to Arthur Weasley,” Snape said shortly. Silence fell once again, and Harry had had enough.

“Will someone please tell me what’s going on?” he asked, attempting to tear his arm out of the Potion Master’s grip. Weirdly, he couldn’t even get it to loosen. Atem blinked, startled.

“Occlumancy is a way to defend your mind,” Bill explained, looking surprised. “Snape’s one of the best Occlumens in the world, so you won’t find a better teacher but…” Once again Bill paused, looking mildly frustrated. “Harry, Occlumancy takes great skill and discipline to control your thoughts and create a barrier against those who want in. And considering what you’ve just witnessed, hell what you’ve had to witness these past few years… well, unless you’re doing it naturally it’s very unlikely that you’ll be able to master it any time this decade.” Harry blinked, still vaguely confused, but Atem clearly was not.

“Isn’t there anything else that you can do?” Snape shook his head.

“Not with Latin magic.” Harry blinked. What on earth were they talking about now? Whatever it was, no one seemed content to let him in on it as Atem merely sighed nodding.

“Bill… Go spend time with your family. Your mother will need you,” he said quietly, and Bill nodded, leaving quickly. Atem then turned back to Snape. “Meet us in your office in the evening, Saturday. I might have a way to rid Harry of this, if it's what I think it is.”
“If it’s Horcrux related, you would be right.” Harry didn’t know what a Horcrux was but going by the expression on Atem’s face he didn’t want to find out.

“Very well. Saturday.” And with that, he was gone.

Chapter End Notes

Ah, Dumbledore getting his comeuppance. This is what happens when you try to manipulate those who see right through you. In fact, writing Yami vs Dumbledore was great fun because no one ever calls Dumbledore out on his shit except, maybe, Snape about once. And that's only when he realises that Dumbledore has only been protecting Harry so that he can 'die at the proper moment'. At which point, I would be angry too. By the way, I am aware that Snape, at this point in time, doesn't technically know that Harry is a Horcrux in the HP canon, but I've tweaked it here for my own purposes. Just in case anyone was confused at the end and wondering how Snape knows this when Dumbledore only tells him after he's been cursed by the Marvolo ring.

Hi, Harry and your entitlement. Not getting you very far is it? He gets less frustrating later, I promise, but at this moment he's still demanding answers he doesn't deserve and pointing fingers where they don't belong. This is just a very rude awakening that he can't actually get away with everything that he wants to, because Dumbledore can't protect him and therefore lies the blame anywhere except on himself. It's kind of laughable that he thinks that everything going wrong is from Yami's influence when all Yami is doing is forcing Dumbledore to act within the school's own standards. Honestly, we needed someone to do this a couple decades earlier when Sirius somehow finds himself not expelled after deliberately trying to kill another student.

As for Occlumancy, I find it curious why people have Harry mastering it in other works. In certain situations, I would understand but here... no. The least likely time that Harry is going to master Occlumancy is Fifth through to Seventh Year. He's still pretty messed up from witnessing Cedric's death, he's just woken from a nightmare that turns out was real and is being demonised left right and centre by the Ministry. With all that going on, it's highly unlikely that canon Harry would ever be able to give the right kind of focus we know Occlumancy requires and pretty much impossible to do it in his sleep. That Dumbledore even suggests this makes me think that he knew it was doomed to failure and just didn't care. Much like how he somehow didn't notice that there was an imposter the year before when even Snape notices the ingredients for Polyjuice Potion goes missing.

But that's enough of my ranting. I hope you enjoy this chapter and I'll be back with the next instalment on 11th April!
Hey guys, dramatic title but have to add this from my phone. Updates are going to be incredibly slow as my poor ancient elderly computer has finally given up the ghost and I can’t afford a new one for a while! There may be a couple but until I can get my hands on a replacement to properly get back into writing there won’t be regular updates for a few months. My apologies for this I’ve been trying like mad to find a solution between finishing unit and starting a new job but I don’t have one just yet. I will take this notice down once I have a new computer so you will know when I have a new one and updates can become regular again.

End Notes

So... hope you enjoyed that! A few notes:

1) Historically Egypt has actually been floating around for about 5000 years, as the earliest date for the 'first' Pharaoh of the First Dynasty, Narmer, is dated to be around 3100 BC. So in that thought, Atem would be placed within these first formative years, which is fine because we don't have many names for early kings. Alongside this, there was only really one other major civilisation at the time in early Mesopotamia and while the Akkadian Empire (yes, that was a real thing) wasn't properly established this early, it falls within 500 years which in archaeological terms is within the acceptable range of uncertainty (allowing for 500 years each way of 3000BC). So I may have fudged history a bit but, Yugioh does too because it doesn't particularly work whether you use 5000 or 3000 years, looking at the timelines, location and attitudes.

2) I didn't intentionally start out to make Dumbledore manipulative but within this fic there is a greater emphasis on the political machinations of the wizarding world. This is something that I find interesting because, honestly, Dumbledore has done a number of shady things, including the use of Sirius and Snape. For example, psychologically, putting Sirius back in a house he was (theoretically because JK Rowling never goes into detail) abused and then eventually kicked out of and keeping him there for so long, is not good. And Snape... well, Snape is interesting because Rowling supposedly wrote him as heartless but if you look at his actions he really isn't- more a man who has lived a pretty terrible life and has to constantly hide behind a mask of what people think he is like, so we don't really know what Snape is like behind that. And Snape, out of all the Order, is going to be the one with the most political knowledge (and Bill but this is explained later).

3) Yes, yes I did use two names of Pharaohs for the Thief King and Atem's surnames. And yes, I used the fanon name for the Thief King with a small change in spelling but, then again, Atem is actually the name of an early Egyptian god from the early Dynasties (also spelled as Atum and is an offshoot of Ra). So, I took creative license with it.

4) My apologies for any Harry Potter continuity errors. As you can tell I have kind of re-written Bill's backstory/job and he is a bit OOC but, since we don't see Bill a lot in the books, I took creative license with him too. And for those interested, in terms of Yugioh this is set just before the Waking the Dragons Arc in case you missed the mini-hint ;) And yes, Dartz will turn up in this story. Later, but still there.
Anyways, pls read and review and I hope you have enjoyed this little taste of things to come. And my apologies that it starts off so slow.

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