Years have passed since the Pharaoh departed from this life and the world has seemingly moved on. That was until the Pharaoh's tomb, along with the Millennium Items were unearthed. You find yourself in the middle of a supernatural conflict only because you were at the wrong place at the wrong time. Unhinged and obsessed, both you and Seto Kaiba must now contend with a terrible power neither of you can control.
Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

A word of caution: This fanfic is intended for mature audiences over the age of 17 as it contains material that would be inappropriate for minors such as strong language, graphic depictions of violence, and adult content.

You wouldn’t say you were hungover. At the same time, your body was not very happy about trying to metabolize the sheer amount of alcohol you consumed at the party the night before. So while you weren’t hungover, you were not NOT hungover.

Oh gawd...

You seriously were not twenty-one anymore, that was for sure.

Judging from the lack of cars on North Avenue, you guessed that the other residents of Wicker Park had a similar night. As you pulled your car up into a spot next to the Starbucks, you briefly reached for some change before you remembered it was Sunday.

Many boasted that nothing could beat a summer near the Great Lakes and while the late morning air still was warm and summerlike, Memorial Day weekend had come and gone. You could already see several trees beginning to change color.

To further prove that the last remnants of summer were fading, you took note of the foreboding grey clouds that were rolling in from Lake Michigan in the east. More than likely it was going to bring in a cold front and autumn would officially begin for Chicago. The arrival of autumn meant one thing: Winter was coming.

Fantastic, you groaned as you rubbed your tired eyes and headed for the door of Starbucks. On the way in, you spotted a small dog tied up outside and took a moment to pet him (or her) before heading inside. You needed caffeine.

And water. Water would be absolutely amazing right now. Why had you not drank more water before you left?

After placing your order with the barista, you meekly asked for a cup of water. To pass the time while your caffeinated sugary concoction was being made, you perused the selection of energy drinks, yogurt parfaits, and various juices. You picked up a Defense Up and flipped it over to read the nutritional information.

It would help the not-not hangover, but was it worth the price? A quick check at the menu made you put the juice back in its proper spot. No. No it was not worth the price.

Ugh...Fuck grad school. You weren’t this poor during your undergrad! Then again, you amended, you had the GI Bill to fall back on while you were working on your undergraduate degree. That had been nice.

While waiting for your drink, you pulled out your phone to text your friend. Last night, you two had talked about wanting to see the Nameless Pharaoh Unearthed exhibit before it left the Field Museum.
You had made plans to go the next morning and get some lunch afterwards. Initially, you had figured your friend would forget, but you were awoken to a text at 8am, inquiring whether or not the plans were still on.

Hell yes they were! Effects of alcohol on your early to mid twenties body be damned!

*Just about to leave Starbucks. ETA in like, 20 mins.*

Your order was completed shortly after hitting the Send button. Before grabbing your drink, you took a long swallow from your water. The first few gulps of your overly caffeinated beverage was sheer bliss. You thanked the barista like they were your new lord and savior. Because, yeah. At this moment, they kind of were.

The barista calling out "Feel better” as you left let you know that they knew you looked as hungover as you felt. Not that you were actually hungover or anything....

Much to your chagrin, the dog was gone by the time you got back outside. While walking to your car, you could not help but frown. You were inside for about five minutes and in that time, the cloud coverage increased significantly.

You didn’t know much about meteorology, but those were some fast-moving clouds. Without a doubt, it was going to storm soon and you hoped that it would hold off until you got inside the museum. Especially because you were planning on parking further away from the Field Museum in order to avoid paying the ridiculous parking rates.

Honestly, you knew you probably should have bitten the proverbial bullet and called Uber or dealt with the CTA. However, you were not feeling like dealing with people until you had your coffee. So you drove, like the not NOT hungover moron you were.

You also wanted the convenience of slowly getting ready at your own leisurely pace. Dealing with the CTA meant it would take much longer for you to get to the Field.

Thankfully the Bears weren’t playing at home, or there would be no way you could get within five miles of the area.

By the time you were actually standing on the front steps of the Field Museum, you clicked your tongue impatiently while holding your phone to your ear and watching the darkening sky with a 'Don't even think about raining' stare. You immediately lost signal as soon as you got inside, so it was standing outside for you. Within the past half hour, the sky had darkened significantly and was now accompanied by a fog thick enough to cause the street lights to come on. With the wind beginning to pick up, the entire city of Chicago was beginning to look like Silent Hill and you just wanted to get inside before it started downpouring.

At least you had the foresight to grab your hoodie that had been sitting in the backseat of your car all summer. You were kinda lazy and kept forgetting to bring it inside.

You clicked your tongue once more as you listened to your friend’s voicemail. When prompted to, you began to talk. “Hi, it’s me. Just wondering where you are. I’m standing outside and would really rather not be right now. Hopefully you’re inside or something and can’t hear your ph’--”

A beep alerted you to the fact you were receiving an incoming call. Sliding your finger over to the Answer icon, you once more held your phone up to your ear. “Hey,” you greeted the aforementioned friend. “Where are you?”
As your friend apologetically said your name, you frowned. You had a feeling what was coming...

“I um...feel back asleep.”

You freaking knew it!

Mentally, you were screaming. Although your friend could not see your facial expression, you had already schooled your face to look as pleasant as possible. “Okay. Soo...did you still want to go see the exhibit today?”

You friend must have caught the fact you were trying to mask your annoyance. Or maybe you were just doing a really poor job of it. You didn’t know. In spite of your best efforts, your head still weird, making your thoughts all muddled. “I am really sorry. It’s looking super spooky out there. I am not feeling too great right now...I drank too much last night to really do this today.”

Although you wanted scream and rant over how you had woken up on time to shower, put enough makeup on to ensure you did not look like you spent your night haunting houses, and managed to get coffee before showing up relatively on time, you just managed to say, “Okay.”

“I really miss seeing you!” Your friend insisted. “You’re always so busy with school. So just let me know when you’re free and I’ll buy you dinner to make up for it.”

“Ohkay,” you said once again. You weren’t in the mood to deal with this right now, so you decided to lie. “Look, it’s starting to rain. I need to get going. I’ll text you.”

Once the conversation was over, you leaned against the railing of the giant steps leading up to the museum and sighed heavily. Running a hand through your hair, you watched as cars and taxis moved about the street while you debated whether or not to just go home.

Briefly you heard a snippet of a conversation to your immediate left. Out of curiosity, you tilted your head to look. While you didn’t understand what was being said, tones were almost universal and the guy sounded as pissed off as you were.

The man in question was tall and even on a Sunday afternoon, he was dressed very professionally. This was America and people towering above your petite frame never merited even a second thought.Yet the guy was more than tall, his presence was commanding. There was no other way to describe it.

You knew humans had a multitude of sixth senses with one of them being gaze detection or that innate ability to just know someone was looking at you. Whatever it was called. Either way, piercing blue eyes caught your own. Immediately, your gaze continued on as if you were merely scanning the crowd instead of gawking.

You could still feel his stare on you and you had two options: start going towards your car (and feel like an idiot) or head inside (and feel like an idiot). You got out of bed, made an effort, and were already here. So you opted for the latter of the options and headed up the stairs.
Chapter 2

WARNING: The rating on this story is rather accurate. While a lot of violence does happen in canon, I understand that it can be different to see violence in written form. I want to make everyone cognizant to that before proceeding with this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Surprisingly, the museum was rather dead for a weekend afternoon. You only had a few people ahead of you and to keep yourself entertained (while judging life choices others made), you secretly took a picture of someone wearing the ugliest leggings you ever saw as pants and sent a Snapchat to your friend. Not the friend that ditched you, of course. Another friend.

While typing, you sensed someone behind you and as you briefly turned around to look, you mentally groaned. *Fuck my life, it's that guy.*

Honestly, he looked as serious as a heart attack. Sooo not hot.

Returning to your message, you finished being a judgmental bitch and by the time you hit send, you were at the front of the line. “I’m military,” you explained while pulling out your expired military. “Do you offer discounts to any of the ticketed exhibits?”

The cashier looked at the ID before back at you sympathetically. “I’m sorry, it’s only for basic admission and soldiers who are currently Active Duty”

“No worries,” you said while sliding your ID back in your wallet. You then pulled out both your debit card and student ID. It was worth a try.

“Could I have a ticket for the pharaoh exhibit?” You glanced over at the tour times and decided on the 1:30pm tour.

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You should wear a sign that said ‘I will always be about 5-7 minutes late because it is who I am as a person’ just so others would not do anything silly, like have high expectations of you. After your tenure in the military was over, it was like your brain rebelled against the idea of come early and wait--where you were required to show up at least a half an hour early to something and stand around at parade rest, with your hands behind your back and feet about ten inches apart--for at least thirty-five minutes.

After presenting your ticket, you decided to listen to the sign and silence your phone. You weren't *that* much of a rebel.

“Bringing a sweatshirt was smart,” the elderly ticket-checker observed while you rummaged through your purse to find your phone. “It’s really cold in there.”

By then, your phone was in your hand. With the crappy signal you were getting, you just decided to just put the thing in Airplane Mode to try to save on the battery. “I actually didn’t even think about that,” you admitted as you absentmindedly put your phone in your back pocket. You then put on your hoodie and rolled the sleeves up just a little.
“I think I am going to heed your warning. Thanks for the head's up!” you politely called. The Midwestern politeness was strong in you.

“Of course,” the woman replied with a smile to match your own. “Enjoy.”

Making a sound of affirmation, you opened the door to the exhibit and stopped to read the introductory text about the Nameless Pharaoh.

...Ruled during the New Kingdom, presumed to be son of Akhenamkhamen...Unknown for how long he ruled...Only part of his name was present on the Abydos Kings List...Was succeeded by Set, who was originally believed to be one of the Seti's...

After you finished reading, you briefly glanced over at one of the many maps that highlighted the capital city of Thebes before moving on. Your later arrival made it so that you did not have to awkwardly try to read a display without two or three people next to you, doing the same thing.

Wandering around and reading what caught your interest, you peaked in the second room to see a crowd around a large stone that held a slot for seven objects. Briefly, you paused to examine it, but decided to wait until the crowd thinned a little bit before investigating.

A few more minutes passed as you decided to read the displays you initially were not that interested in. Eventually, you turned to head to the next room when you felt an intense heat. Without thinking, you shut your eyes and threw your hands over your head in a brace position. This was so your arms could shield your head and face. There was a second wave of heat before you heard an ear-splitting noise that sliced through the air.

Your muscles tensed automatically and you held your breath while your brain was trying to make sense of the current situation. It was not until your body propelling backwards did you realize what was happening

*Explosion*...

And then you knew no more.

You were not sure how long you were unconscious for, or even if you had been unconscious. However, when you regained some awareness, your senses were perforated by the smell of smoke that was accompanied by the smell of blood, death, and internal organs on the outside of the human body. The smell hit you in full-force and you did your best not to gag.

_Air--I need--_

This was all too familiar. Muscle memory attempted to move you into a prone position, but your immediate fight-or-flight response was overridden by your sense of logic.

This was not Afghanistan, you reminded yourself. You had no weapon and moving right now might mean certain death. Your body had been thrown, that much was evident. Slowly you became cognizant of the fact that if there was smoke, there would be smoke alarms. Yet, all you could hear was high-pitched ringing. Tinnitus. You resisted the urge to reach for your ears, or anywhere on your body to check for bleeding. This was not Afghanistan. You were not the medic anymore.

You had been trying to breathe as slowly and steadily as possible, but your lungs were burning. With a cough and what you let out what you assumed to be a loud wheeze. Your body further betrayed you by attempting to gasp for oxygen only to continue to sputter and wheeze as your lungs filled with dust and smoke instead of fresh air.
Icy hands grabbed your face and jerked you into an upright position. Without even thinking, your eyes shot open. You roughly bit the bottom of your lip to keep from crying out in pain. It was funny how adrenaline worked, you were probably severely injured but could not feel the viscous warm of blood to even attempt to assess your injuries. Yet the moment someone pulled your hair, it was the worst pain imaginable.

“Knew...alive....” Was all you could make out over the ringing. One frigid hand moved under your chin to tilt your head up. “Lo...at...e...”

The only thing you could think about was being able to take that next labored breath. With animalistic desperation, your eyes darted around for some kind of escape. That is when they met the gaze of your captor. A golden eye stared back at you in place of a second eye. Blood seeped down the man’s face and already, you could see angry red skin—your medical mind quickly went over the steps of how to combat that type of inflammation—surrounded that golden eye.

While you were not the most perceptive, it was obvious what had happened: the man took the eye that had been in one the display case and put it in his own eye socket.

You did not even have a moment to comprehend the frustration of losing your hearing. You had to tell yourself that thinking ‘Har har, this must be what Archer feels like’ was grossly inappropriate for this situation.

Instead of revulsion, you felt an intense curiosity at why a man would mutilate himself over an Ancient Egyptian artifact. The moment your vision landed on the golden eye, the object illuminated and immediately, it was as if the world had been on Pause and someone suddenly hit the Play button. You became keenly aware of the pain your body was in; there was definitely something wrong with your leg and your arms and hands were bleeding. More than likely, the latter was a defensive injury that spared both your face and eyes. Your purse was missing from your shoulder and you could feel the area the shoulder strap had been was irritated.

With the newfound awareness came your hearing. An unwelcome return, however, as the sound of chaos from around you made you aware of how helpless you were in this man’s grip. Your mind and body were in fight-or-flight and you were desperately trying to survive.

Suddenly, it was as if a spell was broken. Your body jolted upwards before it spasmed. As you toppled forwards, the man released the hold on your hair and pushed your limp body backwards into another before turning and disappearing from your sight.

A strangled grunt was the only reason you knew that the man below you was still alive.

You coughed from the sudden movements and the ever-present acrid smoke and debris that clung in the air. Swatting away the dust, you moved to a kneeling position and looked down at the person who broke your fall.

Slowly, the man opened his eyes and attempted to get into a kneeling position as well. You reached out and attempted to steady him. The medic in you wanted to instruct him to stay on his back, but this was not Afghanistan. You were not the medic. That and your throat and airways burned too much to attempt to talk.

Instead, he looked directly at you and after making eye contact, you coughed once more from surprise. What is going on with his eyes? The iris flickered between blue to silver before the entire surface of both of his eyes shifted from red to green to violet, yellow, and several more colors each second as if you were looking into a prism instead of at someone’s eyes. All the while, you could see...
your own distorted reflection in each orb. It was as if his eyes were reaching out towards you in an attempt to capture your soul.

A cold chill ran down your spine and the spectacle was over. His irises seemingly returned to normal, with silvery motes, giving them a refractive glimmer.

Under normal circumstances, you would say, “Fuck this” and get out of dodge in order to save yourself. There was something—perhaps your conscience—that compelled you to stay. Instead of fleeing, you attempted to find your voice and managed to croak out a question. “Can you stand?”

In disasters, somehow, people were able to show the greatest strength and compassion. You pondered this as you helped the man up in spite of your right leg jittering in protest. If he noticed the blood still seeping from your freshly injured hands, he made no indication it bothered him.

When you were both in a standing position, you swallowed against the hoarseness of your throat. In fires, you were supposed to crawl, not walk towards an exit. Yet, the idea of being any closer to the remains of casualties was not appealing.

After a few labored steps, your leg felt like it was ready to snap from underneath you. As it buckled, the man steadied you until the spasms in your leg subsided. Nodding at him, he kept one arm around your shoulder in support as you both limped towards the emergency exit sign. In spite of all the dust and smoke, the letters severed as a beacon that promised an escape.

As suddenly as it began, the intense heat of the room was replaced with cold air. As your lungs filled with fresh oxygen, you once more began to cough. Yet, your companion still held you upright even as he too, began to cough in an attempt of the body to rid itself of the inhaled smoke and debris.

“Thank you,” you managed to choke out once your coughing ceased. Your eyes burned and nearly everything hurt, but you were alive. Closing your eyes, you allowed your body to lean against the stranger for support. In fight-or-flight, the sympathetic nervous system activates to release enough energy to push one's body to the limit, in order to survive. Once one got to safety, exhaustion usually followed.

Even with the panicked shouts and wail of sirens from all around you, you were tired. You were even tired enough to temporarily forget about the world and pass out on this stranger’s overly expensive (and now ruined) blazer as if it were were your favorite pillow.

Your eyes wearily opened to register approaching paramedics and stretchers. The stranger urged you in the direction of the closest one. “I got her,” the paramedic assured even as he moved to keep a hold of you.

While the paramedics placed you on the stretcher, you nearly shot up in panic as you watched the stranger collapse to the ground. You were urged to a laying position but did not take note of what was being said until a team of paramedics reached him as well.

By now, the adrenaline that had been urging you forward was gone and all that was left was the cold, hard reality of your situation. You were clearly injured, your purse was gone, and the anguished groans of the other injured and dead museum patrons would not fade away from your memory any time soon.

You sensed a familiar weight in your back pocket. On the bright side, at least you had your phone.

Chapter End Notes
The Millennium Eye has been used to trap and transport souls. So I think when combined with the some Duel Monster cards it could produce some interesting results)
*evil cackle*
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

I know a lot of writers and readers view flashbacks as a lazy way to convey important information. Yet, I wanted to write the explosion scene from Seto’s point of view since Reader had a convenient case of tinnitus.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Just relax,” one of the many doctors Seto Kaiba had seen within the past several hours began. “I’m going to explain to you what is going to happen. I’m going to slide you into the chamber and pressurize the oxygen, so it gets into your body. You inhaled too much fumes and your body replaced the oxygen in your Red Blood Cells with carbon monoxide and is preventing oxygen from reaching important tissue and organs.”

Seto had heard all of this before and the perpetual throbbing in his head was making him lose his patience with all the medical personnel. There was so much that he needed to do, yet he could not do any of it unless he was healthy. So he had to bear it for now and nodded along at the appropriate moments during the explanation.

As the gurney was slide into the glass Hyperbaric Chamber, Seto allowed his eyes to close. Yet, he could not relax. His mind was too active and no matter what he did to occupy himself, his mind kept replaying the events of the past twenty-four hours.

Specifically, his mind honed on a span of no more than five minutes:

He could not fully comprehend what had just happened, or maybe he just did not want to. The alarms, the anguished cries. His world had gone dark and all he could feel was heat in his lungs and pain. Immense pain. Opening his eyes, Seto lifted a hand to shield his vision from the smoke and debris.

Attempting to move, Seto became keenly aware how heavy his entire body felt, particularly his left side. He realized then that with it, he felt pain. His entire left side felt bruised and burned against his ruined clothes. The pain creeped from his hip and right into his chest and into his lungs. As he struggled to breathe, his heart pounded painfully in his chest, adrenaline surging through his system.

Grunting, Seto managed to roll onto his back. He held his hand closer to his eyes as he slowly began to clean them. Closing them once more, Seto quickly assessed the situation and the best course of action to ensure he would be able to escape. The initial blast and ensuing shockwave created a depressurized force that in turn, created a blast wind from air rushing into the void created from the depressurization...

He recalled all too vividly the sensation of his body being hurled backwards as a result of that blast wind. The words barotrauma and edema echoed through Seto’s mind as he recalled the numerous lessons drilled into him by his predecessor, but that lesson did not resonate as much as psi and atmospheric pressure. After all, weapon manufacturers cared more about the chemistry and engineering behind their product. Their effects on human life were almost inconsequential by
comparison.

Oh right, he thought dimly through the fog of his mind. He should focus more on surviving instead of thinking about chemistry and atmospheric pressure.

Reaching out his hand, Seto began to feel around his surroundings tentatively in an attempt to avoid broken glass and fellow casualties when he heard it. Somehow, through the sounds of the chaos around him, Seto could hear people talking.

A macabre drumbeat

“Hekau,” a loud rumbling voice pierced through the noise in spite of the sound of the respirator the man wore. Seto felt himself stiffen at that. It was Coptic for magician, after all. “One of the Nameless Pharaoh’s priests.”

Seto turned his head to see three figures moving through the wreckage as if they were mere apparitions. The only indication of the fact they were among the world of the living was the respirators each one of them wore. A glimmer caught Seto’s attention as he noticed each one of them wore a Millennium Item.

More accurately, two of the three of them held an item, blood trickled down the man’s face; the hole where his left eye used to be was replaced by the Millennium Eye. He guessed that the duffel bag one of them carried contained the other four items.

“They’ll kill him,” the wielder of the Key dismissed as she aimed her gun.

“The gods have saw fit to place him here and spared his life. He was meant to survive this day,” the owner of the Eye replied.

The woman considered these words as she lowered her gun slightly before turning towards the last member of their entourage as if deferring to his authority.

“The magic of old should be both feared and respected,” the final one, the wielder of the Scales added. “Three millennia ago, his ilk bent even the gods to their will. His survival is danger for us all and I advise killing him before he becomes a problem.”

“Whatever you do, do it quickly before emergency responders arrive,” the wielder of the Key advised before turning.

Seto wanted to laugh at the entire situation. Here he was, helpless and injured and at the mercy of objects that he had spent years distancing himself from. The one time--the ONLY TIME--he had decided to give in to the mild curiosity he had about this exhibit, he was thrust right back into this madness.

“My compatriots make a very valid point. Kaiba Seto of the Kaiba Corporation surviving could become...inconvenient Yet, your survival seems more advantageous than you dying pathetically in our little stint.”

To add to the absurdity of the entire situation, a body next to him stirred momentarily before falling limp after only a moment. Even if it was not a post-mortem reflex, this room was more than likely to become their tomb.

Quite ironic, really.

Seizing Seto up, the older man attempted to fight only to inhale more smoke. Fingers reached out
and seized a broken piece of glass that pierced his skin, causing warm blood to drip down his hand. It was a feeble weapon, but even a feeble weapon could be deadly if used correctly.

Swinging the glass in a forward motion, Seto set his target on the one remaining eye that did not even flinch. The jagged glass stopped centimeters from the assailant’s face as Seto’s wrist was seized.

“Drop it,” the holder of the Eye instructed calmly before jerking Seto’s wrist sharply to the side. Age and years of neglecting to keep his body in the same physical condition as when he was a teenager who played soccer and practiced karate competitively put him at a severe disadvantage. His fingers opened and the glass fell to the floor unceremoniously.

The man who possessed the Millennium Eye used his free hand to loosen the straps on his gas mask and fixed Seto with an intolerant smile.

He could not just sit there like a scared little kid who was being bullied. In one last attempt, Seto sought to use his free hand to make a fist and throw a punch. In spite of his taller stature and accuracy, Seto’s punch still fell short. The man quickly seized Seto and wrapped his spare hand around Seto’s neck, shoving him backwards into a wall.

Of course, Seto thought. Mind reader. He should have seen that coming.

Seto tried to look away from the golden light that poured from the Millennium Eye, but was transfixed as the light engulfed both Devil's Mirror and himself. He shuddered as his eyes began to become itchy, growing to a burning pain in his skull. The searing pain focused further and with a shameful cry, the hand was released from his throat and Seto stumbled to his knees.

It felt like acid had been poured into his eyes! The pain made his vision go dark and all he could do was hold himself upright and clench his jaw together as he struggled to remain conscious. Through it all, he overheard coughing from what he presumed to be a corpse.

As much as he tried to ignore it, his sense of hearing honed in on what the terrorist was saying. “I knew you were alive.”

He was Kaiba Seto, one of the most powerful men in the world. He would not be weak and die here!

As the pain began to dissipate, Seto registered a weight thrust at him, only to roll off a moment later. Willing his eyes open, Seto moved into a kneeling position and looked at you As you attempted to steady him, Seto moved away. He did not want to be touched.

At that moment, his gaze met yours and all he could see was his own distorted reflection in your eyes. They had been one color a second prior, he knew that much for sure. Yet, it was as if he was staring at the surface of a prism before your eyes settled on a silver, hue. Like the surface of a polished mirror. Seto felt like those quicksilver irises were beckoning him closer. It made him want to pull away, but he found himself unable to.

In spite of the heat, a cold chill ran down his spine. He needed to get out of here. He needed to get out of here and call Mokuba. Then he could figure out the rest later. Friendship and comradery was not something Kaiba Seto was used to. When he noticed how you were unable to walk on your own, Seto’s first instinct was to allow you to just crawl.

As far as he could tell, there were no other survivors. Perhaps it was the need to ensure he was not the sole survivor or to avoid bad press by abandoning a woman. He recognized you as the young
woman who caught his attention earlier when he was on the phone outside of the museum. Whatever it was, Seto found himself putting his arm around your shoulders as a support.

Once you two emerged from the smoke and into the cool rainy outdoors, Seto did not think of letting his hold on you go. It was the need to prove that he was not weak, Seto reasoned. That, and it had been so long since he has last been with a woman, much less been this close to another. Even as he spotted the paramedics and firefighters approaching, he was reluctant to let you go.

As the machine beeped several more times, signaling the session was over, Seto was pulled from his memories. He waited until one of the nurses operated the gurney. As soon as he was able to, Seto sat up and was surprised at how his head no longer had the dull ache it possessed minutes earlier.

“We were able to get in touch with your brother,” the nurse informed Seto as she folded the wheelchair in the room up and placed in it the corner. Hospital policy was to transport patients on wheelchairs, but when there was a VIP patient, some policies could be overlooked.

“And?” Seto promoted as he followed the nurse back to his room.

“I was not the one who spoke to Mr. Kaiba,” the nurse replied, slightly flustered as Seto shot her a look of irritation that clearly weighed her worth. “I’m sorry...I just know that he is en route to O’Hare right now.”

Seto nodded in satisfaction at that. Continuing down the hallway unassisted was a continued effort. He was pleased to note the lack of patients or hospital staff in the hallway. While Seto did not want to shut down an entire wing of a hospital or create a disruption for the day to day functions, certain precautions needed to be taken to ensure that he was able to maintain privacy and the hospital could adhere to all federal privacy laws.

As he passed by a patient room, Seto took note that the door was slightly ajar. While it was not unusual, he shifted his gaze over to try to peer into the room as he passed by. He ignored the compulsion he felt to double back into the room.

His brain was still affected by the smoke inhalation, he dismissed. The machine didn’t work so well after all.

Chapter End Notes

If you've read this far, hopefully this story is mildly enjoyable. If you're down with that sort of thing, leaving a comment or kudos is always appreciated.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Gratuitous smut ahoy!

Chapter Notes

I am not going to lie, I have been nervously staring at the Post button for a lot longer than I need to. I'm pretty nervous about this chapter.

The sun shone bright enough to make the endless sand glow like limestone. You had no intention of venturing underneath the Egyptian sun's intense rays. Instead, you chose to linger alongside a pillar that held up the hypostyle hall. Yet the shade could not keep you cool and the more you stared out at the colorless barren sands of deshret, you slowly became aware of how fatigued your body felt.

Turning, the skirts of your diaphanous gown swished about your feet as you moved towards your rooms. Your handmaidens hurried after you when they realized their charge was no longer where they last saw her.

You moved to lay on your bed that was made out of wooden slate plaited reeds. They held soft woolen cushions soft to the touch. You took a deep breath in and allowed the scent of fresh herbs to fill your senses before slowly exhaling and closing your eyes.

Unaware of how much time passed, your mind jerked into alertness when heard scrape of leather sandals on the stone floor. They came to a halt next to you. Now that he was closer, you began to recognize the familiar scent of incense used by the court priests. Calloused fingers began at the back of your neck and traced their way down the curve of your exposed back.

You could not help but squirm when those hands caused a shiver of frisson to run up your spine. “Have I disturbed you, wife?” your husband’s voice whispered into your ear. It had taken you time to become accustomed to his mannerisms. Initially, you would have taken his tone for sarcasm. Now you have come to recognize it as him being playful.

“Husband,” you greeted impishly without turning your head towards him. “I am the one who hopes my penchant for laziness is not too bothersome.”

When your husband did not reply, you turned your head to meet the stony blue eyes of Set, priest of the god-king and wielder of the Scepter of a Thousand Years.

Instead of replying, Set’s lips captured yours as his arms drew your body closer to him. While his skin was uncomfortably warm, this type of heat did not bother you as much as the unrelenting environment of your adopted homeland.

When your lips parted, you felt the mattress dip as Set lowered himself next to you. He regarded you
with a contemplative gaze. Once more, his fingers reached out and traced the line of your jaw as if you were one of the pieces to the senet puzzles he loved so much and he was trying to figure out what to do with you. “Have you been happy here?”

“Have I been happy…?” you repeated unsure of how to exactly answer that question.

Your husband was not one to repeat himself and fixed you with a look that told you that this topic would not be dropped.

After careful consideration, you responded. “I would be more happy if Ra deigned to drive his solar discs a little closer to the heavens instead of the earth. I have lacked for nothing. Except…”

Leaning forward, you kissed the spot just below his ear before traveling upwards to nibble softly on his ear, eliciting a low groan from Set. “Except for this,” you finished as your breath warmed his ear. “Now if my husband could stop talking about such trivial matters and put his tongue to better use.”

You almost missed his bemused smile; you blinked and it was gone. “How brazen of you,” he purred. “I am not quite sure what has gotten into you to make you so forward…”

That earned him a derisive snort.

Since Set was in no hurry to do anything, you took the opportunity to move over and place a leg on either side of him. “You know what got into me,” you replied as you meet his lips in a slow kiss. Once you broke it, you finished. “You did. And now you have to deal with the consequences…”

Briefly, Set’s hand grazed over your belly that was only now beginning to swell with your unborn child. The affectionate moment was short-lived because his hands moved to your hair and slid over your back before he pulled you closer to him, allowing your bodies to press together. Grinding your hips against him, you were reminded at how sensitive the pregnancy had made you.

As garments were hastily removed, Set’s lips twitched slightly in a dark smirk. “The consequences?” he asked. Pinning you down on the wool mattress, he rubbed himself against your outer lips. You shut your eyes in a mix of agony and pleasure. “Like this?”

“It’s cruel to tease…”

“Sometimes cruelty can be juxtaposed with pleasure,” Set replied before entering you only slightly, much to your chagrin. Your body wanted more.

You wrapped your hands around his neck and your next mewl of pleasure was muffled by your mouth pressing into his. You choose to take that moment to strike.

Sliding your wrists over, you wrapped your hands around him before rolling to place yourself on top of him. You suspected that he allowed you to execute that maneuver, but were not going to dwell too much on that. Not when you felt his cock inside you as you began to ride him. The heat and pleasure overrode any other thought as your body began to reach its pinnacle. You slowed down and gripped your husband’s shoulders when you felt your muscles tighten around him.

You momentarily paused your pace while you rode out your orgasm. Set grabbed your buttox and thrust deeply into you several times before you felt his release.

Moving off of him, you two lay entwined in each other and entangled in the linen of the bed. After he fully caught his breath, Set slipped his arm around your waist and moved to rest his head on your breasts. “I’m here for whatever you need, consequences and all.”
“Consequences and all....”

“Not again,” you groaned while staring up at the florescent lighting. You sunk further into the lumpy hospital pillow in hopes that punishing yourself would make the content of the dream fade away. Especially that last bit. Who says something that cringe-worthy?

It has been nearly a day since the attack and sleep was fleeting. The little time you could get was interrupted by being poked and prodded by the constant flow of medical personnel checking in on you. Or wanting to take you for some test, or wanting more information on how to reach an emergency contact.

And of course, you were woken up by detectives from the good ole Chicago Police Department to question you on yesterday’s events. Something told you that you should probably not answer anything without an attorney present. Then again, attorneys were for fancypants who could afford one. So you answered the questions. A few hours later, you were visited by the FBI, which was awesome. All of this was just awesome.

Especially the bit where you could not tell anyone the whole story. Part of you was questioning whether or not it actually happened. Your brain was not exactly in an oxygen rich environment and it could have just been making shit up.

You used to dream of smoke and the smell of blood caked on the landscape around you. The dream was so vivid that the pungent odor was strong enough to choke on. And as always, the drill of the helicopter's rotors would come too late. Now your dreams were always of that guy. While you had only a vague recollection of each dream, they were always different. You might have been a queen or something at one time. Then there was getting married to someone whose name you didn’t know, and now Dream You got it on with Dream Him in ancient Egypt or whatever. What remained the same was that whenever you awoke, there was that yearning and wanting to rip out your IVs and go on some wacky adventure to find him like you were trapped in the plotline of a bad romantic comedy.

The change was welcome, but nonetheless it was absolutely ridiculous! You spent a total of two--maybe even three whole minutes with the guy! This fixation with a complete stranger was beyond irrational. In fact, it was completely crazy!

Yet you could not get him out of your head...

Maybe if you claimed extreme and sudden pain, they would give you some hardcore narcotics. That would fix your subconscious’ little red wagon, get you stoned off your ass, and allow you to fall into a dreamless slumber. Future opiate addiction be damned, your idea seemed almost flawless.

Glancing over at your phone, you resisted the urge to look up any news about what happened yesterday in hopes of learning a little bit about the guy.

But that was absolutely stalker-like you reasoned. You also did not want to see how many people were injured or killed. As much as you wanted to learn more about the man of mystery, you could not handle such grim news.

Self-control was not your strong point. Especially since you needed to use your phone to call the city to once again, let them know you were a victim of the bombing at the Field Museum. Then you
would have to tell them that you would totally appreciate it if they did not ticket or tow your car since your only spare key was in a locked house you did not currently have the keys to. Just unlocking it would make the temptation to go full stalker mode too great.

Needing to distract yourself from your phone, you decided to focus on how miserable you felt. You were told that you might be discharged either tomorrow morning or afternoon, depending on the result of a few tests. You had not showered or brushed your teeth since the bombing. You were not unfamiliar with roughing it. During the service, when doing a field training exercise, your only access to hygiene products were a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, baby wipes, and dry shampoo. Even with that in mind, you never felt so filthy. You were mildly surprised that you weren’t staining the hospital's pristine white sheets by just glancing at them.

Of course, with your IV administering its plethora of medication, you were barred from showering. You needed assistance to just use the bathroom since you were still unsteady on your leg. That and moving left you feeling out of breath. Smoke inhalation was fun like that.

Physically, you were already feeling a lot better. The thought of capping your own IV for like, three minutes while you hastily washed up sounded absolutely amazing. Glancing at the wall clock you figured it was probably close to shift change and the nurses were giving reports. Which meant that they would be awhile if you pressed the call button and waited for assistance like a good little patient.

Well, you were not one for rules.

“Leeeeroy Jeeenkins,” you drawled as you capped each IV port. Ignoring the alarm that was sounding, you carefully stood up and held on to the bed railing until you felt confident enough to make your way to the ensuite bathroom.

You only had a few minutes and quickly decided that you could brush your teeth after you ruined the beginning of a nurse’s shift. Which would happen as soon as one discovered you managing your own IVs. So you opted for a sponge bath and quickly trying to wash your hair. Except with paper towels in lieu of actual sponges. And soap instead of actual shampoo. The soap was going to dry the ever-living hell out of your hair, but it was better than nothing.

Turning the water on, you began to load some paper towel with soap. While waiting for the water to warm up, you finally decided to stop being a wimp and look see just how terrible your face looked. After everything, you could just imagine that your face looked like a horror show...

“What the FUCK?!”

You did not mean to shout, but it slipped out as soon as you saw your reflection. Thanks to the fact you had braced yourself and covered your head during the explosion, your face was unmarred. Yet, there was one thing very different about your reflection. Your irises were now a liquid silver, like the surface of the mirror reflecting your horrified expression.

Chapter End Notes

It wasn't Kaiba, but hopefully a dream Priest Seth/Set/Seto is fine too. =p~
I have a constant need for validation, so if you want to hit that kudos button, you have no idea how freakishly happy that would make me. If you're really bold, a comment would be just as well. Also, if you're so inclined, you can hit me up on tumblr for headcanons/prompts/asks/tell me to get off Tumblr and Reddit in order to write more. I'm http://xoxo--me.tumblr.com/
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Since I have more than one POV character, I also wanted to note that the American characters use the First Name + Last Name form of address when thinking of anyone, but the Japanese characters will be using the Last Name + First Name when thinking about or referring to other native Japanese characters. If that makes sense?

While a lot of the honorifics are known throughout the fandom, I did use the honorific -tachi. I hated typing ‘Yugi’s friends’ ad nauseam and thought that the honorific was a good shortcut. Basically a name with -tachi at the end indicates group of people. So Yugi-tachi would be referring to the group of people Yugi n’ pals.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Seto had arranged for some of his belongings to be brought to the hospital. So when Mokuba hurried into his older brother’s hospital room, expecting the worst, the younger Kaiba sibling was surprised to see Seto, wearing loose fitting loungewear and casually sitting up in bed, typing on his laptop.

Then again. Mokuba reflected, he should not be so surprised. His brother was the paragon of perfection and succumbing to illness or injury was reserved for lesser mortals. More than anything, Mokuba was in awe to see his brother looking so relaxed, as if he was not caught up in a bombing less than two days prior. Even so, this was Kaiba Seto and things of that nature no longer phased him.

Upon Mokuba’s entrance, Seto looked up from his monitor. The moment he caught his brother’s gaze, Mokuba momentarily drew back.

“What happened to your eyes?”

Seemingly unconcerned, Seto finished up what he was doing before closing the screen on his laptop. “I have an appointment with an ophthalmologist to get fitted with colored contacts.”

“That’s not what I asked, nii-sama!” Mokuba protested before trying again. “Your eyes...How...How did that happen?”

Once more, Seto's s gaze went from his laptop screen to his brother. Something dark flickered across those silvery eyes. Frustration or uncertainty, Mokuba assumed. For someone like his nii-sama, those two emotions went hand-in-hand.

Seto was already on the defensive and whatever secret he had, Mokuba knew it would be counterproductive to even try to drag an answer out of Seto.

Mokuba knew better than to ask how Seto was doing or make a fuss. Seto did not appear to be in a sharing mood and would probably stonewall Mokuba if he even tried. His brother had been involved in a bombing and he was acting nonchalant about it. Granted, it was not the worst that happened to them, but Mokuba had to swallow his own frustration and let this go. For now.
So he changed from one unpleasant topic to the next.

“Yugi hasn’t been answering anyone who is trying to contact him. When I heard about what happened...at the museum, I sent him a message on Facebook. It’s still unread.”

“I’m well aware of that,” Seto replied in a clipped tone. He paused and as if realizing the harshness of his voice before he repeated himself in a more gentle tone. “I know, Mokuba. Moutou was the one who was so adamant on seeing me during my trip here. Yet he never deigned to show up or answer my calls. I have been wondering what was going on. I guess now I know.”

While Mokuba was curious on what exactly prompted Seto to see the exhibit without Yugi, Mokuba thought he knew what the answer would be: Seto was already there and would not have wanted to waste the trip.

Seto studied his brother’s face momentarily before continuing. “I already told what I knew to all the law enforcement agencies,” he said. “That includes the failed field trip with Yugi. I am curious how you found out about it.”

“Shizuka,” Mokuba replied. It was more complicated than that; Shizuka had contacted Mokuba after she heard the news from her brother. Jounouchi had been bothered that Yugi never replied to his messages and contacted Anzu in New York. Apparently Yugi had moved to New York with Anzu? Mokuba didn’t know. In any case, when Jounouchi contacted Anzu, she admitted that she was just as concerned since she had not heard from Yugi since his flight landed in O’Hare.

The only reason Mokuba was in contact with Kawai Shizuka was because of the unlikely friendship they had struck up. Both Kaiba brothers decided against pursuing an education beyond high school. Mokuba still found himself attending a few classes at Todai–University of Tokyo. One day, Mokuba was standing in line for coffee, and after paying, he turned around to see Shizuka literally standing in line behind him.

Their friendship was slightly less complicated than the psychological dependence Yugi-tachi had with one another. But it was still complicated. Then again, Mokuba knew all about how shared trauma could forge nearly unbreakable bonds. So he could not hold it against anyone.

“At least they are staying where they belong: Away from us,” Seto commented before looking down at the notification he received on his phone. After a brief internal debate on whether or not to reply, Seto evidently decided it could wait and set the phone back down.

Mokuba was thankful for the distraction. If Seto had been paying attention to him, he would have seen the ‘Oh fuck’ expression on his sibling’s face. However, the few seconds Seto was looking away did not allow Mokuba enough time to school his features to a perfect mask of innocence. By the time Seto’s attention was back to Mokuba, he caught his brother’s nervous expression.

“...They’re coming to Chicago, aren’t they?”

“Yeah…”

In order to give himself a brief moment of respite, Seto looked up at the ceiling and took a deep breath. Breathing had become significantly easier over the past 12 hours and asides from bodily aches, he was beginning to feel like himself again.

After attempting to remain calm about the idea of having all those idiots surrounding him while they decided to play detective instead of letting the professionals do their job, Seto spoke again. “Who is all coming?”
“Anzu. Shizuka got some time off approved. Honda is still in the service and can’t get leave,” Mokuba replied. He was referring to the fact that Shizuka was now employed as a nurse while Honda had enlisted in the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force as soon as he was of age.

“Shizuka’s brother is coming while I haven’t heard anything about Otogi. So there’s that,” Mokuba finished. There was no chance that Seto would miss the mention of Jounouchi, but Kaiba Mokuba was an optimist at heart.

“They’re not staying with us,” Seto said firmly. “I still need to pick up the slack at HQ while we finalize the decision on who I trust enough to put in charge of the North American branch. Which is perfect since America’s homeland security doesn’t want me leaving the country until they decide their investigation is over.”

As Seto spoke, he began to sound more and more agitated and ended on a bitter note. While his brother had a long list of things he just did not care for, Mokuba knew one thing for certain: Seto loathed being told what to do—especially by foreign authority.

As Mokuba patted his back pocket, he tried to think of a way to fix things for Seto. “There’s a consulate here in Chicago,” he pointed out while he retrieved his pack of cigarettes along with a lighter. Mokuba had his driver pick the items before his plane landed. He was not much of a smoker, but had a feeling that he would be needing more than one before the day was over. “They can’t prevent you from leaving the country and I’m sure that the Consul-General would agree.”

“It’s fine, Mokuba,” Seto stated heavily. “I was planning on staying here through the New Year’s anyway. So it really does not matter.” At the sight of Mokuba’s pack of cigarettes, he asked, “Are you going to go smoke?”

“Yeah,” Mokuba replied. Between everything with Yugi and now what happened to Seto—especially his brother’s eyes, he needed one. “Wanna bum one?”

“I had a moderate case of smoke inhalation. I’m not supposed to smoke tobacco,” Seto told Mokuba, his voice finally losing some of the edge it had just moments ago. Seto was already putting on a pair of shoes which was just as good as a ‘Yes.’

“Hell yeah. Fight the power!” Mokuba cheered

“How warm is it outside?”

“It was like twenty out when I landed at O’Hare. Celsius,” Mokuba clarified as soon as Seto picked up a hoodie he had folded over a chair. Upon hearing that, he dropped the article of clothing back where he found it.

Hopefully some fresh air and nicotine would encourage Seto to open up a bit about what happened to him. As much as Mokuba pretended to ignore the change to his brother’s eyes, he found himself looking over at Seto from his peripheral

“Oh, wow Already?” You exclaimed upon seeing the evening nurse enter your room with what you assumed were your discharge papers. You were told that you were going to be discharged sometime in the late evening.

“Already,” your nurse replied before going over the discharge instructions and follow-up plan with you. While you were only half-listening, you made sure to nod appropriately and pretend to read along with the nurse. Most of it was a no-brainer for you anyway.
As soon as you had the pen in hand and started signing, the nurse seemed to notice that you were the only two people in your room. “I thought you said you had friends to take you home.”

“I do,” you lied. “Well, my brother actually. He popped in about a half hour ago before I made him get me some Starbucks from downstairs.”

You had concocted a few stories just in case anyone was going to give you grief.

One of your friends visited that morning before work and much to your relief, brought you some extra clothes she thought would fit. Along with it, came some personal hygiene products. When she left, she took the insane amount of flowers, get well cards, and stuffed animals home with her. You made a mental note to swing by and pick the stuff up. When you finally got your car out of impound.

Along with her, a few of your friends had volunteered to take you home, but considering it was just a little past two o’clock on a Wednesday afternoon, that was not going to be happening. You knew a few people who would be available, but you were not willing to wait around for them. You wanted to get home and were not above making shit up in order to do so.

That and it was just weird being a patient at the hospital run by the university you were attending. Really weird. Like, professors coming to visit you while you were pretending not to be high on pain medication weird.

Speaking of professions, you were wondering if you should just go to your four o’clock class. While going ‘Surprise bitches! Guess where I just came from?!” would give you some serious street cred, you reaaaally did not feel like going to Cellular Neurobiology today. Your professors were giving you hella slack and you were going to take advantage of their leniency.

“Your brother is probably going to at Starbucks for awhile,” the nurse replied as she double-checked the forms to make sure she did not miss anything. “PM shift is just getting started and there’s going to be a line.”

“If I get down there fast enough, I can probably guilt him into getting me a cookie too~!” You chirped as you said farewell. Once you were alone in the room, you swung your borrowed backpack over your non-injured shoulder and made your way towards the elevators.

After pressing the call button, you adjusted the backpack and pointedly ignored the curious look you got from the nursing station. The last thing you wanted was to be wheeled out to the curb in a wheelchair. You knew exactly what to say to get your way.

While waiting, you frowned down at your hands. They were still injured with the cuts neatly bandaged. You knew what your hands looked like upon being admitted to the hospital. After what happened to your eyes, you quickly inspected yourself for any other changes. You were unsure of what was more disturbing: your eyes suddenly turning silver, your growing obsession with some guy you will never meet again, or the fact your wounds were healing at an accelerated rate. You knew wound healing. You had been a medic, after all and a popped zit did not heal overnight, much less shrapnel wounds.

Since that discovery, you insisted on cleaning and dressing your own wounds. You were sure that you earned the reputation as that patient. However, it was much better than the alternative. Which is also why you kept your mouth firmly shut about your eyes. When questioned about it, you had said your contacts got screwed up in the explosion and all you had were your colored contacts.

A lot of people knew darn well that you didn’t wear glasses or contacts, but what were they going to do? Argue about it? Insist your eye color had changed overnight? That was just crazy and no one
wanted to look crazy, so they left it alone.

The ding of the elevator pulled you out of your thoughts. As you looked up at the doors opening, you averted your gaze. You didn’t want to see your reflection.

Stepping on to the elevator, you pulled out your phone and logged into your bank account to double check your balance. Your purse, along with your wallet and keys were either sitting in the Field Museum or in evidence at the Chicago Police Department. Which meant that you had to pay for everything with your phone.

Luckily for you, Uber accepted Paypal and your Starbucks account was synced to your phone. Doing normal things like checking the balance in your bank account as well as on your Starbucks account helped ground you. It was normal and familiar.

“East lobby,” you mumbled to yourself when you stepped off the elevator and began to follow the signs to the Starbucks. You weren’t kidding about going there.

...Just like the nurse was not kidding about the line.

“Ah, frak”

After a few seconds of debate, you decided to just go home.

Chapter End Notes

The chapter was not supposed to end there. However, it was getting a little bit too long for my liking and I decided that I needed to split it up before it became a 20+ page monstrosity. So while this chapter is boring exposition where people are being placed, next chapter has an actual conversation between you and Kaiba!
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Holy crap! I am so sorry for such a late update! Hopefully a longer-ish chapter will make up for it?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Upon exiting the hospital, you were thankful that you still had your hoodie as your borrowed tank top was a size too large for you. It rather loose on the bust. The jean shorts were also a little too large and while you knew your legs looked fabulous, they were not the most weather appropriate thing in the world. Your hoodie kind of pulled the look together and instead of looking like a homeless person, you preferred to think you were rocking the shabby chic look.

Once you away from the crowd, you walked down the sidewalk to double-check that you were on the intersection of 57th and Drexel. Your nose caught a whiff of the sudden smell of cigarettes. Without really thinking, you glanced over and froze mid step at the sight of the two men standing just a few feet from you. The first guy was probably around your age and looked like a hipster gone delinquent with a beanie that did a poor job of hiding his long black hair that could be best described as a fucking disaster. At least he made an attempt to tame it by tying it into a low ponytail though.

You paid him no more than a glance because it was the other guy you were interested in--especially because it was that guy. He glanced at you from the corner of his eye. You watched as he lowered his cigarette and exhaled a puff of smoke. As if he was doing a double-take, his head turned and silver eyes met your own.

Without taking his eyes off of you, he took one last puff from his cigarette before butting it out. What happened next could be best described as a magnetic pull; he took several steps towards you before looking over at his companion. That had brought him back down to reality and he immediately stopped his advancement.

A wave of heat pulsed through your body and you felt your fingers twitch involuntarily before you got ahold of yourself. You had been about to reach out and touch him.

What has gotten into me?! You berated yourself.

Actually, it's more like what I want to get in me. a traitorous voice answered. Whatever compulsion you had to get in this guy's pants was not helping now that the man in question was standing right in front of you.

For fuck's sake, you meet this guy Sunday and it was barely Wednesday evening! Slow down, crazy!

You stiffened and exerting every ounce of willpower you had (not much, but you do try), you banished your HIGHLY inappropriate-in-public thoughts. You also tried to focus on being normal. Or at least giving the appearance of it.
Oh, crap. You just realized that you were staring. You were being super creepy. They probably thought you were a huge creeper.

Averting your gaze, you clutched the straps of your borrowed backpack. By now, you were now very keenly aware of the fact it was your friend’s daughter’s old Dark Magician Girl backpack.

You should probably say something.

Anything.

As long as it was benign and not sexually charged

“Hi,” you blurted out pitifully. Eyes of liquid silver blinked slowly at you.

Sputtering, your brain rallied and came up with something to add. “I...I’m not too sure how to say it, but I just wanted to thank you for staying with me. Back in the museum.”

As his gaze held yours, you could not help but feel exposed. You self-consciously tugged your hoodie closer to your chest with an attempt to pull your tank top up a little. The seconds blended into what you felt like an eternity. Your began to sweat under the weight of his gaze.

“Is that all?”

Your throat tightened when he finally spoke. Hearing what he said caused your lips to thin as you felt a pang of hurt in the pit of your stomach. His serrated tone sliced through any hopes of making this a pleasant interaction. Looking back up at him, whatever emotion he may have been showing seconds before was now replaced with cool indifference.

Honestly, you were not sure what you were expecting from this. You didn’t think you would ever see this guy again. Now that you had, you built up hope without realizing it.

With the lump that was beginning to build in your throat, you did not trust yourself to speak. Instead, you just nodded your head and gave him a thumbs up.

Pivoting, you turned to walk in the opposite direction (even if it made no sense whatsoever). Yet stopped in mid-step when you heard the second guy finally make his presence known.

“Hey, aren’t you going to introduce me?”

Looking over, you saw the younger of the two had finished his cigarette and was now giving you his full attention. While he had a thicker accent than your co-star of many dreams and idle thoughts, the younger of the two still seemed to speak English fluently. “Sorry about Seto, my brother can be a bit rough around the edges It’s part of his charm. I’m Mokuba by the way.”

His easy disarming smile made you swallow that lump in your throat. Testing your voice at first, you stated your name and explained how you really didn’t know his brother. He just helped you out during what happened on Sunday.

Instinctively, you held out your right hand. By the time you remembered that was kind of a Western thing, Mokuba was already giving you a firm handshake. Like a businessman, really.

...Businessman.

It was a vague memory and seemed almost like a dream now. Asides from being caught in a terrorist bombing, the second round of crazy began with that golden eye and the Devils Mirror card.
Devil’s Mirror was a Duel Monsters card. Seto and Mokuba were Asian. And brothers. There were two Japanese brothers who were in the gaming business and were big into Duel Monsters…

As if seeing the wheels in your head slowly beginning to turn, Mokuba decided to clarify. “Um...Yeah. I’m Mokuba Kaiba.”

Which meant that….

Shifting your gaze over to Seto. Somehow, he managed to squeeze even more ice into his expression. Impressive.

“Seto Kaiba,” he confirmed. The name came out awkwardly, as if he was not used to introducing himself.

Bullshit…

A quick Google search pulled up a picture of both Seto and Mokuba Kaiba. You didn’t even have to look up to confirm the faces of the two brothers.

Perhaps all your stress, fear, and uncertainty finally boiled over and caused you to reach a breaking point because your next words spewed out of your mouth like word vomit. “Banning Evilswarm Exciton Knight was a bitch move.”

Now that you actually said that, there was nothing you could do. Did you seriously just say that?!

You were an idiot!

Before you could apologize for pretty much saying ‘Fuck you’ to the Kaiba brothers, Mokuba broke the silence with a good-natured chuckle. He flipped his ponytail over a shoulder as he took the time to look you over unabashedly. As if he decided he liked what he saw, he fixed you a roguish grin. Had you not wanted to jump his brothers’ bones so hard, whoever pulled him off would be the right-wise born King of England, you knew that grin would make you fall in love a little bit.

“I would argue playing cards like that is the bitch move.”

“Bitch gunna do what a bitch does,” you countered. Honestly, you have no idea what that meant. It was the best you could come up with on the spot. You were socially awkward like that.

Maybe you made a half-decent delivery because you could see the amused gleam in Mokuba's eyes. “Does a bitch like making other people her bitch?” he challenged.

“Bitch, I might.”

“Are you done?” Seto’s voice was as chilly as a January morning

Suddenly feeling self-conscious, you pretended to fix the straps on your backpack while you tried to think of a way to apologize for sounding like such an idiot in front of the Kaiba brothers.

“Sorry” was all you could come up with.

Mokuba was the first one to break up the tension. “Don’t worry about him. Seto is just shy because yo--”

From where you were standing, you could not see the look that Seto gave Mokuba. Whatever silent conversation passed between the brothers, Mokuba quickly decided against finishing that sentence.
When Mokuba turned his attention back to you, his expression was less playful. “It looks like you just got discharged,” he said, nodding at the backpack on your shoulder. “Are you waiting for your ride?”

“Uber’s my ride,” you replied.

“So you live within the city?”

What kind of question was that?

“Yeah.”

“Cool. Now I’m your ride,” Mokuba stated firmly

You blinked. What?

“That’s really nice of you,” you began, “but you really don’t have to.”

“She’s right, Mokuba,” Seto interjected. “It’s unnecessary.”

“And I said I am giving her a ride,” Mokuba countered. With how his entire disposition changed just then, you had no problem believing that he was a man in a position of power.

Mokuba then addressed you. “C’mon, you look dead on your feet. Save yourself some money and let someone do something nice for you.”

“Um…” Biting your lip, you tried to think of a rational argument. When you couldn’t, you relented. “Alright.”

Honestly, accepting a ride from the Vice President of KaibaCorp was relatively normal compared to what else has happened over the past few days.

After Mokuba left to retrieve his car, you were left alone with his brother. Normally being alone with a guy you were sexually attracted to would elicit a triumphant whoop from you. Now you just nervously played with the zipper on your hoodie.

It was one of the most awkward silences of your life. More than likely, Seto liked silence. So you decided to talk since he had been kind of rude to you. “I didn’t mean to start shit between you and your brother.”

“As if you could,” Seto growled out. Silvery eyes as cold and hard as steel looked like he was assessing you. “Mokuba likes his projects.”

Ouch.

That had strung more than you expected it to. If it were any other situation, you would have just walked away and decided you would get home some other way. Yet, your feet were firmly planted in the spot you were standing in. Seto Kaiba wounded your pride with very few words, but this was not just about pride. Something had happened to the both of you.

Steeling yourself against his sharp gaze, you raised your chin and meet it. “Honestly, did I do something to piss you off?” you asked. “Because this thing...This isn’t my fault. I certainly did not ask for this to happen.”

If he was surprised with you directly talking about your shared experience, he gave no indication. Even so, his voice took on a conspiring tone. “I’m not sure how much you said, but I would
recommend pretending that none of this happened.”

“So you know about why this happened?”

“No,” he replied hotly. You could tell it was a lie, but chose not to pursue the topic.

Once more, his eyes darted over you, making you feel even more exposed. His brows creased before he looked at something directly behind you. Even when he spoke, he did not make eye contact with you. “It’s not you,” he said. “Of course this isn’t your fault.”

He was clearly on edge and while it was a stretch, you decided to at least test out your theory. “I think I get it. I’ve been having problems sleeping too.”

For a brief moment, Seto’s eyes widened in surprise before he schooled his features back into what seemed to be his trademark expression of ‘as serious as a heart attack.’

Well, shit. You were right. You also probably succeeded in scaring him off. People like Seto Kaiba did not like being caught off guard or having you guess deeply personal information such as the content of his dreams. “We were involved in a bombing. Of course someone would have some post-trauma symptoms like nightmares.”

There, you gave him a way out. You should probably call the Vatican to canonize you.

Once more, there was that awkward silence and now, you could not think of a way to fill it. This time, Seto was the one who spoke first. “For what it’s worth, KaibaCorp has no say in what cards are banned.”

“I guess. I dunno, I just say stupid things sometimes. A lot of the time.” you replied. “Sorry about that.”

He grunted in acknowledgement. Which was probably for the best, considering he was not agreeing that you were a complete idiot.

Before anything else could be said, you spotted a red Prius slowing down with Mokuba behind the wheel. While the car was nice, it was a bit of a let down. You were expecting a member of the 1 percent to drive something a little flashier, with diamond encrusted grills, or even a Rolls Royce.

You turned your head to address Seto, who was already on his way back inside the hospital. Based upon the fact that he had his phone out, you could assume that he was texting his younger brother.

With nothing else to do or say, you silently got in the car. “Thanks for the ride,” you said as you buckled your seat belt since this was probably the type of car that would beep incessantly until everyone was wearing their seat belt.

After inputting your address in the onboard GPS, Mokuba put the car in drive. “It’s really not a problem,” he replied.

Mokuba studied you from the corner of his eye briefly. “I hope Seto didn’t give you a hard time,” he continued.

“It’s fine!” you replied abruptly. Mainly because you were thinking of another type of hard time you would have wanted Seto to show you.

Mokuba continued as if you hadn’t said anything at all. “Things can get a little weird when it comes to Seto. Especially if mixed with the Millennium Items.”
Millennium Items? You tried recalling the exhibit. Your memory was quite foggy and could only think of the seven treasures unearthed around the same time the Nameless Pharaoh’s name was discovered. Was that what Mokuba was talking about?

You were not sure how Mokuba was interpreting your current facial expression, but after glancing over at you again, he added. “I talked to Seto about what happened.”

So that was what this was about.

And I bet he didn’t tell you a goddamn thing, you thought hotly. You were kind of dumb-- there was no arguing about that--but you were not stupid! It was obvious that Seto was mum about what happened at the museum. And now Mokuba, who probably recognized that phenomenon with your eyes, was using you for information.

Instead of answering, you gave a non-committing shrug. “I really don’t remember what happened.”

“You don’t even remember how your eyes got like that?” Mokuba asked innocently.

You bit down on your lip and quickly looked out the window so Mokuba could not see the way you stiffened up at that. Even if Mokuba knew about whatever those artifacts were, you were not willing to tell him what you saw. You haven’t even told the people you were closest to about it.

"I don't recall," you lied.

“I would not have believed half of what happened to me if I hadn’t witnessed it myself,” Mokuba said. That had caught your attention and you turned back to him. “Like I said, things can get weird.”

“All I know is that some guy shoved an ancient Egyptian artifact through his eye socket,” you mumbled.

A frown looked strange on Mokuba’s face, but you pretended not to notice. Instead, you decided to listen to the GPS giving out directions to your home.

“Did he say anything to you?” Mokuba prompted after yet another period of silence. “Like, did he talk about your soul, or...Did he make you play a game?”

Play a game? What the fuck was this, Jigsaw from the Saw movies?

Those types of things didn’t happen in real life, did they?

You took a deep breath before shaking your head. You then realized that Mokuba probably could not see that. Considering the fact that he was driving and all. So you replied with a simple “No.”

“What about Seto?”

“I don’t know. I couldn’t hear much over the alarms and my ears ringing,” you admitted. It was a better cover story than saying you tinnitus was cured suddenly. Careful to follow the narrative you told all law enforcement agencies, you continued. “After the explosion, I tried to stand up and was suddenly grabbed and shoved into someone. That someone was your brother and he helped me out. I don’t know what was said, if anything was.”

It was obvious that Mokuba was sensing your discomfort because he backed off of questioning you further. “I don’t mean to be pushy. I am just trying to find out what happened that day. Especially since one of my friends went missing that same day. He was supposed to meet Seto at the museum, never showed up, and no one has heard from him since. He used to own one of the Millennium
“Items and I thought maybe these two incidents were connected.”

“Oh...I’m sorry.” Was all you could say.

Well...shit. Now you were feeling guilty but your bullshit detector was going off all the same. There was no way someone could own an item that was just recently unearthed. No freaking way.

“It’s not your fault,” Mokuba replied.

“Still sucks.”

“Yeah,” he agreed, “it kind of does.”

You bit the bottom of your lip and opted to look out the window. You sight sight of your reflection in the side view mirror and the sight of your eyes was still unnerving enough to quickly avert your gaze away from the mirror.

In a move that could be best described as ‘classic you,’ your mouth was running ahead of your thought process since you could not handle another awkward silence. It would make you look out the window and somehow, you would inevitably look into the side view mirror again. “I can’t really explain what happened,” you stated. “This just seemed so fucked up to be real.”

“I know that feeling,” Mokuba agreed. The car began to slow as the GPS indicated his destination (aka: your house) was on the right.

“This one?” he asked, indicating your house. Upon your confirmation, the Prius pulled into the driveway.

“Again, thank you for the ride,” you said. In all honesty, you hoped that you could grab your stuff and make a mad dash to your backyard without any more awkward conversation.

A recurring theme of your life was that luck was not on your side; Mokuba was already getting out of the car with you.

Closing the car door, you ran a hand through your hair while giving Mokuba the most cute yet sheepish look you could muster. More than likely, you looked ridiculous. Taking a deep breath, you began. “Okay. So. I don’t know how to say this, buuuut...I’m kind of locked out.”

You were met with a puzzled stare, but like most adverse things in life, you chose to ignore it. Instead, you made your way towards the backyard. “No one is home to let you in?” Mokuba asked flatly.

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“Alright!” you replied once you got to the garbage barrels. After checking to see which one was the fullest, you chose that barrel and began to wheel it towards the house. “My keys were in my purse and the only one with a spare key lives outside the city.”

Mokuba folded his arms and raised an eyebrow at what you were doing. “How are you going to get in?” he asked.

“Breaking and entering my own house,” you replied flatly. Climbing on top of the garbage barrel, you did a quick survey of the other backyards to make sure that you did not have any spectators. If someone called the cops on you, it would be kind of hard to explain you lived here without your ID.

Mokuba looked up at the balcony you strategically placed the garbage barrel underneath. “Holy shit...I’ll call a locksmith for you. Don’t even try it!”
“Imma do it,” you replied. Glancing up at the balcony, you wiped your hands on your shorts before leaping and grabbing on to the bottom of the balcony. Using your legs, you managed to stabilize yourself enough to propel yourself up on your elbows. You got your first leg on the balcony with you before swinging up your second leg and hoisting your body over the railing.

Looking down at bewildered Mokuba, you gave him a quick thumbs up. “I don’t skip leg day,” you said. While you were tempted to go inside and forget about ever meeting Mokuba Kaiba, you were raised to be polite. “Want to come inside?”

“Through the front door, I hope?” Mokuba asked dryly. “I’m not really wearing the right outfit for parkour.”

You were the kind of idiot who periodically forgot to lock the balcony door. “I’ll meet you downstairs,” you called after opening the aforementioned balcony door and stepping inside.

Walking down the stairs, you went to the front door, unlocked it, and let Mokuba inside your modest, less-than-impressive home. “You should really lock your balcony door,” he said upon stepping inside.

You had the decency to dip your head in embarrassment. “Yeah,” you agreed. “I know.”

Mokuka stepped forwards to close the distance between the two. You felt his hand under your chin, tipping it upwards so you were gazing into his gray-violet eyes. Once more, he gave you that easy disarming smile of his. Briefly, you wondered if his brother would ever look natural with such an easygoing expression. Honestly, you could not help but smile at the thought of that.

His eyes caressed before leaning in. Without even thinking, you quickly turned your head to the side. This guy was too forward to be real. Yet, he was extremely attractive, a freaking billionaire, and if this were a week ago, you would have no problems dragging him to your couch to thank him for the ride home.

But...Seto.

“Sorry,” your voice was small as you took a few steps backwards. “I didn’t mean to give off the wrong signal...but...”

“You’re more into my brother?” Mokuba asked, his grin never leaving his face. It was like he was expecting your reaction. What the fuck? Was that some kind of test?

“I take it you get that a lot?”

Mokuba’s laugh was all white teeth, stretched cheeks, and playfulness. “Nope,” he chuckled. “Not since I turned sixteen, anyway.”

When Mokuba reached out his hand, you tried not to flinch. He rubbed his thumb on your right cheek. “There,” he said with a nod of approval. “You had some dirt on you. You probably touched your face after going all Batman on me.”

You blinked and laughed because it was all you could do. “Thanks.”

“No problem,” Mokuba replied before pulling out his phone and checking the time. After replacing it in his pocket, he reached for his wallet and shifted through it until he found a business card. “I should be getting back to my brother before he decide to just up and leave the hospital. Text me later to let me know you locked the balcony door. Or if things get weird. Whatever happens first, I guess.”
You had no doubt in your mind that if Mokuba did not hear from you, he would end up showing up randomly with hired help to break into your house the same way he saw you do, just to make sure you locked your door. He did not seem to have the type of boundaries normal people had. Or was it because of the fact that he now considered you a 'project,' as Seto put it?

Without much else to do, you took the card without protest and promised him that you would do just that.

Once Mokuba left, you slumped down on your couch and debated on whether you wanted to grab a beer in the refrigerator, shower, or drink profusely while showering. As your eyes fluttered closed, you supposed you would shower once you woke up from your nap.

When you awoke from your dreamless sleep, the sun was already beginning to set. Rubbing your eyes, you allowed your vision to adjust to the receding light. Looking at your coffee table, you thought you saw something sitting there. From the silhouette, it was not a shape you recognized.

With nervous hands, you reached for the object and placed your hands around a cool metallic object, bringing it towards you to examine, you immediately recognized what it was and dropped it while jumping up with a yelp.

A golden Eye of Horus set in a torque necklace stared back at you. This was from the museum…

Things definitely got really weird.

Chapter End Notes

If you want to follow the stupid things I post on Tumblr, I'm xoxo--me (Yes I am the one with a Sailor Moon background and Sasuke icon).
When Mokuba returned to his brother’s hospital room, there was an immediate change in the atmosphere. Seto was once more at his laptop. This time, he was wearing his glasses and Mokuba could see the reflection of the screen through the lenses. He was looking at a familiar website before he tabbed back over to his email and began composing a new message. It was strange, Mokuba was thankful that the reflection of the glasses obscured his brother’s aberrant eye color.

Careful not to disturb Seto, Mokuba quietly closed the door behind him and plopped on the closest piece of furniture. The noise the cushion made under his weight didn’t seem to bother Seto; his brother was still typing away at whatever email he was composing. Crossing his fingers behind his head, Mokuba leaned back and watched his brother work.

After a few moments, he got bored and took out his phone to check the time. 6:17pm Central Time, which meant it was a little after eleven o’clock back home.

The cell phone light alerted Seto to his brother’s presence. A slender hand slowly reached up to remove the glasses from the bridge of his nose. Seto carefully folded them and placed them in the case that sat beside him on the bed. Even though Mokuba knew about Seto’s worsening vision as the years went on, his brother viewed anything less than perfection a weakness that he would never admit to.

*Show time…*

Seemingly unaware of his brother’s disapproving frown, Mokuba placed his phone on the lamp table next to him and spun it around lazily before looking up and fixing Seto with a shit-eating grin. “She’s quite…” He paused for dramatic effect and made sure to pick the way to phrase what he was about to say next wisely. “Sassy. And apparently practices parkour. Don’t ask me how I know.”

Seto should recognize the tone. Unlike his brother, Mokuba was open about his weaknesses and wore his imperfections like a badge of honor. That way, no one would use them against him. Mokuba knew how he sounded when he was in love or found the *one* d’jour. At his worst, Seto heard it at least monthly.

“You can’t have her,” came Seto’s quick and immediate response.

“Because…?”

“She’s an American.”

“How xenophobic,” Mokuba playfully chided. He reached his finger out to stop the phone from spinning. That was enough of that. “Unlike you, nii-sama, I do like to indulge in...international relations.”

Mokuba stretched his neck to the side and was rewarded with a *crack*. While he did that, he did not miss the way his brother’s lips turned downwards and his brow furrowed.

“You know what I mean. She lives *here* and you live an eleven hour flight away.”
“It’s more like ten and a half hours, actually,” Mokuba answered lazily, much to Seto’s further chagrin. “KaibaCorp’s US branch is here. So hanging out in Chicago wouldn’t be too much of a problem. She seems sane enough to me,” Mokuba then held up one finger as if he were listing off points. “I gave her my number nearly an hour ago and she has yet to call or text me. So that eliminates her being at least a Stage Three clinger. She’s hot by American and Japanese standards. Nice legs, great ass...You should really have seen the parkour stunt she pulled. Seems bangable enough for me.”

After holding up the last finger, Mokuba cocked an eyebrow up at Seto. “So what’s the real reason?”

It was better to call out Seto’s bullshit excuse now instead of waiting several minutes--when he went back to work—and badgering him in order to extract the real answer. Besides, the way Seto’s eyes widened at the mention of a nice set of legs, and nice ass (Seto was soo an ass man) along with mentioning the stunt you pulled to gain access to own house was too great to pass up.

“Mokuba…” Seto began.

Before he could go further, Mokuba interrupted him by going in for the kill. “Nii-sama, you know how much I love you, I really do.”

Mokuba locked eyes with his brother’s as if he were about to issue a challenge. “That doesn’t mean you get to tell me who I can and cannot fuck.”

The slight twitch of his older brother’s mouth and narrowing of those eyes (far more intimidating when Mokuba realized how mirror-like they were) was all the confirmation he needed. Jealousy.

“No.” The words escaped from his older brother’s mouth like a feral growl. His eyes gleamed like metal; the shine of the knife as it hits the moonlight moments before plunging into an unsuspecting victim’s jugular.

As if realizing that he looked ready to murder or at least seriously maim his brother Seto’s facial features relaxed. The next words were jumbled and thrown out hastily. “You act like an idiot when you’re emotionally attached. Since I’ll be in the city for the next few months, I am not willing to see the extent of how much of an idiot you can be when you’re pursuing a hopeless relationship.”

Mokuba never heard his brother sound so possessive, except when it concerned KaibaCorp. Even then, it had been years since hearing such a tone. For a moment, Mokuba debated backing down.

Instead, he threw up his hands in surrender. “Fair enough,” he conceded.

Upon receiving a quizzical stare from Seto for giving up so easily, Mokuba launched into his pre-planned explanation. “She’s not my type anyway. Article 62 of the Bro Code defines dibs. It seems that dibs has been called and I respect that..”

“Mokuba…” Seto groaned. At least his features softened when Seto realized Mokuba had been setting him up.

“She passed my test,” Mokuba said simply.

A look of recognition crossed Seto’s face before he tried his best to scowl at his brother. It was obvious that Seto was trying to keep his emotions in check since the look only came across as mild annoyance. “I do not need you to keep trying to play matchmaker.”

“I’m not trying to say you need to put a ring on it. She’s a complete stranger who you happened to
be at the wrong place at the wrong time, resulting in that freaky eye thing.” Mokuba said. “You’ve been living like a monk. Why not have some fun?”

Seto closed his eyes and rubbed the bridge of his nose where his glasses sat before regarding his brother once more. “This is none of your business Mokuba.”

“I just want you to be happy,” Mokuba said softly yet sincerely.

“I am as happy as I can be. There’s nothing wrong with my life that a one-night stand or even a fling can fix,” Seto insisted.

“You just. I don’t know...I just saw you smile today for the first time in a long time.”

Seto frowned in confusion, so Mokuba elaborated. “When she walked by and you noticed her. I saw you smile.”

There was a long silence that followed. While Mokuba wanted to go on, he figured it was best to let Seto get his thoughts in order.

Finally, Seto sighed. “Look, my life is fine the way it is. I have no intention of getting involved with anyone right now. Especially not someone I met because we both happened to be victims of a terrorist attack…”

...That is somehow connected to the Millennium Items and possibly to Yugi’s disappearance, Mokuba added mentally.

“...New topic?”

Your first shot was not helping you clear your head. So you poured a second one, downed, it and grimaced since no one was around to judge you for not being able to handle your alcohol.

You wanted to rationalize this somehow. Like, maybe Mokuba left it there. For the rich, gold bling was probably like hair ties: disposable and left in the weirdest places. Even with you in the kitchen, where you had a wall separating you from the living room, you could practically feel that eye in the center of the necklace just staring at you. It was definitely one of the items on display in the Field Museum. The entire design was too tacky to be forgotten.

Thinking about a priceless Egyptian artifact rightfully owned by the exhibit was stressing you out. Wasn’t alcohol supposed to depress your nervous system? Because you were not feeling any better. What was the proof on it anyway? A casual glance told you it was 80. Or 40% alcohol per volume. Whatever what meant.

You were still too sober for this.

Maybe if you had some Xanax. A whole bar of Xanax.

Fuck…

You were pacing and needed to calm down and think. You could not just call anyone to tell them about the fact that when you woke up from a nap, a stolen ancient Egyptian artifact was sitting on your coffee table like it was no big deal. You had to get rid of the evidence. Then deny and subvert.

“I am going to Tom Brady this thing,” you concluded out loud before chuckling at the lame
reference you made—even though it was not funny. At least it helped break you from ruminating and allowed you to think a with a clearer head.

Dumping it in Lake Michigan seemed like a good idea, but it was a bit too far away. The Chicago River was close. You were less likely to get caught just throwing the damn thing over your shoulder on a bridge somewhere at midnight. But you couldn’t drive because you were drunk. Even if you were stone cold sober, you still had to pick up your car from impound. Simply walking to the river seemed like an idea just waiting to backfire.

Then again, just how did an ancient Egyptian artifact end up in your living room? You were not important enough to frame as a co-conspirator in the attack. First of all, you had no idea how to make a bomb. Secondly, all your weird Google searches would make the feds think you were a serial killer, not a terrorist. Lastly, you were...Well...You.

The only person who had been in your house since the attack was Mokuba. The more you thought about it, the more you wondered if Mokuba snuck into your home while you were sleeping and brought the necklace as a way to screw with you. While it did not seem like his style, you had to be honest: you knew the guy for about forty minutes and he had serious boundary issues.

You should have had him drive to one of your friend’s house. You were being far too trusting to a complete stranger. Probably because he was a billionaire, had his own Wikipedia page, and you wanted to do so many terrible yet amazing things to his brother.

Yeah...You needed to dump this necklace like a bad boyfriend. Someone might be trying to screw with you.

Since you were still in the kitchen, you made your way to the closet where you kept your cleaning supplies and pulled out your box of disposable plastic gloves. Taking one out, you carelessly put it in your left hand since your use for it was just temporary. Pulling out a second one, you carefully eased it on your hand while using your palm to pull the glove on the rest of the way. After taking off the temporary glove and tossing it over your shoulder for now, you picked up another one with your right hand and easily put it on.

Now that you ensured that you were not going to leave fingerprints on the necklace (since you weren’t fucking stupid or drunk enough to not cover your bases), you took a deep breath. With a sigh, you retrieved several plastic bags from the kitchen before making your way to the living room.

As expected, the necklace was still sitting innocuously on the coffee table; its eye looking up at you like it was a puppy that was just caught peeing on the rug for the last time. Or so you thought, but you were kind of drunk, so what did you know?

Speaking of dogs, you put a plastic bag over your hand, you picked the necklace up like it was a piece of dog poop and tied the bag of. You put it in a few more plastic bags and tying those for good measure.

After you were reasonably satisfied with how many layers separated you from that necklace, you needed to decide where to store it. You didn’t want it inside, so as you made your way upstairs to put it outside on the balcony, you were thinking that the morning dew would wash away any remaining fingerprints on the outside bag. You were also hoping that some large eagle--like the ones from Lord of the Rings--would swoop down in the middle of the night and carry the necklace away.

Not very likely, but this entire situation was also extremely unlikely, so you could only hope this entire thing would no longer be your problem in the morning.
You practically threw the bag at the potted plant that was now served to remind you of your failed attempt at growing cherry tomatoes over the summer. Without looking back, you walked inside and made sure the lock the balcony door behind you.

Speaking of locking the door, there was Mokuba. You could feel yourself begin to get angry at the thought that he more than likely set you up like this. You took the gloves off as you made your way back downstairs and threw them on the coffee table--for now--before grabbing your phone. Then you grabbed his business card and entered his cell phone number into a new text message:

*I locked the door. Did you happen to forget something?*

While waiting for the response, you pulled up your Facebook app and pointedly ignored the top status updates with the StandWithChicago and PrayforChicago hashtags. You had several notifications--probably people tagging you in posts about the bombing.

Waking up to a missing ancient Egyptian artifact had distracted you from thinking about Seto. Now that you had your phone with WiFi connection throughout your house (except that one corner in the kitchen), you were free to obsessively Google him to your heart’s content.

Typing his name in the Facebook search brought up a public page that had 29,355 Likes. Interestingly enough, two of those likes were from acquaintances of yours. The About section did not have much information aside from a link to the KaibaCorp website and how he was the fourth President and CEO of KaibaCorp, the first CEO under the new direction he lead the company in 2000 at the age of fifteen...

Wait...WHAT? He was FIFTEEN?! That was incredible. Once you got over the shock, you did some quick arithmetic based upon that information and the current year in order to determine his age. Huh. He certainly did not look it, that was for sure.

The idea of turning him into a dirty old man made you smile.

You were planning on stalking his Facebook timeline and Wikipedia page later, but for now, you tabbed over the pictures just as a text from Mokuba flashed across the top of your screen.

*I don’t think so. Did something fall out of my wallet?*

“Don’t play fucking stupid,” you muttered before pulling up the text. *So this gold necklace isn’t yours?*

You were diplomatic as fuck, what could you say?

With the message sent, you went right back to looking at the pictures of Mokuba’s sexy older brother. Some of the photos were random boring corporate related pictures, but the ones where he was in it…

Wow. He looked *darn* good in a suit. It was making you hella thirsty to the point where you just ignored the next message that flashed across your screen from Mokuba.

*Um...What?*

It was not like you could really reply to that anyway. You weren’t dumb enough to describe it in vivid detail. In fact, you should probably never have said something to begin with. That was impulsive and extremely stupid of you.

You were just going to ignore him. Ignoring most of your problems until they went away was kind
of your modus operandi. In any case, you were too busy ogling his brother to answer the younger Kaiba.

For a good part of an hour, you descended further and further down the rabbit hole of Facebook posts (you were not even started on his Twitter) when your phone blew up. Figuratively, of course.

First was a picture message followed by a few lines of texts added as an afterthought.

When the picture loaded, you saw a picture of a female in what looked to be her late teens, early 20s decked out in gold jewelry. Her unironic use of bling aside, the most alarming thing was the necklace she wore. It was that necklace!

Which was impossible because it was supposed to be an ancient Egyptian artifact that was unearthed from a long-dead pharaoh’s tomb only recently. In fact, it was just as impossible at his friend owning one of the items like he told you earlier today,

This is going to sound crazy, but does the necklace she is wearing look familiar?

I get that it’s completely random and kind of crazy to ask this.

Just let me know either way, okay? That would really help me out!

If some rando was wearing the a similar necklace. Or maybe you were misremembering the displays. Memory was a fickle bitch. For all you knew, you might have been so tired that you might have picked the necklace up off the floor after Mokuba left and set it on the coffee table yourself.

The woman--girl, really--was probably some crazy ex. Billionaires could afford all that bling and a creepy solid gold necklace was probably pocket change to the Kaibas.

Yup, that’s it! So I guess you did drop it. That kind of thing happens to me all the time lol. I could try to meet you somewhere to give it back.

So this wasn’t some ancient Egyptian artifact that made its way into your home. That was such a relief! Honestly, you should probably not have assumed something so ridiculous. Sure, a lot of completely ridiculous things happened over the past week, so it was almost safe to assume that things were still super weird.

At you didn’t chuck the necklace into the Chicago River. You would have been screwed.

A few minutes later, you received yet another text from Mokuba.

It was just as you were about to hit ‘Search Google for image.’

Sorry for long pause earlier--looks like Seto is getting discharged! I think we’re just going to chill at home once we get there. I have friends flying in this week and things might be busy. Why don’t you drop it off at my place Friday night?

You were never inside of a billionaire’s home. Sure, you once wanted to see the inside of the Trump Towers, but only got as far as five steps inside before the front desk asked if they could help you. Flustered, you stammered that you were waiting for your friend before being politely yet firmly told to leave.

You should be devoting the weekend to playing catch up with school and arranging to go back to work, but you were not going to pass up a chance to see how the one percent lived. Plus if you could even catch a glimpse of Seto...
So you replied: *Sure. What time works for you?*

While making a game plan for what you were going to wear, you got a reply back from Mokuba: *I’m still on JST. How about like 8? Or is that too late?*

That meant that you could wear evening make up. *Bitchin’!* *Totally works,* you sent back. Then you realized you needed to get there somehow. *I should have my car back by then, so I can GPS my way there. Or is your address classified and I should meet a dark suit in Millennium Park who will blindfold me and throw me in the back of a van in order to get to your location lol.*

Perhaps that was a bit too snarky, but you were kind of drunk, so you thought you were being cheeky and adorable. Within moments, you received a reply. *Lol, that’s how we usually roll. But I trust you enough to send a driver and leave you unblindfolded for now. If you’re into that, I guess I could let my brother know. Jk--kinda. I hope you’re not offended by that. If it’s cool, I will have a car pick you up around 7:30ish.*

Oh no, Mister Kaiba, you thought, you were not offended in the least. In fact, you could feel your palms begin to sweat slightly when you read that and just pictured being handcuffed to a four poster bed while Seto tied a blindfold around you and…

*I am not offended at all. See you then.* You resisted the urge to end the text off with saying you’ll bring the handcuffs, but that was going a little too far. You were trying to bang his brother, not flirt with Mokuba after all.

After that text was sent, you quickly retrieved the bling and after ripping through the layers of plastic bags, you threw away your mess and left the Millennium Necklace sitting on your bathroom counter. As you studied your eyes and what eyeshadow to match the new color with, you caught sight of the tauk’s reflection.

Maybe your imagination was being too active, but the entire item seemed to gleam momentarily. The Eye of Hours stared at you as if to say ‘Gotcha, bitch.’

Chapter End Notes

*Surprise, bee-yatches! I bet you thought you had seen the last of me!*

*Since Dark Side of the Dimensions is shaping up to eff up my plot (Damn you, Kisara!), I wanted to get another chapter in before the movie premiers. I scrapped two sections to put in the next chapter since I just am not satisfied with what I had.*
I edited the crap out of older chapters since I kept spotting embarrassing typos. To ensure that I would stop missing them, I kept re-reading this chapter to ensure that there are way fewer of those bad boys.

If you re-read the chapters, you will probably notice that some things are not consistent. I figured for a sense of realism, I wanted to make each POV character not the most reliable source of information. (IE: Mokuba believing that Yugi and the "Nerd Herd" were still BFFs while Anzu's POV this chapter contradicts it.

As a warning, this chapter is pretty exposition heavy.

Kiara just sighed at the television in front of her. Honestly, there were plenty of other shows--the benefits of her chosen path was far better than the pay--but American television shows had a certain charm.

Like the talk shows that centered around paternity tests and the extreme reactions to the results. Kiara was empathetic enough to not dismiss all the show’s guests as chavs. Sometimes, life just happened.

Still…

“Fake,” she muttered. This all had to be rubbish. Americans were weird enough to make something up for laughs or even for a chance to appear on the telly.

At commercial, Kiara picked up the remote to look at the TV listings in order to see what else was on. Hearing someone coming down the hallway into the common room, she quickly chose a less embarrassing show. She then leaned back in order to pretend she had been watching it the entire time.

Please be Bakari...

Kiara did her best to look nonchalant when Mina entered the room. Her dark blue gaze went from the television screen to meet Kiara’s.

“You look too spooked to be watching Too Cute,” Mina commented while taking a seat on the sectional opposite of Kiara. “Did a bird attack one of the fluffy little pomeranians?”

“You should have heard their sad little yaps as the hawk carried their sibling away,” Kiara replied.

“How…hawkward,” quipped Mina.

After glancing over at Kiara once more, Mina raised a brow at the other woman’s somber expression. “It was a pun,” she insisted. “I was told I was getting better at making them.”

“Sorry,” Kiara replied before weakly adding, “I wanted to watch the pomeranians.”

“Seriously, what’s the matter with you?” Mina asked.
Kiara bit the bottom of her lip under Mina’s scrutinizing stare. “You’re not developing reverse Stockholm syndrome or something, are you?”

“Stockholm syndrome?” Kiara repeated before her own pale eyes widened in realization. The Puzzle bearer was not something she liked thinking of. “No! It’s not that. I just…”

Sighing, she looked down at the hands in her lap. Out of all the others, Mina was far less intimidating, but she would have preferred speaking to Bakari. The longer she kept this to herself, the worse it would get…

“Your treasure,” Kiara began before pausing to wet her lips and think of what to say. “The Millennium Ring…”

Mina’s expression darkened at the mention of the Millennium Item she was given. “I’m not possessed, if that’s what you wanted to ask.” she stated flatly.

It was known that a vengeful spirit once had a connection to the item. Honestly, Kiara did not want to know whether it still had a connection to this world.

Based upon the cut of the shirt Mina wore, it was obvious that she was not currently wearing the Millennium Ring. But that was not what Kiara needed to know. “Do you still have it?” she asked cautiously. “The Ring?”

That question earned Kiara a snort followed by an incredulous look. “Every night, just as the room is rising, I like to take the Millennium Ring out for a walk before leaving it on a bench for about an hour. I figured I would keep the spirit happy, but last night...Last night, it got off its leash and I’ve been putting up posters all over town,” Mina replied sarcastically. “Of course I still have it!”

Kiara could only bite the bottom of her lip to keep her face neutral. What if she was the only one whose treasure went missing?

As if reading her thoughts, a look of surprise crossed Mina’s features. “What happened to the Millennium Necklace?”

“I don’t know,” Kiara admitted softly. “It was just gone. I last had it when I tried to use it earlier this afternoon. I just...I don’t know. I didn’t bloody know what to do!”

“You don’t know,” Mina repeated. Her voice grew in volume as she began to realize how badly the timid pale-haired woman in front of her screwed up. “What do you mean you don’t know? And you knew about it this morning?! Am I the first person you told?”

“I didn’t know what to do,” Kiara reiterated.

The next words out of Mina’s mouth were in her native tongue. They were more than likely was not something Kiara wanted to hear directed at her anyway. The foreign ramblings subsided when Mina suddenly turned and hurriedly left the common room. It took Kiara a moment before she decided to follow after her, only to see the other woman ascending the stairs to their living quarters.

Moving after her, Kiara reached the top of the staircase just as she heard Mina scream something that she could not understand. It was followed by several loud crashes and thumps that made Kiara involuntarily cower outside Mina’s door.

Kiara did not have to wait long before the door was thrown open and a red-faced Mina emerged. “Mine is gone too,” she curtly informed Kiara while pushing past her.
Mina was halfway down the hallway before she turned to Kiara expectantly. “Come on,” she ordered before turning to descend down the stairs. “You kinda saved my ass by making me paranoid enough to check if the Ring is still around. So I won’t rat you out for keeping secrets, but we can’t keep this to ourselves.”
As much as Kiara wanted to stand dumbly in the hallway and just wait for Bakari to get back, she found herself mumbling in agreement before following along.

Anzu was half paying attention when she purchased her tea--it was supposedly inspired by creative mixologists. Or so the sign proclaimed. Her nerves were fried beyond any repair at this point and had been since hearing of Yugi’s disappearance.

After taking a sip of the tea, Anzu determined it was not that bad. She scanned the flightboard. A flight from Portland just changed its status to Landed. Right under it was the flight she was concerned about: Spirit Airlines from Los Angeles to O’Hare. Each time she remembered that Shizuka and Jonouchi were arriving from LAX and had to go through customs before catching their connecting flight, Anzu’s heart went out to her friends. That reminder made her trek from JFK to the Midwest seem painless by comparison.

“Excuse you,” a woman huffed at Anzu as she elbowed her way past her.

“Seriously? Watch where you’re going, lady!” Anzu snapped right on back at her in perfect English. New York City (and all of her stress) was really bringing out the worst in her.

Then again, airports brought out the worst in people.

She had used her laptop until she was prompted to watch another ad for 30 free minutes of Internet access. After deciding to opt out, she played on her phone until the battery died, then wandered around--with luggage in tow--until she found an open outlet. Once she charged her phone, she decided to bored eat before wandering around some more and ended up stress drinking. That had made her feel more buzzed than she intended and ended up eating again.

That was all done in exactly the six hours and thirty seven minutes since the landed. Anzu had even debated buying a magazine, but reading in English sometimes gave her a bit of a headache.

Around hour three, Anzu realized that she had the TSA message memorized. That had made her regret turning down Mokuba’s offer to pick her up, have her get settled at her hotel before coming back to the airport around the time of Jounouchi and Shizuka’s scheduled arrival.

Even after checking her bank account when she purchased that second mojito, Anzu just could not find it in her to text Mokuba, begging him to pick her up. Not after what happened to Kaiba.

*Kami-sama...* What if Yugi really had been at the museum that day…?

Anzu’s mind did not want to go there. Instead, she decided to start making her way over to Terminal 3--that was where the flight was scheduled to arrive--in order to meet Jounouchi and Shizuka.

She had to consult the map and flight board a few times to ensure that her friend’s arrival gate had not changed and how she can get there without having to go through security. Once she arrived to the security barricade, she noticed that the Portland flight were currently making their way through the gate.

Normally Anzu would have window shopped. Or even found a bench and waited just beyond the
security checkpoint until she spotted her friends. However, the flight board had just changed the status of Spirit Airlines flight 736 to Landed. Anzu could not sit any longer or even pretend to focus on any more overpriced merchandise.

Remembering what Mokuba told her about letting him know when the flight landed, Anzu pulled out her phone and immediately frowned. Her battery had already drained to 91%. She really needed to upgrade. Composing a new text, she quickly typed it out and sent it to Mokuba. *Their flight just landed! Spirit Airlines Terminal 3. =^.^=*

Almost immediately, Mokuba replied: *Gate number?*

Looking up from her phone to the flight board, Anzu’s eyes landed on an eerily familiar set of dark eyes that contrasted with his pale face and snowy hair. Their gaze momentarily met before brown eyes continued on like he had been searching the crowd. Anzu felt her breath hitch.

There was no way…

Holding up her arm to grab his attention, Anzu was prepared to call out his name when he seemingly disappeared in the sea of people.

Had she been imagining things?

Scanning the crowd one more, Anzu could not catch another glimpse of him, and decided to give up. She double-checked the flight board before replying to Mokuba *L9.*

*Cool. I’ll text you when I pull up.*

Anzu continued watching the crowd, wondering if she would catch one more glimpse of him. Or even if he would come back, realizing he had just walked past her.

Of course, after several minutes passed and there was no sign of her old friend, Anzu had already convinced herself that there was no way Bakura Ryou would be in America.

After what seemed like an unbearably long stretch of time, Anzu caught sight of a familiar mop of blonde hair. Then she saw Shizuka holding up her arm and waving to her.

Excited to be reunited with her friends, Anzu began to head towards them, only to remember about her luggage. After grabbing the handle and wheeling it behind her, she made her way towards the duo at a much slower pace.

Immediately, Anzu flung her arms around Shizuka in greeting before Jounouchi’s strong arms enveloped her in an embrace. Pulling back, the two friends took a moment to study one another. After all, it had been three years since Anzu was last in Japan.

Upon graduating high school, Anzu had been accepted into Juilliard, astonishing even her. The reality of earning a Bachelors of Fine Arts even from one of the most prestigious schools in the country set in quicker than the ink on her diploma could dry. The next two years had made her long for the halcyon days of working part-time while in high school and occasionally attempting to save the world.

She had finally been able to find work in Las Vegas and for the first year, Anzu had thought she was content. After all, she was working in her field and making decent enough money that she began the process of applying for naturalization. Yet, the glitz and glamor of Las Vegas was soon replaced by the awareness of why they nicknamed Las Vegas the Sin City.
Feeling trapped, Anzu decided that she needed out. She applied for graduate school at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. While she attended class in the late afternoons to early evenings, she often had a quick cab ride from the UNLV campus to Caesar's Palace or the Mirage for a show before going home and passing out. She only slept for a few hours before she had to get up to go back to class, perform volunteer work to boost her resume, train, or work on homework. Anzu loathed the program, but eventually trudged through it and earned her Master’s in Business Administration.

After nearly a decade of being in America, her hard work had finally paid off. On her last visit home, she received an email about the crapshoot job she interviewed for with the New York City Ballet. She initially did not want to read it until she caught sight of the first few lines of text in the email body. It informed her that she received the job as a junior director of development.

Seeing Jounouchi’s face and how it was beginning to show the first signs of no longer possessing the youthful vigor he had been known for, Anzu began to feel a familiar pang of sorrow. She experienced it whenever she was reminded of how far her had drifted apart over the years.

Yet, the emotions were short-lived when Jounouchi gave her a thumbs up. “Thirty was nicer to you than twenty. You’re still a hottie!”

From besides him, Shizuka shifted awkwardly. “That’s what you say to her after nearly three years?” she asked incredulously before turning her attention back to Anzu. “He is right though, you look amazing! So much happier than last time you were home. It seems like you finally achieved your dreams.”

In a way, she had. Anzu had bemoaned that she spent many of her best years toiling at lousy jobs or still in school. Yet after seeing how many individuals were beginning to experience muscle and joint pain following years of overexerting themselves, Anzu was thankful that she made the decisions she had.

Yet, Anzu did not want to talk about any of that. Not now and especially not in front of Jounouchi. In spite of his preferred dueling style relying on luck, much of his life continued to be anything but lucky.

After graduation, Jonouchi had entered the world of professional dueling. For a few years, he had been successful at it. That changed when Shizuka confessed that she may be dropping out of Tokyo University. Their mother’s meager income was just unable to pay for both tuition and their combined living expenses in Tokyo.

Everyone saw how tirelessly Shizuka worked in cram school to do well on her examinations. It was all in order to gain admission to the prestigious Todai. In spite of all her hard work, Shizuka had not gained admission the first time she applied. True to her resilient nature, Shizuka refused to accept admission anywhere except Todai. As a result, she endured the year of taunting from her former classmates at being a ronin-sei while she continued to attend cram school and they partied at less prestigious universities.

The next Results Day, Shizuka had sent Anzu a picture of her being lifted up by the Todai cheerleader squad while she gave the camera a double peace sign. She had made the grade. After all that, it was no way that Jounouchi would allow Shizuka to give up.

In spite of protests, Jounouchi began to work part-time. As his popularity as a duelist diminished, that one part-time job became two part-time jobs. Eventually, it turned into a full-time position where Jounouchi Katsuya, of all people, had become a salaryman.

In some ways, there was a positive in his decision to help his mother and sister out with finances. For
starters, the strained relationship between mother and son began to mend. The newfound connection with his mother was what kept Jounouchi grounded when his father’s began to lose an extreme amount of weight and noticed that his ankles started to swell from fluid retention. No one was surprised to learn that he developed cirrhosis of the liver.

Jounouchi had made plans to see his father during golden week a few years ago. He had not answered Jounouchi’s phone call once the bullet train had arrived in Domino. Jounouchi had already suspected the worst.

After calling Yugi, the duo had discovered Jounouchi Mitsuhide unresponsive in the kitchen with the curry rice he had been making nearly on fire. He had been sober ever since he received his diagnosis, or so was the claim.

Once the paramedics left with the body of his father, Yugi had watched as Jounouchi tore up the apartment for any sign of alcohol. Both the search and subsequent autopsy confirmed his father’s claims of sobriety. In a way, it made the grieving process even worse for Jounouchi. What had hurt the most was never saying that final goodbye.

With Shizuka working as a Registered Nurse, she was either working or exhausted from work. A nursing shortage--especially in a major metropolitan city--meant more work for her. His mother was the one who helped him with processing his father’s sudden death and the guilt for assuming that his dad lied about being sober.

With Domino located on the easternmost portion of Tokyo’s prefecture, the bullet train only took a little under an hour to arrive to and from Tokyo proper. Yet, with Yugi the sole proprietor of Kame Games following his grandfather’s death, he was often busy on weekends when Jounouchi was free. It was vice versa for weekdays and as a result, the two never saw each other as much as they would have preferred. That left Jounouchi’s mother to finally be the mother that Jounouchi needed all of his life.

Bakura and Otogi had drifted out of the picture shortly after graduation. Otogi was mainly heard from on Twitter by everyone who was not Anzu. Her connection to him was something she was especially not Yugi.

As both Anzu and Otogi were in America, they had briefly reconnected on Facebook. While there was talk to visit one another, those plans never came to fruition. Making the trip from West Coast to East Coast or vice versa just never panned out.

However, Otogi did visit Anzu while she was living in Las Vegas and at her lowest point. They had found themselves being intimate on a number of occasions during that short stay. Towards the end of his visit, they had joked “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” They kept in close contact and had decided to see how they would be able to make a go at a long-distance relationship.

The distance between Las Vegas and San Francisco was still nearly 9 hour. Or 2 hours by plane. Every time one of them made the trip, Anzu ended up feeling that they had to cram as many activities in a few days or have as much sex as possible to be worth the time and money. Otogi seemed to feel the same way.

In the end, they had decided to act like it none of this had ever happened and remain friends. It did not stop their hookups when Otogi found himself in New York City while they were both single. And more often than not, they were almost always single.

By comparison, Honda was the happiest of them all. He made his career in the Japanese Ground Defense Force. The military life suited him. After a few years in, he married and currently was the
father of a three year old son. From what Anzu heard, he was expecting a second boy around the New Year. None of them had much luck in love, including Yugi.

*Yugi*...

He had come to New York to visit Anzu after she finally obtained her citizenship and moved into her own condo. The plan had been to travel from New York City to Denver where he was to be one of the celebrity judges during some championship tournament since he had been out of the dueling circuit for a few years now. From there, he would go back to New York and attend New York Comic Con as a guest. Then after a month of being in the States, he would return home to Japan. However, after learning of Kaiba’s presence in Chicago along with the exhibit temporarily being at the Field Museum, Yugi had excitedly modified his plans.

And now, here they all were, in Chicago. After their reunion, it seemed like each one of them was avoiding the elephant in the room by discussing Yugi. Instead, they silently made their way to baggage claim and stared at each other awkwardly while waiting for the luggage.

When the sibling’s luggage finally came around on the carousel, Anzu felt her phone vibrate and saw that it was Mokuba. “Mokuba is outside,” she let them know while they were grabbing their luggage off of the conveyor belt.

“The other Kaiba is not with him, right?” Jounouchi asked cautiously. “I am really in no mood to deal with that prick right now.”

“I wouldn’t think so,” Anzu replied carefully. Jounouchi and Kaiba never got past reluctantly tolerated each other. They were probably trying to prove who was more mature.

“Mokuba is driving and I would think his car is only big enough for only the four of us.”

The trio headed outside to the passenger pickup and drop-off section to see Mokuba standing outside of his car. He helped Shizuka with her luggage and by the time he turned to help Anzu, she had already placed her large overstuffed suitcase in the trunk.

“I think Anzu packed more than you two combined,” Mokuba commented with a chuckle.

“International baggage fees were ridiculous,” Shizuka replied before gesturing for Jounouchi to take the front seat. She continued to talk while her and Anzu climbed into the back. “I honestly used my scale to weigh it before I had to put a few pairs of shoes in Katsuya’s suitcase.”

“Thanks for that,” Jounouchi grumped from the front seat. Most of his words were muffled from him resting his chin and mouth on his hand.

“Can’t blame her,” Mokuba commented. “You never know what the weather is going to be like here. I blasted the heat on the way to work this morning, but had the windows down on the way home.”

Most of the ride was spent making polite conversation until Anzu had to ask. “How is Kaiba doing?”

She did not miss Mokuba tightening his grip on the steering wheel. “He’s recovering...Surprisingly fast, actually. And that’s not just him being stubborn.”

With a sigh he glanced over at Jounouchi before continuing. “Here’s the deal. I kind of screwed up on your hotel reservations. I was so frantic about Seto that I had a lapse of judgment, thinking America was one day ahead of Japan instead of behind. I got it fixed, but you don’t check in until
tomorrow at three o’clock.”

“That’s fine,” Anzu said. “We can find somewhere for tonight. It’s a weeknight, so there should be openings. How much was the reservation? I just don’t feel comfortable letting you pay…”

“Neither do I,” Jounouchi added.

Mokuba just waved them off. “You know I am just going to void and shred any check you write. Stuffing cash down my blazer--Jounouchi--will just make me confused. I might mistake myself for a stripper. Save your money, it was not a big deal. It was my screw up, so if you guys want, you can crash at my place tonight.”

“Is Kaiba still in the hospital?” Jounouchi asked hopefully.

“He’s at home, but you probably won’t even see him tonight,” Mokuba answered levelly. “He’s been pretty tired. There is a chance that if you do see him….There’s something different about him. Whatever you do, please don’t comment on it, okay?”

“Is his face burned or somethin’?” Jounouchi asked once more, hopefully. Shizuka kneed the back of his seat to get him to quit being rude.

“No,” Mokuba answered quickly with a reproaching look at Jounouchi. “Do NOT tell Seto I said anything. I need you to promise me this shit right now. Okay?”

Mokuba did not continue until everyone agreed. He made Jounouchi swear twice along with a pinky promise before he continued. “Okay. So, I think something happened at the museum that has to do with the Millennium Items. I may have illegally gained access to a few of the preliminary reports from the bombing. Asides from Seto, there were six other survivors and almost all of them noticed three of the bombers going after the Millennium Items. One of them did something to Seto and another survivor who happened to be by him when the attack started.”

With his signature playboyish grin, he continued, “I charmed her enough to get her number. She’s coming over tomorrow night and is going to bring something very interesting with her. Apparently it just appeared in her house.”

During the whole story, Anzu felt herself tense up with the hairs on the back of her neck standing up.

“Does she has a Millennium Item?” Shizuka asked, vocalizing exactly what Anzu was thinking.


“We’re here to find Yugi, not the nutjobs that decided to bomb the museum,” Jounouchi retorted. “No offense, but you Kaibas have enough money and influence to make everyone want to catch those fucks. No one seems to give a damn about Yugi!”

“Seto was going to meet Yugi at the Field Museum. If he didn’t disappear, he would have been one of the victims,” Mokuba replied calmly. “Think about it. The former bearer of the Puzzle goes missing a day before the museum is bombed with nothing but the Millennium Items stolen? Does that seem a little more than coincidental?”

Jounouchi glanced out the window before mumbling a quiet, “I guess not.”

“It was a long flight,” Shizuka said in her brother’s defense.

“I know,” Mokuba replied. “That girl is going to come over tomorrow since she thinks the Necklace
is mine. I told her we were just going to play some games and have a few drinks. If I am right, this might be help us find Yugi.”

“So we drink, play games, and be merry to get her to like us? So she can use the Necklace to help us find Yugi?” Jounouchi asked before shrugging. “What the hell? I’m down.”
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

I started writing this chapter on pg 64 of my Google Doc. It's now on page 77 and still going. I went back and added the smut scene before realizing I should just split the chapter into two parts. Next chapter is going to have ACTUAL Seto/Reader interaction. And trust me, I think you will all approve of it. ;)

I'm not gunna lie, I can't write smut while sober. So I am updating this after taking a shot of brandy, drinking a beer, and then one of those Bud Light Margaritas with a twist (since they're cheap and kind of a guilty pleasure). I'm 5'2" and if I had a dollar for how often someone told me to eat a sandwich because I am too thin, I would probably be able to afford some more booze. So that means I have a low alcohol tolerance and I am pretty drunk right now.

It's also like 4am. What I am trying to say is that there may be some. Okay, a lot of typos. If you spot any before I edit it while sober, let me know!

It rained on Friday.

Of course, the cold front from earlier this week did not last long. It was absolutely gorgeous yesterday when you had to waste the day. Your first stop was the bank to get your new debit card printed right there and then. That allowed you to go to the DMV in order to pay for a new license since you needed a valid photo ID to pick up your car.

You had two suits waiting for you when you pulled into your driveway. Luckily, they parked on the street. Initially, you paid them no attention since you were beginning to develop tunnel vision about the possibility of seeing Seto again the next day.

When you were addressed by the two suits, you wanted to cry, thinking it was the feds wanting to interview you again. It turned out that they were both attorneys from KaibaCorp. They had come bearing a nondisclosure agreement. Along with it was an extremely nice pen that you really wanted to pocket.

Since you already signed a contract without reading it fully when you enlisted, you learned your lesson and read this one carefully. Overall, it seemed pretty standard and was mainly about confidentiality. Of course. You were almost disappointed with how formal it was. Considering this was probably from Mokuba, you were half expecting a clause about not going into the sex dungeon without a horse's head or something.

After you signed the agreement, the suits left with their awesome pen and you continued on with your day.

And after all that anticipation, it rained and was too humid for this late in September. For starters, the humidity completely ruined your hair and caused any makeup to melt off as soon as you got done applying it.

Which meant you had to condition your hair yet again, put some serum in it to cut down on the frizz
before meticulously straightening it. For someone with your hair type and length, the entire process took longer than expected. Yet you were going to take your time with your makeup because you were going to look flawless and that was final.

When you heard the doorbell, you glanced up from the mirror to see it was 7:24pm. Mokuba had said the driver would arrive at 7:30.

Early birds were literally the worst.

Calling out that you were coming, you quickly checked the mirror one last time. You looked as good as you were going to get. Finally, you finished putting on your necklace that oh-so-subtly drew attention to your cleavage. Which the sundress you were wearing definitely emphasised. But not in a glaring ‘look at my tits’ kind of way. It was classier. Like you. Because that was how you were going to roll.

While on the way to the door, you grabbed your purse and made sure you had your keys, new wallet, and phone. Mokuba’s necklace was already sitting in an old box you used to put some of your own necklaces in. You have been raised to have manners and knew relatives would be turning over in their graves if you returned Mokuba Kaiba’s necklace in anything but a jewelry box. Southern hospitality was not shit compared to Midwestern courtesy.

You grabbed the box from a shelf. At the door, you slipped on a pair of heels before grabbing a coat and umbrella. You figured you would deal with fixing your shoe straps in the car.

Once you stepped outside, you apologized to the driver before locking your door and following him to the sedan. The driver opened the door and you tugged at the hem of your dress down before giving your thanks and climbing inside.

With the door shut, you began to get your shoes on properly before double-checking your face in your compact. With that accomplished, you were finally able to appreciate the fact that you were in a private car.

That is when you had a sudden thought: should you tip the driver? You had to tip Uber driver and taxis. Was it proper etiquette to tip private chauffeurs?

You didn’t have any cash on you. But maybe there was an ATM somewhere…

For the rest of the ride, you were frantically Googling whether or not to tip private chauffeurs.

There were too many different opinions. So you were going to go with the ‘I can’t afford to tip’ route and hope that it was not a faux pas. Once you got out of the car, you glanced up at the high-rise building that housed luxury condos. The exterior was an all glass, curtain wall and even among the surrounding buildings, everything seemed to scream out, ‘Look at me! I am rich!’

You took a deep breath before heading inside the building labeled at Millennium Park.

Seto was at his desk, reading a report on earning projections for the next quarter. A sudden noise made him glance up from his work. He felt surprised at the sight of you looking meek as you quietly closed the door behind you.

“Sorry to if I disturbed you.”

Like a wolf observing its prey, he took an interest in watching you slowly cross the room. The way the soft fabric of your dress clung to your curves was enough to make Seto temporarily forget about
 earning projections.

With great reluctance, he forced himself to move his gaze away from how soft fabric hugged your curves and focused on your face.

By now, you paused at his side and were so close that Seto could feel your warm breath on his neck. “Are you alright?” he asked.

“Mmmm,” was the only response he received as you wrapped your arms around him. Your chin came to rest on his shoulder and you took a moment to nuzzle his neck. You then kissed your way upwards until you got to his ear. “I’m much better now that I’m here with you....Seto...”

The sound of your voice saying his name…

Without hesitation, Seto rose from his chair and turned to face you. Sometimes he forgot how much taller he was than you. Or maybe he just never remembered how tall you were.

Seto tipped his chin and caught your lips in a kiss. Long fingers brushed against your jawline to tilt your head up towards him in order to deepen the kiss. Seto’s breath hitched as he simultaneously felt himself stiffen when your teeth brushed against his lower lip.

He broke the kiss and moved the chair out of the way before he positioned you so your back was facing his desk. Seto then began to walk you backwards until he had you on the edge of his desk. “Is this what you’re after?” he asked before trailing kisses down your jawline. He then nibbled at your shoulder.

The sound you made was affirmation enough. Seto moved the keyboard and folders aside before pushing you down on his desk. “Good,” he breathed as you rolled your hips into his. Seto responded in kind, pressing his erection between your thighs. “I always wanted to fuck you on this desk.”

“What a coincidence,” you replied breathlessly. “I always wanted you to fuck me on this desk.”

Seto’s fingers grazed your clavicle before they slide the spaghetti strap of your dress aside. Getting the hint, your hand moved to the first strap and pulled the material down. After slipping out of it, you did the same to the other until the material of your dress fell down to your waist, revealing your bare breasts.

Seto smirked at the fact that you were not wearing a bra. You had definitely come to his office with ulterior motives. He bent his head down and kneaded a breast with one hand while his tongue lapped at the nipple of the other. Of course, he did not miss how you threw your head back to let out a deep sigh of contentment.

He felt your hands travel towards his belt before tracing over his zipper and feeling the length of his erection. “Impatient, are we?” Seto asked when you began to try to undo his belt.

“A little,” you admitted bowing your head in slight embarrassment.

Seto worked his hand up towards your dampened panties. “I can tell,” he said before using his other hand to assist with sliding them off. Seto then made quick work of undoing his pants before pulling them and his boxers down. By the time he was done, you had cleared the desk enough to scoot further back on it.

Eager for what came next, Seto hiked up the hem of your dress while he positioned himself. The first thrust caused Seto to exhale deeply. So fucking tight…
There was pleasure and pain from the pressure as his cock stretched out smooth muscle and connective tissue in order to accommodate his size. You braced your hands against the desk and wrapped your legs around his hips. This allowed Seto to grip at your thighs before pushing back inside, harder this time. That elicited a hard breath forced from your lungs.

Grinding hard once more, Seto groaned into your neck. Your own hips rolled and kept up with his pace. Each time he pounded into you, he was rewarded with not only a cry of pleasure, but his desk shook violently in response to the motion.

Just hearing you moan his name was almost enough to cause him to be undone. Yet managed to delay his own orgasm by slowing his pace. “I want you to come for me,” Seto rasped.

You paused in order to adjust your body once more. When you continued, the pace was slower and more deliberate. Seto bit down on his inner cheek to keep his own orgasm in check. Nonetheless, his own thrusts continue to match yours.

Seto only slowed his pace when he felt muscles suddenly tighten before pulsing around his cock. He thrust slower and deeper, allowing you to ride out your orgasm. Through his own pleasure, he could hear you let out a tired moan at the top of your climax. Feeling that he was close, he involuntarily breathed out your name before meeting your lips with a kiss.

“Say it,” Seto commanded when he broke the kiss.

He grabbed your ass so that he was holding you above his desk while continuing to fuck you. "Say it!” He was almost there...

“I love you.”

With that, Seto let out a low groan as he reached his own release.

Just as he woke up from the dream.

Upon fully regaining consciousness, Seto could feel his erection pressing against his boxers. He peeled back his sheets to ensure that he did not have any nocturnal emissions. Satisfied at his findings, he fell back on his pillow and stared up at the ceiling.

“This has got to stop,” Seto muttered to himself. He rubbed the remnants of sleep from his eyes before picking up his cell phone to check the time.

8:23pm.

Seto could have sworn that he set an alarm before he took a nap.

He needed a shower.

Throwing back the covers once more, he frowned at the sight of the Millennium Rod. When the item first appeared in his room, Seto had thrown it in the bottom of a drawer in hopes of forgetting about it.

Just like those dreams, the Rod kept returning as if it were a lost puppy, desperate for its master's attention. Except its master was long dead. Whoever Seto had been three thousand years ago, it had no bearing on who he was today.

Seto momentarily closed his eyes to allow his mind to go blank. If he left the Rod there, then maybe it would stop randomly appearing in the most inconvenient spots.
In any case, he still needed a shower. Seto threw the covers over the ancient object before striding to the bathroom. He had another rod that he needed to take care of...
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The warm water ran over Seto’s lithe frame, relaxing the tension he held between his shoulder blades. He felt his hand grip his erection while his free hand rested on the tiled wall of the shower.

He groaned as the familiar images appeared in his mind’s eye. He pictured you riding astride him...Your silvery eyes locked on his own as your head bobbed up and down while sucking his cock...Your head thrown back, calling out his name while he fucked you hard and fast...

Seto squeezed his cock and allowed his body to jerk in reaction as he imagined your hand doing this to him...Or the way your hair would be as you lay under him while he had his way with you in his bed.

His hand moved quickly up and down his shaft. He begins fucking into his fist as he imagined pinning your arms down....Or how you would sound begging for him.

Without thinking, Seto’s mouth fell open. He breathed out your name as he came into his fist. He allowed his breathing to become more steady while the water washed his fluids down the drain. When he felt himself begin to relax, Seto decided to finish washing.

He only wished he could never see you again. As he stepped out of the shower, Seto reflected on the fact that it was a distinct possibility that he never would. In a city of over two million people, the odds of running into you on the street were slim. If he were honestly worried about that, then Seto could be on the next flight back to Tokyo if he so desired.

Seto reached for his towel and began to dry himself. With Mokuba here, his brother could finalize everything in Seto’s stead. Seto had done a thorough background check on you and had taken the liberty of checking the balance in your bank account. Even if you wanted to, you could never afford a flight to Tokyo--much less the time off.

Seto debated on just letting his hair air dry. Eventually, he decided against it and went about styling it as usual. He paused when he could hear a cacophony in spite of the bathroom fan.

Mokuba had company. Wonderful.

Once he left the bathroom, Seto decided against loungewear and dressed in regular pants and a button up shirt. The noise in the living room seemed to grow louder by the minute. Deciding to investigate, Seto opened his bedroom door and was greeted with the sound of the festivities going on in his living room.

Seto had not received the text about his unwelcomed guests yesterday. Well, technically he did. When they were already halfway in the door. He had tolerated the presence of Shizuka and Anzu spending the night. The addition of Jounouchi was enough to ensure that after a few minutes of pleasantries, he excused himself to the kitchen. After making a few Hot Pockets, Seto made his way back to his room for the night.

Of course, when everyone was doing their best not to look at him and comment on his eyes, Seto seized the opportunity to grab a bottle. A few shots combined with the oxycontin he had taken earlier was enough to lull Seto into an inebriated state where he was able to enjoy the evening.
The next morning, Seto had woken up and was pleasantly surprised to find everyone had left when he ventured out of his room to have a cigarette. He had managed to have a productive morning with an extended conference call back to Japan. He made sure it was a voice only call since he would not be able to get his colored contacts until early next week.

Following the conference call, he replied to several emails from his Executive Assistant and Chief of Staff. He had been reviewing a licensing agreement Legal had briefed him on when Seto’s eyes began to feel heavy. He had decided it was enough work for a little while before taking a nap once more.

And now it seemed as if the trio had returned for the night. Seto crept back into his room to grab his phone and text Mokuba. *You told me that they would be here for only one night.*

*There’s a lounge on the 60th floor for parties. Can’t you go there?*

Seto only had to wait a few moments before he received a reply. *Just come out and say Hi. We’ll head downstairs and you can go back to being a hermit.*

Initially, Seto had considered saying no. However, the idea of getting his living room back was extremely appealing. He wanted to finish the newest Metal Gear while he still had some free time.

Seto made his way down the hallway and upon rounding the corner, he could see Mokuba, Shizuka, Anzu, and Jounouchi sitting around the coffee table. Cards were spread around a bottle of beer. A few empty bottles were already sitting on the table. Seto noted the familiar flush on both Shizuka and Jounouchi’s faces.

Seto could only shake his head in bemusement at how Mokuba could bring down anyone’s defenses and convince them to have fun. Or at least drink, which for Mokuba, usually went hand-in-hand.

“Don’t break the circle,” Jounouchi cautioned as Shizuka drew a card.

An eight of hearts. Shizuka frowned as she glanced at the rules that were written in katakana. “Eight is Make a date,” she announced in English before looking over at Anzu. After laughing about the rules, she announced: “Anzu is going to be my date!”

“Kanpai!” The two tapped their beers together in cheers before drinking.

Finally, Seto had noticed you sitting in the seiza position with your back towards him.

A familiar voice in the back of his head (that always sounded like Gozaburo) chided him for the way that his heart jumped the tiniest bit when he saw you lean forward to grab a card from the circle. Your back stiffened and you hesitated for a moment before asking, “Is someone standing behind me?”

Four pairs of eyes looked up at Seto. “Oh, Kaiba-san,” Shizuka greeted with a respectful incline of her head. This earned a wicked grin from Mokuba.

“I think that counts as answering a question.” Mokuba told her. “Drink!”

This was not good, Seto decided as he saw you glance over at him. Seto did not miss the way your entire face brightened at the sight of him. Nor did he miss the dress you were wearing and how much it reminded him of the dream he just had. Seto felt a wave of heat wash over his body at that thought.

He needed another shower. A cold one this time. To distract himself from you and your choice of attire, Seto focused his attention on his younger brother.
“It seems like you’re having fun,” Seto said as dryly as possible in English.

“We can take it downstairs,” Mokuba replied in English as well. Seto wanted to call bullshit. It was obvious that Mokuba was just trying to lure him out to the living room in order to see you. His suspicions were confirmed when Mokuba picked up an unopened bottle of beer and waggled it in Seto’s direction. “Or you could come join us.”

With you just a few feet away from him, Seto was tempted. If it Jounouchi were not present, Seto would have taken the beer and sat down. He had no problem with Anzu and was used to Shizuka by now, but Seto was not going to drink in front of Jounouchi.

“I’ll pass,” he said before turning towards the kitchen.

“I guess the rumors are true,” Anzu teased. With the way her voice slurred, it was obvious that this was not her first drink of the evening. “Kaiba is a lightweight!”

“Extremely,” Seto tersely replied. He did not have anything to prove. From the kitchen, he momentarily looked over at you. Somehow, it was as if disappointment was radiating from you. Anzu must have sensed it too because she gave your shoulder a comforting squeeze as if her taunt was part of some girl conspiracy.

Somehow the idea of you befriending Anzu annoyed him. Before anyone could see him lingering at the kitchen entrance, he went to the refrigerator. While pretending to decide between leftovers, he listened in to the game.

At the moment, you were all coming up with words that rhymed with the word ‘Rhyme’. Of course, it ended when Jounouchi could not think of an English word. Seto resisted the urge to laugh by making a sandwich.

Idiot.

Seto could sense you approaching the kitchen. He concentrated on buttering the bread exactly so when you got near. You placed your empty beer bottle in the recycling before pausing.

“What kind of sandwich are you making?”

“Just ham and cheese,” he replied. When you didn’t move, Seto looked up to see that the wide-eyed innocent look you had going on earlier you was replaced by a devilish smirk. Even though it was the first time seeing it in person, Seto remembered that smirk from so many of his dreams.

“Drink,” you ordered.

Seto immediately took his attention off of his food and focused entirely on you.

“I’m the Question Master,” you explained. “When you answer my question, you have to drink. Them’s the rules.”

He could have told you to fuck off. If you had been anyone else standing in his kitchen and giving him orders, you would be on your way home with your tail between your legs by now. Instead, Seto noticed that he was still holding the butter knife. Without losing eye contact, he licked it clean. The way your eyes widened and lips parted made him smirk.

“Fine,” he replied as he set the knife down. By now, the living room had grown silent, but it did not seem as if either of you two noticed. Instead, Seto located a shot glass from the cabinet.
He set it on the counter and glanced over at you before making his way to the liquor cabinet. “Am I supposed to drinking anything in particular?” he asked.

“No preference,” you replied.

“You don’t have an answer to my question?” Seto asked in mock disappointment. “What kind of Question Master are you?”


Upon hearing that, Seto wished that he never said anything. Unfortunately for him, there was a bottle of Patron Premium in plain sight. After pouring the shot, he used the glass to give you a mock salute before downing it.

Expensive tequila was not supposed to burn going down. Somehow it still did. Nonetheless, Seto kept his composure and set the glass on the counter. He was rewarded with a nod of satisfaction from you.

His stomach was empty and Seto could already feel the effects of the alcohol taking hold. Instead of going back to his sandwich, he fetched a second shot glass and poured you both a drink.

“I was not part of your game,” he explained while handing you the second glass. “House rules says that is a penalty shot. As you so eloquently put it a moment ago: Them’s the rules.”

“If it’s house rules…” You said before accepting the glass. You took a cautious sniff and wrinkled your nose slightly. “Kanpai, I guess…”?


You nodded and hesitated only slightly before taking the shot. The second shot went down easier for Seto. Anticipating the burning allowed him to see you make a face. You held your mouth over the glass as if you were going to spit the tequila back out.

“Ughh...That’s why you need salt and a lime for tequila shots,” you groaned.

Seto slowly set his shot glass down when he realized just how close you were. He never had an acute sense of smell, but could still catch the aroma of the perfume you wore. He could see the rise and fall of your chest. Briefly, Seto considered trying to find out where exactly you had sprayed your perfume.

Noticing the proximity as well, you put the shot glass next to his and took a step forwards. Your hand accidentally brushed against Seto’s leg. That brief touch sent shivers of excitement up his spine.

Fuck…

Seto knew that he should push you away and tell you to go back to your drinking game. He just did not want you. He wanted you. He wanted to pin you against the wall, tear your dress off, and see if those gasps and moans you made in his dreams were only a product of his imagination.

It was not like Seto could do anything. Not with Mokuba and his...guests here.

Seto was abruptly pulled from his thoughts at the sound of Jounouchi’s voice from the living room.

“But it’s her turn,” Jounouchi said in Japanese instead of the broken English he had been using
earlier.

“Then just pass her,” Mokuba replied irritably. “Chill out.”

You flinched back, argentine eyes wide. Seto was not sure how, but he could feel your confusion and panic so intensely it was if it were his own emotions. In a way, they were because Seto could feel a sense of unreality, the racing heart, and feeling and need to get out of this apartment right now. In a way, it was how he knew these emotions were not his own: Kaiba Seto never fled.

“I understood that,” you managed to choke out through the knot of dread in your throat.

Seto wanted to scoff at that. However, he was quickly able to put the pieces together just as you vocalized his realization out loud. “I don’t know Japanese.”

Until now, Seto thought. How he was able to even think through your sense of panic was beyond him. What he did know was that he needed to calm you down before you dashed out of the kitchen and created a scene. He did not want to have to explain this.

Seto put his hands on your shoulders as if that alone could keep you anchored in place. “Wait here,” he told you. “I will be right back.”

He could see your eyes darting towards the door as if you were thinking of making a run for it. However, you nodded your head. Without really thinking, he gave your shoulders a reassuring squeeze before leaving you in the kitchen.

Seto brushed past the living room and headed straight for his room. First, he grabbed his pack of cigarettes and lighter before heading to the ensuite bathroom. He opened the medicine cabinet and grabbed the bottle labeled Ativan. Unscrewing the top, he grabbed one pill and put it in his pocket before heading back into the kitchen.

Instead of the liquor cabinet, Seto went for the refrigerator. There was not much to choose from asides from beer. Yet his eyes landed on a bottle of sake he almost forgotten about as it was stashed in the back of the fridge. For a good reason too. It was sweet and tasted a bit too citrus-like for Seto’s liking. Yet, his most recent ex enjoyed it. Honestly, Seto was surprised he did not get rid of it (or smash the bottle against the wall out of anger) following the break-up.

His choices were that, liquor, or beer. As the tequila and whatever emotions you were projecting were clouding his ability to think, Seto grabbed the bottle. He handed it to you before locating two sake glasses. After instructing you to follow him, Seto put on his shoes and stepped into the hallway.

He knew you were following after him, he could sense it. Seto pressed the down button on the elevator. While you both waited, he looked over at you. You were looking at the bottle of sake in your hand, specifically at the kanji. While you were not exactly calm, it seemed as if you were no longer on the verge of hysterics.

“Can you read that?” he asked.

You nodded just as the elevator reached the floor. Seto waited until you boarded the elevator before he pressed the button for the 12th floor. His condo was on the 62nd floor and during the fifty-floor descent, he could only stare impatiently at the light that indicated the current floor.

Finally, the elevator stopped on the 12th floor and the doors opened. You were still studying the bottle of sake, but followed after him to a hospitality room. It was thankfully deserted.

"Do you smoke?" Seto asked as he used his key fob to open the door and step inside.
"No. But I don't mind if you do," you replied. Seto set the sake cups down on a table near a couch before making his way to the patio door. He heard you set the sake bottle down and follow him to the door.

The rain from earlier in the evening had evolved into a full-scale thunderstorm. Using his foot, Seto propped the door open and light a cigarette.

You just leaned against the wall and contented yourself with watching the lightening.

After his first few puffs, Seto was able to collect his thoughts. "So you're able to read and understand Japanese, he said after exhaling. "Can you speak it?"

There was a brief pause before you replied to him in Japanese. "This is really weird."

You spoke with an obvious accent, but your pronunciation was perfect.

Seto took a long drag from his cigarette.

"As if this is the weirdest thing to happen to the both of us," he commented.

"Can I get a puff?" You asked, indicating the cigarette.

Women, Seto thought grimly. Never wanting their own, but always content to eat your food or smoke your cigarette. Still, he handed you his cigarette.

For a supposed nonsmoker, you held the cigarette as if you were a regular. Of course, when you inhaled, you let out a small cough before exhaling. You seemed to tolerate the second puff better. After the second exhale, it seemed as if that were enough and handed the cigarette back to Seto.

Already he could feel himself relax a bit. Either you were calming down or he was drunk. Probably a little of both.

"To be fair, I was drugged out of my mind when I noticed my eyes. I'm a veteran and after Afghanistan...I guess I usually can ignore weird shit. I don't know."

He was not going to comment on you disclosing that you were a veteran. After all, he already knew about it. Seto had run a background check on you the day Mokuba gave you a ride home from the hospital, after all.

Unlike you, Seto had not been so lucky when he first saw his reflection. Yet, he managed to coldly accept it. The dreams were another matter. He was about to tell you about how he seemed to attract all the weird stuff in high school. So somehow, this was almost familiar.

Yet he was not in a sharing mood. He never was, really. Instead, Seto reached for his pocket with his free hand. "I have something for anxiety if you needed it."

"Besides the booze and cigarettes? I didn't peg you as the type to smoke pot." After he gave you a look, you seemed to get the hint on what he was referring to. "I don't want to take medication meant for you."

"I don't need it," Seto replied quickly. A bit too defensively, really. "I was given it without asking."
You looked almost offended at how much easily abused medication was practically thrown at him. "That's such bullshit. I was just told to take Ibuprofen. Yeah, I'll take the Ativan if you have it on you. Just half though, otherwise I am probably going to take a coma on your couch."

"If you're going to take a coma, I would rather you took one in my bed," Seto replied before hastily correcting himself. "In A bed."

He looked out at the storm so you could not see his expression. What the hell did he just say? He knew that he should have told you to fuck off instead of taking that first shot of tequila.

"Is that an invitation?" You replied with your voice growing lower.

Seto tossed the cigarette on the ground before using his foot to stub it out. He stepped fully inside, allowing the patio door to close behind him.

He moved to the sake bottle and poured himself a drink. Without caring that he never liked the sake to begin with, Seto downed it.

You were now hovering by the door and wringing out your hands nervously. "Shit...I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable," you stammered nervously.

"Shut up and have a drink with me," Seto said. He poured you both a cup of sake before taking a seat on the couch. This time, he sipped from the cup since it made the citrus after taste less intense.

You took the offered cup and sat a respectable distance from him. If you were both middle schoolers at a Catholic school dance and were instructed to leave room for Jesus. Honestly, Seto had no idea what he was even doing anymore but was almost beyond caring. Maybe if he fucked you senseless on this couch, he could finally get you out of his system.

And if the opposite happened? If he got attached…?

Seto was pulled from his rumination by his phone vibrating in his back pocket. He wanted to ignore it, but form of habit made him instinctively reach for the device. It would be Saturday afternoon in Japan and if there was someone trying to contact him, Seto could not ignore the message.

His fears were unfounded. Instead of an urgent email that made it through his numerous filters, Seto saw he received three texts from Mokuba. ‘Just wanted to let you know we’re heading out. Our new BFF is already missed, but I know she’s in good hands. Won’t be back until early tomorrow AM. So...yeah. 1/3’

‘Just sayin. I text our little buddy but her phone is upstairs still. Can you let her know that she can keep the necklace? Tell her I don’t want it anymore or something 2/3’

‘Make up something clever, but tell her I said it. 3/3’

Just as Seto was reading, a fourth text message came through: ‘Also, tell her to accept Anzu’s Friend request on Facebook. Kthanx!’

‘K,’ was all Seto typed back before hitting Send.

Instead of relaying the message, Seto just held up the phone screen for you to read. You set your sake cup down before scooting closer to him in order to read the message. The way you leaned forward allowed Seto an ample view of your cleavage.
“Okay. I guess,” you concluded when you finished reading the message.

“What necklace?” Seto questioned in as passive of a tone as possible. His thoughts were going in all directions on why Mokuba was giving you a necklace.

Your brows knitted together and Seto could sense trepidation rising from you. “That gold necklace,” you replied as if Seto should know what you were talking about. “Mokuba made it seem like a big deal.”

When Seto did not respond, you had seemingly became aware of the position you were sitting in and straightened your back. Before speaking, you reached towards the sake cup and gulped down the remaining alcohol. “When Mokuba dropped me off at home, I took a nap. When I woke up, there was a necklace on my coffee table. I thought...I don’t even know what I thought. At the time, I was thinking maybe Mokuba dropped it and I was too tired to remember picking it up.”

As Seto listened, he began to realize exactly what you were talking about. He immediately pulled up the Internet browser on his phone before briefly pausing. Was he seriously about to do this…?

Yeah he was.

“‘Isis Ishtar,’ Battle City finals,’ he typed into the search bar. When the images loaded, Seto clicked on the picture Isis had taken for her duelist profile before showing you the screen.

“That’s the same picture Mokuba showed me,” you said. “Yeah. It’s the same necklace.”

If Seto were a better man, he would try to explain Egypt, the Millennium Items, and how he was able to wrap his head around the concept of them. Even if he wanted to tell you to put an anchor around the Millennium Necklace, rent a boat, and sink it to the deepest part of Lake Michigan. Because if you took the item, your life would never be the same.

However, that would be revealing too much. Even if he still wanted nothing more than to drag you upstairs and fuck you until you both forgot about the Millennium Necklace, you were a stranger. An outsider.

After much deliberation, Seto made his decision: he would not get involved. Tomorrow morning, he would busy himself with strategic planning, sorting out the inevitable crises that popped up on a day-to-day basis, and balance the company checkbook. The next day, he would do the same, and the day after it too. That was how Kaiba Seto decided his life would be and he accepted the mundanity of it all. For over a decade, Seto had become familiar with the detached meaningless fog and perpetual boredom that comprised of his existence.

There was no room in his life for heroics or outsiders. The more time and distance he could put between you two, the better things may be.

Instead of explaining anything, Seto grabbed the bottle of sake, his cup, and stood from the couch. “I think it is time for you to go home.”

You mimicked his movements and straightened your dress when you stood up. “Yeah. Probably. I need to get my purse from upstairs.”

“I’ll call you a car,” Seto said.

“Sure,” came your reply.

The ride up the elevator was silent and you politely took care of the sake cup before grabbing your
purse. By the time Seto finished up on the phone, you were almost already out the door, furiously tapping at your screen as you composed a text message. He could sense your anger as if it were his own emotions.

He still ignored it. Instead, he gave you the information for the driver and sent you on your way.

Before you left, you lingered at the doorway. “Thanks for being cool about things at least,” you said awkwardly. You did not even bother waiting for a reply before closing the door behind you.

Seto noticed you had not taken the Millennium Necklace with you.

Chapter End Notes

The drinking game I was trying to describe Circle of Death (or King’s Cup). The rules are pretty simple and I thought it would be easy for people who are not fluent in English to play. I initially typed up how I learned to play, but deleted it because I know I get annoyed when I see rules that are not exactly how I learned to play. =p~

In case anyone wants to shake me senseless for Seto and Reader-chan getting so close and then pulling away: there’s a plan! Since I’m super uncreative, I am loosely following the outline of Joseph Campbell’s hero journey. They just refused the call to adventure. Luckily, the proverbial mentor sensei-sama is showing up next chapter. ~.^
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

I cannot apologize enough for the delay. Life has just been….great. Just great. /sarcasm.
I do want to thank everyone who has taken time to review, it really has encouraged me to get off my lazy butt, make a cocktail, and get to writing. So I want to dedicate this chapter to all the reviewers, margaritas, and weekend brunch.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You weren’t pissed that Seto refrained from pushing you up against the nearest wall to fuck your brains out. You were pissed that he knew some rather important information that he was keeping to himself. He knew exactly what was going on with all the craziness, but chose not to say anything!

Fuck him, you thought bitterly.

Wait...

No!

You did not want to go there.

He’s a complete douchebag, you mentally amended before nodding to yourself in satisfaction. Much better. That insult held no implications.

When you got home, you did the only sane and logical thing: continue to drink heavily until you blacked out. The last memory you had before sweet oblivion claimed you was you bemoaning the fact that you were now out of vodka.

The next morning, the powers that be must have been on your side (for once) because when you woke up (surprisingly in your bed), you were not as hungover as you anticipated being. You still felt disgusting and had an acidic taste in your mouth. Asides from that, however, you felt relatively fine.

You would probably have to double-check the kitchen and every bathroom to make sure you didn’t puke. The taste of alcohol, vomit, and shame in your mouth was bothering you.

“I’m a mess,” you muttered while dragging your hands through hair that really needed to get washed.

You lay on your bed and stared up at the ceiling. “I’m a mess,” you repeated to the ceiling. Luckily ceilings do not talk, so it did not disagree with your self-assessment.

With a groan, you threw back your covers and wanted to scream at the sight that you saw. You knew you left that necklace at the Kaiba’s last night. You did it intentionally!

And yet, here it was, chilling in your bed like some entitled one-night stand.

You immediately reached for your phone. Initially, you were disappointed to see that it was only a little past 9am on Saturday. You were hoping to have blacked out until Sunday afternoon. Your phone was about to die, so you plugged it into the charger and began to look at your call log and text messages. You had to make sure no one came over to drop that necklace off.
You had evidently changed Mokuba’s name in your contacts to ‘Douche’s Brother,’ but other than that, you did not drink and social media or drunk text anyone. For a moment you were distracted from an ancient Egyptian artifact materializing itself in your bedroom to bet proud of yourself. You got blackout drunk and as far as you could tell, you did not do anything stupid.

Perhaps this was what it meant to grow up and become a little bit more mature with each passing year...

You were pulled out of your self-congratulatory reverie by the noise coming from downstairs. Freezing, you held your breath and listened to what sounded like someone going through the kitchen cupboards.

There was someone in your house.

Okay, so it was not technically your house. You and your sibling inherited it. Your sibling was technically the more responsible one with paying the taxes and other bills. However, your sibling was not supposed to be in Illinois much less Chicago. Not only that, but you would have informed you that there was a visitor...Considering what happened last time...

Which meant that there was a complete stranger in your house.

As you got out of bed, you tried to be as stealthy as possible as not to alert the intruder. While you owned a gun, you liked to think you were sane enough to keep it in a safe location. That did not include sleeping with it under your pillow. You might be in denial over how much the military affected you, but you liked to think you were sane enough not to do that.

Right now, you wished you were that kind of crazy because your gun was downstairs. The heaviest object was a decorative glass candle your mother had given you and you would rather get stabbed to death than use it as a bludgeoning weapon.

You attempted to creep down the hallway to sneak out the balcony door. However, the intruder was already up the steps by the time you even tried.

The first thing you noticed about him was that he held your gun to his side casually. Next, were his brown eyes and white hair followed by the golden pendant tied around an old piece of rope.

“Oh good, you’re not dead,” the spirit of the Millennium Ring greeted brightly. “You had daddy worried, little princess.”

You had a few options: you could either let out a battle cry and tackle the intruder in hopes of actually wrestling your gun away. Given the fact that the guy looked ready to shoot you at the slightest move, you knew that was not really an option. Then, there was cooperation...

“If it’s money you want--” you began, not taking your eyes from the firearm.

“Tch, if I wanted money, I would not be here looking for it. “

Ouch.

That was rude.

“Then why…?”

You could only guess why a lone gunman would break into a woman’s home. If that was the case, then you might have a chance to fight the guy off. He looked scrawny and if he got close enough,
you were confident in being able to take him in hand-to-hand combat before he was able to use your own gun against you.

“You are quite the dirty girl, aren’t you? I’m not interested in that. At all,” the man retorted with obvious distaste. With his free hand, he gestured towards the pendant. “You seem like a smart girl. So I am sure you recognize the significance of my Millennium Ring. It led me here to you and let’s just say that I am positive that you have no idea what is happening to you. Am I correct?”

You tried to process what he was saying. However, all you could think about was the fact that as he spoke, he was gesturing with the gun. Your gun.

Whoever he was, he chose to ignore your lack of reply and continued with his monologue. “As to why I am here....Well, let’s just say that I needed to make sure my new favorite girl made it through the night. You see, I have quite the connection to the seven artifacts from Ancient Egypt. The necklace has evidently chosen you as its new master. You’re a blank slate and thus, are my new favorite person. You need information and guidance. That is the type of thing that I am more than happy to provide it to only my most favorite people.”

When he was finally finished, he studied your expression before following your gaze to the gun. “Oh this?” he asked innocuously. “Are you waiting for me to let my guard down so you can try to get this back?”

Well...yeah. You kind of were.

You did not even have a moment to reply because the next thing you knew, you were lifted several inches off the ground and flung backwards, through the air, and into the wall. The man with your only weapon did not even move. Feeling gravity take over, you slumped against the wall and fell to the carpeted floor with an undignified thump.

As this was happening, you could not help but notice that the pendant emitted a soft glow that was similar to what you saw in the museum that fateful day.

There was nothing you could do to defend yourself. Not from some supernatural force. The only thing you could do was not meet his gaze. You made that mistake once before.

Shutting your eyes, you began to prepare yourself for the pain of what was probably going to follow.

Instead, you felt the intruder close the distance between you two and get into a crouching position. He just chuckled as if you were a rowdy child before patting your cheek.

“You really are quite the naughty little girl, aren’t you?” he observed. “You seem rather grumpy. I’ll tell you what: if you go be a good girl and take a shower before coming downstairs with that necklace of yours, I will forgive you for being a brat. After all, I think you and I have much to discuss. That...and you really do need to shower, my dear.”

Your instinct was to defend yourself and fight back. Yet, after everything that happened, there was no fight left in you. It was almost as if he played these mind games to ensure you lost the will to fight back.

If that were the case, then he won. At this moment, you were just so mentally drained that all you could do was nod your head before picking yourself up off the ground and head towards the upstairs bathroom. This will at least give you some time to figure things out.

Once more, it was as if this guy was able to read your mind. Just as you were about to open the
bathroom door, he called from the bottom of the stairs: “Don’t take too long. Not unless you want me to come up there and drag you out of the shower.”

You could lock the door, but you seriously doubted that would keep him out. Not if he was able to get inside your locked house. You could only robotically go through the motions of turning the water on. You did not even bother fully undressing before stepping under the hot spray of water.

As soon as you felt the weight of your now wet clothes, you realized how phenomenally stupid you just were. You had thought you reached the quintessence of insanity until another ancient Egyptian artifact showed up. This time, with a crazy man attached to it.

There was no way you were going to undress with that guy in your home. No freaking way. Everything he did was some sort of mind game and he succeeded in getting under your skin.

And he expected you to just go along with this? Then again, what choice did you have? You doubted you could make a run for it. Even if you got away, then what? It was not as if you could go to the police without that necklace getting brought up. There was the option of going to Seto, but you could already see him giving you a cold stare before informing you that this was not his problem.

Which left you with hearing this guy out and just going along with what he was saying. Maybe he wasn’t such a bad guy after all? He was no Obi-Wan, but you really could use answers from someone who wanted to play hot and cold with you. For all you knew, this guy could be more of a Doctor House.

You felt a bitter laugh escape from your throat at that thought. Not very likely. You just felt resigned to your fate since there was nothing you could do to try to get out of this little discussion you were supposed to have with the man who broke into your home, subtly threatened you with your own gun, mocked you, and then used some kind of ancient Egyptian artifact to throw you into a freaking wall. At least you weren’t hurt from that one!

The water did nothing to relax your tensed up muscles and you suspected that part of the reason was how utterly uncomfortable it was to shower in your pajama shorts and an oversized t-shirt. Somehow, you managed to make the entire experience only mildly uncomfortable. When you turned the water off, you made sure to have a towel ready before you tossed your wet clothes in the tub; each article of clothing made a disgusting splat as it hit the porcelain.

You quickly dried yourself off before realizing that your clean clothes were in your bedroom. Well. That sucked.

Luckily for you, you had discarded some workout clothes before a shower and never got around to picking them up. You did not want to think about how long they had been there and quickly got dressed. You paused to contemplate blowdrying your hair, but did not want to risk the guy making good on his threat, so you just wrapped a towel around your head before reaching for the doorknob. With a heavy sigh, you pushed the door open and headed towards room.

You threw the comforter back and the necklace gleamed in the morning sunlight. Before grabbing it, you hesitated and glanced to your window. Maybe you could open it and prop the screen off…?

Not accounting for the fact that would make noise, there was no way you could jump out of a second story window and be able to walk, much less run away.

“Why me?” you complained to the necklace as you picked it up off your mattress. With the necklace in hand, you had no choice but to make your way downstairs.
You had found the intruder in the kitchen, helping himself to your food.

“Is this what you eat?” he complained at the sight of your very un-June Cleaver-like kitchen.

“Sorry…” You were too tired to tell anyone to go fuck themselves over your lack of domestication. Instead, you opened the refrigerator door and grabbed a beer and half-eaten sandwich you drunkenly put in there the night before.

Without thinking, you took some orange juice and a glass. By the time you sat at the kitchen table, the intruder was staring at you incredulously. Nothing was said as you mixed the beer and orange juice together.

“It’s between the hours of eleven o’clock and three. Which means it’s brunch and drinking a beermosa is acceptable during brunch hours. It’s classy.”

“Millennials,” he muttered before taking a seat across from you.

As he spoke, you were grateful to be drinking.

“Over three Millennia ago, there was a power insurmountable. The god-kings of Egypt ordered a blood sacrifice to create seven artifacts that could bend the shadows and gods to their will…”

When Seto finished his second bottle of water, he haphazardly tossed the plastic on to the coffee table. It was still littered with playing cards and empty beer bottles from the night before, so Seto saw no reason to clean it up. The help would be coming by tomorrow evening, so he could live with the mess at the moment.

Stretching his neck to one side, Seto was finally able to hear a satisfying crack before he returned to his phone. The emails never stopped, but luckily, it was Sunday in Japan, so he could take his time going through his inbox.

While waiting for an email to load, Seto was able to see his reflection in the phone’s screen. His skin looked blotchy and eyes had bags under them. For now, he ignored how his silver irises made the bags stand out all the more. As last night progressed, Seto had gotten more and more intoxicated.

Which was fascinating because once he kicked you out, he made himself a tea to calm his fried nerves. No matter how he wanted to deny it, Kaiba Seto was in his thirties and could not drink until he passed out over his laptop, wake up a few hours later, and get back to work.

Even so, that did not account for his level of intoxication when compared to how much he had to drink.

When he had woken up with a hangover, Seto could only sigh and stare gloomily at the ceiling when he suspected the cause behind his current state. Considering how his physiological state changed when she had such a sudden mood shift the night before, it seemed more than likely that her own emotional reactivity and extreme physiological states could directly affect him.

Which meant that he really should finish up his work so he could try to get to the bottom of all this insanity before it consumed him...

Mokuba walked into the living room to see his brother sprawled out on the couch, leg propped up on the back of the couch in an undershirt and sweat pants. Normal individuals would be unperturbed to walk into the living room and find their brother in such a state. Most would just dismiss it as ‘normal Saturday morning.’ However, Mokuba had learned long ago that Kaiba Seto was no mere mortal.
“Long night?” Mokuba asked, biting his cheeks to hide his signature shit-eating grin.

He turned his head away from his brother and peered down the hallway towards the bedrooms. When he saw that the door to Seto’s room was ajar, the grin quickly faded from his face. “You kicked her out already?” Mokuba asked incredulously. “I hope you at least invited her to brunch…”

Seto only signed and threw his free arm over his eyes in a comically morose fashion. “I didn’t want here here,” he said simply. “Nothing happened. Didn’t you get my text?”

Mokuba pulled his phone out from his back pocket and went to show his brother the battery died. Upon realizing that Seto’s eyes were still covered, he gave up on it. “Shizuka didn’t have an iPhone charger. So my phone’s dead.”

“Hrm,” was the reply Seto grunted out.

Eyebrows furrowing together, Mokuba examined his brother’s face as if noticing him for the first time. “Um...Nii-sama....Is everything, y’know...okay?

“I have a lot on my mind,” Seto replied vaguely. Mokuba had already given him your number and the more he thought about you and your share bond, the more Seto wanted to exit out of his email app and at least send you a text message about not drinking yourself into oblivion on the regular.

However, considering the intense gaze you shot him when he kicked you out, Seto had a feeling that would encourage you to drink until you got alcohol poisoning if it meant sending a message.

Ever the paradigm of self-control, Seto forced his thoughts away from you and how you looked in that dress the night before. Or how much he regretted not waking up to that dress on his bedroom floor…

No.

He made his decision last night and would not let the thoughts of you erode at his resolve or not control.

Instead, Seto ignored Mokuba’s worried expression and continued with his emails.

You were not sure how much time had expired, but you finished your second beermosa when Bakura (who was possessing Ryou Bakura) stayed your hand when you went to make a third.

“I think I indulged you enough with those,” he said. In spite of his words, your antics seemed to amuse him. Which was strange, considering he was a tomb robber who made a deal with a dark god, got trapped in an object with said god for three millennia before being set free by a three thousand year old amnesiac pharaoh, all by playing a time-traveling-except-not-really RPG. Why would your borderline alcoholism be funny by comparison?

“Why?” you questioned. You were not sure if you were questioning why he was stopping you from drinking, why he even bothered telling you this, or if you were in a middle of an existential crisis.

“Because, my dear, you’re going to put on the Millennium Necklace and learn how to use it. That way, you won’t die when you’re challenged to your first Dark Game. And believe me, you will be challenged to one, whether you like it or not.”

The Dark Games…
You knew all about that by now. The only way to win a Millennium Item was to participate in one. Since the Millennium Necklace seemed so goddamn attached to you, it was inevitable whoever was responsible for the bombing at the Field Museum would be after them.

You were not sure if you believed Bakura’s insistence that he was only trying to use the resurface of the Millennium Items to finally allow his soul to pass the the afterlife. However, he had endeared himself to you over the past few hours.

Not to mention, if Seto really did have this Millennium Rod, then that meant seeing him again. If you could learn to throw him against a wall…

Well..

All these factors made putting the Millennium Necklace on a lot easier than you ever thought it would be. That is when your vision went black:

“That’s the car!” You did not even think as you trailed the car crossing the bridge. The first time you put on the Millennium Necklace, you had a vision of this moment.

The past was already written and while the future was always fluid, the Millennium Necklace allowed you to see what could be. It allowed you to change things. And as you ignored the pain from running in heels, you were determined to not screw this up.

There was no way you could get close enough to the car before you lost it, so you had to take stock of every visual cue. Just in case this was still your first vision after putting the Necklace on. Your gaze immediately went towards street signs, a frozen yogurt shop, an unfamiliar looking bridge with a sign ‘Historic Third Ward’ written on an arch.

You wished you could shout everything you learned up until now, but couldn’t. The vision had only been for a few seconds. When the car was finally down the street, you paused and looked at your hands. An idea came to you and hopefully you could figure this out. You held all the fingers on both hands up at once before putting them down and holding up three fingers. You put them down and held up a single digit…

When your vision cleared, you found yourself on the floor with Bakura looking up at you. “A silver Lexus. A bridge...Historic Third Ward...Ten. Three. One,” you said as you attempted to relay exactly what you had seen in your vision to someone who may have known what was going on.

Bakura took your arms and hoisted you into a standing position before patting you on the head. “You’re making daddy very proud,” he said indulgently.

The sun had set about an hour ago and the temper would be dropping soon enough. Malik glanced in his side view mirror and while the jeep keep its distance, Malik was no fool. He knew when he was being followed.

He had detailed and customized the motorcycle himself. Still, it did not have a clock. Malik could only guess that he was about two hours south of Dubai. However, a mile marker confirmed that he was close to where he needed to be.

He pulled the clutch and shifted the gear before accelerating down the desert road and maintained that speed until he approached the landmark. He slowed his bike until he came to a stop. Taking off his helmet, Malik shook out his hair before resting the helmet on the ground and pretended that he was looking at his engine until he could hear the hum of the jeep as it approached and braked.
Malik pretended to glance curiously at the jeep as the two men dressed in traditional garb got out of the vehicle. “Peace be on you, brother,” one of the men greeted.

Did they really think he was that stupid? If these men were who they tried to pass off as, they would not have been driving. Not when it was salah.

Whoever these people were, they had to be low-ranking. Or whoever they worked for were incredibly foolish. Malik intended to find out which one of these were the truth and returned the greeting when the men approached even closer.

“Are you having problems?” the second of the duo inquired as he approached. Unlike the first man, this one’s attempt at the local accent was pitiful.

Malik quickly decided this was the the dumber of the two. Before he could see the glint of their knives, Malik’s gun was drawn and his shot landed right between the first man’s eyes. A few quick maneuvers allowed him to avoid the second, more foolish man and he quickly aimed the barrel of the gun at him.

“Put the keys for jeep on the ground,” Malik ordered. “Next, you’re going to put your friend in the back of the jeep. Then, finally, we’re going to have a long discussion. If I like your answers, you can live. If I don’t…”

Malik let that threat be unspoken. Whoever was following him and Isis had underestimated him. The underworld quickly forgot about Malik Ishtar and the Ghouls, but Malik did not forget all he learned from his ties to the underworld so easily. Especially not in his current line of work.

By the time Malik was satisfied with the answer, he dug the wallet and cell phone out of the pocket of his latest corpse. Unlocking the cell phone, Malik pulled up Boss in the contacts and his the Dial button. “I really hope those were not the best and brightest you sent to trail my sister and I,” he growled into the microphone when the call was answered.

Malik paused to listen to what was said before shaking his head. “How nice. Regardless, you’re wasting your time. Isis and I do not have the Millennium Items. We have had nothing to do with them since completing our duty as Tomb Keepers. So save your time, resources, and men’s lives by calling off whatever surveillance you have.”

Malik did not even bother listening to an answer before hanging up the phone. He had already taken the first guy’s belongings and was satisfied that the scene looked like a robbery gone bad. Malik knew that he would need to cool his heels somewhere until this situation blew over.

Right now, he needed to leave before a motorist came upon the scene. He would decide where to go on the way back into Dubai. Then he would be on the next flight there and let his siblings know what happened once he arrived.

They looked like any loving couple as she got to his table and he rose to give his a date a kiss on the cheek before pulling the chair out for her. She took a seat and gave him a fond smile before they began a conversation that would not have drawn any unwanted attention to them. That was until they waiter left them after taking their orders.

“How is the boy?” the woman asked.

“As well as can be expected,” the man replied after he finished taking a long sip of his wine. He traced the outline of the wineglass while contemplating what to say next. “He will need to be moved. I’m arranging this as we speak.”
“How will you find a new location for the ceremony?” she questioned mildly in spite of her obviously holding in her surprise and skepticism.

“Just trust me, my love. When the darkness descends and I claim the dominion over the shadows, you will see. And we will have our wish.”

Chapter End Notes

I was still working on the chapter when the presidential debate came on and I of course, had to drink when the rules and boyfriend said I needed to. Hopefully my proof-reading wasn't too terrible! Also.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

To celebrate Kaiba's birthday on the 25th, here's a SUPER long chapter. This chapter alone is *21 pages long* on my Google Drive. 16 of those pages are pure Kaiba/Reader interaction.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It had been three days since Bakura invited himself into your life. He had not left your house since. At least he didn’t put up much of a fuss when you had left to work in the lab Monday morning. However, when you were gone, he had taken the liberty of raiding your room. After a long day of earning your tuition and stipend, you came home and was greeted to the sight of your Duel Monsters deck.

The rest of that evening had been spent dueling Bakura as he continuously mocked your skills. Like it was seriously your fault Your sibling played competitively and you just kind of gave up after getting defeated so many times over the years.

Throughout the goading, he kept staring at you like you were a moron who just was not getting the hint. Whatever the hint was supposed to be.

Luckily, he had been gone when you woke up Tuesday morning. You even checked each room and basement just to make sure. Bakura seemed like the type to lurk in basements just for funsies.

Satisfied that Bakura was gone, you checked the balance of your Ventra card, hoisted your backpack over your shoulder, and left the house. As you started in the direction of the Blue Line, you paused before turning around and double-checking to make sure all the doors were firmly locked.

More than likely, you disappointed Bakura enough that he gave up on you and decided to go be play Obi-Wan with someone else.

That was your only hope.

He was being trailed. Of course, these so-called hunters did not understand that they were the prey.

For hours, Bakura enjoyed toying with them as he slowly led them to the trap he had waiting. From an outsider’s perspective, it looked as if wide-eyed Ryou Bakura were naively exploring an unfamiliar city while trying to track down hints to locate Yugi.

Bakura could almost sense his quarry’s tension the further south he traveled. Bakura did not enjoy the time he had spent scouring blight-ridden neighborhoods like Fuller Park, but the high-vacancy rate and fact these areas of Chicago had been written off and shut out of economic development suited his purposes quite nicely.

Perhaps his game’s first hint of trouble should have been how Bakura had slipped out of their sight; quick and quiet, just like the thief he was. After hours of fruitless pursuit that was coupled by overconfidence, none of the pursuers thought twice about following after him.
The sound of a blade slicing through the air was quickly met by the unmistakable pulse of blood pouring from the first body.

The Millennium Ring glowed and Bakura let go of the sword he was holding. He held up the magic card Cursed Bamboo Sword. The sword dissipated and Bakura put the card back in his pocket.

“You really should keep your head about you when you walk straight into a Dark Game,” Bakura chided the second of his pursuers, who was quick the draw a hand gun.

Oh, so he did not enjoy the pun. What a pity.

Bakura coolly observed a shaking hand and fingers stretched towards the gun's trigger. “You brought a non-bladed weapon,” he observed as he conjured the power of the Millennium Ring. “Perhaps if you gave me a moment to explain the rules, you would not have violated them so quickly.

“Penalty game.”

The moment those words escaped Bakura’s lips, the gun clattered to the ground. Supernatural forces bond his victim’s wrists and ankles together. Casually, Bakura made his way towards a table that had a multitude of blades laid out before him. Bakura chose a scalpel and turned to face his victim.

“You’ll find that you will be unable to speak or scream unless I ask you a question,” he said, tracing the blade down what had been a previously unmarred face. Blood began to seep through the wound. Bakura regarded how his victim’s eyes bulged out in terror as soon as his plight was realized.

Bakura smirked to the sounds of protest that resonated deep within his victim’s throat when he lifted the blade a second time. “Let’s see how long it takes to make you talk.”

He cut low and deep. His quarry’s mouth flew open as if to scream. The only sound produced was the hiss of metal on flesh, spasms, and gurgles.

Bakura withdrew the blade dramatically before addressing the hapless fool before him. “That is just a sample of what is in store for you, precious. Would you like to answer some questions about your organization? It will make me very happy.”

A question was posed, and under the rules of the Dark Game, the victim was allowed the ability to speak. “Fuck you,” an agonized voice hissed out. “The worst you can do is kill me, but we are bigger than you can ever imagine. Our--”

Bakura held up a hand and the voice was cut off. “Wrong answer,” he snarled before carefully pursing his arsenal. Once he selected a new blade, Bakura returned to his victim.

“You say the worst I can do is kill you…? Well, I will make sure you regret that.”

After quite some time, the metallic scent of blood was overwhelming. The hot, viscous liquid seeped through Bakura’s fingers and dipped down his arms; blotches stained the walls and floor.

After he cleaned himself up and sanitized enough to elude authorities from linking this scene to his honorable landlord, Bakura lazily stretched and decided to head back to his new home. Before making his way out of the house, he gave the corpse a mock salute.

Not only was the decedent a big help, Bakura had managed to relieve quite a bit of stress.
When you got home that evening, you found Bakura casually reclining in the living room with his eyes glued to your TV.

You just stared.

“How was school?” Bakura greeted without looking up from the TV show he was watching. “Do you have any homework to do? You know you aren’t allowed to watch television before finishing your homework, young lady.”

Your felt your backpack slowly slip from your shoulder and ignored it as it fell to the ground.

How the…?

You made sure the doors were locked! The balcony door was not even unlocked since you locked it the day you came home from the hospital!

Sighing, Bakura picked up the controller and hit the pause button before turning his attention to you. In spite of the shock at seeing him in your locked house and the questions you had about how he got in, it was obvious he was using your Netflix account.

You really hoped he did not screw up your suggested shows.

“You look upset,” Bakura observed. “Why don’t you sit on daddy’s lap and tell him all about it?”

You learned to ignore how he decided he was a father figure to you already. Especially when you realized that he was just trying to screw with your head instead of trying to screw you. Or maybe that was just how he was.

“How…” You began. “How did you get in?”

“Never underestimate the King of Thieves,” he smirked.

Okay, so he broke in. That was just fantastic. It made you feel very safe and secure in your own home.

“If the neighbors see you skulking about, they’re going to call the cops,” you said diplomatically. You had already resigned yourself to this. “If I gave you a spare key, would you use it?”

“If it will make my little girl happy, I will be gladly oblige,” Bakura replied before he picked the controller back up. “If that’s all you wanted to talk about, you should get started on your homework.”

“You’re just going to watch TV?” you asked. Really, you wanted to ask if he had any plans to coach you on the Millennium Necklace or embarrass you in Duel Monsters,. You just did not want to give him any ideas.

“I am not in the mood for much else,” Bakura answered before he eyed you up and down. “Unless you had any other suggestions?”

You had no intention of doing any of your readings or working on your papers. While you did not like the idea of fleeing your own home, you just needed a day away from any kind of craziness. Especially Bakura’s brand of craziness.

“No,” you replied hastily before picking your backpack up. You began to leave before you remembered about the spare key. Briefly, you thought about just dealing with it when you got home
but decided against it. You quickly grabbed the spare key and as if he were watching you (he probably was), you handed it to Bakura’s outstretched hand.

With that accomplished, you made sure you had your own keys before leaving.

You were not really sure where to go. Luckily for you, you lived in Wicker Park. Which meant that you could probably pick up a rock, spin around in a circle, and throw the rock in a random direction. Chances were good that you would probably hit an independent coffee shop that had late hours.

You patted your backpack to make sure that your deck and Millennium Item didn’t randomly disappear before you arbitrarily chose a direction and started walking.

Instead of proofreading the fundraising proposal, Seto found himself stalking your social media accounts. Of course, there was only so much information he could see on your public profiles.

Well, there was only so much he could see using legitimate methods. If Seto wanted access, he could get access. After all, he had brought down a satellite and hacked into Industrial Illusion’s mainframe when he was only sixteen years old.

However, Seto reasoned that would be out of line. Running a background check on her was only pragmatic; forcing his way on to social media sites was something else entirely.

Seto closed the tabs and attempted to return his attention to the document. His eyes flicked to the bottom right of his computer screen to look at the time. 8:26pm. Which meant that it was approaching 10:30am back in Japan.

Seto was at least thankful that you had some sense of responsibility. Which meant no benders during the workweek. Hopefully that would last.

Seto steepled his fingers and rested his chin on top of them before he turned his attention back to his document. It only took a few minutes until he realized that his mind was wandering and he was re-reading the same sentence.

This was maddening. The emotions the bond forced would throw an otherwise decent man’s moral compass out the window. Seto Kaiba could never be considered a decent man; he had spent too long as a liar and a thief. Seto knew his checkered past and while he did his best to push those memories and accompanying feelings of self-reproach out of his mind, it did factor into his own self-assessment. He was not a decent man, but he was a man and could only ignore his desires for so long.

Seeing as how he was not going to be getting any more work done for the night, Seto slammed screen his laptop down and abruptly stood up from his desk. He grabbed several items from the room before exiting the spare bedroom he and Mokuba used as an office.

Mokuba had been in the living room and doing his own work when he heard the commotion. When Seto passed the living room, he could see his brother quirking an eyebrow in the older Kaiba’s general direction.

Seto paused briefly enough to address his brother. “I’m going out,” he said briskly before continuing on towards the front door. Seto briefly entertained the idea of feeding his brother some bullshit excuse on where he was going.

More than likely Mokuba would see through it. Mokuba would then make it his life’s purpose to find out the real reason for why his workaholic brother decided to suddenly leave with unfinished work.
It was rather peculiar how someone with his brother's personality could become so formidable at as a Vice-President yet lay around pathetically for days after a breakup; be a ruthless during a meeting yet stun the cameras with his charisma and charm during a press conference less than five minutes later.

Mokuba Kaiba was the antithesis of of Seto. Instead of wasting time to answer his brother’s questions about the fundraising document that should have been completed nearly an hour ago, Seto decided to say nothing at all. With his shoes on, Seto grabbed his keys and exited their shared condo.

In the elevator, Seto put his phone on Vibrate. As soon as he got to the parking garage, he placed the phone in his pocket. Ignoring the ‘No Smoking’ signs, Seto lit a cigarette, exhaled a puff of smoke, and felt his muscles relax slightly with each exhale.

His silver BMW was parked next to Mokuba’s Prius. Upon reaching the cars, Seto took one last puff before stubbing the cigarette out and tossing the butt under the Prius.

He got into the car and started the ignition. He then paused his hand over the gear shift as he reflected what he was doing.

It was as if he did not know where to find you. At first, Seto could not explain it, but as he began to puzzle out the nuances of this forced bond, he slowly began to understand its abilities and limitations. First, you had an almost empathetic-like ability to influence his moods and physiological state. The limitation of this was that it had to be a mood and state you currently were in and had to be extreme. Drinking a cup of coffee in the morning or laughing at a dank meme did not influence Seto. For that, he was grateful. You also picked up his ability to understand Japanese. However, since Seto had been speaking English for over twenty years, he did not notice much of a difference with his ability to comprehend the English language.

He on the other hand, always seemed to have a general idea of where you were. It was not as if his mind was constantly conscious of the fact. More of a proprioception, really--or one's own ability to know where one part of his body was. Which made finding you in a city of two million as easy as scratching his nose.

At the moment, Seto assumed that these abilities were one-sided. He could at least use this rendezvous to test out his theory. Each of these ‘abilities’ seemed linked to personalities. From what Seto observed you projected a persona that was infuriatingly exuberant. Your need to drink yourself into oblivion to drown out the emotions you wore on your sleeve was one indication that you put on a front. The second was finding out about your military service. His background check revealed that and your education in both psychology and the medical field. Which in a way, explained a lot.

Seto, however…

Well, Seto knew he was a controlling ass. When he had questions, he needed immediate answers. His need for omniscience at least made it easy to track you down.

After parking his car, Seto unbuttoned the cuff of his button-up dress shirt and rolled the sleeves up. In spite of it being late September, the air was still unseasonably warm. He eyed the ‘WH’ sign of the establishment you were currently a patron of warily. It was decently lit and looked clean enough…but was that a Delorean on display?

Seto Kaiba walked into a hipster coffee shop. It was like a setup to a joke (or the beginning of a steamy fanfiction), except for the fact your back was to the door and were hunched over the table with your Duel Monsters cards spread out before you. Which meant that his entrance went unnoticed.
You had a binder with extra cards you used to swap out cards now and again, but you had not played Duel Monsters in quite some time. During your tenure in the military, it was a fun time waster and you even put together a Burn Deck to screw with everyone’s need for an archetype deck nowadays.

Burn Decks were luzly and had the potential to make lame-ass Elemental Hero users rage quit. You could even beat your sibling with them….

Yet, your beloved deck was criticized for “lack of strategy” and not being skill-oriented. At worst, it was compared to camping in Halo or Super Smash Brothers. Plus, you knew it did not have the draw power necessary to win competitively.

So you could only sigh and try to figure out where you were going wrong with your current deck...

You could sense someone looking over your shoulder and was ready to tell them to mind their own business when he spoke first.

“Now I can see why you’re so pissed about Evilswarm Exciton Knight.”

His voice was a low purr that carried a certain heat to it. As he spoke, his breath tickled your ear, causing shivers of excitement to run down your spine.

Seto…

You tilted your head sideways to see that it was really Seto Kaiba. With how close he was, you could smell him; spicy hints of mint mixed with nicotine--he must have smoked recently.

Your eyes met and you briefly felt a wave of heat travel through you before settling warm and tingly in the pit of your stomach. Seto stared down at you with blue eyes, not the silver you were accustomed to.

A second look revealed that while Seto’s eyes were his natural blue, there was something about how the light caught his irises that seemed so...off. They were almost too bright for the current lighting.

He was wearing colored contacts, you realized.

With that out of the way, you once again could appreciate the fact that he was here and rather close to you. You gulped and reached for your drink. It allowed you a moment to gather your thoughts enough to reply.

“Can I help you?”

Seto moved from your side and for a brief moment, you were afraid that he was going to leave. However, he took a seat across from you and to your astonishment, pulled his own deck from his pocket and began to shuffle the cards.

Holy…

Seto Kaiba wanted to duel you. During your free time, you kept reading articles on Seto and from what you read, he had retired from the dueling circuit years ago. So the fact that he was coming out of retirement to duel you was legendary. No one around you seemed to realize who he was, otherwise your table would be swarmed in seconds.

And then they would watch you lose. Terribly.
Before you could protest, Seto held out his deck for you to cut.

You couldn’t…

“You’re the younger sibling of the reigning American champion…”

“Looks like you did your homework,” you replied and lowered your voice in an attempt to sound husky and to change the subject. “Aren’t you the smartest boy in class?”

You really wish he did not figure it out.

“So I would assume that you’re at least acquainted with the game.”

“Yeah,” you agreed. “But that doesn’t mean I want to make an ass out of myself in front of you.”

Seto was undeterred. “Then don’t make an ass out of yourself,” he replied as if it were really that simple.

There was a slight change in his expression as he moved in towards you. “I find a good duel to be quite...stimulating,” he said. His intense gaze met yours for a few moments and all you could do was remind yourself to keep breathing.

You thought you knew what eye-fucking meant. The way you two held each other’s gaze made you reevaluate the definition.

Seto closed his eyes and gripped the table for a moment, as if he were giving himself a mini prep talk. When he opened his eyes, his pupils were no longer as dilated. “I’m going to get a drink,” he announced, rising from his seat. “Use this time to prepare.”

He left you to frantically look over your deck. You had only a few minutes at most.

An idea occurred to you. It was cheap, but it was your only hope. You stacked the cards that were spread out on the table and quickly glanced around to make sure no one was watching. Satisfied, you opened your backpack and carefully unraveled the scarf you had wrapped the Millennium Necklace in.

You quickly created a faux infinity scarf before you placed the Millennium Necklace around your neck. Finally, you moved the scarf around so the necklace was not exposed.

You reached for your backpack where you held your Burn Deck before you felt a sense of wrongness. It would be a mistake to duel with it. Even wearing the necklace was a mistake...

By the time Seto returned to the table, you had managed to take off both scarf and Millennium Item. You had just found the Magic Card you needed and nodded your head in his general direction to acknowledge his presence. Then, you shuffled it into your deck.

When he set down his drink, you handed him your deck to cut. The look he gave you was all approval and you two exchanged decks to cut before handing them back to the respective owner.

You drew your six cards; three monsters. Two traps and a magic card.

“Ladies first,” Seto said before leaning back to watch you make your first move.

“Such a gentleman,” you replied without looking up from your deck. There were no holographics with this duel, just you setting your magic card down on the table. “Reinforcement of the Army,” “
you announced. It allowed you to add one level four warrior type monster to your hand.

The lack of technology made searching through your deck such a pain in the ass. Especially when it meant reshuffling it once you found what you were looking for. “Evilswarm Castor in Attack mode. His special ability lets me summon a second Evilswarm monster. So…”

You set your second monster down on the table. “Here’s Heliotrope.”

With two monsters on the field, you had the option of XYZ summoning a monster from your extra deck. If this were your second turn, you would not hesitate to summon Evilswarm Ophion. But you could not attack, so you set down your two trap cards and ended your turn.

During his turn, Seto set a monster face down before placing three cards in the magic/trap section of the field.

You drew a Magic Card and immediately placed it face down before summoning Evilswarm Thunderbird. “Next, I am going to use Castor and Heliotrope to summon Evilswarm Ophion.”

The roll of Seto’s eyes told you that he knew what was coming. Yeah? Well. Fuck him. You knew that whatever card was in defense position was probably going to allow him to summon a Blue Eyes White Dragon.

“Whatever, jackass,” you smirked. While you were not going to be able to attack Seto’s Life Points this turn, you figured it was best to get Evilswarm Thunderbird off the field. “I activate Thunderbird’s special ability to--”

“I know what it does,” Seto interrupted.

Without further explanation, you placed Thunderbird in the banished section before detaching Castor from Ophion and placing it in the graveyard. It allowed you to get Infestation Pandemic in your hand.

“I end my turn,” you replied as soon as you set Infestation Pandemic face down on the table.

It was obvious that Seto had not been expecting that. For his next turn, Seto picked up a card and before he placed it down, he hesitated and looked at you.

That was strange.

You watched him swallow before he placed Maiden with Eyes of Blue on the field in Attack Mode.

You were not sure why, but just seeing that card pissed you off. Disregarding your previous strategy, you flipped over a Trap Card. “I activate Breakthrough Skill,” you growled before pointing towards Maiden with Eyes of Blue. “Now you can’t use its special ability.”

Next, you activated Infestation Pandemic, rendering his traps and spell cards useless for this turn. You summoned a second Evilswarm Thunderbird to the field and launched into the Battle Phase.

“I use Ophion to attack Maiden with Eyes of Blue,” you announced with a snarl that surprised you. Without fanfare, Seto removed the card and placed it in the graveyard.

You needed to calm the fuck down. Now that the card was out of sight, you felt better, but needed just a few seconds to start thinking straight again. So you reached into your backpack before pulling out a pen and notebook.
You wrote out both your Life Points before subtracting 2,550 points from Seto’s. By the time you returned to the game, you were feeling like yourself again. Seto’s face down card was Radius of the Storm Winds, which one of your Thunderbirds was able to take out easily. You used your second Thunderbird to attack his Life Points, bringing him down to 3,500.

Huh.

You were winning, but your feeling of triumph was fleeting. During his turn, Seto revealed that two of his Trap Cards were Call of the Haunted. Two monsters were on the field and Seto sacrificed them to summon a Blue Eyes White Dragon.

It allowed him to play Burst Stream of Destruction. Blue Eyes could not attack this turn, but it sent the rest of your cards to the graveyard. Except for one Thunderbird; you were able to activate its special effect to send it off the field for the rest of the turn.

However, Seto’s onslaught was not over. He played Stamping Destruction: a Magic Card that sent your Trap Card, Fiendish Chain to the graveyard.

You bit the bottom of your lip and inhaled deeply. If your next card was a Monster Card, you could summon Evilswarm Bahamut and take control of the Blue Eyes White Dragon. Or if it happened to be the Dragon Capture Jar you placed in your deck earlier, you could render his deck useless. Then, you could win the duel against Seto Kaiba.

With a bated breath, you drew and wanted to scream in frustration. You drew a freaking MAGIC Card! And no! It was not the one you wanted!

“Problem?” Seto asked, knowing full well that you were pissed about your draw.

You could work with this…

Thunderbird returned to the field, so you summoned a second Evilswarm Castor to the field and with that, a second Ophion. Seto eyed you curiously since there was still a 450 point difference between your two dragons.

Well, not for much longer. You did your thing of getting Infestation Pandemic and revealed the second card you had in the Trap/Spell zone: Forbidden Dress. It decreased Blue Eyes White Dragon’s attack points by 600. The caveat was that the card targeted by Forbidden Dress could not be destroyed. It still made Seto lose 150 Life Points.

And that felt good.

For his next turn, Seto placed a card face down. It turned out that the card was a Totem Dragon and you easily dispatched it.

You put two more cards in your Magic/Trap section before you sat back and saw that Seto was eyeing you appraisingly.

“Your overconfidence is your weakness,” he cautioned.

You felt your mouth dry and almost had to pick up your jaw from the table.

Did he just…?

He did. He just quoted Star Wars. Not only that but he quote was from the original trilogy!
“Be still, my heart.”

“And your faith in your dragons is yours,” you declared.

The smirk Seto gave you was the kind of smirk you imagined once earned him the nickname ‘the Young Dragon.’ Combined with how he was staring at you, you had no problem imagining this was how a dragon would look before devouring its prey.

On his next turn, it was clear that he had been toying with you because the game quickly turned in his favor. You had managed to counter his strategy, but just barely.

You were clenching your jaw while shifting your gaze between your hand and the field when you felt Seto’s eyes on you. Glancing at him, you saw him leaning on one hand. “Do you know the lore behind Evilswarms?” he asked.

Some of the Duel Monsters lore was cheesy as fuck, but you still knew what your deck meant. “Yeah. They started out as Steelswarm monsters, but after some virus or whatever was unleashed, it corrupted them and morphed them into Evilswarm monsters.”

Seto nodded approvingly. “I always thought the Evilswarm archetype was a cheap bastardization.” Before you could protest he shot you a reproaching look that made you immediately shut your mouth. “I may have to re-evaluate my opinion... The Dark Side really is a dangerous temptation.”

The Star Wars reference was subtle, but you latched onto it. “The Dark Side does not have to be viewed as evil just because it does not follow convention,” you said. Honestly, you had been kind of forming this argument in the back of your head since you quoted Emperor Palpatine. “I believe part of the Sith Code is that there is only passion and through passion, one can gain strength.”

Instead of replying, Seto sat up straight and pointed at the field. Specifically, he directed your attention to his Azure-Eyes Silver Dragon. “No matter what you do at this point, your life points will still be 1,700. And if I summon Vanguard of the Dragon,” he placed the card down in Attack Mode. “It is going to wipe out your remaining Life Points.”

“Farewell, Bahamut,” you sighed as you took the card off the field. “I tried.”

Since your field was pretty much empty by the end of the duel, you finished gathering your cards first. “So,” you asked conversationally in Japanese. “did you find that stimulating?”

Instead of answering your question directly, Seto finished putting his cards away. He then took one last sip of his drink before standing up. “Let’s go,” he said and by the way he said it, the man meant it as an order.

You were perfectly alright with following him outside as he led you to his car. Without saying a word, he got into the driver’s seat and you did not hesitate to open the door of the passenger’s side before you climbed in.

The car was already started and Seto held his hands firmly on the steering wheel. “Is your place okay?”

You did not want to think about the possibility of Seto seeing Bakura. Not after what you learned about their history. “I have a really annoying houseguest right now,” you answered vaguely yet honestly. “How about yours?”

Seto just shook his head before hissing out a curse. He gripped the steering wheel with one hand while the other tapped on it as he thought. You were in the mood to say, ‘Fuck it,’ and climb on the
man’s lap right here. Before you could execute your plan, Seto shifted the car into gear and began to drive.

You had to be honest with yourself: his driving kind of scared you. It was too reminiscent of the taxi drivers around the city and that was not a good thing.

For fuck’s sake, he was speeding down a street that announced it had traffic cameras! Either he had a million traffic citations, or the city of Chicago knew his license plate and gave him a pass.

In spite of mildly fearing for your life, you kept glancing over at him and it was hard not to stare at how handsome the man looked as he drove. Several times, you caught him glancing over at you and you always quickly diverted your gaze, like you were still a virginal schoolgirl. You would have felt like an idiot if you had not noticed that he was doing the same whenever you caught him looking over at you.

The car was stopped at a traffic light when you felt his gaze on you once more. His hand was on the gear shift and you watched as it moved towards yours. That was almost too adorable for you. Just as you reached your hand out to take his, Seto suddenly jerked it back to the gear shift. The light had turned green.

Seto had already made the first move by showing up where you were. You were not going to ask how he knew where to find you, the point was that he showed up and requested to leave with you. Which meant that you probably had permission to do this...

In spite of your conviction, you nervously set your hand on Seto’s right thigh. You felt his body immediately tense up before relaxing. You gave his leg a quick squeeze before letting your hand just sit there momentarily while you rallied the courage to move your hand up and down his leg. Each time you moved your hand upwards, you moved it a little further up his thigh.

Finally, you reached a point where you could go no higher without touching his crotch. As you decided what to do, you traced a circular pattern on his slacks. Seto adjusted his grip on the steering wheel before letting out a breath. “You should probably stop,” he warned before adding, “Just for a little bit longer at least.”

You thought you were just driving around until one of you came up with an idea. Nonetheless, you obediently pulled put your hand back in your lap and watched as Seto’s expression looked almost pained by the absence of it. You glanced around just as he pulled towards a parking structure. Your eyes went upward as you took in your surroundings.

He took you to KaibaCorp,

Well, the North American branch at least. The building was not nearly as impressive as the location in Japan, but you still marveled at where you were. You were silent while Seto rolled down his window and nodded at the late-night security guard. He used his key fob to open the garage and maneuvered his car to his reserved parking spot.

You had thought that you were going to stay in the car, but was surprised when Seto unbuckled his seatbelt and got out.

Deciding that you were not going to need them, you left your belongings in the car and followed after Seto.

*Oh thank goodness---Land!*
His pace did not seem as hurried as when you left the cafe following the duel. However, you suspected that was because he needed to project a certain image. For the most part, the building was empty, but you occasionally ran into security, an executive finishing up some work, or someone trying to get extra overtime. More often than not, they were all too eager to chat up their CEO.

You wanted to be pissed off every time Seto stopped to talk to someone, you really did. Yet, watching him transform into this charming, suave corporate motherfucker was just fascinating. For the most part, your presence was ignored next to the larger-than-life President of KaibaCorp. If your existence was acknowledged at all, it was with a quick nod in your general direction or glancing at you before professionally averting their gaze as if they never saw you in the first place.

After what seemed like an eternity, Seto finally unlocked the door to his office.

The moment you stepped inside, Seto closed and locked the door behind him. Now that you were alone together, you two just stared at each other as if unsure what to do.

You took a deep breath before making your way towards the desk you had dreamed of him bending you over so many times before. You traced a hand over it before deciding that the very expensive-looking wood made the perfect seat.

“So,” you began, crossing your legs. “You’re the boss.”

Seto quickly closed the distance between you two. “I’m the boss,” he agreed as his lips met yours.

At first, your kisses were tentative and hesitant, but quickly turned hurried and fueled with a hunger for more.

Your arms moved to wrap themselves around his back. You uncrossed your legs and Seto was quick to part them so he could move in closer. His body melded into yours and you found yourself deepening each kiss until your need for air became too great to ignore.

When you two pulled yourselves away from the one another, you were left breathless and very much aware of the sound of your heart hammering in your chest. Seto’s thumb traced your jawline while he stared down at you, his eyes feral with intent.

Seto Kaiba tasted like mint and from the way he was looking at you, he wanted you. Badly.

“Is there something I can assist you with, Kaiba-s hachou,” you asked in a low purr.

You did not miss the way his expression darkened before he took a hold of your wrist, pulling you in a standing position. Not letting go of your wrist, he led you to one of the two couches in the room. As if deciding that you were going too slowly, you let out a muffled squeal of surprise as you felt Seto pick you up to carry you the rest of the distance before practically tossing you down on one of the couches.

He was surprisingly strong. Then again, you considered, so were you.

With a an arrogant smirk of your own, you grabbed Seto by his belt and used your grip to pull him forward and tug him down. This time, you kissed him, fiercely and possessively. For a moment, you thought that Seto was going to stand up, straighten his clothes out, and tell you to get out of his office. Instead, one arm snaked around your waist so he could draw your body against his.

That is when you felt his erection against your thigh and as tempting as it was to reach out and see how big he was, you decided that you could wait just a little bit longer. Instead, you shifted yourself
so you could move your hips against his.

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The first time you felt yourself grind over Seto’s erection, your breath hitched. You could hear as Seto grunted with pleasure only to sigh heavily moments later. Concerned that you did something wrong, you looked up at Seto only to see him pull his vibrating phone out from his back pocket.

You expected him to answer it. But he glanced over at the screen before hitting the side button to silence the call. He practically slammed the device on the coffee table before he resumed the position he was in seconds before.

“It doesn’t matter,” Seto breathed while he planted several kisses along your jawline. Your lips seized his once more. Teeth grazed against Seto’s lower lip and Seto’s breathing became heavier. Hips buckled into yours your lips parted to allow his tongue access while your hands moved underneath his shirt to feel the skin of his back.

Seto’s lips wandered from yours to your neck, kissing and sucking. There was nothing gentle about it. His own hands slid up your shirt and moved up and down your back and stomach. You could not tell if he was too nervous to touch anywhere else or was trying to tease you.

Before you could find out for yourself, you heard the sound of his cell phone vibrating against the glass of the coffee table. Seto reached behind him to grab his phone before bringing it forward and looking at the caller ID one more time.

“I’m busy,” he growled into the receiver before hanging up and carelessly tossing the phone down on the couch cushions.

The way he looked from the phone to you before he decided to answer…

Oh fuck…

You felt a raw heat pool into very specific regions of your body. And you wanted more.

His eyes widened in alarm when you sat up from the couch. That sudden look of brief incredulity was quickly replaced by something unreadable. His eyes moved to study your body intently while skin was revealed to him inch by inch as you pulled your shirt over your head.

Tossing the fabric next to his phone, you moved to your bra, only to find Seto’s hand stopping you. “I get to do this,” he announced. Expert fingers unhooked your bra and he quickly discarded it.

Within seconds, Seto pinned you to the couch. He used one hand to prop himself up while the second hand roamed your naked skin. Seto then bent his head and lips crashed on your breast like he was a man dying of thirst. Long fingers caressed and kneaded one breast while his tongue lapped at your nipple of the other.

After over two weeks of wanting just this, it actually happening was almost too much. Closing your eyes, you could not help but bury your face into the crook between his neck and shoulder and groan in contentment. Feverishly, your fingers flew to the buttons of his shirt and practically ripped them off undoing them. You needed to feel his naked skin against yours right now.

Seto paused his ministrations to indulge you by shrugging off his shirt. You waited with a bated breath while he pulled off his undershirt. Seto’s body was lithe, but not toned. Yet his broad
shoulders and flat stomach (especially at his age) was enough for you to nod in approval.

Your hands trailed Seto’s chest and moved downwards until you felt the bulge of his erection. His body tensed up, waiting to see what you would do. Shyly, you ran your hand up and down his length. You watched as his eyes seemed to glaze over while you continued to experiment with the pace and placement of your hand. Him thrusting against your palm only encouraged the experimentation.

You paid close attention to any signs of resistance as you undid his belt buckle and top button of his pants. Your fingers then pinch the zipper before pulling it downwards.

Years ago, there were online flammers who accused Seto Kaiba of having an incredibly small penis. You had discovered that while e-stalking him. When your hands made contact with his cock, your fingers followed his length from tip to base and you immediately knew that those rumors had no basis whatsoever.

You began to massage the tip that was already coated by pre-cum before you allowed your hand to travel up and down his member in long strokes.

Peeking up at Seto through your lashes, you could see his head tossed backwards, his eyes closed. His right hand gripped the couch cushion so hard, his knuckles were white. It was obvious that he was enjoying this and the fact that you were making such a powerful man feel this way was all the motivation you needed to keep going.

You did not know how much longer the handjob went on, but you felt Seto push your hair behind your ear. You could feel his breath tickle your ear and could not help but squirm as he spoke. “I need to fuck you before you make me cum.”

To prove his point, his fingers rubbed against the denim of your jeans before his lips met your once more. Your hands went to undo your button and zipper to allow Seto easier access when the sound of an air raid siren filled the room.

Fueled by your survival instinct, you quickly sat up in alarm and turned your attention towards the windows. Instead of a flash of a motor in the god-forsaken desert, it took a moment to register the familiar sight of the Chicago skyline. You then wanted to hang your head in shame: the sound was coming from Seto’s phone.

The man in question had his head bowed with his jaws clenched together in anger. “The story of my life,” he growled out before stiffly moving your shirt aside to grab his phone. He exhaled deeply before answering it.

“This is Kaiba…”

You practically collapsed against the couch. Yeah, you got why he made the ringtone for certain contacts so freaking loud. But an air raid siren? Did he enjoy seeing people practically jump out of their own skin?!

At least he was too busy to see how fucked up you really were.

You closed your eyes and attempted to calm your nerves before you remembered that you were naked from the waist up. Suddenly feeling self-conscious, you opened your eyes to see Seto was already dressing himself with one hand.

So that was that, you thought gloomily. As you dressed, you tried not to listen in on the conversation.
It was strange how you could listen to a conversation in perfect Japanese just as easily as English. Now that you suddenly woke up one morning fluent in the language, you could not help but get the basic gist of the conversation: apparently Mokuba had tried to call him earlier since there was a huge problem with the computers at the Japanese branch of KaibaCorp.

Seto moved towards his desk to work on the computer there before seemingly deciding against it. Instead, he motioned for you to follow him as he led you back to the parking garage. During the elevator ride down he glanced over at you. “Do you know how to drive manual?” he asked quietly so no one on the other end of the call could hear him.

“Y...You want me to drive?” you stammered out. “As in drive your car?”

Seto nodded curtly before raising an eyebrow impatiently waiting for you to answer his question.

“It’s been awhile. But yeah. I know how,” you replied. The words were barely out of your mouth before the keys to his car were thrust into your hand.

You wished that you had him thrusting in your hand again, you thought petulantly.

You unlocked the BMW and while you took a painstakingly long time adjusting the seat and mirrors, Seto unceremoniously put your belongings in the back seat before grabbing a laptop. He stuck a wireless adapter in the USB outlet and looked at you while the laptop was booting up. “You can drive now,” he said before turning his full attention to the phone call and his computer.

Shaky hands put the keys in the ignition and the engine purred to life. Luckily for you, Seto was not paying attention to how you studied the gear shift in order to puzzle out just how you were supposed to put the car into reverse. After the second time of placing it into first gear, you finally figured out you needed to shift all the way to the left.

Considering how difficult that was, you were afraid to touch the steering wheel. ‘You got this,’ you said as a pep talk. The grooves of the steering wheel fit perfectly into the palm of your hand.

Just like Seto had...

You gently pulled the car from the parking spot and now that you knew how to shift into first gear, you did so effortlessly. The way the car moved so smoothly to your driving was fascinating and made you appreciate the appeal of luxury cars. You glanced towards the signs pointing towards the freeway and wanted to ask Seto what it would take for you to take the car on I-94. You know, as an apology for getting cockblocked by his job.

Shit, you would probably bet that you could be at the Illinois-Wisconsin border within an hour with this thing...

However, a quick glance at him engrossed in his work made you obediently navigate home. He either trusted your driving, already checked out your driving history (heh), or was too rich to care if you crashed his car into Lake Michigan. You were going to go with the last option, personally.

You chose to concentrate on driving and speed so that would not happen. Somewhere between the parking garage and your driveway, Seto had effectively fixed the problem with the servers and was obviously paying attention to the way you drove. You wish that he did not do that because it resulted in the car jerking forward as you screwed up shifting gears at traffic lights on more than one occasion.

“Do you want to drive?” you finally asked when you heard him sigh audibly at your craptacular manhandling of this beast of a car. Well. Maybe if he finished manhandling you first...
“No point,” Seto replied, “We’re almost to your place.”

Wait…

How did he know where you lived?

You just were not going to ask questions. For your own sanity, you would just assume Mokuba told him. And he knew the area very well. Not that he had a route between his work and your home memorized.

When you finally pulled into your driveway and parked behind your own unimpressive vehicle. Switching off the engine, you could not help but stare at the lights on in your house. Bakura was obviously still watching TV, if the blue light emitting from the living room window was any indication.

You really hoped Seto did not want to come in. As much as you wanted to finish what you started earlier, you did not want him coming inside and seeing Bakura.

In fact, you were going to be fortunate if Bakura did not stride outside and attempt to play father figure.

At the moment, your need to get Seto far away from here before Bakura came outside outweighed your desire to sneak him in up into your room. The pressure on keeping the thief a secret made you open the car door and step out. Seto eyed the house momentarily before following your lead.

“It is a shame that your…house guest is still here,” he said after closing the passenger door behind him. He then handed over the your bag that he retrieved from the back seat.

“Yeah,” you agreed. “I would invite you inside if I were home alone.”

“Hrm.”

Both you and Seto stood in silence before he moved towards the driver’s side of the car. “What are you doing Friday night?” he asked suddenly.

Honestly? You had plans with some friends.

However, those plans were now as good as canceled.

“Nothing,” you replied.

“Good,” Seto said before opening the door. “Keep Friday night open. I will pick you up at six o’clock.”

You had to wait until Friday?! This was going to be the longest three days of your life.

Instead of protesting, you agreed. No other words were exchanged before you slowly made your way up the driveway. You wanted to make sure Seto was gone before you went inside, but Seto seemingly wanted to make sure you went inside before he left.

He wanted to be a gentleman now?!

You gave him a thumbs up before you rounded the corner of your house and out of his line of sight. The moon was in its first quarter, so you could hardly use it to see whether or not you had to cover up your neck and shoulders before you went inside. Deciding that it would probably be the safest
option, you quickly got the scarf from your bag and tied it around your neck.

You were not surprised that the moment you opened the back door, you heard Bakura pause whatever show he was watching. Was he seriously watching Orange is the New Black?

“And where have you been, young lady?” his voice called from the living room.

With a slight snort you decided to just go with it and say the first thing that came to mind: “I was studying...anatomy and physiology.”

What was Bakura even going to do, ground you?

Actually. Yeah. That was a distinct possibility. Goddamn it.

Chapter End Notes

While Seto and Reader-chan did not get it on this chapter, I hope that was a good consolation prize. I also had trouble deciding what deck to let the Reader use. I personally am familiar with Evilswarm and Burn Decks, so I just went with that.

Also, it was the third option: Seto is too rich to really care whether or not the Reader ended up crashing his car into Lake Michigan. He had shit to do and could not concentrate with her in his office, so he let the Reader drive.
I need to apologize in advance. In my notes, Reader and Seto were supposed to run into each other outside of freaking Chipotle. This clearly didn't happen because everyone pretty much decided to do whatever they want. It then escalated from there.

Wednesdays were supposed to be relatively easy since you did not have any lab work and usually spent the day talking yourself into not skipping your Cellular Neurobiology class.

Of course, Bakura did not care about any of that. So you had found yourself sitting seiza at your coffee table while Bakura took the seat across from you. You had anticipated being challenged to a duel as soon as Bakura saw that you were awake this morning. This foresight allowed you to prepare by dressing in a high neck dress with no sleeves to not only cover up the marks, but to also conceal the Millennium Necklace that was now fastened around your neck.

The fact you chose a dress without sleeves was obvious: it was still unseasonably warm out.

Last night, you used your usual deck against Seto since he wanted a fair duel. Today, you were using your Burn Deck. To hell with playing fair! You finished shuffling your deck first and were suddenly overcome with a feeling of unease.

Huh...

You continued to shuffle the deck until that feeling went away. “You’re delaying,” Bakura observed. “I was hoping that Seto Kaiba was able to coach you in more areas than just anatomy and physiology.”

Bakura then drew his cards and set one Monster Card face down before added two Magic/Trap Cards to the field.

You played Dark Hole and sent his Broww, Huntsman of Dark World to the Graveyard. You did not need your Millennium Necklace to guess what he was planning on doing with his graveyard.

“It looks as if you at least changed your strategy up a bit,” he continued as you set three Trap Cards down before finally placing a monster face down in Defense Mode.

“I guess,” you replied nonchalantly.

During his next move, Bakura easily dispatched your Princess of Tsurugi. However, it's special effect caused him to take 1,000 points of damage.

“Not your usual Swarms. Did you beg Kaiba for advice on how to properly duel against me?” Bakura goaded.

“On my hands and knees,” you replied, taking 1,000 of your own damage from a direct attack.

Bakura just laughed before his eyes landed on your high-necked dress. “I see. What a dirty little girl I have. Let’s see if your ill repute earned you any type of advantage.”
You raise an eyebrow at him before activating Swords of Revealing Light. “I’m sorry. Do you feel left out?” you cooed.

For someone who boasted his ability with nearly every breath, it took Bakura far too long to catch on to what you are doing. “I see,” he said just as you felt an inexplicable oddness. “You were using your Millennium Necklace this entire time. Now that you finally puzzled it out, let’s see how you do when we take your training to the next level…”

You frowned at how the entire atmosphere of the living room changed. Even the air you were breathing was no longer normal.

“Welcome to your first Dark Game! Since it is your very first time, daddy will go easy on you.”

The Dark Games...Thousands of years ago, some self-righteous Pharaoh sealed himself and Bakura in two of the Millennium Items. That Pharaoh’s even douchier successor created a Memory Stone that served as the key to the dark power contained within the Millennium Items. The Millennium Items served as a conduit to channel that power and initiate a Dark Game. However, that power was sealed away until all seven of the Items were unearthed once more. Well, technically, twice more.

Or so that was how Bakura explained it to you.

Dark Games were different than normal types of duels. You could not cheat during one and there was always a price for pay for the loser.

“What are the stakes?” you asked.

“Your Friday night,” Bakura replied. “Tch, don’t give me that look. Do you really think I did not see you return home with Seto Kaiba yesterday? Or I could not hear you? I must say, that bond has him bad. Or perhaps it is maturity that comes with age...? Either way, it was so adorable to see him ask you out on a date. I wonder what he would do if you were suddenly...tied up Friday night.”

Probably nothing, you thought. He would just be pissed. However, there was something that Bakura said to make you pause. He knew about the bond. Which meant that there was far more than what he was telling you.

What was with these people and keeping you in the dark about things that were very relevant to you?

“Deal. If I win, I get information. All the information you know pertaining to my situation...and whatever happened to Yugi.”

Anzu and the others went back home already, but they had been cool to you. So you wanted to help.

“That is two for the price of one, my dear,” Bakura pointed out. “Nonetheless, I did promise to go easy on you. So you have a deal.”

You had two cards sitting in your hand that would bring his life points down to 800. You chained two Magic Cards: Poison of the Old Man. That dealt 1,600 points of damage. You then ended your turn. During Bakura’s Draw Phase, you waited until a new card was in his hand before you flipped over your final Trap Card.

“Well, this was easy: Secret Barrel,” you announced. It dealt 200 points of damage per card in Bakura’s hand and his side of the field. Since he currently had four cards on the field and three in his hand, his Life Points quickly hit zero.

“It seems that I did not make an error in finding you,” Bakura said once the room returned to normal.
“You certainly know how to make a father proud.”

As creepy as the situation was on the outside, you could not help but feel a sense of pride of your own at those words.

Part of the reason KaibaCorp paid so much for for additional attorneys on retainer was so he did not have to be inconvenienced by smaller things, such as going to their office as opposed to the people he paid coming to him.

Luckily for Seto, he was to meet his attorney for a late lunch that was surprisingly close to his condo. In Japan, Kaiba Seto would not be seen walking among the unwashed masses, but here, he was more anonymous. He easily blended into the sea of suits seen in the late afternoons of downtown Chicago.

The GPS on his phone let Seto know that he would arrive at his destination in ten minutes. Right on State, Left on Madison. Right on Dearbourne. Got it.

Seto used the reflective surface of some storefront windows to ensure his Brioni suit was still perfectly presentable. By the time he arrived, his attorney was already pursuing the drink menu.

Seto was not unfamiliar with the concept of nomikai—drinking parties back home, or proving that he could handle his alcohol in front of American businessmen. There were many instances where Seto closed a deal while shitfaced. However, something about meeting this particular attorney over drinks irked him.

“Tremblay,” Seto greeted before taking a seat across from the man.

Bakari Tremblay looked up from the menu. “Mr. Kaiba,” he nodded in greeting before passing the menu over to him. “The beer selection is not too great, but the cocktail menu might interest you.”

Seto took the menu and immediately wanted to stand up and leave. All the drinks were something that he would order for a girlfriend.

Really, everything about Bakari just pissed Seto off; there was something about the man’s flashing purple eyes and near constant self-satisfied smirk on his swarthy features that reminded Seto of another lawless son of a bitch from a life he no longer cared to think about.

However, Seto had already paid the man. So he stayed. “I don’t believe I am paying you to drink. Do you have anything to talk to me about, or are you just planning on wasting my time? he demanded.

“Chicago PD and the Feds no longer interested in asking you or your girlfriend any more questions,” Bakari deadpanned. “Congratulations.”

Seto had never called you his girlfriend. He just never bothered correcting him.

Luckily, when you did talk to law enforcement officials prior to Bakari representing you from behind the scenes, you had been smart enough to keep your mouth shut about what had really happened.

Seto just nodded. When the waitress arrived to take his drink order, Seto ordered a lager without even glancing up at her. Bakari, however, gave an award-winning smile before making small talk with the woman and ordering a Miller. The waitress left their table with a grin on her face and spring in her step.
Once alone, Bakari regarded Seto curiously. “You must really be protective of her,” he said. “She’s the first client I ever represented without meeting or even talking to.”

Seto could not help but openly scoff. “No sane man would want their woman alone in a room with you.”

You were not his girlfriend. Yet, Seto was still going to make you his.

Their drinks arrived and Bakari used his glass to give a mock salute to Seto. “You’re a smart man for that one, Mr. Kaiba,” he agreed. “It sounds like she’s very special to you.”

“I’m fond of her,” Seto replied noncommittally. He did not want to keep thinking about you. After getting so close to being able to get you out of his system, thinking about how he was interrupted the other night still infuriated him.

“I believe we have other topics to discuss,” Seto said as a way to change the subject. Just as he and Bakari got to business, your presence entered his periphery.

What were you doing on this side of town? Seto could only groan before taking a small sip from his beer. Knowing how you were on weekends, this would be his only drink because you would do all the drinking for him.

“It’s a nice building, but I still want to push it in the river,” you said eyeballing the Trump Tower from the Michigan Avenue Bridge. You and your friend were making your way westwards. You would rather talk politics than glance south and in the direction of the condo Seto and Mokuba shared.

Life had a way of screwing with you. Since you had to cancel your Friday plans, you agreed to meet up with your friend on Thursday. And she wanted to meet up in Millennium Park, just blocks from Seto’s home away from home. This was the same friend who was supposed to go to the Field Museum with you the day you found yourself in this mess.

You two agreed not to discuss the ‘What if’s’ about that day.

“Isn’t that an event on Facebook or something?” your friend inquired.

“Yeah, you replied. “I think it’s in January.”

You both pulled out your phones to check on that. Your friend had better reception and was able to locate the event first. “January twenty-ninth,” she confirmed.

“Imma go to it,” you stated. “I’m not even kidding.”

“Is that the same guy or whatever that wants to drink Lake Michigan?” your friend continued since you both had a way to walk before getting to your destination.

“I…” you began before faltering. “I don’t know.”

It turned out that even though both events were in January, the host was not the same person. Both of you fell into a comfortable silence while you waited for the light to turn so you could cross the street. While waiting, you caught sight of a familiar sign. Immediately, the siren song called out to you.

“Do you want to stop at Starbucks first?” you asked hopefully.

Your friend grabbed your wrist and looked both ways to see that traffic was clear before she dragged
you away from Starbucks. “Why don’t you just work there?” she asked. “You go there enough.”

“But then I won’t like so much anymore,” you countered.

In spite of your protests, you and your friend did not go to Starbucks and after perusing the selection of the bakery she had wanted to go to, your friend sighed audibly. “Let’s just go to Starbucks.”

Music to your goddamn ears.

Several minutes later, you had your pastry and caffeine in front of you while nodding appropriately to the pictures your friend took of her date. You kind of wished that you could pull down the neck of your dress to expose the badass marks from Tuesday. However, your brand new advanced healing factor made it so that the marks were already gone. Which was just as well. You didn’t want to feel frumpy during a night out anyway. And you could sport a cleavage baring dress. Which was much cuter than your friend’s, by the way.

Also, you kind of wanted to humblebrag about how a billionaire CEO almost fucked you in his office.

Sure you signed the NDA, but you knew your way around pesky confidentiality agreements. However, when your friend asked about what you were up to and how you were coping with the topic—that-should-not-be-mentioned, you just shrugged and said you were keeping busy and coping like a boss.

At the mention of men, you were ready to spring into action. Yet, you hesitated and just reported that you were interested in someone, but it was complicated. You just...you did not want to talk about Seto because it was complicated!

Oh and your eyes? Once more, they’re totally contact lenses!. You advised that she should ask an optometrist about colored lenses to make her eyes all mirror-like too. And yes, science really has gone too far.

Soon your conversation changed topics once again. This time, your friend bemoaned how lucky you were that you had your own home and a decent job while in grad school. You were just going to ignore the comment about the house, you inherited it and did not like talking about your loved one’s passing.

“I partied like a freaking rock star during undergrad,” you pointed out, “and still got into University of Chicago. Your GPA was hella better than mine, so just apply. I mean shit, if money is a problem, the tuition at UIC is reasonable without an assistantship.”

This was not the first time the two of you had this discussion, so you decided to just drop the subject. Slamming down your coffee, you glanced at your phone to check the time. “It’s like, a fifteen-minute walk there. So you want to grab a drink for the road and head out?”

“You can get one,” your friend replied.

“In my defense, I’m almost at a free reward,” you said while you cleaned the table up.

While your friend joined you in line, you two kept on talking. “So is Howl at the Moon like a sing-along?” you asked.

“You can sing along,” your friend answered. “Musicians just perform a lot of popular songs.”

“And there will be booze?” you always asked the important hard-hitting questions.
“Yeah,” your friend confirmed, looking uncomfortable.

One day, you were going to come home to an Intervention Party, complete with a banner and everything. Until then, you were going to ignore the problem and focus on what kind of Frappuccino you wanted. Strawberries and Cream did not contain caffeine, but sounded delightful. You were going to go with that.

After paying for your order, you turned back to your friend to see that she was talking to a guy wearing a suit. His pale hair reminded you of Bakura’s but contrasted with his deeply tanned skin. You decided to be a bro and busied yourself looking at the announcement board until your drink was called.

At that time, your friend waved you over and introduced you to a guy whose name was too eerily similar to Bakura’s for your liking. There was a look of recognition in his eyes upon seeing you and hearing your name.

Ignorance was bliss and you were not going to think about it. Instead, you needed to show Bakari that you were completely not feeling paranoid and shook his outstretched hand. It would make your friend happy. “Nice to meet you.”

You were such an amazing friend.

“And it’s nice to finally meet you,” Bakari replied. His eyes gave your body an appraising look, as if he were looking for something specific.

Yes, that was not suspicious. At all.

Before you could inquire further, your friend cut in. “Would it be okay if Bakari tags along?” she asked giving you a look that practically begged you to be cool about this. “He has a car.”

Recent events said you were perfectly okay with getting in the car with a stranger (Mokuba), becoming Facebook besties with a stranger (Anzu), giving a handjob to a stranger (Seto), and letting a complete stranger live in your house and teach you the ways of the Force after breaking in less than a week ago (Bakura). But this is where you drew the line.

There was probably nothing you could do to convince your friend not to go to Howl at the Moon with this guy. You, however, could lie your ass off. “Yeah that’s fine. It kind of works out since I’ve been kind of nervous about crowds.”

A solemn expression crossed your friend’s face before she nodded. “I understand.”.

“Are you going to be alright?” your friend asked as Bakari began to usher you both out of Starbucks.

Bakari then stopped to look behind you before a Cheshire grin spread across his features. “Oh hello again, Mr. Kaiba. I don’t think I saw you come in.”

The hairs on the back of your neck stood up and you could also sense his silent presence behind you. Your eyes trailed down to look at your arms. Did Seto Kaiba plant some subdermal tracking device in you?

“Anyway,” Bakari continued. “As you can see, she is with friends and not alone.”

Your eyes went from inspecting your limbs for any signs of a tracking device straight to Seto. You were clearly missing something.

“Don’t worry about that right now,” Seto replied gruffly. However, his expression softened
considerably when he caught sight of your face.

“Text me when you get home, okay?” your friend requested.

You gave your friend a wave and finally turned back to Seto. You two started questioningly at each other before you shrugged. “We were going to go to Howl at the Moon and...I have a Starbucks Gold Card,” you began in an attempt to justify why you were only a few blocks from his condo.

“It was her idea,” you added.

Instead of replying, Seto titled his head as a signal to follow him. Once you two continued down the block, he gave your frappucino a glance. “What is this?”

“More calories than I care to think about,” you disclosed. His stare told you that was not an answer to his question. “A Strawberries and Cream frappucino.”

You were going to offer him some, but Seto already reached for your drink and grabbed it out of your hands. He took a long sip before unceremoniously handing it back to you. “I don’t really taste the strawberries,” he commented.

“No,” you admitted, stirring the drink with your straw. “It doesn’t. But I still bought it, so whatever.”

“Even though you said it has more calories than you care to think about?” Seto asked with a quirk of an eyebrow. You were starting to learn the small gestures Seto made with his eyebrow and the motions of his head gave his emotions away in spite of his otherwise impeccable poker face. He seemed more amused than bewildered, you decided.

“Yes,” you replied.

Seto reached for the drink a second time. “Then I guess I am going to have to help you drink it,” he said.

While you two lapsed into a somewhat awkward silence, you kept passing the frappucino between the two of you until Seto decided that you both had enough and threw it away into a trash can as you passed it.

You were going to protest, but ultimately decided against it. Somehow, you had a feeling that Seto would just shrug and tell you if you wanted more, then you can retrieve it from the garbage. Which you were okay with not doing.

At the next set of lights, you glanced over at the street sign to see how far away you were from his condo when you felt his warm breath against your ear. “It seems you couldn’t even wait until tomorrow to try to get in my pants,” he mumbled in Japanese before quickly straightening back up.

“I’m just following your lead,” you replied innocently, the Japanese rolling off your tongue as easily as if you were speaking English. “I like it when a man takes charge.”

It would be a mood killer to point out that he was the one finding you all the time. You made a mental note to keep feeling around for any subdermal microchips later.

Seto led you into a restaurant whose name you took note of--The Gage--before he quickly told the host that you were going to sit at the bar. There were several open stools and you took the seat to the left of him. While Seto was looking at his own drink menu, you decided to quickly take out your ID and debit card.
He was a billionaire probably called your yearly income ‘pocket change,’ but you were raised better than that. You could buy your own drink.

You could not decide between the margarita or daiquiri. So you decided to settle matters with ‘Eeny Meeny Miny Moe’ when Seto noticed your debit card on top of your ID. Instead of giving it back to you like a normal person, he picked up your debit card and placed it in his own wallet.

“I will give it back to you later,” he assured. “I think that I can afford to buy you a drink.”

You pretended to reluctantly agree. That was fine; you had cash on you. Since you were no longer going to use it to pay for the cover at Howl at the Moon, you would use it to give the bartender a nice tip.

After placing your order (you decided on the daiquiri), the bartender left the go make your drinks and you came to a bitter realization: There was the option of trying to make small talk, but you had a feeling that Seto would rather bash his own skull into the bar than make small talk.

Which left you with absolutely nothing to talk about. You could talk to Seto about your studies and research, but more than likely his eyes might glaze over in boredom. KaibaCorp had once been a subcontractor producing weapons. Seto probably knew a bit about guns and you had learned during your tenure in the military. Yet that did not seem appropriate…

By the time your drink arrived, you concluded that you had nothing in common. Seto was a fantastic kisser and probably great in bed, but this bond was affecting your judgment too much. Nothing more would come from this than a one-night stand in order to get this desire out of both your systems.

You supposed that if Seto was really going to hit it and quit it, you should be glad he at least bought you a drink first…

“Just say whatever is on your mind,” Seto’s voice cut through your thoughts like a knife.

Were you really that noticeable?

Instead of making things extremely awkward between the two of you, it was probably best to play it safe and make it only somewhat awkward. “Who was that guy that left with my friend?” you asked. “Her body isn’t going to end up in the river, right?”

Seto glanced at you from the corner of his eye and studied you as if to decide whether or not you were kidding. “He’s a defense attorney whose law firm I have on monthly retainer,” he answered. “So how does he know who I am?”

What did he say to you?” Seto asked suddenly. Too suddenly.

“He just said that it was nice to finally meet me when I introduced myself,” you replied.

That explained how he knew Seto. “So how does he know who I am?”

“What did he say to you?” Seto asked suddenly. Too suddenly.

“He just said that it was nice to finally meet me when I introduced myself,” you replied.

Seto drained half of his drink before answering lowly and in Japanese. “After the events that occurred at the museum, it is standard procedure to not speak to state and federal agents without a lawyer present. So of course I would have representation. However, due to the unique circumstances of our situation, I believed it prudent to ensure that an attorney represented your interests as well.”

Until now, Seto had spoken to you casually in both Japanese and English. Now, he trying to sound formal. Was he...embarrassed?

“So he’s my attorney?” you questioned. No wonder you suddenly stopped getting questioned. You
wonder what would have happened if you had to go in to give another statement, only to discover that you had a lawyer.

“He was your attorney,” Seto confirmed. He paused his conversation long enough to order another drink when the bartender approached. “Our part in their investigation is over.”

“So I had a lawyer who never bothered contacting his client?” You were not going to let this one go so easily. “That seems kind of unprofessional.”

“It was at my request,” Seto stated briskly. “I thought it best to leave you out of it.”

“Sounds familiar,” you sniffed.

From the rigid way he held his neck and how his eyes narrowed at you, it was obvious that your American sass was beginning to piss Seto off. “Excuse me?” he growled.

You decided to finish your free drink first because this was going to blow his fucking mind. “Guess what I woke up to last Saturday morning?”

“A hangover,” Seto deadpanned.

His answer could have been a good guess, but there were far too many coincidences for you to ignore.

“You seem to know a lot about me and my current location,” you quipped. “That’s creepy. Really fucking creepy. Anyway, I woke up to that necklace. I believe it’s called the Millennium, Necklace and has the power to see right into the--”

Seto practically slapped you as he slammed his hand against your mouth to silence you. “We’re in public, you idiot!”

You both were speaking in Japanese and Seto’s dramatics had managed to draw more attention to yourselves than you had. He did have a point though. “You’re right,” you said when Seto removed his hand. “Even though you don’t have any idea what the fuck is going on, you’re right.”

Seto snorted. “And you do?”

“Is everything okay over here?” the bartender asked. “I could get you both some water.”

“Just the check,” Seto growled out.

Oooh, you made him angry! Good.

The bartender looked between the two of you before giving you a look that asked, ‘Are you going to be okay?’ From an outsider’s perspective, you could see how Seto could look like an abusive boyfriend. Unlike him, you did not like making a scene. You just nodded and forced a smile.

“I am fine. Thank you,” you answered politely since at least once of you had manners.

Time to bounce, you decided. You quickly pulled two ten dollar bills from your purse and glanced over at Seto whose expression was becoming stormier by the second. Definitely time to bounce.

You completely blew any chance of ever getting him out of your system. With him in his designer colored contact lenses wearing a tailored suit and you in a dress you purchased at TJ Maxx on clearance, the difference between you could not be any more apparent. He looked up at you and defiantly held your gaze in spite of you leaning forward enough to expose a generous amount of
cleavage as you placed the wrinkled bills in front of him.

“A warning would have been appreciated,” you said in a voice barely above a whisper. “Last Saturday, the Spirit of the Millennium Ring had tracked down the Necklace and I woke up to him in my house, with my gun.”

As you spoke, Seto’s eyes never left yours and practically burned a hole through you. Even with the contacts, Seto’s eyes held a dangerous glint. And yet, there was something about the way he looked so pissed with his brows knit together and lips narrowed that ignite a fire in your core only he could put out.

Your big mouth killed that opportunity and since there was no kill quite like overkill, you continued to talk. “That house guest? Yeah, that’s him. While he is absolutely insane, it’s better than being treated with kid gloves.”

It was petty, but you spun around to make you retreat before Seto could reply. You both wanted the last word and Seto spat his towards your retreating back, “I seem to have overestimated your intelligence. You’re really nothing but a dumb kid.”

“Says Old Man Kaiba,” you fired back without looking over your shoulder.

Cloaked in self-righteousness, you stormed out of the Gage. To your left, was a Steak Shake and to your right was a Japanese-style restaurant called Hot Woks Cool Sushi. You were tempted to duck in one of these establishments in case Seto came barreling out after you. Then again, Seto literally lived around the corner and you did not want to risk seeing him again.

Which, was probably never going to happen.

Tears welled up in your eyes and you blinked rapidly to keep them at bay. You screwed up and did more than cross a line with him: you pole vaulted over it. Yes, you had a right to be annoyed if not outright angry with him. But, you were an adult, damn it! And it would have been the mature thing to have waited until you were in private and not drinking to discuss the Millennium Items as well as his reasoning for keeping you in the dark.

With your shoulders slumped, you headed in the direction of the Blue Line. You just wanted to go home and sleep. Maybe Bakura would leave you alone if he saw that you were crying.

Hah..

Not likely.

You were halfway towards the train when you remembered something that made you lose the last remnants of your self-control; Seto still had your debit card.

The hot tears spilled down your cheeks and no matter what you did, they would not stop. After everything that happened, you knew it was not a matter of if, but when you would have a complete mental breakdown. You had just hoped it would have happened in the privacy of your own home and not in the heart of downtown Chicago.
I am pretty disappointed that I could not get this chapter out before Kaiba's birthday. But I finished this bad boy in time for Halloween! Since I tricked everyone for the past few chapters, have a treat!

In a city as large as Chicago, a teary-eyed twentysomething was not that unusual. You drew some looks, but were thankful that no one said anything. Urban isolation was pretty awesome sometimes.

It was dark and dusky by the time you arrived on your street. You had finally stopped crying, but your body felt heavy with how emotionally drained you were. So much so that you barely registered the silhouette of your own car in the driveway, much less the silver one parked behind it.

When your mind processed the presence of the second car, you stopped and the pang of loss surrounding your heart was quickly replaced by it thumping wildly in your chest. What was he doing here?

As you approached, you caught sight of his silhouette and the unmistakable glow of a cigarette. You were finally close enough to make out the evening breeze tousling Seto’s hair. The man himself lazily leaned against the driver’s side of his car, leg bent at a smooth angle.

Seto looked up at your approach and took a long drag from his cigarette before speaking. “I would have offered you a ride, but I did not want you to accuse me of being creepy yet again.”

Did he really want the last word that badly?

You just decided to just take what he had to dish. You moved up the driveway and past his car to lean against the trunk of your own.

Then you waited.

“No witty retort?” he inquired.

“No, I just thought that I would let you have the floor. Isn’t that why you came here?”

Your gaze fluttered to the cigarette in Seto’s hand as he dropped it to the ground and stubbed it out with his patent leather shoe. Did he not realize that you were going to be the one to clean that up? Then again, did he care? Probably not.

Seto then straightened himself up and looked over at you.

*Let it go,* you told yourself. It is just a cigarette and will probably get washed away the next time it rains.

Seto took one step closer and then another. From the way he looked so rigid, it was as if he was fighting a huge war inside his head. Nonetheless, Seto pulled back his suit jacket just enough to reveal a gleam of gold between his belt loop.
A Millennium Item. So he was a member of the same Super Secret Club you were.

“I didn’t come here for the last word,” he told you. “I thought I would take care of your pest problem.”

You said nothing and just walked up the driveway to the front door with Seto following at your heels. As you unlocked the front door, you reflected that this must be how Anakin Skywalker felt when he had to choose between saving Mace Windu or Darth Sidious.

You unlocked the door and were expected to see Bakura at his usual perch on your couch or prepared to inflict doom and gloom on you and Seto. Instead, you stepped inside and glanced around. He was not there.

Seto swept inside from behind you as if he owned the place. You paused momentarily before closing the front door. Seto had already done a quick sweep of the living room, dining area, and kitchen and you could hear the sounds of his shoes going up the stairs.

“Do you need any help with anything?” you called from the bottom of the steps.

No reply.

Feeling a bit disconcerted at that, you started up the stairs when your ears alerted you to the sound of a door opening. By the time you reached the top step, you could see Seto standing in the doorway to your bedroom. His hand was still on the doorknob and while you could not see his expression, you did not miss how his Adam’s Apple bobbed as he swallowed.

“Sorry about the mess,” you mumbled awkwardly because you had to keep yourself occupied with other thought. Thinking prevented you from rushing Seto and pinning him on your bed. With how Seto turned from the door to look at you, it was obvious that he has similar ideas.

You gulped.

From shameless flirting outside of Starbucks, snapping at each other, you storming off, and losing your rhetorical shit before coming home to see Seto beat you there, you were not sure how to even process this roller coaster of emotions.

“I will be downstairs.” Seto’s voice snapped you back to reality.

You stepped to the side to let Seto pass, but instead of going down the steps, he glanced down at you. “I don’t want to have to wait around here all night. Pack a bag. We’re leaving.”

With that, he made his way down the stairs, leaving you no room to argue.

As if you were going to argue in the first place.

Your room was exactly how you left it and since your suitcases were in the basement, you had to make do with what you had up here. Checking your closet, your eyes landed on the rucksack from your military days. You unapologetically dumped the contents out while making a silent promise to clean it up later before getting to work.

Honestly, you were not sure how long Seto meant for you to be away, but you thought it prudent to at least pack for a weekend. And you did not know what the weather was going to be like, what you were going to feel like wearing, or what you would even do. To compensate for the uncertainty, you carefully rolled a variety of clothes up before placing them in your bag. You paid careful attention to each article of clothing before selecting sleeping clothes, bras, and panties.
Speaking of which…

You had not planned on seeing Seto today and most definitely did not wear any undergarments that you would be comfortable with him seeing. So you looked at your risquer bra and panty combinations before you decided on a pair. Without undressing, you switched out of the lame underwear and into the sexier ones. Keeping the dress on seemed like a good idea. Easier access.

Luckily (or unluckily) for you, Bakura’s presence made you hole up in your room. Which made packing your electronics and various school supplies rather easy. Once finished, you hoisted the backpack over your shoulder and told yourself that it was not *that* heavy and you most definitely did not overpack.

When you returned to the first floor, you found Seto eyeballing the decorations in your living room.

“You making such a scene was not only over-dramatic, but embarrassing. Don’t *ever* pull a stunt like that again.”

Seto’s voice was sharp as he voiced the order. He drew one step closer. Oh yes, you two were going to have this conversation and by that, you meant that Seto expected you to listen and respond in the affirmative.

“Alright.”

Your bag was slowly sliding down your shoulder, so you set it on the ground for the time being.

“Don’t ever keep anything about the Millennium Items or interlopers that inhabit them from me again.”

Seto took another step forward, his eyes never leaving yours. A shiver ran up your spine until it reached the base of your skull. The tone of his voice did not change and neither did your reply.

“Alright.”

“Never call me Old Man Kaiba.”

His voice was still sharp, but you could not help but bite your cheeks to keep from smirking. This situation was serious, but you could not help it. The first two demands were reasonable, but this...It was obvious that you had hurt his ego. If he was ever going to insult you again, you could make no real promises.

“But of course.”

His voice held a raw, naked heat while his gaze was hot and dangerous. Exactly as a man should be, you decided. He moved your hair out of the way--just like he had the other day, and as he leaned in, you became acutely aware of his scent and the sensation teeth nipping on the lobe of your ear. With a flick of his tongue, he spoke: “You might as well have told me to fuck off. Never tell a man like me to fuck off and then allow him to walk straight into your house.”

You could have melted into a puddle right there and would have died content. Instead, you turned your head enough to grab the sides of his face so your lips could claim his. Returning the kiss, Seto’s fingers pressed into the small of your back, bringing you closer to him. He bit hungrily on your bottom lip and all you could do was moan into his mouth. This allowed his tongue to greedily pass your lips.

For now, you just let your mind go blank and savored the feeling of Seto’s hands against you, his
mouth working against yours. When you two finally pulled away from one another, his lips were swallen from the little nips you had given him as payback.

Seto glanced back at the living room furniture as if he were debating on just fucking you right here and now. Instead, he drew himself back to his full height and straightened his suit jacket and tie.

Recognizing this as the signal for you two to leave, you heaved your bag from the floor, grabbed your purse, and after locking the door behind you, joined him outside.

“Maybe I should take my car,” you mused out loud.

By then, Seto was already opening the driver’s door of his car and glanced up you for just a moment. “Don’t be stupid,” he retorted.

Seto’s condo was in the Chicago Loop and there was no way you wanted to try to find (much less pay for) parking down there. However, let it be known throughout the land that you at least offered to drive yourself.

You both sat in the car with a heavy silence between you. Seto plugged in his phone and was listening to some music app. You were not really paying attention until part of some song lyrics caught your attention.

“Is this Kanye?” you asked.

Seto shifted gears and stepped on the accelerator. You were unprepared for this and the force pushed you backwards into your seat. Eyes caught each other’s in the rear-view mirror for just a moment before Seto focused back on the road. “Yes,” he admitted. “And?”

...You then began to remember how much Seto had to drink. He did not smell like alcohol when you were kissing him, but now that you were paying attention to it, Seto was obviously impaired.

“And nothing,” you replied as you debated on calling him out. “I was just curious.”

You were just...going to look out the window. You did just that and tried to let your mind go blank instead of analyzing this situation and once again, self-sabotaging. You were good at screwing things up for yourself.

You quietly staring out the window, minding your own business only lasted a few minutes.

You remembered that you promised to text your friend when you got home. Not one to break that kind of promise, you pulled out your phone and composed a message:  *Just letting you know I made it home.*

Technically, you were not lying. You did make it home; you just left shortly afterwards.

Seto pulled the car into the parking structure attached to his building and made a point of glancing towards the spot next to him. It was as if he were expecting a car magically appear any second. You were going to take an educated guess and say that was Mokuba’s parking spot. Which meant, he was not home.

To keep yourself from thinking, you paid attention to the expensive cars you passed while following Seto through the parking structure and into the elevator. You were half expecting something that would put the elevator make-out scene in ‘50 Shades of Grey’ to shame. Instead, Seto pressed the button for the 36th floor and leaned back against the mirrored wall. Eyes closed and arms folded, he seemed perfectly content to stay on his side of the elevator.
As if sensing your confusion, Seto opened his eyes and inclined his chin to the corner adjacent from him. Eyes following the direction he indicated, you could see why it was not a good idea to jump each other’s bones: there was a security camera.

That explained it.

After entering the condo the Kaiba brothers shared, you watched as Seto took off his shoes with more than a little irritation. You knew that taking off shoes was a cultural thing, but Seto did not seem to care about that while he was in your house.

You set your extremely heavy bag down and since you were wearing sandals, you slipped off them off with ease. You felt Seto’s eyes on you and decided to give him a little show by bending forward to reveal a little cleavage in order to place your sandals just so.

Maybe this would get him back in the mood…

As luck would have it, your movements caused the strap of your dress to fall down. Slowly and deliberately pulling it back up, your fingers slowly glided over chest and shoulder before you glanced back up at Seto. His expression was dark frustration.

Grabbing hold of your wrists, Seto yanked you into a standing position before he caught your chin with one hand and kissed you. The kiss quickly deepened and became more heated, impatient. Tongues intertwining and moans escaping each of your lips while hands explored one another’s body. That exploration did not stop even after each kiss.

Your head was on Seto’s chest while your hand was moving up and down the length of his pant’s crotch. His own hand was traveling up your dress and tracing the outline of your panties. With the way his breath hitched, you could tell that he was not expecting to feel silk and lacy material.

“I swear to fuck, you better not stop this time;” you said with a breathy moan as his fingers found your clit through the fabric.

“I was not planning on stopping for anything,” Seto replied just as he put his hand inside your panties. Those long fingers of his stroked over your clit and you could not help but let out a sharp gasp and held on to him as if your knees were going to give out.

Your hand moved to return the favor, but were quickly swatted away by Seto’s free hand.

What was this man doing to you? you wondered as two fingers worked their way in and out of you. The same hand that swatted you away held you up against his chest so he could feel every moan and jerk your body made while his skillful fingers touched you. While you knew Seto would be good, it was as if this bond between you heightened the intensity of your pleasure.

You were almost ready you beg him to fuck you when you both suddenly paused and both your heads turned towards the door at the sound of keys. You pulled away from him, but Seto’s sudden grip on your arm pulled you back. Instead of acting casual, he practically dragged you down the hallway to his bedroom before Mokuba could open the front door.

The door to his bedroom slammed shut just as you heard the front door open and Mokuba call out that he was home. You could not help but survey the bedroom until your attention was directed to the golden object Seto casually tossed on the nightstand.

The Millennium Rod. You had almost forgotten that he had that.
“Come here,” Seto ordered from the spot he stood. You were more than happy to oblige. Once more, your lips met and while Seto was much taller, you reached upwards to let your hands snake through his dark hair. The bond between you two and the many interruptions made your mouths meet with a fevered desperation.

Within moments, heavy breaths were all that was heard before you felt your back pressed against the wall that lead to the en suite bathroom. You hooked a leg around Seto's hip, allowing you to grind against him. From this position, your dress hiked up your thighs, making it so that only your panties rubbed against the expensive fabric of his pants. You each thrust against each other with a feral hunger that required immediate satisfaction.

Still, your mind raced. You wanted this. No, you **needed** this. You were patient for so long…

But you needed to be quiet. Mokuba was here. Your bag was forgotten in the entrance way. Mokuba had to know that you were here…

*Fuck it all. Just stop thinking!*

Seemingly just as tired of the foreplay, Seto practically tore your panties from your body. You stepped out of them and were alerted to the sound of his belt buckle and zipper. Still dressed, Seto tugged down his pants just enough and you could *feel* his cock spring free from his boxers when it pressed against the inside of your thigh.

You reached down between your legs to take cock in your hands, rubbing it against your wet slit. With a deep groan, Seto grinded against you before he grabbed hold of the leg wrapped around your waist and took control of how his cock rubbed against you. Your hips thrust forward in encouragement until Seto pressed the tip of his cock into your folds.

With a hard grunt, Seto used one hand to brace himself against the wall and the other slid up your thigh and grabbed hold of your ass. You responded by arching your hips against him, allowing his cock to go deeper.

You threw your head against the wall, savoring the sensation of Seto buried inside of you. There was pleasure mixed with pain from his length stretching out connective tissue to accommodate him. Yet, the both of you had been craving this with such a ferocious intensity that it took a few moments to process that it was really happening: you two were fucking each other.

Even just like this, you were brought to an edge that you wanted to throw yourself over just to feel more of him. In the back of your mind, you knew that this was not natural, but were not going to allow yourself to care.

Seto moved his hand from your ass to tug at the hem of your dress. Understanding what he wanted, you lifted your dress over your head and tossed it aside so you were wearing just your bra. That too, quickly came off and Seto lightly pinched your nipple between his thumb and forefinger. The mewl that elicited from you was the signal he needed to resume what you both started.

At first, the thrusts were gentle and as they picked up pace, you had to wrap both of your legs around his waist. You managed to balance against the wall with your upper back until Seto pounded against you, slamming you against the wall repeatedly; moans and the sound of his skin deliciously smacking against yours filled the room.

“You’re so fucking tight,” he groaned.

With the way your bodies responded to one another, your hips matching the other's pace with a
carnal ferocity, there was nothing sweet or romantic about it; you two were really fucking each other and that was the most apt description.

With your leg muscles able to maintain your balance, you tightly gripped Seto’s own ass and pushed him into you at the pace you wanted him to move.

“You feel so good,” you panted out.

Seto’s fingers dug into your sides while his thrusts became deeper and slower. It only took a second before you comprehend what was about to happen and by then, Seto let one final groan escape his lips before he bucked into you one last time. A warmth filled you and you as Seto pulled you closer to his chest. You listened to the sound of his pounding heart until he pulled out of you.

Your lowered your shaking legs that had been entangled around his waist. Seto then guided you to the bed.

“I’m not done with you yet.”

What a coincidence, you were about to say the same thing.
Chapter 15

You stirred to the sound of Seto getting out of bed to make his way to the en suite bathroom.

_He fell asleep with the colored contacts in. That sucks,_ you decided before turning over in his bed to avoid the light from the bathroom. Seto could be rude, but he at least closed the bathroom quietly behind him.

You were not too sure if you fell back asleep, but the next thing you became aware of was Seto feeling around for the clothes that you pretty much tossed across the room.

Finding what he was looking for, Seto pulled out his phone from his pants pocket. You could see his face and part of his naked body illuminated by the glow of the phone.

“What time is it?” you asked blearily.

“A little after two,” he answered while tapping the screen rapidly. Typing. “Go back to sleep.”

“I’ll think about it,” you mumbled before snuggling into softest pillow and the most comfortable mattress in the universe. While he thankfully turned the haptic feedback feature on his phone off, you found yourself listening to Seto type. You weren’t sure what Mr. Type-y hands over there found so important at ‘a little after two’ o’clock in the morning, but you found the sound to be oddly soothing.

Eventually, you heard the sound of a phone being plugged into its charger before the mattress shifted only slightly to accommodate Seto crawling back into bed. You were ready to go back to sleep when you felt Seto’s arms wrap around you and pull you closer to him. You two had been just like that after you had worn each other out. The spooning lasted as long as it took both of you to admit that falling asleep like this was not going to happen and you both rolled over to a more comfortable sleeping position.

“I know this is a little late for this discussion,” Seto started.

...But I am seeing someone
...But I am not into women.
...But I need you to get the fuck out of my bedroom.
...But I have one hell of an STD.

Your mind went over the endless possibilities of how Seto could end that sentence.

“Are you on any type of birth control?” he finished.

For the time being, your mind was clear or at least free of the influence of needing to have Seto metaphorically screw your brains out. Neither of you had even mentioned a condom. Hell, that thought did not even occur to you in the moment And normally you were so careful…

“I have an IED,” you answered. Wait. You needed to try that one again. “An IUD.”

You were familiar with the skepticism that followed. “I got it at Planned Parenthood. I just had to saw two magic phrases: ‘I am in grad school’ and ‘I spent a year in Afghanistan.’ I can show you the paperwork for that and my last STD test.”

You could feel Seto shake his head against your shoulder. “That’s alright.”
Now it was his turn to feel awkward. “You get tested too, right?”

“Yes,” Seto responded slowly, like this question made him uncomfortable. And you had to admit, it was weird thinking about a guy like him submitting to an STD panel. “And I have never had any blood transfusions nor have I used any intravenous drugs.”

Which left the question of what kind of drug Seto Kaiba did use. That was a question for another day.

“Cool,” you replied. “Nice chat.”

“Nice chat,” Seto agreed. He playfully smacked your ass before rolling over and returning to his side of the bed.

Falling asleep without assistance or collapsing in complete exhaustion was always difficult, but your eyes eventually fluttered shut.

For the first time in a long time, your dreams remembered that while there were no trenches in the desert, you were still trapped in one. There was the whirl of the helicopter blades in the far distance; it would never come in time.

Experience taught you that to stay alive, you need to do something. Anything. There was just so much blood though. There were the faces of your squad, their voices gargled from the blood pouring out of their mouths, ears, everywhere—all begging you not to let them die.

But you did.

And you had to move, return fire. Anything, but you had to move!

The familiar sound of Reveille woke you up in a start and you practically leaped out of the bed only to get tangled in blankets. The sound of Seto’s laughter brought you back to reality.

You took a long slow breath. No desert, no blood and MEDEVACs. “You asshole,” you muttered on exhale, forcing the air through your nose.

“I’m going to work,” Seto brusquely announced while you made an attempt to straighten yourself out and regulate your heartbeat. Once calmed down, you noticed Seto was dressed in an undershirt and boxers, a towel draped over his shoulders.

“Okay,” you replied. With your heart rate skyrocketing so early in the morning, you were wide awake. You stalled for time by pretending to rub the last remnants of sleep from your eyes until Seto opened the door for a walk-in closet larger than most bathrooms. You used that chance to get out of bed in order to go on a mini scavenger hunt to find your discarded clothes.

By the time you slipped your dress over your head, you could see that Seto was watching you through one of the closet’s mirrors while he buttoned his shirt. Without his colored contacts, his eyes were far more expressive. When he noticed that he had been caught, the appraising look in his eyes faded while he resumed his stoic expression.

“It seems that we are back to normal,” Seto started after clearing his throat. He diverted his gaze from you by turning his attention to selecting a tie for the day.

“Seems that way,” you agreed. Without anything to use as a prop, you began to try to smooth the wrinkles from your dress.
“Things got rather out of hand last night. However, since we have that...attraction between us out of our system, we should try to carry on with our own lives.”

“In other words, no repeat performances,” you summarized. By then you had given up on your dress and were studying your nails intently.

“Correct,” Seto said succinctly. “I am not looking for a relationship.”

“Good to hear,” you said trying to match his impassive, businesslike way of speaking. “The idea of being tied down right now is so...unappealing.”

Seto just nodded before he turned his attention to fixing his tie. “I wanted to make sure that there were no misunderstandings between us.”

“We’re clearly on the same page. Is there anything else?”

“No, that’s all.”

“Cool. Would it be alright if I used your shower?”

Seto moved further into the closet to choose a suit jacket. “That’s fine,” he replied with his back to you. “When you first walk in, there will be a closet to your right. There’s extra towels in there.”

The en suite bathroom, just like his bedroom, was spartan and the few personal touches were simple. It was definitely a bachelor’s home, you decided upon seeing the wet towel on the floor and toothpaste in the sink. Seto clearly was not used to picking up after himself.

You were not going to snoop. As tempting as it was, Seto seemed like the paranoid type who would be on guard for things like that. You located the towels and obediently closed the closet door without giving it a further look. You also mentally congratulated yourself for doing the right thing.

Making your way to the shower, you eventually figured out how to turn it on before you found a temperature that was favorable. You then stripped and got in.

The warm water relaxed the knots that formed in your muscles after the excursions from the night before. Picking up some body wash, you examined the label before using your hands to lather it over your body.

You were not going to think about the conversation. Honestly, you went into this with no expectations; maybe a short-lived fling. Even a weekend sexathon. But a one night deal after telling you to pack a bag and leave your own home?

Just when you thought you were beginning to understand a little about Seto Kaiba, there was something else to puzzle out about him. He blows hot, he blows cold. The man was an enigma. There was no way that you could be in a relationship with someone like him; you would end up murdering him in his sleep.

The sound of the door opening made you jump a little.

“I brought your bag,” Seto announced and you heard the unmistakable thud of a heavy backpack hitting the ground. Thank goodness your laptop was in a protective case.

You were about to cover yourself up until you remembered that Seto could not see you through the opaque shower door. “Thank you.”
You still stood tense, waiting for the sound of the door closing to signal he left. It didn’t and you chanced a look over your shoulder to see that Seto was still in bathroom and at the sink.

“Did you by chance pack bricks in your bag?”

“Just my pet rocks,” you replied without missing a beat. “I couldn’t just abandon them.”

Seto was silent as if he were trying to decide if you were serious or not. You decided to answer for him. “I’m kidding. I have my laptop and crap I need for school.”

A *hrn* was his reply. You were ready to just get out of the shower and throw modesty out the window. It was not as if he didn’t see it before. Or watched as you got dressed.

Before you could muster up the courage to turn the shower off, Seto broke the silence. “I am leaving now. Mokuba will be here for a little while longer.”

“Okay,” you answered. Unsure of what else to say, you added, “Have a good day at work.”

“Sure,” Seto replied before exiting the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

Great, you thought. You had to face Mokuba after having a one-night stand with his brother.
Turning off the shower, you tried not to make more noise than necessary, lest you alert Mokuba to the fact you did not just go back to sleep. Maybe you could wait him out to avoid the awkward conversation? Once Mokuba was gone, you would go home, have a beer, and wait for all this to blow over.

But the way Seto touched you…

Which was part of the reason you had to stall for time: to avoid talking to Mokuba after all the fantastic things his brother did to you.

Yes! Stall for time.

You plugged in your cell phone in an outlet and took your time getting dressed. So much so that you even put on the Millennium Necklace along with your scarf. Since you forgot to pack a hairdryer, you tied your hair back while it air dried enough to style it. Even if you had packed a hairdryer, using it would go against the 'be very very quiet' thing. In the meantime, you carefully applied your daily makeup. Once that was done, you exited the bathroom and debated on just making a run for it.

You did not owe Mokuba an explanation. Maybe a quick apology, but that was more on Seto for bringing you back here in the first place.

You gathered your belongings and exited the bathroom only to note Seto’s clothes from last night were still on the bedroom floor…

Time to bail.

You hoisted your bag over your shoulder and turned towards the door. Reaching up a hand, you began to twist the doorknob before you paused. You then leaned against the door to listen for the sound of Mokuba moving about the condo. Nothing.

You took a deep breath before you opened the door inch-by-inch and took the first few cautious steps into the hallway. You made very little progress before a fresh surge of adrenaline made you stop in your tracks.

Mokuba Kaiba--looking dapper as fuck in a suit--was standing in the doorway to his room with his head tilted down. This allowed his dark bangs to obscure his peripheral, allowing you to stay hidden like some kind of ninja. He appeared to be fastening something to his wrist, probably a watch or something.

You had two options: make a mad dash to the front door and stop long enough to grab your shoes (you would put them on in the elevator) or slowly back into Seto’s room and continue to be very, very quiet for the next hour or so.

Prepared to execute the second option, you took one step back just as Mokuba finished his task and tugged a strand of hair behind his ear. This allowed him to see you.

“Hey,” he greeted drowsily. The usual vibrancy in his voice gone, but the corners of his mouth still turned upwards just enough to give you a devious smirk. “Did you have a good night?”

Mokuba knew exactly what had happened. Initially, you and Seto had been quiet, but that had lasted only so long before you no longer cared to keep the noise level down. You shifted the weight of
your backpack while thinking of what to say. It was like Mokuba expected a certain reaction out of you. Deciding to be adroit in your word choices, you replied with, “I never had one quite like it before.”

Mokuba blinked before he shook his head while chuckling to himself. “There is is, the sassy thing!” Well, that had not worked like you were hoping. You were just going to go now…

“And there it is, the sassy thing, heading out. Nice seeing you again!”

“You’re leaving?” Mokuba asked as you passed him in the hallway. “Before breakfast?”

Breakfast. Food. Just thinking about food made your stomach remind you that you only had only had that pastry and Frappucino for dinner last night. And that had been an early dinner. There was the cocktail, but you lived in the land of denial, where alcohol had zero calories.

“...What’s for breakfast?” you asked cautiously.

“Food,” Mokuba replied cryptically. “Put your stuff down, we’ll come back for it.”

The confused look on your face made Mokuba elaborate. “Yeah. Of course Seto wouldn’t have told you. Typical. Anyway, he asked me to take you to KaibaCorp.”

The sigh from Mokuba told you that the puzzled look never left your face. “We’ll talk on the way there. Is Panera okay with you??”

You were perfectly okay with that. You would just do some cardio this weekend.

...Actual cardio. Even if you could, sexercise did not count. No matter how much you had a feeling to the contrary, Seto had been clear about not wanting to sleep with you again.

But wait... Was a Kaiba really suggesting that you do something so plebian, like go to a chain?! What was next, Mokuba wanting to go on public transportation like the L?

As it turned out, you two took the Pedway, the underground pedestrian walkway system.

Seto had maintained his indifferent façade up until he got into his car and looked over at the passenger seat. He had expected to wake up and resume the life where he had full control of every aspect. Instead, seeing you naked in his bed made all the memories from the night before come rushing back. It made him want more of your scent, the softness of your skin, every moan and gasp as he ravaged your body...

‘Good to hear. The idea of being tied down right now is so...unappealing.’

He could not get that comment out of his head. The more Seto replayed it in his mind, the more sinister your tone sounded.

Seto had felt more of your emotion at being awoken to the sound of Reveille. Seto had wanted to drag you out of his shower and demand to know who the fuck you thought you were; and was the idea of a relationship that was so unappealing or a relationship with him. was what was unappealing.

He slammed his fist against the steering wheel in frustration.

Because you were just so busy and a relationship would encroach on your freedom to go clubbing and sleep the day away. Seto decided that a relationship with you would be horrible, but it did not
stop him from wanting to drag you to his bed and force an explanation from you before making you beg for his forgiveness.

Seto gritted his teeth and gripped the steering wheel tightly before he roared with all the vitriol of an angsty teenager by punching the dashboard several times before starting his car.

He needed to get to work.

It usually took Seto between eight to twenty minutes to drive the 1.2 miles to KaibaCorp. Today, it had nearly taken him forty minutes before he pulled into his parking spot. During the time, Seto had been ready to snap his phone in half since he not only had to deal with traffic but take several calls from people who should have been more competent.

Upon parking his car in the designated spot, he caught sight of his reflection and swore. Your presence had been the slip from his routine that threw him off. Seto had a routine and waking up with you in bed next to him was all it took for his brain to get out of ‘morning routine’ mode.

While you were showering, he had retrieved your bag from the living room, spoke to Mokuba, and used the bag as an excuse to enter the bathroom. Autopilot had been disengaged and he didn’t put in his fucking colored contacts.

No one could see him with these eyes.

Seto immediately started the car and weaved in and out of traffic, driving like a maniac to get back to the condo.

By the time Seto returned, he noticed that your bag had made a reappearance in the living room. He checked Mokuba’s room first and seeing that it was empty, he went into his and took out his regular contact lenses before putting in the colored ones.

Seto knew you were not here before he even got inside. However, you were getting closer. Since Mokuba was not the type of person to leave early unless he was dragged out of the door, Seto could only assume that the two of you went out for breakfast and were now returning.

Within a few minutes, Seto overheard the conversation between you and Mokuba.

"I had a good friend that mained with Teemo. Every time we played, he would just lock Teemo over and over. I used to think he was a good guy, but...I realized that I didn’t know him anymore.”

“Did he eventually choose a different champion to main?” your voice was warm honey when you talked nerdy.

“No,” Mokuba replied gravely. “We don’t really talk anymore.”

“It’s for the best,” you consoled. “You just can’t trust anyone that sells their soul to sign Teemo’s dark pact.”

"Dark pact," Mokuba repeated. "I think that's fitting; I often find myself wondering why Riot named Satan Teemo."

Mokuba was the first to notice Seto stalking down the hallway towards them. Seto’s eyes flickered to the coffee cup you and Mokuba were holding before they settled on you. The first thing Seto noticed was that you were wearing a scarf.

He felt a surge of possessive rage at the sight of that scarf. Mokuba would never---
Seto had not seen any marks on your neck this morning and while he trusted his brother more than anyone else, he could not help but wonder what you felt the need to cover up.

“Looks like you changed your mind,” Mokuba observed.

That morning, Mokuba was insistent that Seto took a personal day. The way Mokuba phrased it made Seto want to leave for work right there and then out of sheer spite. While awake at two o’clock this morning, Seto had intentionally freed up his morning to accommodate for any fatigue. So perhaps it would not be catastrophic if...

“I’m not taking a full day,” Seto replied levelly. “Just a half day.”

“I guess I need to head out then,” Mokuba said before giving you a quick wave. “Gotta make sure KaibaCorp isn’t on the verge of apocalyptic ruin without its ever-diligent president.”

Seto snorted in response and waited for his brother to leave before his attention returned fully to you. You were studying him while taking a long swallow of your coffee. “Is everything okay?”

Seto stalked towards you, his long strides dark with intent until he towered over your upturned face.

Without taking your eyes from him, you slowly reached behind you to set your coffee on the nearest surface. Whatever you saw in his gaze, Seto could feel the anxiety build up in the pit of your stomach.

Seto grabbed hold of the scarf and yanked it off. “You’re playing a dangerous game,” he murmured at the sight of the Millennium Necklace around your neck.

With the item around your neck, Seto expected to see the all-knowing arrogance Isis Ishtar held. You were a clever woman, Seto did not even have to be around you to know that because he could see the intelligence in your eyes. Yet, you were nothing like Isis Ishtar. She had at least known what she was getting into before leaping headfirst into the inferno.

“Get your deck,” he told you before he moved down the hallway to the office. There, he retrieved two Duel Disks as well as his own deck. He then went into his bedroom and retrieved one final item.

By the time he returned, you were shuffling a deck.

There was so much that had happened in such a short amount of time. You felt like you were surrounded by an emotion-driven wildfire, licks of flames scorching your flesh as the fire danced closer to you. And yet, there was no way to escape. When you looked at Seto though, you never minded the thought of being engulfed in those flames.

Seto...

Seto was saying you were playing a dangerous game as if you had a choice in the matter. He could have warned you long before this because you were involved now. And something was coming; you could sense it every time you wore the Millennium Necklace. You had a feeling that Seto’s involvement now painted a big red target on your back. Which may have been why Bakura got outta Dodge.

These thoughts raced through your head as you finished shuffling your deck and placed your cards in the Duel Disk Seto handed you. It would do automatic shuffling, but you wanted to make sure that the cards were how you needed them to be before you did that.

Seto pulled back his suit jacket. By the time you understood what he was doing, Seto already had the
Millennium Rod in hand and spun around to face you.

You knew what was coming. Unlike your predecessor, you could not see the future, per se. Rather than images, your glimpses of the future were feeling and impressions. Still, it allowed you a chance to brace yourself as the burst of energy hit you.

You flew back several feet and hit the couch, feeling bursts of pain running up your back just as the air shifted. As you climbed to your feet, you fixed Seto with a passionate yet fierce glare.

"Did you really think Bakura was the only one who knew about the power of the Millennium Items?" he asked.

Well..

Yeah, you kind of did.

Instead of answering him, you chose to ignore that snide question of his. “A Shadow Duel,” you deadpanned before touching your Millennium Necklace. You could feel the hum of the items power below your fingertips, begging to be used. “I didn’t know you liked it dirty.”

“You wanted to be part of this, so here we are,” Seto said plainly. “A real fight is never clean. I knew you were young, but I did not think you were that naïve.”

A real fight? Seto could never comprehend how bridges could be terrifying or the flash just before a motor exploded. If this was a fight, then you had home field advantage.

“Try not to cry when new tricks don’t come to an old dog,” you countered. You placed the Duel Disk on the arm of your dominate hand.

Seto’s lips turned upwards in a way you could not interpret. Yet his eyes narrowed because less than a day ago, he had warned you not to call him an old man.

Which you hadn’t. You just called him an old dog.

“So the little kitten still has her claws” Seto said dryly as he signaled you to make the first move.

“Adorable. Just like a cat, you’re fun to piss off. The only rules of this game is that neither of us can use our Millennium Items to cheat. Do you think that you can manage that?”

“And they say that I’m sassy,” you countered. “Behave a little before you end up like Old Yeller.”

You were talking a big game and while you knew that the odds were not in your favor, he was not expecting you to use a Burn Deck.

You had wanted to use your Evilswarm deck, but decided against it. Seto wanted to play with fire, so you were going to burn him. You were glad you did not say that insult out loud due to the cheeiness of it. Yet, Seto did not realize you had the second deck and decided for funsies, you put your one monster card in defense mode before literally putting the rest of your cards in the Magic/Trap slots.

He placed Dragon Shrine on the field and wanted to roll your eyes when he placed Blue-Eyes White Dragon in his hand. He used no Magic/Trap cards and just set a card face down on the field in Defense Mode.

On your next turn, you flipped over your Monster Card. “I switched it up a bit today. Just for you, babe.”
Stealth Bird sprang to life in a way you never saw a hologram do before. Of course, you thought, this was a Shadow Duel. Keeping your eldritch horror pseudo-Lovecraftian Evilswarm monsters out of this duel was probably a good thing.

Especially when you drew the adorable Des Koala as your next card. However, there was real pain that spread across Seto’s features as Stealth Bird dealt 1,000 points of damage to him. You tried not to pay too much attention to that as you activated its special ability, allowing you to put it face down once more.

Even by trying to counter his strategy, you were no match for someone like Seto Kaiba. Within two turns, he summoned Hieratic Sun dragon Overlord of Heliopolis. Its special ability wiped out your defenses entirely and caused you to take 3,000 points of damage.

Pain ricocheted throughout your body and you could not help but cry out in alarm as if thirty-seven percent of your life energy just left you instead of losing thirty-seven percent of your Life Points. A stream of blood dropped down your mouth and as you raised your head to show Seto what he had done, you saw him using the sleeve of his suit jacket to wipe a similar injury from his mouth.

Seto lowered his head to meet your gaze levelly.

He had felt that.

How he was always able to find you and how he had knew you were hungover last Saturday. Even last night, you were surprised that he seemed to get pleasure from giving it. Initially, you had thought he was just into that. Now it made sense. He could feel what you felt and may have had an internal GPS to you at all times.

Instead of commenting, it was your turn, so you drew. After all, you were not going to tell him that you were on to his secret. Your next draw was Spirit Reaper and you quickly put it face down in defense mode before your arms felt steady enough to talk again. “Looks like the old dog has a bite,” you commented.

Replaying that in your head, you knew you could do better. But witty banter after losing 3,000 Life Points was like being able to do advanced calculus after being shot in your femoral artery or something: that shit was just not going to happen.

For your next two turns, you drew a second Spirit Reaper and Mine Golem, respectively. Seto did not waste time in attacking the Mine Golem and as soon as it was in the graveyard, it inflicted 500 points of damage to his Life Points. Nightmare Wheel then finally, your secret weapon: Dragon Capture Jar were drawn. After placing it, you examined Seto’s field; three Monster cards and two Magic or Trap Cards.

When Seto thought that he was able to attack your Life Points directly, your shit-eating grin made him nearly rethink his attack momentarily before pressing on. That is when you revealed the Dragon Capture Jar.

You were about to reveal your second face-down card when you felt a wrongness about that choice. The Millennium Necklace was warm against your neck.

No…

It activated without you doing anything. Whether you intended to use it or not, it meant that you just broke the rules and cheated during a Shadow Game. Thinking quick, you threw your hand over your deck to surrender the duel. However, it was too late. Just as your hand fell on your deck, your Life Points dropped to zero.
Points dropped to zero.

Maybe you two could talk about this..? Seto was reasonable and was right on the money when he said you did not know what the fuck you were getting yourself into.

“Seto,” you started, your voice pleading for him not to do this. However, that had just made Seto look as drunk on power as you had felt any time you put the Millennium Necklace around your neck.

“Penalty Game.”

A flickering shadow pierced through your chest and all you knew was pain before your vision went black.
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

Re-reading the chapter, Seto seems to keep flip-flopping. In canon, he’s done a lot of crazy shit. (Kick some people out of the plane he hijacked in the manga so they plummet to the ocean and their watery grave, consider suicide if he could not save Mokuba, blow up Alcatraz WITH EVERYONE ON IT! Let’s not forget Death-T! He’s also ripped up a Blue-Eyes White Dragon so he could not be used against him. In DSOD, he does something else preeettty crazy. This man has no chill whatsoever and is the walking, talking definition of ‘Mentally Unstable.’ While he’s mellowed out with age, he still is not the most well-adjusted human being ever. I have an idea of what he’s thinking throughout the chapter, but he’s really conflicted and emotional at the moment. Which leads to him saying and behaving erratically. Hopefully I captured that fairly well. I apologize if I did not. Like I said, this chapter really isn’t the best.

Neither Seto or Reader are mind readers. They may go through life in one way, but are coming off completely different from how they intended. I dunno. I just felt the need to explain so I didn’t look like a total idiot who can’t remember her own story. ^^;;

You had grown up hearing the horrors of trench warfare, but you never expected combat be like this; swords and bayonets were replaced by IEDs and mortars, making war so detached. With the ability to deal death without even looking at the enemy, impersonal too.

You had been trained to know that someone you never saw coming can end you and your squad in a split second. Every time you stepped out of the relative safety of the base, you ears were on constant alert, hoping you did not hear the whistle of an incoming mortar.

Cities were the worst. Chapter IV of the Geneva Convention gave protection to medical personnel carrying out their duties--which is what you were doing--anyone who knowingly fired at a medic with insignia would be committing a war crime.

Yet, these invisible enemies did not know about the Geneva Convention, or simply did not care. Which is why cities were the worst. There was always a shadow that did not appear quite right; the child who looked at you a few seconds too long; the dirt on the road always looked like it may have been disturbed not too long ago; or that robe and the way locals are held their hands looked peculiar. You even paid attention to litter on the street, making sure that it did not look suspicious. Survival meant treating every part of your surrounding like it could become a threat.

In spite of the darkening skies and the wind picking up to indicate the approach of a sandstorm, the streets were lively. Something pulled at you, indicating that there was something wrong. Your squad was traveling in a wedge formation with you as the rifleman towards the front. You glanced over your shoulder at your squad leader and the radio operator. In full battle rattle, expressions were hard to read, but there were no additional hand and arm signals. Your turned your head back around.

Shouldn’t you be in a Humvee? Even with the narrow streets, shouldn’t you be in a Humvee? This was not right. This was not how that day went.

Instead of the world becoming a flash of fire and body parts, there was a low moan from a building.
It was the low guttural gasp that escaped from a person’s throat when their lungs had been punctured.

Your ears strained trying to listen while staring ahead at the Team Leader, waiting for a signal to move out or serve as cover. There was the guttural sound again, this time accompanied by the creak and groan that buildings under strain made seconds before collapsing.

You hoisted the M-4 and disengaged the safety. You cautiously raised the muzzle and poised your finger over the trigger, sweat dotting your brow. Yet, there was nothing in front of you. Quite literally, it was a void. And yet, you could feel eyes on you from every angle.

You could only stare in stupefaction at the black hole of decay in front of you. The ancients held a fear of the darkness. It was a rational impulse, yet it was something modern children were conditioned out of. Now, it was as if the light were forcefully ripped out of everything that came in contact with that void. Fear was the one of the oldest emotions and at that very moment, you could understand how fear of the darkness persisted from generation to generation.

The earth shifted and the only thing that existed in this bubble of darkness were screams of civilians. The streets then became a field of slaughter. Reeling from the sudden vertigo, you stayed low to the ground while the automatic rifleman to your left began to fire. There were orders to fall back. From whom, you did not know, but you were all too quick to listen to that voice of reason.

Forgetting the proper formations, your squad scattered like rabbits. You were all soldiers, trained killers. Yet, all any of you knew at that moment was terror. Others, who were faster outran you and you could see their clothes torn and their flesh ripped open like a second mouth.

Your gear was weighing you down and while there would be hell to pay, throwing down your gear was better than your weapon.

“Did you see that?” a voice in English screamed out. “Did you see---?”

No, all you could think about was the perversion caused from nothingness along with the field of corpses you were retreating from.

There was that same guttural groan from before. Right there and then, you knew that you were going to die. The shadows and madness had a physical manifestation and it was coming to claim you because you played with powers you could not control. Your had brought this blight upon you all and now, each death was the price of your hubris.

As your body was ripped limb from limb, all you could do was scream. Even when you were certain that you were dead, you could not stop screaming as the searing pain was never-ending.

Every fiber of your being ached and your throat felt raw from screaming before your vocal chords were ripped from your larynx. Groaning in pain, your eyes slowly opened. Daylight blinded you. When your vision finally adjusted, you saw that Seto was staring down at you from your position on the floor.

Slowly, your mind became aware of the fact that you could breathe. You began to hyperventilate at the realization that while your chest cavity was no longer torn open, you could remember it happening. Yet, you slowly became cognizant to the fact that you weren’t in pain, your eyes did not hurt, and your throat felt fine. The memories remained and all you wanted to do was get up to flee back into the sunshine that was free from the shadows, far away from those dark memories.
In spite of your conviction, your limbs would not move. You wanted to scream and kick. To warn Seto that he was about to get swallowed by the rot and decay that was all your fault, but your body just would not move!

“You’re fine,” Seto said. You could see the flash of gold, signaling that he was holding his Millennium Item. He then placed it on the couch and with one fluid movement, he picked you up from the floor and with you in his lap, he made himself comfortable on the couch. “Stop with the dramatics.”

You could hear him, but did not listen as your head lolled against his chest. You were not supposed to be alive, Seto wasn’t supposed to be alive because you wielded powers that you were not supposed to.

When you did not respond, Seto sighed and cradled your head against his chest so you could hear the sound of his heartbeat. It felt like an eternity, but the rhythmic sound of Seto’s body being so alive grounded you enough for you to become more aware of reality.

“You’re fine,” Seto repeated. This time, you had enough control of your body to nod weakly against his chest. Seto rewarded you for your efforts by running a hand through your hair. It felt nice knowing that you even had hair and all of your limbs.

“You entered a world where losing a game can send your soul to hell,” Seto began. “It could have been worse for you. Others who have lost Shadow Duels were not so lucky.”

You remembered there were once rumors that circulated, stating Seto had been in a coma for a few months. This prompted an attempt at a hostile takeover. Was that because Seto lost a Dark Game?

By now, what you experienced was like a fading memory from a dream. Yet, you could not help but want to stay in the sunlight and away from any shade.

“You needed to know the consequences for tapping into this power so impetuously. And look at you; I thought you said that you were going to make me cry. Instead, you look like a lost little kitten who got taken to the vet to be declawed.” Seto’s voice was so deep and velvety that it sent tingles down your spine to remind you that you were both here and alive.

Seto continued talking, but his voice became distant, as if he were lost in thought or memory. While he spoke, you began to flex your fingers and move your hand to ensure that you still could. “One of the most valuable lessons my father inadvertently taught me was that a single defeat can bring down an empire.”

There was a silence while you mulled over that thought. In the meantime, Seto traced his hand over the part of your neck where the Millennium Necklace sat. “That was Shadow magic, it is not safe or comfortable and as you just saw, the consequences can be terrifying. I understand all too well that the power the Millennium Items radiates is too tantalizing to deny for too long.”

Seto continued talking while his hand trailed up your neck to trace your jaw. In spite of his ministrations, his gaze was far away, as if he were the one glimpsing into the ancient past. “Even those who have trained for years to use the items have found themselves succumbing to the darkness. Although the Egyptians thought these items were sacred, sacred does not equate to holy or pure. The priests found that prolonged exposure to the darkness had permanent effects on their psyche as it alters them, mind, body, and soul. Yet, the Egyptians believed that light and darkness needed to exist simultaneously and was nothing more than a precarious balancing act.”

Suddenly Seto’s eyes widened like he was abruptly pulled from the thoughts he did not realize he
was voicing out loud. He looked towards the window while he ran a hand through his hair. When he looked back at you, his expression was once more schooled to his usual calm. “Now that we are through with summer reruns, let’s get back to what is important. Since you are so determined to be part of this and as you so eloquently put it, I ‘have no idea what the fuck is going on,’ why don’t you fill me in?”

You moved to get off Seto’s lap, but his arm held you in place. You were not sure why Seto was doing this. Now that you were in full control of your facilities, you were trying to respect his wishes.

However, everything about being with him like this just felt right. Rather than move his arm away, you wrapped your own arms around him and lay your head back on his chest. “What did you want to know?”

His answer was quick as if he were thinking of all this before. He probably was. “What have you seen while wearing the Millennium Necklace?”

You answered honestly and relayed the first and only vision you had. Everything else was more instinctive. You babbled on until you remembered the last part of your vision: the numbers. You quickly relayed that information.

“Ten, three, one,” Seto repeated to himself before he realized what it meant. “October thirty-first.”

Halloween.

Your mind raced over everything you knew about Halloween and how it could be related to ancient Egyptian artifacts when you suddenly blurted out: “Samhain.”

Before Seto requested that you explain yourself, your words spewed out like word vomit. Seto was not an idiot and probably understood the origin of Halloween just fine. Yet, you found yourself explaining it anyway.

“It’s an Irish..or I guess Celtic harvest festival, marking the beginning of the darker half of the year. The Celts believed that Samhain is when the borders between our world and the other world was at its thinnest. They would light bonfires and wear masks n’ shit to ward off the spirits that roamed the earth once more. I also think they believed that the Druids power was at it’s greatest—-”

“The Name,” Seto murmured.

“Pardon?”

“True Names contain a vast amount of power that can be used to control and summon. Now that the Nameless Pharaoh’s name is known, whoever has that and the Millennium Puzzle can control the power of the Shadows and thus, the gods themselves. If you recall the museum, the Nameless Pharaoh used his Name for the spell to seal a calamity. Egyptians knew that names were a power source and could be used as a conduit of magic.”

The gods themselves...Which meant that Seto was implying that the Egyptian pantheon was something more than a long-dead religion. You shifted uncomfortable in his lap. You could accept a lot of what was going on because you witnessed this with your own eyes. However, if you saw a half-man, half falcon, you were going to go home. Everyone had their limits and that was yours.

It was time to change the subject before things got even more weird. Seto was definitely less hot when talking silly like that.
“My turn for a question, you announced. “Why did you want me to go to KaibaCorp today?”

“I was going to have you watch the footage of my Battle City tournament to show you how these items are not to be used so flippantly. However, that no longer seems necessary. Second question: What were you doing with Bakura?”

Was he freaking serious? Seto’s stony expression returned, but his eyes reflected something more.

“He said that I am his favorite person,” you replied slowly just to screw with him. Like he was screwing with you by making you sit in his lap like this…

And saying ancient Egyptian gods were totally legit.

“I don’t like it when something is kept from me,” Seto’s voice was hot against your ear. “Did you ever sleep with him?”

“What? No!”

That daddy thing was not going to help Seto calm down any. So, as you explained Bakura making you duel over and over, his history lessons, and forcing you to train with shadow magic through the Millennium Necklace, you conveniently left that part out.

You also left the part out of watching him try to steal candy from a vending machine. Bakura made you come with him on a walk like some kind of dog and after he recounted how he straight-up tortured and murdered a bitch following a Dark Game, he made a beeline for the vending machine in the park. You had weakly offered to buy him, something, but he ignored you before he insisted on another Shadow Duel. At least you got a Snickers bar out of that weirdness.

“He stays downstairs, I stay upstairs,” you concluded. “If he needed anything while I was upstairs, he knocked and waited for me to open the door.” Which was pretty nice, all things considered.

“Since we’re all quid pro quo here, now it’s my question: Why didn’t you tell me about any of this Shadow magic shit? Or give me a fair warning when you saw I had the Millennium Necklace?”

“I didn’t think I had to,” Seto replied and that was all you were going to get out of him.

“Well, you made it very clear that we’re not part of each other’s lives,” you muttered.

Seto stiffened at hearing you say that.

“Third question,” Seto’s voice was a low growl this time. “Do you really not want a relationship, or do you just not want a relationship with me?”

“I am not good in relationships,” you began.

“And?”

“And that’s it. There’s no and.”

If Seto could give one sentence answers, you could too.

It was time to face reality, you decided. If you continued sitting in his lap, the harder it would be to get back up. With resolve, you stood up and Seto mimicked your actions. Still, you stared up at him defiantly. Seto never took his eyes off of you.

“You said you did not even want to fuck me again. I agreed with you, yet you seem pissed that I’m
going along with. Especially when you’re the one who brought it up in the first place I don’t know what you expect me to do here. Argue? Get sad and cry? Beg for your cock one more time?”

Smoldering eyes considered this question. You took your eyes from him to follow his hand’s movements seconds before his thumb brushed over your bottom lip. The touch was brief and his thumb moved away from your lips and were replaced by the touch of his.

“Yes,” he mumbled into your lips so you could feel the vibrations of each syllable he spoke. “That’s exactly what I want you to do.”

You were momentarily disarmed. You wanted to do just that, but there was the annoying voice of reason, begging you to think rationally. Seto had you on a rollercoaster of highs and lows that was akin to emotional manipulation. Not only that, but he kept contradicting himself. Even if Seto did not know what he wanted, it was unfair to play this game of hot and cold with you while he waited to make a decision.

Regretfully, you took a step away, shaking your head. “You can’t tell someone you don’t want them and change your mind a few hours later.” Your heart ached at pulling away when every fiber of your being wanted to be encased in the comfort and warmth of his body.

Seto’s face drifted close to yours once more, his fingers running up the nape of your neck until it reached the Millennium Necklace. Unclasping it, Seto tossed it behind him on the couch. He then pulled you tightly into him and his breath was hot against your ear. “I think you’re forgetting who I am--” You let out a shaky breath as his hands worked their way up your shirt until they reached and unhooked your bra. “--I am the president and CEO of KaibaCorp--”

Seto’s hands moved about your body hungrily and you could not help but feel yourself grow hot at his touch. “You cannot even begin to fathom the power and influence I have.”

With a sudden movement, your body was flat against the carpet. Seto pinning you down. “That means you do not get to dictate what I can and cannot do.”

One arm caged you to the ground while his other arm pinned your arms to the floor. Seto was a man much stronger than he looked, but you could still fight back. Yet you didn’t. Heat raced through your core when you felt his hips lower and parted your legs so he could press himself against you.

Seto breathed your name as if he was tired of fighting himself much less you. However, there was still a part of you that fought against the urges the bond created and you suspected the fading memories of your Penalty Game had a lot to do with it. You decided that you had to hurt now so you would not feel even more hurt later.

“You’re right,” you agreed running a hand through his hair just to feel it beneath your fingertips one last time. “You’re a man of great power and influence. Whereas you’re legendary, I am painfully ordinary. Without this bond, I would be nothing to you.”

His body flexed and tensed up before his lips seized yours in a kiss that was so rough you could not breathe beneath his weight pinning you to the carpet. “When did I tell you that you meant nothing?” he demanded. “When did I say that I am only attracted to you because of this bond? You’re the one who never noticed me .”

You resisted him, yet somehow, he was able to lure you back in. His words left you too baffled to ask, so Seto continued. “The museum. I was trying to get in touch with Yugi when I saw you leaning against the railing outside of the Field Museum.”
That... That sounded vaguely familiar. Had that been Seto?

“Weren’t you glaring at me?”

“‘What...?’” Seto stared down at you in confusion. “I am not sure what you’re remembering, but after I left a less than flattering voicemail for Yugi, I saw you and thought you were attractive.”

Seto chuckled. “You were wearing jean shorts and I admit, I enjoyed seeing you walk away.”

You were just stunned. Doing your best to recount the events that occurred prior to the explosion, only fragments of memory returned to you. You recalled seeing a guy in a suit and judging him for wearing a suit on Sunday. Or were you remembering incorrectly?

“I am not just anybody. That means not being able to approach others like those of you who are ‘painfully ordinary.’” Seto sure did like to quote you, didn’t he? You said a lot of stupid shit and wished he would stop.

“I was still curious about you. I don’t know how many people I have seen try to use a military discount before a student one.”

“There was a huge price difference,” you said in your defense.

“I am not insulting you for it,” Seto countered. “I was amused and illustrating that I took notice of you before this bond. So I will repeat that without this bond, you’re the one who would not want anything to do with me.”

He sounded so goddamn insulted at that. You did not know how to reply to him. In all honesty, you barely remembered Seto asides from dismissing him as some bougie asshole. At least you think you did?

You could not be certain if he was lying since it was all too convenient. Yet, the possibility that he was attracted to you before this all began was an idea you latched and held on to.

“Well... I’m noticing you now. You’ve successfully pursued me and I have liked it so far. Remind me: what was it that you want from me?”

The dark look returned to his eyes as Seto’s body clamped down on you. His hips grinded against yours, eliciting a noise from you that clearly pleased him. “I want you naked in my bed. I want to feel you dripping wet for me. I want your legs wrapped around my waist while I bury my cock inside you. I want you writhing beneath me while screaming my name as I make you come.”

You could not help but feel a heated shiver at his raw words. You wanted just that as well and could only squirm when his lips claimed your throat in a kiss, leaving marks in his wake. “But most of all, I want you to begging for me,” Seto finished. “Should I continue?”

You glanced over at your bag and went through the lingerie you had brought with you. “Give me fifteen minutes,” you said.

Seto’s eyes flicked from you to the bag. “You have five minutes.”

“Can I negotiate for ten?”

“Eight. Final offer.”

“I will see you in eight minutes,” you declared before heaving your bag from the floor.
“Um...Where’s the bathroom?”

Seto just pointed to the room across from Mokuba’s. “Eight minutes,” he reminded you.

It took you nearly ten minutes to get ready. Mainly because while you were waiting for your straightener to heat up so you could iron out the wrinkles in the silk kimono robe you put on over the lacy babydoll you wore. Also, you had to fix your hair and makeup a little bit while contemplating just how insane these past few days were.

When you returned to Seto’s room, he had taken off his tie, suit jacket, and undid the first few buttons of his shirt. He was laying on his bed, reading something on his phone when he noticed your arrival. “You’re two minutes and fifteen seconds late,” he announced before looking up at you.

When he looked up from the phone, your hands went to the sash on your robe and loosened it, letting it slide off your shoulders to pool on the floor. His eyes traveled appreciatively up and down your body.

Seto slowly set his phone down. “Come here.”

If Seto was going to do whatever necessary to make you beg for him, you were going to have a little bit of fun first. You closed the door and stood at the doorway for a second longer before you began to sauntered over towards him. During undergrad, for funsies, you had taken some pole dancing classes and had learned how to walk towards the pole. Starting with your inside foot, you stepped forward, crossing one leg in front of the other and transferring the weight of your hip as you moved towards him.

Before you could process that Seto rose from his spot on the bed, he had you pinned down against his mattress. With your legs spread apart, Seto was between your thighs. His hand stroked your thigh with one hand while he used the other to prop himself up. His bangs lightly touched your forehead and your eyes met his while Seto studied your expression with a self-satisfied smirk on his face.

You reached up to brush Seto’s bangs out of the way, but your movement was blocked when his larger hands locked around your wrists before slamming them against the headboard. He pinned your wrists and held them there. After your small show, it was clear that he lost whatever patience and control he had. He had said that he was powerful man and now, he was letting you know that he was in charge. Just staring at those hungry eyes of his sent coils of thrill and heat through your body.

“You really pissed me off today,” Seto’s words were the calm before the storm.

“You, you, I--”

“Didn’t meant to to?”

You nodded.

Without warning, he loosened his grip on your wrists and he peeled off the thong panties that came with the babydoll. He stepped away from you long enough to begin removing his remaining clothes. With his divided attention, you could easily sit up to retake control, but just because you could did not mean that you should.

The bed dipped under Seto’s weight. One hand snaked its way up your leg while the other dipped under the low-cut neck of your lingerie. His fingers ghosted over your nipple and all you could do was shiver in anticipation.
“Are you sorry?” Seto stilled and waited for an answer from you. Again, you nodded.

The way his lips twitched told you that was the wrong answer. “No you’re not,” his voice was raw heat. “Not yet.”

His hands glided from your leg to your stomach, and back to your leg before slowly making their way to your clit. A second finger was added while he moved his fingers up and down outside your entrance. Warmth pulsed between your legs and you could not help but writhe underneath his touch.

Seto’s other hand gripped your breast while he sucked on your neck, planting red welts everywhere his lips touched. Still, you kept your arms obediently above your head, clasping your hands together as a grounding exercise to keep yourself from falling apart under this man’s attention.

“Seto…” You breathed, throwing your head against the pillow.

“So responsive,” Seto’s fingers drove into you, eliciting a sharp hiss from you. He pressed harder, causing your back to arch while your hips grinded against his fingers.

You could see the silver of his eyes behind the blue colored contacts as his eyes bore into yours. “You’re so wet,” Seto commented while he continued to create friction at a slower, more deliberate pace. “Are you wet for me?”

If it had been anyone but him, your answer would have been sarcastic. Instead you could only nod your head yet again. “Yes. You.”

“I don’t believe you,” Seto replied, his face moving along your neck and jaw. Hungry kisses against sensitive skin caused you to gasp. You lifted your arms to grab ahold of Seto before you quickly placed them back where they belonged. Luckily for you, he never noticed.

Seto withdrew his fingers before rubbing against your clit once more. His other hand massaged your breast before rolling the nub of your nipple between his fingers.

Mnhhmm...Hah….Seto…” you panted and moaned.

“That’s my name,” Seto purred. Everything he did caused a pulse to flare in your core. No one else had ever made you want to be touched, to be fucked so desperately. “Don’t forget that I want you screaming it.”

Wanting so much more, than what he was giving, you decided to remind him of his words. “You said that you want me screaming your name while you make me come.”

Seto’s voice ripped through the brief silence that passed through you. “Roll over. On your stomach.”

Your arms felt like pins and needles from holding their position for so long, but you managed to comply with his orders. Seto put his hands on your hips and allowed his cock to slide through your folds while his hands gripped your ass, your back, all over. You moved your body to try to lure him, but he would not have it. Instead, Seto moved so he was laying on top of you while trusting against your clit, teasing you just enough to give you pleasure but not satisfaction.

“What do you want?” his words were hot, demanding.

“You. I...ngh...I want only you, Seto.”

With a display of strength that surprised you, Seto wrapped his arms just under your breast and pulled you up. Without warning, Seto shoved inside you with such force that your entire body
lurched forward, but was caught by him. The way he held you made your mind think that this might be something more than just sex.

After the first few thrusts, Seto changed his balance so he could pound into you over and over with enough force that even you noticed the bed squeaking between each of your pants and cries.

“I want to make you come,” Seto groaned as he continuously pounded into you.

“...Seto….So close…..,” you snarled through your clenched teeth while you used your muscles to tilt your pelvis to encourage his cock to his that sweet spot. “Ugh...Seto...So good!” His chest was pressed against your back. He propped himself up on both hands before he drove into you more slowly, deliberately. You were so close.

“Never say another man’s name like you say mine,” Seto growled into your ear, his teeth scraping against the sensitive lobe of your ear. It was enough to send you over the edge. Your body burned while you grinded against him to try to ride out the orgasm.

“No one else...Just you, Seto .”

Hearing his name, Seto lifted his own hips one final time before he pushed deeply into you. He felt his balls against you as his own body spasmed, coming completely unhinged while he breathed out your own name.

Hot liquid filled your core upon each twitch of Seto’s release and you slowly became aware of yourself once more. Seto, still inside of you, pulled you closer to him. Your sweaty skin was too hot, but you did not want to deny yourself this intimacy.

“Goddamn,” you breathed as Seto nuzzled himself against the nape of your neck.

“Indeed,” he replied, ever the high-class bourgeois bastard who was too above post-sex profanity. Arms moved underneath you and you caught the hint that Seto wanted you to turn back over. As soon as you did, you were rewarded with a hot kiss.

“I need more,” he said once your lips parted. “I need to get to work. I am going to book a hotel for us this weekend,” arms coiled around you to move you closer. “Just make no mistake, you are mine.”

You hated to ask but you needed to be sure. “...As in we’re together?”

“Would you prefer it any other way?”

“'No.'
Your post-coital cuddle session lasted until Seto decided that KaibaCorp simply could not last another half hour without him.

Less than twenty minutes later, you were dressed and at security with your laptop and laptop case Seto had loaned you. He exchanged a few quiet words with one of the security officers sitting by the CCTVs before nodding at you and leaving.

After being oh-so generously given your very own KaibaCorp guest badge (with the expiration date set for 12/31 of that year), you were greeted by a suit who introduced himself as Isono. The look he shot you screamed one thing: ‘Jesus Christ, my boss is going through an early midlife crisis.’ In spite of that, Isono was all professionalism as he gave you a quick tour of the building. He led you down a seemingly random hallway before opening a door to a conference room and handing you a business card with instruction on how to connect to the WiFi.

Seto had expected you to do research on the vision you had the first time you wore the Millennium Necklace. You tried to, you honestly did. However, any time you thought of that, you were reminded of the penalty game. Which in turn, brought back the memories of the horror...

Like many highly traumatized individuals, you were the master of avoidance. After attempting to work on some schoolwork, you found yourself reading something on Reddit. That led you to TVTropes and before you knew it, you had six different tabs open.

Productivity was not your strong point. You justified this by telling yourself that after everything that happened, it was okay to relax.

Your overly dramatic sigh was muffled from your hand covering your mouth as it rested on your chin. Your eyes shifted to the bottom right of your screen and wanted to groan at the fact that it was only a little after noon. Seto had said he would be done with work no later than 5 o’clock. Six o’clock at the latest.

Your gaze drifted back to page you were reading on Well-Intended Extremists when you noticed your mouse moving. Sitting up straight, you watched as someone brought up your Start menu.

What the---?!?

You didn’t click on any links you weren’t supposed to!

Whoever was controlling your laptop brought up a new Word document and quickly typed out: I see that you are hard at work.

You had to calm down. A few hours ago, you and Seto had the ‘are we together?’ talk and since you were together, he was your boyfriend. Which meant that you were connected to the WiFi network of your boyfriend’s company. There were only two people who would mess with the computer of the CEO’s new girlfriend.

Initially, you wanted to accuse Mokuba, but decided to err on the side of caution. You hit the Enter button before you replied: Seto…?

The reply was almost instantaneous. Yes.

It had to be the fact you were connected to the WiFi network from the business card. You knew you
should have set your phone up as hotspot. You hoped Seto did not look at your browsing history. You really hoped he did not have any intention of looking at your browsing history.

In any case, taking over your laptop to chide you on not working was a huge invasion of privacy. Using your hand to cover your webcam, you closed your eyes and once again sighed while you thought this one through.

Eventually, you were going to have to talk to him about boundaries. For now, you were going to let this go.

Hopefully he could sense your unease at this and wished you knew how to amplify those emotions through the bond. However, he was waiting for a reply and you were going to try to keep things lighthearted.

*I am working very hard, thank you for asking~ =)*

<3

You were about to type another text heart when Seto hit Enter and erased the smiley and heart. “Somebody’s grumpy,” you muttered.

*There are a lot of people who would appreciate it if you could take things a little more seriously.*

You had some crazy ass vision that may have been connected to a world-class duelist’s disappearance. However, in all out honesty, that was not your problem.

Instead of replying and looking like a bitch, you went back to your Internet browser. To show good faith, exited out of your frivolous tabs and opened a new one. Typing ‘apology cat’ into the search bar, you hit Enter.

The first result was a picture of a sad looking cat with the text ‘I’m sorry - Please forgive me.’ You double-clicked on that one to enlarge it.

Seto pasted a link that led to a picture of Sean Bean with the caption ‘One does not simply apologize with a cat meme.’

Holy shit!

This was huge.

Seto freakin’ Kaiba not only had a slight sense of humor, but also knew how to use memes correctly. “Be still, my beating heart,” you murmured out loud before going back to the Word document. You were now too impressed to keep being annoyed at him taking over your computer like this.

*Then how should I apologize? ~.^*

Seto began to type something before he deleted the text. *I booked a hotel for us this weekend. You’re a smart girl, I am sure that you can think of a way to make things right with me.*

Yes, sir, you replied without realizing that Seto was still typing. He deleted his text and the blinking cursor indicated that he was waiting for you to continue. *Or should I call you something else…?*

*I will have to think this one through. In the meantime, you can get back to work. Mokuba and I will be working through the lunch hour. If you get hungry, let me know. I still have your debit card.*
That’s right, Seto had snatched your debit card yesterday when you were out.

Wow...That had only been yesterday?

The rest of the conversation consisted of you two finally exchanging cell phone numbers and email addresses before Seto let you know that he would be disconnecting from your computer.

About thirty seconds after typing that, Word came up once more. Mokuba wanted me to tell you to accept his friend request on Facebook. I am going back to work. For real this time.

Seto had closed out of the Word document and you were left staring at Seto’s ‘One Does not Simply’ meme. The pressure to think about the Millennium Necklace was on and you needed a different way to think about its power. Otherwise thinking would just...not be good.

You re-read what Seto had wrote about the hotel for the weekend. In all out honesty, you were a little raw from last night and this morning. Yet the thought of having him to yourself for an entire weekend…

You looked down at your hands that were beginning to shake. “I feel like a freakin’ junkie looking for a fix,” you muttered to yourself. After getting a taste of Seto, you only wanted more and each time you thought of him, the worse the craving became. What was happening to you?

To avoid thinking about the growing heat between your thighs, you steepled your hands and took a deep breath. Right now, you needed to concentrate. You almost felt like the only thing that would help you focus at this point was an Adderall or something.

Adderall…

One of your friends had once given you one of her Adderall. She lived out of state and you had visited her once in her hometown. You remembered walking with her over a bridge that overlooked a cityscape…

The same cityscape from your vision.

Memory may have been a fickle bitch, but you began to search the Internet with a renewed enthusiasm. It took nearly an hour before you were looking at the same bridge you had seen in your vision.

Did someone really abduct Yugi and bring him to Milwaukee?!

That was so...random. And yet, there was no possible way it was completely random.

Without thinking, you moved towards the laptop case where you placed the Millennium Necklace. When your brain caught up with what you were doing, your hand recoiled away from the zipper. You had already proven incapable of handling that kind of power.

Instead, you turned your attention back to your laptop screen and opened up a new tab. There had to be some reason you had a vision of this city and that specific location. Targeting the Field Museum for the Millennium Items was almost reasonable and if there was going to be an event on Halloween, it may have been unavoidable. However, you mused, wouldn’t it have made more sense to target the artifacts when they were traveling to Chicago? Or when the museum was closed? Less people would have been killed…

Someone had to have profited from it. Perhaps trying to see what organizations had ties to both Milwaukee and Chicago was pointless, but it served as a distraction. You had briefly got up and
wandered somewhere you had spotted a water cooler during your brief tour. There was a pot of old crappy coffee by it and since you were already there, you poured yourself some water and got some coffee before returning to the conference room. You felt that if you went to see Seto to get your debit card, you would lose this newly acquired focus.

You were in the middle of reading up on the Chicago and North Western railway system when you felt someone looming over you to read over your shoulder. Your first instinct was to close your laptop screen only to realize it was just Seto.

“I see I startled you,” Seto said while his eyes scanned the current page you were reading. He then took a seat next to you. Without asking, he slid your laptop in front of him and started looking at the tabs you had open before reading the notes you had jotted down.

You briefly raised an eyebrow at the phrasing, but Seto either ignored you or didn’t notice. Seto definitely was not one for apologizing, that was for sure.

While you waited for your laptop back, you took out your phone and was surprised at how late it had gotten. It was already a little after 5 o’clock. Though true to his word, Seto had finished the day before six. You kept yourself occupied by finally accepting Mokuba’s friend request (oops), viewing the pictures friends sent you via Snapchat, and looking through your own email.

Eventually, Seto spoke up, “Interesting theory,” he said. “How certain are you?”

“I’ve been there before,” you answered. “It all adds up, the view, the Historic Third Ward bridge, and even the frozen yogurt shop.” You couldn’t forget about the froyo.

“Hrm,” was Seto’s reply before he closed your laptop. “We can discuss this later. I take it you have not had anything since breakfast?”

“Coffee,” you replied. “I had coffee.”

“Are you ready to go?” he asked as his way of acknowledgement.

“Yeah”, you reply while packing up your stuff. You follow Seto to the parking garage. He seemed lost in his own thoughts and brushed by employees looking eager to chat up their boss. You decided to just let him be until you were in his car and saw that instead of driving back to his place, you were heading in the direction of the Gold Coast.

“Um…” You began, trying to say this as nicely as possible since Seto seemed like the type who got serious road rage and you were now in the middle of rush hour, after all. “Shouldn’t we go back to your place first? I still have all my stuff there. And you might want a change of clothes...?”

“Don’t worry about it,” Seto replied without taking his eyes from the slow moving traffic. In the setting sunlight, you could see how his brows knit together, making his faint wrinkles look more prominent. “I took care of everything.”

Normally, you would have a difficult time believing that. However, Seto had managed to shut down a large portion of the Tokyo metropolitan area for a Duel Monsters tournament when he was only sixteen. You had no trouble believing that you would have at least one change of clothes waiting for you at the hotel.

Seto’s grip on the steering wheel kept loosening and tightening. By the time you heard his window roll down, you could see that he was clearly pissed off by traffic. “I need a cigarette,” he explained when he caught sight of your curious glance.
Seto already had his cigarette and lighter in hand, so he was unable to see your shrug. Regardless of what you thought about smoking, you were in Seto’s car. His car, his rules.

After a few puffs, he seemed to visible relax. “In all honesty,” Seto began between drags. His gaze shifted towards you to watch your expression. “I’m not too sure why you were worried about clothing, it’s not like I will let you wear much clothing this weekend.”

That was pretty bad. Almost as bad as whenever a guy said, ‘That’s a nice shirt, but it will look better on the floor.’

“Are you sure about that?” you countered. “Because I was kind of hoping to wear a lot of leather and have you on all fours, calling me Master.”

Seto briefly coughed and tossed the remaining cigarette out the window. “I think that is enough of that,” he said while rolling the window up.

You ruffled his proverbial feather. Eager for more, you decided to continue.

“I guess you’re the type who likes to be called daddy,” you said without thinking. As soon as those words left your mouth, you mentally slapping yourself. At least Seto did not actually know about Bakura’s idiosyncrasies.

“What happened to calling me Sir?” Seto asked.

“I’m just throwing ideas out there, seeing if anything sticks.”

“For now, I would prefer you to just call me Seto.”

The way he said that just…

You were not expecting that tone and how genuinely sweet he just sounded. You had to look out the window to avoid him seeing how flustered you were. Still, you could not help but feel yourself smile, feeling silly and girly.
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

I wanted to post this last night, but the Packers beat the Cowboys and...holy crap! That
game, you gaiz. That game...

So to celebrate the Packers winning and being the true Kings in the North, have an extra
long chapter! I even took out a lot of the wtf? what is happening? y u do dis :_;
moments and tried to write a little fluff.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

That feeling of butterflies in your stomach only intensified when you caught the name of the hotel
Seto was slowing down at. He seriously made last-minute reservations at the Waldorf Astoria?! You
were not expecting Seto to take you to a sleazy motel. Yet, you were not expecting a 5-star hotel.

Seto handed his keys to the valet and walked into the lobby like he was walking into the front too of
his own home. Then again, you had to keep reminding yourself that this was the president and CEO
of a multibillion dollar conglomerate. This was quite normal for him.

And here you were, some pleb, who was only with him since you had been at the wrong place at the
wrong time.

You knew you looked completely out of place and decided it may be best if Seto could pretend that
he was not with the bug-eyed weirdo eyeballing everything in the lobby with sheer fascination.
Honestly, were the statues lining the walls even real stone? Or were they plastic?

You glanced to your right and left before touching one.

They were real. Holy crap!

What were you even doing here?! You were almost pretty sure that your proletariat ass didn’t belong
here…

You pulled yourself from the shock and awe just in time to see Seto turning from the front desk to
look at you. Seto looked so refined and at ease. Even at his age, he was handsome enough to be a
model. You could not help but hope that the two individuals at the front desk did not think you were
some sugar baby or prostitute. Your make up had faded hours ago and compared to everyone else in
the lobby, you felt absolutely shabby in your Nordstrom outfit that you purchased for ‘professional
settings.’

Yet, Seto was waiting for you to follow him and to avoid embarrassing him, you quickly closed the
distance between the two of you. Seto looked like he wanted to say something, but decided against it
and handed you a key card.

He held his silence until you are both on the elevator and the doors close behind you. “You’re
feeling insecure. Stop it.”

You really needed to figure out a way to block him from feeling your emotions; it was kind of unfair
that he had a built-in GPS to you and was able to sense what you were feeling.
But he had a point: you needed to cut this out before you ruined this for yourself. Seto would not take you out in public if he was embarrassed to be seen with you or thought you were unworthy of staying somewhere so expensive.

It just wasn’t easy to avoid thinking that way.

“This is just new to me, you admitted.

You felt Seto’s hand under your chin, directing you to look at him. “Then you should start getting used to it,” he said softly yet firmly.

The sound of the elevator doors opening made Seto back up a respectable distance while two women boarded the elevator. Two floors later, you both disembarked the elevator where you were led down the hallway before coming to a stop by the door to your room.

You followed Seto into the room where you were quick to spot your bag set neatly on a chaise. Based upon the fact that the rest of your shoes were lined up neatly, you guessed that Seto arranged for someone to get your belongings from his condo and bring them here. Honestly, part of you felt slightly embarrassed about the fact that your personal belongings such as your undergarments and lingerie had been touched, but you doubted any staff member paid your items a second glance.

You initially assumed Seto would have just booked a regular hotel room and really should have known better. If Seto Kaiba was going to have a sexcapade-filled weekend, he was going to have it in a goddamned luxury suite.

Familiarizing yourself with the general layout of the suite, you headed into the bedroom. A quick investigation of the dresser drawers confirmed your suspicion about your clothes being put away. Someone had even ironed everything before folding each item neatly away. Shit, you thought, could someone come over and do this for the rest of my clothes?

From behind you, Seto watched your antics with amusement. “I did tell you that I took care of it.”

“You did”, you agreed. “Thank you.”

Glancing over at him, Seto had already took off his suit jacket and tie. He was in the process of unbuttoning the first few buttons of his shirt when he noticed that you were watching him.

“Don’t mind me. Continue,” you said, folding your arms, prepared to enjoy the show.

Seto looked over at the analogue clock next to the bed before he busied himself with setting out new clothes. “Later,” he said. “We have dinner reservations downstairs at seven.”

Your gaze shifted from Seto to the clock to see that it was only 6:28pm. While that left plenty of time for...activities, the idea of a quick shower, washing your face, reapplying makeup and deodorant was extremely appealing.

By the time you located the cocktail dress you had packed, Seto was already closing the door to the master bathroom. A few moments later, he emerged from the bathroom, looking slightly annoyed. “All of your cosmetics were placed in there,” he grumbled as a way of explanation.

“You asked someone to do that?” your voice was saccharine because you knew damn well that Seto had not made that request. “You’re such a gentleman~!”
He seriously was going to have taken the nicer bathroom for himself? It was not that big of a deal, but really? Most of the guys you dated would have let you have that bathroom with no questions asked. However, as you made your way into the room, you could see why Seto would have wanted to have it to himself; the bathtub was large enough that it should rightfully be called a hot tub.

Looking from the bathtub, you surveyed the rest of the room and did a double-take at the sight of a television that was built into the bathroom mirror. Honestly, you would have preferred to soak in the tub with Seto while watching something on that TV. Maybe order room service…

At the sight of your reflection, you realized that this was no time to be daydreaming. You only had a half hour to look hot, so you grabbed a towel and practically dashed inside the walk-in shower.

You were just putting the finishing touches on your makeup when you heard Seto call your name and open the bathroom door just enough to ask if you were ready yet.

“Yeah,” you responded as you turned off your straightener and did a final mirror inspection before nodding in satisfaction.

When you stepped out of the bathroom, Seto was leaning against the door frame to the bedroom with his arms crossed in front of him. He had changed out of his suit and was now wearing a black turtleneck with a dark pair of pants. To offset the dark color scheme, he wore a longer white blazer. You noted with slight amusement that the blazer had the KaibaCorp logo on it.

Briefly, you wondered where you could get clothes with the KC logo on it. Or would you have to custom order it?

Seto turned his head towards. His gaze was unwavering as you made your way towards him. His eyes roamed over each curve of your body. Slowly, the edges of his mouth curve in a satisfactory smirk.

As quickly as that look appeared, his mouth once more became an indifferent line, revealing nothing. Seto turned from you and made his way to the door. You could not help but notice how his body momentarily tensed, as if he regretted not taking you up on the offer earlier.

The restaurant was on the second floor and you were surprised to hear that Seto used his full name for the reservation. Then again, considering his penchant for wearing apparel with his company’s logo on it, you should not be that surprised. Part of you expected the hostess to fawn over Seto. Instead, she grabbed two menus and led her over to your table.

Did she not know this man was rich and powerful enough to hemorrhage money? Or did she simply not care? You pondered of how many celebrities might actually come here before you looked down at the menu.

As soon as you did, you wanted to sigh at the menu options, or lack thereof. You and Seto did not have that talk yet, so he didn’t know…

“I’m paying, right?” you quipped as a way to mask your disappointment before Seto could comment on it.

Seto just snorted in reply.

“Do you like foie gras?” Seto asked while he was still looking at the menu.

You had no idea what that was, but you were pretty sure that you were going to hate it.
It was now or never...

You slowly put the menu down and rubbed your hands together before steepling your fingers. Seto looked up from his menu to stare at you with a slight eyebrow raised.

“I’m a...vegetarian,” you tell him in the same tone you would use if you were confessing a dark secret.

And the entire menu was full of mushrooms or meat. Mushrooms were too disgusting for human consumption.

Seto’s expression was a mix of incredulity and something that conveyed Was that all? He returned his attention to the menu. “So I take it you do not like foie gras,” he murmured. “Do you eat...oysters?”

“No.”

“Mushrooms?”

You knew that you made a face at the mere mention of that horrid fungus. You were sure he could sense your disgust through the bond.

Seto was beginning to sound annoyed. “So what are you going to have for dinner?”

“Liquor and dessert,” you replied simply but honestly.

Based upon his expression, you could tell that he was not amused by your answer nor did he find it as cheeky and adorable as you did. Thinking quick, you continued to talk. “Just kidding.” you lied. “I was going to get a salad.”

You really just wanted liquor and dessert…

Before you could make an ass out of yourself (as if you already haven’t), the waiter mercifully appeared and began to talk about the wine selection. Seto motioned for him to just skip past that. He then placed his drink order before you were able to place your own.

“Not a big wine drinker?” you asked once the waiter left.

Seto took a long gulp from his water before answering. “I just don’t think men should be drinking wine.”

For some reason, his assertion sounded like a whole lot of displaced anger. Instead of making a comment about gender roles and stereotypes, you tactfully decided to drink some of your own water while you processed that information.

By the time the waiter returned with your drinks and was ready to take your order, you were surprised to find that you and Seto were talking. Actually talking and getting to know one another.

When you were on your second drink, a thought occurred to you: if Seto was able to sense your emotions, would it be possible to manipulate them? You tested this by making sure that you felt a strong sense of approval towards the topic of conversation, specifically what you had to say. You supposed this was easy because it went without saying that you approved of your own thoughts and opinions.

Honestly, without a proper experimental design, you had no idea if this was working. However, Seto
seemed to hold eye contact with you longer and inquire further about you than you would have thought him capable of. While he seemed to be into you, it could easily be a confirmation bias. Or it could be the alcohol.

Maybe if you had some cheesecake with your liquor instead of this lame ass salad...

You had to admit though, the croutons were on point. You had even considered asking the waiter for the brand so you could buy boxes of them.

Overall, your little experiment made you feel far more affectionate towards Seto that went beyond constantly feeling the need to crawl into his lap. (Though you still very much wanted to drag him back upstairs). As your own affection for the man grew, you wanted to send it his way, but tenfold. Perhaps it was the alcohol sans delicious dessert, but you did not think twice about knowingly attempting to influence Seto’s emotions.

Especially since Seto had used the bond to show up at the cafe you were patronizing, then again Starbucks, and your own home. Morals were for people who had normal lives, not for people like you, who had so little time to process so much.

*But it doesn’t make it real*, the nagging voice at the back of your head protested. That voice was quickly silenced with the drunken feeling of power each time Seto looked up at you or moved his leg to rub against yours. Each touch of his was as electrifying as it was the first time he kissed you. It made you feel such a strong desire to be more than just lusted after by this powerful man.

You could not help but wonder how many people had fantasized about this man being so close to them? How many would cite Seto Kaiba has the reason for their sexual awakening? And right now, he was yours.

After Seto asked for the check, he waited until the waiter left their table before you felt his hand take yours. “I think,” he said, his thumb tracing circular patterns into your hand. “I think we had too much to drink.”

“Oh, You gave his hand a squeeze before he withdrew it just before the waiter returned. Seto was like a PDA ninja; he was quick and subtle enough with his affection to not be noticed by anyone else.

Seto did not even bother looking at the check, he just handed his card over to the waiter, who took it without question. “You should probably drink some water,” he suggested.

It was not until you ordered your second drink did you remember that anything you drank, Seto felt. Honestly, it was part of what inspired this experiment of yours. You had sipped at your second drink and declined a third. However, you had pretty bad about actually drinking your water throughout the night.

You were definitely more than a little tipsy. Even if you had not had anything to eat since breakfast, having a salad for dinner did not help you stay sober like say...dessert would have. So drinking water was definitely a good idea.

“Race to see who finishes their water first?” you asked as you reached for your glass.

“Maybe later,” Seto said in a way that you knew there would be no later. “I’m more curious to see how well you chug.”

“Trying to gauge...something else?” you asked quietly, especially since the waiter was approaching
the table with Seto's card and the receipt.

Seto placed his card back in his wallet. Without a word, he slid your debit card across the table.

"I missed you so much," you told your debit card before digging through your purse to find your wallet. "Don't worry though I'll make it up to you."

Seto did his best to ignore your dramatics while he did the mental math and filled out the receipt. Since your debit card was where it belonged, you did your best to down the water. You were definitely going to need to visit the restroom before you got back upstairs. Pausing any intimate moment to run to the bathroom was just...not sexy.

“I’ll be right back,” you announced, standing up. Seto still had the rest of his third drink to finish off.

Once you were finished in the bathroom, you went to wash your hands and touch up your hair and makeup. Feeling your phone vibrate, you grabbed your phone. It was a text message from Seto, commending you for finishing your water. He then instructed you to wait for him by the elevators.

Seto must have thought you would take forever in the bathroom or would be extremely quick since as soon as you exited, you saw him opening the door to the men’s room.

“Hey, you’re kinda cute,” you greeted playfully.

Seto just shook his head at your reply before the two of you walked to the elevator.

Seto pressed the button to your floor before he stood so close to you that you were practically shoulder-to-shoulder. You both were staring forward so you could only see your blurred reflection in elevator doors when you felt Seto’s warm hand along your thigh.

Was he seriously...?

You could only watch his ministrations through the reflection and just as his hand reached the hem of your dress he moved to squeeze your ass before primly placing his hands behind his back as if they were there the entire time.

"Tease," you accused.

You were now emboldened, but needed to wait for the opportune moment to make it count. Just as the elevator button signaled that you were on your floor, you motioned for Seto to walk ahead of you. The moment he was in front of you, you reached out your arm and quickly smacked Seto’s ass. Enjoying the sound your hand made upon impact, you looked up at Seto before fixing him with a devilish look and sashayed out of the elevator. If Seto really liked your ass that much, you could at least give him a little show.

Since you were the first to reach the room, you dug the key card from your purse. You looked down at the card for a moment before inserting it in the key slot. The door clicked open and you held it open for Seto before crossing through the threshold. You expected Seto to push you against the wall as soon as the door closed behind him. However, he just went to the bathroom he got ready in.

Was he okay...?

Seto did not bother closing the door behind him. You moved to close the door, but decided against it when you saw that he was only taking his colored contacts out.

You decided that watching him was a bit weird, so you made your way towards the couch and sat
down. You leaned backwards and closed your eyes, just enjoying the pleasurable warmth of the alcohol.

Suddenly the weight of the couch shifted. You opened your eyes just a little and leaned against Seto while he ran his fingers along your arms and shoulders. You shifted your own weight and scooted closer to Seto then rested your head against his shoulder. You had only been intimate for a short while, but already, the scent of his cologne and body wash was familiar to you, comforting. You let out a sound of contentment.

“You’re like a cat,” Seto commented.

“Because I’m fun to piss off,” you replied, remembering his words from earlier that day.

You opened your eyes as Seto began to run his long fingers through your hair. It was almost unfair how his fingers were so elegant, long, and skillful.

“No,” Seto said, kissing your jawline. After tucking your hair behind your ear, he lowered the hand he was touching you with until it rested on your thigh. Leaning closer, you felt his teeth graze your earlobe. The sensation caused you to inhale deeply as Seto spoke his next words, “You make the cutest noises...I just love hearing your purr.”

You adjusted your position only slightly so you could slip a finger from under Seto’s chin and ran your thumb on the bottom of Seto’s lip. As soon as the digit reached the middle of his lips, Seto planted a butterfly kiss on your thumb.

This was the first time he was so gentle with you. Either he really was drunk or you has been successful in being able to control your end of the bond. Either way you wanted more of this intimacy from him.

You moved your hands around Seto’s neck before leaning in and indulging yourself. He tasted of mouthwash and whiskey. Kissing him like this felt like coming home. His lips moulded into yours and slowly grew desperate, with his tongue sliding between your lips. As you melted into his body, you could not help but moan.

“I think,” Seto began between kisses. “We should take this to the bedroom.”

Seto moved off of you so he could stand up. You quickly mirrored him and instead of him moving to the bedroom, Seto leaned down and pressed his lips against yours. Arms wrapped around your waist as he lifted you easily off the ground. His hands them moved to cup your ass. You were unsure of how you reacted to it, but Seto only chuckled as you wrapped your legs around his waist and he kissed you once more.

Carrying you to the bedroom, Seto’s placed you down on the bed before moving on top of you to continue the kiss. Seto’s hands traveled up your thighs until they gripped your panties. You breathed against his neck as you felt the sudden temperature change as he slid them down your legs. His hands stopped midway before they returned between your legs to stroke the skin there.

“Seto,” you breathed, gripping his middle. You kicked off your panties and arched your back just enough to reach behind you to undo your zipper.

Seto easily peeled the fabric away from your skin. Nonetheless, you assisted him in taking the dress off and once the material hit the floor, you felt his hands move to unclasp your bra just as he rolled on top of you.
Your fingers moved into the contours of his back while his hips ground into yours. When you began to move your own hips into his, Seto groaned deliciously before his lips trailed from your jaw to your breast.

Remembering what you had done in the restaurant, you continued to use the bond to your advantage to make him want you as much, if not more, than you wanted him at that moment.

A heavy sigh escaped from his lips and you pleasantly noted that his breathing was becoming heavier. His jaw and teeth were clenched as if he were trying to control himself. Yet, you both continue to grind against one another in the same slow pace.

As if he could not take it anymore, Seto moved away from you. Initially alarmed, you could only move further back in the bed and were able to finally watch him strip. Of course, he put on no show for you since his hands hastily removed his blazer and turtleneck before going to his belt buckle.

Suddenly overcome with inspiration, you moved to stop his hand. “Let me,” you replied before you undid his belt. As you undid the buttons of his pants, Seto worked on his zipper. You both slid off his pants and boxers. Your hands immediately move to his cock. You looked up at him briefly to see his hooded eyes staring down at you. That was all the permission you needed before your fingers moved up and down his length.

Your hand moved to gently coax the remaining foreskin back before you leaned towards him. Your tongue flicked over the head of his cock. You opened your mouth and felt Seto stopping you just before you were able to put your lips around him.

“As much as I would love for you to suck me off, I have something else in mind,” he said before his lips descended upon yours in a ravenous kiss. Your body was lowered to the mattress without breaking contact from you. His kiss and touch were commanding you to look at him, touch him, and be his and only his.

What did you do to him…?

Soon, he was planting kisses all over your body while feeling each couture of your form as if he was trying to memorize you.

“Tell me what you want,” Seto breathed into your ear. His fingers traced around your thighs before moving to rub at your clit. Your hips jerked against his hand and you wanted to just swat them away and replace his hands with his cock. But he was waiting for an answer.

With how Seto looked down at you, there was zero doubt in your mind that he would build an elevator to space if you requested it. However, you wanted him and all of him.

“I want you, Seto,” you replied before looking up at him. With your natural eye color, you had the puppy dog eyes down to a science. Now, you hoped you still were able to pull it off. “I want you fucking me right now.”

You hear him mutter a curse before you felt him enter you with a shallow thrust. “You’re so fucking tight,” he groaned against your neck before sucking on your pulse to keep the sounds of his own pleasure at bay.

You really had done something to him and there was a mix of excitement and guilt when you realized you were unsure if this was something that you could undo.

You wrap your arms around him and bury your face in the crook of his own neck as you both trust
into each other, your pace long and slow. Between the sounds of your own cries of pleasure, you ran your hands along his body, hoping to make him feel as good as he was making you feel at that moment.

He groaned out your name and you could tell that he was getting close to his release by how much slower and deeper his thrusts were becoming. You moved to grip his ass to encourage the slow deep thrusts that were making you reach your own edge.

“Don’t stop,” you begged.

Hearing Seto curse out your name once more was what finally caused your head to fall back against the mattress. A soft moan escaped your lips when you finally came undone, your muscles spasming around Seto’s cock, sending your brain into a rapturous fog.

To prolong your orgasm, Seto continued those long thrusts until his body slumped against yours. With one final grunt, you felt him cumming inside of you.

Seto’s lips met yours in a final languid kiss. His arms wrapped around you to pull him closer to him as your mouths explored one another’s. When the kiss ended, Seto continued to lock lips with you, each kiss shorter until he finally gave you a final peck and gently pulled out of you.

Clean up time.

You both went into the en suite bathroom and Seto just grabbed some toilet paper before giving you some privacy to clean yourself up. You were thankful for the gesture since gravity was already taking its course.

By the time you exited the bathroom, you saw that Seto had already pulled off the duvet so no one would have to deal with the wet spot. As soon as he saw that you were exiting the en suite, he clicked off the last light on in the room.

Darkness....

Immediately, terror seized you. The shadows held that primordial fear, warning all away for it was the void that would pull you in and devour you until there was nothing left.

Sensing your panicked response, Seto quickly turned the light back on and stared at you in confusion. You had slept just fine the night before...

His facial expression changed when he realized how badly he fucked up.

Chapter End Notes

*evil cackle* At least I wasn't as evil as I was originally going to be though...?

On an unrelated note, does anyone else play Duel Links? Am I the only one who keeps getting the worst cards in the shop?
Hurray, an update right before Valentine's Day!
(I know I am pretty bad since I post whenever)
To celebrate this, here's a chapter with the bae!
(Yes, I do think my rhymes are extremely clever)

I have had bronchitis for almost two weeks at this point and most of the chapter was written from my phone while debating on whether or not I should rip my own respiratory system out to stop the coughing since ain't nobody for time for bronchitis. Since I do not have a beta, I usually read the chapters out loud as a way to proofread. That was not exactly possible with this chapter. Apologies if there’s more typos than normal.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Seto waited until he heard your breathing become slower and deeper before he was convinced you were asleep. Slowly, he crept out of bed. With the light from the lamp in the bedroom, the main room of the suite was illuminated enough for him to navigate the room without any additional light.

Spotting his briefcase, Seto grabbed it and set it on the counter of the kitchenette and opened it. His hand paused momentarily before he reluctantly retrieved the Millennium Rod. Staring down at the object that belonged to him in a life he could barely remember, Seto could not help but feel contempt building up inside of him like a pressure cooker.

He had made it clear long ago that he wanted nothing to do with the Millennium Items. No matter how much he fought the pull of what these artifacts deemed his “destiny,” he would always get sucked back in. Seto would have traveled across the globe several times to locate Malik Ishtar and give the Rod back to him if Seto had not been certain that the moment he returned home, the Millennium Rod would be there, waiting for him.

So Seto went about playing the game and was only met with more frustration.

Seto had two Penalty Games inflicted upon him. Following the first one, he was filled with enough fury to construct Death-T. The humiliation he felt after losing juxtaposed with the rage that had been a near constant since his biological father’s death was like oil and fire. He exploded. The second Penalty Game had more or less allowed Seto to engage in some self-reflection.

You were different.

Your reaction was abnormal. From everything he learned, the Penalty Games were not supposed to break a person’s spirit like that.

So why…?

Seto could not help but blame the Millennium Rod. Had this happened with the Puzzle, had he imposed the Penalty Game…
It would have been different, he was sure of it.

Seto had thought he fixed the problem when he pulled you out of the Penalty Game. What had he done wrong?

Or was he just that incompetent?

Long fingers tightly gripped the artifact as Seto fought to keep his anger in check.

He needed to do this now. Seto could not risk you waking up to see him holding the Millennium Rod. You could not know about this.

Seto stood in the doorway to the bedroom and watched you sleep momentarily. Guilt was not an emotion he was accustomed to. The emotion was reserved for a very select few events in his life since his life had not allowed him the luxury to dwell on such sentiments.

What he was doing… It was akin to what Malik had done to turn his Battle City tournament into the man’s personal playground to carry out a grudge. It left a bad taste in his mouth.

Yet...

Seto needed you strong. Weaknesses like the one displayed earlier was an unnecessary complication that Seto sought to avoid--especially because it meant that your weaknesses may become his.

If this did not work, he could hate himself for it later. If it did, then the ends justified the means.

With a strong set to his jaw, Seto held up the Millennium Rod and implanted his will into your unconscious mind. For a moment, your body went stiff and jerked while your own will fought against his magic.

Within moments, your body settled before you woke up long enough to pull the blankets back over you. By that time, Seto was already placing the Millennium item back into his briefcase before returning to bed.

Despite appearances, Kaiba Seto was not a morning person. His mind was awake and going through the litany of tasks he needed to accomplish, his eyelids felt too heavy for him to open. Seto could easily fall back asleep, but the gnawing of responsibility was enough to send a surge of adrenaline through his system, prompting him to finally open his eyes to start the day.

As he was getting out of bed, careful not to wake you, he heard your bleary voice mutter into the pillow, “I’m never drinking again.”

You had both been more than pleasantly buzzed last night, but you seemed to sober up rather quickly once you two became intimate. The fact that was the first word out of your mouth and not anything about the Penalty Game or the Millennium Rod made Seto assume that this time, he got it right.

Good.

“You’re probably just dehydrated,” Seto replied. He debated opening the curtain but decided that he did not need to unnecessarily torture himself on the weekend. “You should have drank more water.”

“I didn’t see you drink any water,” you protested blearily.

*Gaslighting to cover up your fuck up. Grow a pair.* A voice that sounded suspiciously like Gozaburo
snapped at him. Seto turned his attention to the room service menu.

He heard you shifting in bed before you decided it was too much effort to move and plopped back down on the pillow in a comically morose fashion.

The room had complimentary coffee. It may come as a complete shock to many people, but Seto knew how to brew coffee. However, it did not mean that he felt like doing it. Not when he could have it brought to him.

“Let me know if you want anything from here,” he said before handing you the room service menu. His hand ran down your back, feeling the vertebrae of your spine through the fabric of your pajamas. He then cupped your ass before giving it a playful squeeze while you perused the menu.

“Fourteen dollars for fucking cantaloupe,” you gripped, sounding more alert than you had a few moments ago. A good sign.

“Sounds reasonable,” Seto quipped.

“Quiet back there,” you shot back while continuing to express shock over the prices.

Regardless of the compulsion drawing you two together, it would have been easy for you to take advantage of the unique situation you had found yourself in. Seto had been with partners who were with him for his money and influence. He had also been with partners who sought to prove they were not gold-diggers. They each had who he was in the back of their mind.

It was like you saw him as a man before you saw his title.

He was becoming increasingly aware of how he was beginning to get an erection. With his hands on your body, it was not helping the increasing stiffness in his boxers.

Fuck…

Seto wanted to, but he was already feeling sore last night. Maybe in a few hours...

“Have you decided what you wanted?” he asked once he moved away from you.

You handed the menu back to him with your order.

Once Seto phoned in the order, he went to take a shower and get ready to start the day. By the time he was finished in the bathroom, breakfast had been delivered. Just the smell of coffee made Seto feel more awake.

Overall, the morning was relatively quiet until the sound of an air raid siren filled the room.

“Holy fuck!” Seto heard you swear just as he reached for the phone to check the caller ID before taking the call.

“This is Kaiba,” he said into the receiver and watched as you got up from your seat to go to the bedroom. He carried on the conversation while putting his Bluetooth in his ear and moving to open a few new tabs on his laptop.

A few minutes later, you emerged from the room wearing workout clothes. He would have been able to deduce that you were going to the gym even without you catching his eye and awkwardly mouthing it. He just nodded before he returned his attention back to the call.
It was approaching midnight and Jounouchi was at least grateful that he had the day off tomorrow. Of course, that meant he had a day off from his normal job. He still had a lot of work to finish at the game shop. No one stepped up to the plate after Yugi’s disappearance, so Jounouchi was the one to run the Kame Game Shop.

Over the years, the shop’s reputation had grown and Yugi had been able to expand, hire workers and managers. However, Yugi was still the owner and had more duties than Jounouchi thought possible. Like payroll, for instance.

Luckily for him, an Internet search brought up instructions on how to properly calculate payroll with the program Yugi was using. Even so, it did not make the job any easier.

_The year-end adjustment is for the calculator of the income tax due by the employee_, Jounouchi read. With each line, he felt his eyes glaze over more and more until he felt his eyelids grow heavy. Maybe he should call it a night…?

No, he decided, he couldn’t.

A call to one of the numerous influential individuals he and Yugi made friends with during their dueling days would ease his burden. Yet, Jounouchi could not do that. He owed it to not only Yugi, but the old man. Yugi’s grandfather had been his mentor and father figure during his formative teenage years. This shop was their legacy and Jounouchi owed it to them to make sure that Yugi got it back in the same condition as it was when he left.

Fueled by his own stubborn determination, Jounouchi stood up from the computer chair to stretch in hopes of waking himself up. When that did not ease the heaviness of his eyes, he reached for another can of soda and quickly drained half of it before setting it down on the desk and wiping his mouth with his sleeve.

As if on cue, the screen of his phone light up and began to vibrate to alert Jounouchi to an incoming call.

There was only one person who would be calling him damn near midnight on a Saturday night: Yasuko. She was a white-collar office worker with a fondness for death metal karaoke and beer. More than likely, Yasuko missed the last train and needed a place to crash for the night along with a good fuck.

Except Jounouchi was not at home, he was in Domino. It was nearly an hour train ride between his place and the game shop. As expensive as it may be, Jounouchi was already horny enough at the thought of Yasuko all over him to pay for the cab fare.

Yasuko could sleep on the futon Jounouchi was using for the night while he finished up payroll.

Now he was feeling more awake...

However, when he reached for his phone, Jounouchi did not see Yasuko’s contact information on the screen. In fact, the incoming number consisted of a series of numbers that did not look like any type of phone number.

The Millennium Items had the ability to use a videotape to initiate a Shadow Game. That memory was enough to make Jounouchi want to smash the phone against a wall.

But…
Yugi could also be using the Millennium Puzzle to reach out to him. Jounouchi would not be able to forgive himself if he ignored this.

Before the call ended, Jounouchi slide his finger to answer the phone and held it up to his ear.

“Who is this?” he demanded.

“Someone who has more information than time to convey it,” the voice on the other end of the line replied. It was a man and judging from his voice and the way he spoke Japanese, he was around Jounouchi’s age and was not a native speaker.

“Before I buy, I need to know what kinda information you’re selling,” Jounouchi replied.

The man on the other end of the phone chuckled slightly. “You’re just as abrasive as ever, Jounouchi Katsuya. I like that. Right now, Mouto Yugi is in a secure location that is under constant guard. However, there will be an opportunity where his security becomes more lax. During that time, there could be a...deus ex machina, if you will.”

Jounouchi felt his hands tighten around the phone. Careful not to press the ‘End Call’ button, he moved his face away from the screen while he went through a quick mental exercise to keep calm.

This was what he had been waiting for all this time. Jounouchi could not screw this up. “A dues ex machina?” he repeated. “What’s information like that gunna end up costing me?”

“Nothing, except your silence and cooperation,” came the reply. When there was no witty retort, the stranger continued. “As you may have guessed, your little friend group had been under surveillance and you’ve been deemed too much of a waste of time and resources to keep tabs on.”

He was going to punch something. He needed to punch something.

“A waste of time and resources, huh?”

“That is not mean to be an insult. It means no one will be the wiser to your presence if you choose to rescue your friend.”

“But I have to be silent about it,” Jounouchi added.

“Yes,” came the reply. “The Kaiba brothers along with that one girl are being watched. Any one in America who ever so much as added Yugi as a friend on social media is under suspicion. Contacting your friends will alert our organization to any plan for rescue along with my treachery. A gaggle of your friends showing up at the eleventh hour will do the same. If I am going to tell you anything, I need your assurance that you will be coming alone.”

“As much as I want to be the hero, going in alone sounds like a nice way to get myself into hot water,” Jounouchi retorted.

“Yes,” the man agreed. “I would have a difficult time in this situation as well. However, this is the most information you have, is it not? I doubt anything that the Kaibas have learned has been freely shared.”

The douche and Mokuba knew more about this? Of course they would and of course they would rather hoard the information than let the people who cared about Yugi the most know anything.

It was suspicious and extremely unwise to go anywhere near a Millennium Item holder alone. Yet, this might be the only chance Jounouchi had of saving his friend.
“First, I need to know why you’re even bothering to tell me this and why you are remotely interested in helping Yugi.”

“Because there are those who are still indebted to the pharaoh,” was the reply.

The call had lasted the better part of an hour. Seto had his reservations agreeing to last minute appearances and was not looking forward to next weekend. When he was younger, he would have basked in his own celebrity. Now that he was older, Seto had better things to do with his weekend than have minimum wage volunteers herding him around halls filled with the dreaded smell of con funk while dodging teenagers with ‘Free Hug’ signs trying to get close to him so they could squeal to their equally obnoxious underage friends.

Seto knew that his invitation was an afterthought. In his younger years, Seto would have informed guest relations that someone like him was either the main attraction as a guest or nothing. He would have then ended the call.

Yet, it created good publicity for KaibaCorp. It would also allow Seto the opportunity to tease the Duel Links concept and gauge the response. More importantly, Seto needed to make a public appearance to show that he was alive, well, and perfectly capable of fulfilling his duties as president and CEO of Kaiba Corp since shareholders were now paying very close attention to him following the attack.

His gaze darted to the door of the hotel room, wondering how long you were planning on working out for. Seto debated on heading to the gym himself. He sustained a torn ACL when he was twenty-five and in spite of multiple surgeries and physical therapy, his days of playing soccer (or non-American football) competitively were over. He still had a private trainer back home that ensured he was still adept at Judo, but whenever he spent an extended time in America, Seto rarely kept up with his regime. Of course, he did the recommended amount of cardio: twenty to sixty minutes of intensive exercise three to five times per week.

Yet, there was so much work to be done and with a distraction of his new relationship (although it was a very welcomed distraction), there was little time to devote to cardio.

Not counting the sex, of course.

When he heard the sound of the keycard in the door, Seto glanced at the clock on the bottom right corner of his laptop. You had been gone for nearly two hours.

Seto looked up from his work to see that you were covered in a layer of sweat and presently in the kitchenette, refilling a disposable water bottle before practically gulping the contents down and wiping the excess water from your mouth.

Seto had advised you to drink more water last night...

When you caught him watching you, Seto felt a surge of warmth though your shared bond. It was reminiscent of how he felt whenever he saw how well-adjusted and normal Mokuba was in spite of everything he had put his younger brother through.

He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. Realization dawned on him: this was the first time you saw him wearing glasses.

Seto could count on one hand how many people, much less lovers he let see him wearing his glasses. He reached to take them off when you spoke up. “Keep them on, I like them.”
“I will still be a while,” he said, ignoring the comment about his glasses before turning back to his work.

“Alrighty,” you replied absently before disappearing into the bedroom. A few minutes later, he heard the sound of the shower and decided to use that opportunity to go to the other bathroom—his bathroom—and put his contacts in.

He then sat back down at his computer and was too lost in his work to register how much time had passed. He saw a flash of color out of his peripheral and glanced up from his computer long enough to see that you had finished showering and were now wearing the silk bathrobe he had seen you in the other day.

Your footsteps were so light that he did not register your presence behind him until your hands moved to touch his shoulders. Frisson ran up his spine at the contact. You made him feel like a teenager discovering what sex was all over again. Whether it was the bond or your youth, Seto could not rightfully say.

Your hands began to knead and stroke the muscles of his neck and shoulders. While he was used to professional masseuses, he could feel his muscles begin to loosen under your touch.

“That isn’t too much pressure, is it?” you paused to question cautiously.

“It’s fine,” Seto replied before you continued.

Seto briefly wondered where you learned how to give massages and while he was tempted to ask, he refrained from doing so. Although you were younger than his brother, you were still old enough to have been in previous relationships and picturing you taking care of another lover like this made him feel an ember of jealousy that simmered in the pit of his stomach.

“Is everything okay?” you asked cautiously.

You began to move your hands from him and Seto grabbed your wrist to stop you from moving away. Seto was able to lift you enough to pull him in his lap, your robe moving to expose a delicious amount of skin in the process.

Seto moved the robe aside enough to expose your breasts and smirked at how your skin became gooseflesh under his touch. He rolled a nipple between his fingers and the way you gasped out in pleasure fueled his own arousal.

Now that he thought about it, Seto never made you come from just fingering you. He could only imagine how it would feel to have you come completely undone by his touch alone---

Before Seto could let those floodgates open, he needed to finish up his work.

“Give me ten minutes to finish some things up,” he said before pressing his lips against your temple.

You stood from his lap and while you straightened your robe, Seto turned back to his laptop. However, he felt your heated gaze on him and turned to see a devious glint in those unnatural argentine eyes.

“You have five minutes,” you declared in your best imitation of the tone he used on you the other day.

Keeping his face expressionless was second nature for him. He leaned back in his seat and stared at you. Were this any other circumstance, Seto was confident that you would quickly divert your gaze
or pretend to do something to avoid the stare that had earned him the nickname ‘the Young Dragon.’

You maintained eye contact and folded your arms. With the way your mouth moved, it was obvious that you were trying to keep yourself from laughing. Briefly, Seto questioned how you survived the military when you were so terrible at keeping a straight face.

In any case, Seto knew that you thought he was playing around. Granted, he was being uncharacteristically playful. Still, he was curious to see how you would respond. After all, you had never seen the businessman side of him; the ruthless bargainer and negotiator. Seto rarely walked out of a negotiation that did not favor him.

“What is in it for me?” he demanded.

Seto was expecting you to sputter some kind of answer or refrain from a perverse grin. The answer you gave him—or rather, your non-answer—completely took him off guard. You loosened the waist sash of the kimono robe and let it slide off your shoulders to pool on the floor.

Seto already knew you were naked underneath the robe, but suddenly seeing you…

He was still a man, after all.

Stepping out of the robe, you turned to go towards the bedroom. You momentarily paused and looked over your shoulder.

“Tick tock,” you reminded him before disappearing into the other room.

Your sudden move allowed you to leave the negotiation table before he could reply.

Well played.

It was a good thing that he was Kaiba Seto, otherwise the work would have taken him much longer. Seto had registered the sound of water running in the other bathroom, but ignored it in favor of the time frame you had given him. Now that he still heard it, he was curious and went to investigate.

When he opened the door to the bathroom, he saw you with your hair tied up and donning one of the hotel’s complimentary white bathrobes (seeing as how the one yours was still on the floor in the other room). The sleeve of the robe were rolled up so it would not get wet while you were sloshing the bathwater. After a few minutes, you turned the faucet off and nearly jumped when you looked up and saw that Seto had already closed the bathroom door and was approaching the tub.

“I didn’t give you permission to come into my bathroom,” you said.

“Where are my manners?” Seto asked with mock concern. “Perhaps I should first ask the man who is paying for the room whether or not this is your designated bathroom.”

“Is he around? Go on; call him. I’ll wait,” you replied, folding your arms.

Your behavior, and as Mokuba described it, your sassiness, was endearing and a relief. It meant that this time, he got things with the Millennium Rod right.

Which also meant that you would continue to sass-talk him for as long as you could. “But then the bath water might go cold,” he pointed out before dryly adding. “I hope that you were not planning on drowning me for going over five minutes.”
You placed your hand over your heart and fixed him with your best attempt at looking affronted. “I’m wounded by the very suggestion.”

Seto shot you a level look before he finished undressing and by the time he folded his pants and boxers on top of his shirt, you had already got in the tub and were in the process of redoing your bun so your hair would not get wet.

Although the bathtub was large, you still moved to the side when Seto got in and waited for him to place his larger body in a comfortable position. Ever since he had been adopted, Seto had been thrust into a lifestyle where not sharing bathwater was the norm. Gozaburo had laughed at the first time Seto had asked if he needed to drain the bathtub after his bath. In a short amount of time, taking a shower like Westerners was complementary to Seto’s lifestyle.

He leaned back to let the warm water wash over his body. The water had a hint of various aromatics—most prominently jasmine, or so Seto would have guessed. He did not have to be a genius to know that you used a bath bomb. He had seen the wrapper in the trash near the sink, after all. More than likely, you had taken your debit card with you when you went to work out.

“Come here,” Seto said before pulling you closer to him. After watching you disrobe twice in less than fifteen minutes, Seto was already hard and you both were careful with how you moved until you were situated between his legs.

Your head rested against his lithe chest as he wrapped his arms around you to hold you close. The way your bun was against his body was already starting to bother him, so Seto reached for the hair tie and tugged at the elastic until your hair came undone and tumbled down and unto the water.

“I didn’t want to get my hair wet,” you complained before adjusting your hair so that it fell over one shoulder.

“If you didn’t want to get wet,” Seto began, kissing your neck, “you should not have gotten into a bath with me.”

He moved his hands so that one was resting on your hip while the other tweaked your nipple. In acquiescence, you moved your ass closer to him. He then felt your fingers graze his inner thigh, his member twitching at the soft butterfly touches. He repositioned his elbow so the position would not be so awkward for you and he groaned when your hands wrapped around his cock, giving it a long, slow stroke.

In response, Seto massaged his palm against your breasts, teasing and squeezing you while you continued to stroke his length. Without realizing it, he thrust his hips in time with your movements and soon he found himself pressing his fingers along your clit. Two fingers thrust in and out of your entrance.

His emotions were always precarious balancing act between magnificent bastard and a neurotic mess. This bond allowed him to understand that even before the Penalty Game, you were a kindred spirit in how you were a beautifully broken disaster. There was no doubt that if he used the letters P, T, S, and D together, you would vehemently deny having it while secretly horrified that someone had seen through your facade. The bond allowed him to see how you were still on the battlefield and when you weren’t, you were waging a private war between succumbing to despair and denying as well as repressing the atrocities of war.

In a way, just being with you like this was Seto’s reprieve from his own

Forgetting about how he had been fingering you, Seto’s cock rubbed against your ass each time he
bucked his hips. With your shallow breaths, no words had to be exchanged between the two of you.

Now how to do this…?

Before he knew it, Seto was being straddled by you with him guiding the movement of your hips as you rode him while he thrust his own hips wildly against yours.

You looked so fucking hot like this.

And just listening to your cute mewls of pleasure…

He was not going to last much longer.

Seto groaned and gripped at your hips as he felt his release. You bent down to kiss him and Seto was too eager to pull you back into the warm water and kissed you hard. He savored the feel of the water and sensation of your body against him.

“You’re going to tear me apart at this rate,” you breathed against him.

Seeing this as a good time as any, Seto decided that he should bring it up.

“I suppose it is a good thing I will be gone next weekend,” he said.

He could feel your body tense at that and he was glad that you could not see his face. Otherwise, you would see his own fiendish smirk.

“Are you going to back to Japan?” you asked cautiously.

Through the bond, Seto could feel the pang of dread as as acutely as a jagged shard of ice in the pit of his stomach.

Him returning to Japan was an inevitability. If things were to continue, you would have to have a very long discussion. Fortunately, there were several factors that allowed him to justify his extended stay in North America.

“Not yet,” he replied. “I will, however, be attending New York Comic Con.”

He could almost hear you let out a sigh of relief. “Oh...Okay...Congrats! That’s a good thing, right?”

Seto hummed in reply. He was unsure of how long you both had been laying like this, but he was starting to get cold. Also, he would not admit to it out loud, but his knees were beginning to ache. An unfortunate consequence to jumping out dramatically jumping out of aircrafts as a teenager and young adult.

Once in a standing position, Seto handed you a towel first before he turned his back to allow you some privacy for clean up. He continued to speak while drying himself with a towel before he started to get dressed. “Would you be free next weekend to attend as my guest?” he asked.

In other words, you would be attending a very public event as his girlfriend. Seto rarely allowed past significant others--a few whom he had been involved with for quite some time-- to attend KaibaCorp events alongside him. And those were events he had full control over.

You were smart and he hoped that you could figure out the implication of his invitation and the meaning behind it without him having to put it in words.

There was a moment of pause while you tied your hair into a ponytail. Through the mirror’s
reflection, he could see your eyes widen and felt a surge of warmness through your shared connection as your face broke out in a bright smile.

“I would love that!” you exclaimed.

The warmth that practically radiated from you was infectious and Seto faced away from the mirror so you would not be able to see his own expression.

Seto preferred to think that the unbridled excitement was because you were glad that he was taking you to Comic Con instead of being thrilled at the possibility of partying at Comic Con all weekend.

Chapter End Notes

If you play Duel Links (which now pretty much owns my soul), my ID is 368-948-499.

I wanted to say a quick tidbit about Jounochi’s lady friend. I directly based her off of the new Sanrio character Aggresuko because I thought it was funny. The name Aggresuko uses the characters that mean Rage + Child. So I was like, ‘lawls, let’s call this person Yasuko since the name uses the kanji for Peace + Child.

Lastly, the next chapter is going to be pretty much filler and be at Comic Con. So if you are interested in plot, just a head’s up. In my notes, Anzu shows up. And I should apparently flip a coin to see whether or not Otogi will make an appearance “Because,” as I wrote, “fuck it, why not?”
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Do you really think that I am going to let you and Seto be happy?

Chapter Notes

As a fair warning, this does contain implied/referenced hard drug use. I did mention this in the tags, but wanted to warn everyone ahead of time that there are mentions of it. HOWEVER, I tried to be very subtle about it since I know a lot of people are uncomfortable with these types of topics.

Lastly, I figured I would delve a bit into the Reader's backstory to see if anyone likes it or not. If you don't like it, let me know. It won't hurt my feelings and since I'm not too invested in it, I will be more than happy to change it or just edit it out.

Sunday night, Seto brought you home and the house was (as far as anyone could tell), undisturbed. You had walked with Seto to the front door and before he could turn to leave, you stood on your tiptoes and wrapped your arms around his neck. In response, Seto’s arm curved around your waist to pull you closer to him.

Lips met and Seto’s tongue traced your lips, plunging into your mouth in a heated kiss. Before things could get heated, he pulled away and chided you for making it difficult to leave when he had a full week’s worth of work to finish in a few days. Instead of leaving, more kissing ensued.

A few minutes later, Seto said that he would text you and closed the door behind him, leaving you to the silence of your own thoughts.

You should probably unpack or at least throw your clothes in the washing machine. Unfortunately, you made it all the way to the couch before you decided that was good enough and plopped down.

Maybe you would do laundry when you got home from your obligated lab hours if you wanted to keep your position as a research assistant and earn your stipend.

...There was also trying to figure out that connection to find Yugi.

There was so much to do.

This was going to be a long week.

It had been a long week, a very long week.

For flights, you normally looked like you had just rolled out of bed. However, you had been briefed on the importance of appearances. In layman’s terms, it meant not looking like a homeless person.
On Tuesday afternoon, you had found yourself on the Magnificent Mile with your credit card in hand and ready to rent some designer clothes.

Thinking about how much money you were spending would only upset you. So you barely looked over at the total before handing the sales clerk your credit card. It was a credit card, you told yourself. That meant worrying about it in the future.

To complete the look, you ventured into your closet and pulled out a box you had not touched since storing it there. You opened the box and hesitantly unwrapped the purses and wallets from the tissue paper they had been carefully wrapped in when your mother’s house was being packed up.

They had been your mother’s designer purses and while most of the jewelry found its way into your collection, you felt guilty for using more of the expensive items your mother had owned.

Looking at, much less packing the extra purses and wallet was emotionally draining. You had almost forgotten to contact Anzu that night. Initially, Anzu reminded you of a girl you knew—Téa—and were expecting to dislike her. However, Anzu had won you over and even over a text-based chat, her warm and welcoming nature made you open up to her. She seemed surprised at not only learning that you and Seto were together, but you were also going to be attending ComicCon with him that weekend.

When she learned how much money you spent looking cute, she said that next time, ask her and she would be more than happy to lend you some of her clothes. You both wore the same shoe size (and you were happy to learn you had tiny dancer’s feet) and while her pants and dress size were a little off, it was close enough to be passable.

You two made plans to meet up sometime during the weekend. Apparently, she worked less than a half hour from the convention center. Once you decided to text her once you figured out Seto’s schedule, Anzu said she needed to get ready for bed and logged off the chat.

The rest of the week passed slowly.

Seto wanted to be in New York City by noon and that meant one thing: an early morning. At 8:45am, you heard the doorbell just as you were staring blearily into your coffee pot as you began to measure out the beans.

Seto said a car would pick you up at nine o’clock.

You *hated* morning people and despised morning people who thought it was adorable to show up early.

You looked cute as hell, but you were going to have to go a good chunk of the day without caffeine. That was great, just great.

With a final sad look, you said good-bye to your coffee pot and grabbed your suitcase. The driver was still at the door and just as you lifted the suitcase over the threshold before setting it on the ground to fish your keys out of your pockets, the driver rolled the luggage to the car. He then opened the car door for you before he went around the car to place your belongings in the trunk.

You slide into the backseat to find Seto on the phone. His hair was still damp and while you expertly covered the bags under your eyes with makeup, he looked exhausted. As a greeting, Seto nodded towards the cup holders where you saw two Starbucks cups.

Putting your hands together, you mouthed your praise and thanks before you downed the sugary
syrupy caffeinated goodness. Since Seto was on the phone, the driver was listening to NPR at a barely inaudible level and you could not decide what was more boring: the sexy baritone of your boyfriend’s voice talking business, or NPR discussing a topic that did not interest you in the slightest.

You had been informed that you would be taking one of the KaibaCorp private jets and were curious to see what it would be like getting on a private jet at O’Hare. Instead, you felt mildly disappointed when you noticed that the car was traveling south towards Midway.

Seto realized that they literally had to double back in order to pick you up…right? While traveling on the L with this outfit and dragging your luggage was not ideal, you could have taken the Orange Line and met them at the airport…

Then again, you could easily picture Seto scoffing at the very idea of public transportation.

Fidgeting slightly, you leaned your head back and closed your eyes. That had lasted until you realized you did not want to spend the rest of the day with knot in your neck and reluctantly straightened your posture.

As if sensing your boredom, Seto caught your eye and made a gun motion at his head before taking a long swing from his drink. When he set it down, you could see the label for the drink he got for himself. A caramel macchiato with two extra shots.

If you looked gap moe up in the dictionary, you would find a gif of this exact moment. It made you want to grab Seto by his tie, tell whomever he was on the phone with that Mr. Kaiba would be tied up for the next hour, and see how gap moe he could really be.

Instead, you pretended that you were a goddamn lady and took a long sip from your own drink.

As soon as Midway approached, you looked out the window curiously. Asides from the military plane you had ridden in during your deployment, you had never flown in a private aircraft. And quite honestly, you were not too sure whether or not a military aircraft counted as a private flight. So you were curious on where you would go.

You soon had your answer. The car turned off of a ramp that would have led to the airport proper and as the car pulled up to a security gate, you were instructed to get out your ID.

Once you put your ID back in your wallet, Seto looked over at you and frowned. “As a forewarning, my security team will be accompanying both of us the entire weekend.”

You blinked. “Okay…?”

“Also,” Seto continued, “be prepared for the paparazzi once we land in New York.”

You were surprised at how Mokuba and Seto roamed about Chicago like it was nothing. During your e-stalking, you did not miss how the Kaibas were usually accompanied by bodyguards. Compared to how disgustingly rich they were, you had also expected them to live in a gilded penthouse compared to the fairly modest condo. You supposed it was why a lot of celebrities liked living in Chicago: there was a relative degree of privacy and if they could wander around the Magnificent Mile without anyone knowing who they were, you supposed there was no real need for security outside the walls of KaibaCorp.

As you mused, the car pulled up outside of the terminal that specifically catered to private planes. While employees were handling the bags, you saw Seto speaking to one of the two men wearing captain jackets. You stood around awkwardly until a KaibaCorp employee (or so you could tell from
his badge) greeted you formally before letting you know that you could make your way inside the terminal lounge.

In other words, you were kind of in the way and should probably just hang out until the plane was ready for departure. Once inside the terminal, there was a small security station and once more, you had to show your ID while your purse was scanned.

“Cute dress,” a female TSA agent said once you stepped through the metal detector.

“It’s totally a rental,” you admitted in a low conspiratorial tone. “I’m afraid to breathe on it half the time.”

After letting the agent know where you rented your clothes from, you decided to explore the private terminal. Admittedly, there was not a lot to look at, but everything was just so...fancy looking and you were unsure how you would ever be content with commercial flights now that you knew something like this existed.

You looked out the window and could easily spot the KaibaCorp plane based upon the large blue ‘KC’ letters etched on the plane.

“Were you just planning on looking?” Seto questioned as he passed you on his way towards the door.

“You mean you haven’t invented a teleporter yet?” you questioned while following behind him.

“I’ll put that on my ‘To Do’ list,” he said dryly as you two climbed the steps onto the plane. “I’ll put it right next to the elevator to space.”

“A space elevator?” you questioned skeptically. “Seriously?”

“No,” Seto answered.

Once inside, you were greeted by the stewardess. You honestly expected to be glared jealously at by every female KaibaCorp employee. Instead, the flight attendant looked like she wanted to go hide from her boss and gave you a look that practically pleaded with you to keep your boyfriend in a good mood and deliver her from her own private hell.

You knew those feels all too well.

Seto had been in somewhat of a good mood while in the car. Now he seemed like a tyrant as he barked orders to his staff. His sudden change in behavior made you tense up until he disappeared down to the other side of the plane.

“Sorry about that,” you said automatically once you thought Seto was out of earshot. “It must suck having him as your boss sometimes.”

“It’s part of my job,” the stewardess replied pleasantly enough but the look she gave you made it seem like she was the one who pitied you. “We should be taking off in about ten minutes or so. Would you like something to drink in the meantime? Coffee? Tea? A shot from Mr. Kaiba’s private stash of whiskey?”

It was five o’clock fifteen hours ago you rationalized. You wondered what kind of whiskey Seto drank on his flights. However, you were determined to be on your best behavior this weekend and that meant not getting drunk. At least not getting drunk before noon local time.
The plane was fairly large and you stood admiring it for a few moments. Towards the cockpit, a section was partitioned off for the KaibaCorp staff. You were led to the part of the plane reserved for Seto and Mokuba. On one side of that section sat two airplane seats and a large 40” in television. On the other side of the isle was a table with the same airplane seats on either side. Further down, you saw a couch opposite of yet another 40” television mounted on a countertop with the liquor right next to it. Even further down the aircraft was more airplane chairs with fold up tables that could be used for a very large work station or a meeting. As far as color schemes went, everything was very monochromatic and reminded you of Seto’s bedroom and bathroom.

Seto had disappeared even further down the aircraft that was separated by curtains. With how shitty of a mood he was sudden in, you decided to just take a seat on the couch. After looking around, you spotted the seatbelt and left it, wondering if you were going to get told to wear one during taxiing and takeoff.

A crew member had placed both yours and Seto’s carry-on luggage in a container and since you had nothing better to do, you plugged in your laptop as Seto returned from wherever he just took his adult time-out in.

You looked up when you heard Seto sniffle and noted that he dabbed at his nose with a Kleenex before placing it his back pocket as opposed to throwing it away.

Nah...There was no way…

Instead of saying something, you looked back to your computer.

“What’s the WiFi password?”

Seto’s eyebrows rose and he paused as if he were contemplating on saying something. Instead, he sat next to you and typed in the password.

“You should buckle your seatbelt before the crew tells you to,” Seto advised. He stood up and moved to the first set of chairs before pulling out his own laptop case, but held it in his lap while he looked out the window.

You debated on stowing your own laptop during takeoff, but you wanted to see how this was going to play out. Firmly holding it on your lap, you resumed going through your student email.

“Having fun? Seto called once the plane began to accelerate and lift off.

“I have a good pun for this,” you replied. “Give me until we’re at cruising altitude, then I’ll get back to you.”

“No thanks,” came Seto’s response.

You barely paid attention to the pilot's announcement about being at cruising altitude since you were busy with your own work. You did, however, spare a glance at Seto to see him frowning and furiously typing something up on his laptop.

“Is there anything I can do you help?”

Seto did not pause what he was doing to address you. “What do you mean?”

What did you mean…?

“Like, I don’t know. Is there something I can type up for you? Proofread? Shut the fuck up and let
you work? That sort of thing.”

“I have people to proofread for me,” he answered.

“But did they ever attend one of the top-rated universities in the country for graduate school?” you prompted since you loved getting that fact in whenever you could.

Seto paused his typing before he considered. “I’ll email you something. I need Millennials and younger as a target audience. Look it over and add any suggestion as a comment instead of editing the document. Have it done by the time we land.”

“Mmmm...I like it when you order me around, Kaiba-saichou..”

About an hour into the flight, you noticed that Seto kept stealing glances in your direction and you shifted in the seat so he could see that you were actually working on the document.

You were a slacker, but you had gotten into the University of Chicago after obtaining your Bachelor’s degree. Which meant that you had to be somewhat of a diligent student.

Within the first ninety minutes of the flight, you stretched your fingers out, triumphant that you had finished.

“Imma email this back to you,” you said to Seto and glanced over to see him unscrewing a pill bottle and swallowing an orange pill with the bottled water the stewardess brought him.

“Ibuprofen,” Seto clarified and before you could ask, added, “That was the last one.”

You just ignored it since you were not planning on asking for one to begin with. “Anyway, I sent it.”

“I do get notifications on my phone and laptop,” Seto grunted in reply.

Seto was clearly being a moody bitch right now, so you decided to just let him be for the remainder of the flight. The pilot made an announcement that the plane would soon be making its descent into JFK airport. Remembering the information about the press being present, you made your way to the bathroom to redo your make up.

During taxiing, you began to store your carry-on items where you had found them and smoothed out imaginary wrinkles in your skirt while Seto went to speak to one of his employees.

“Look as natural as possible,” Seto coached when you heard the door of the plane open. “Just make sure not to slouch. You’re with the president and CEO of KaibaCorp, so hold your head high.”

So there really were going to be press here.

You were really glad you did not lie to your professor about why you were skipping class. Sure, you did not elaborate, but did not lie either. That had to count for something.

In the video you would later find on the Internet, Seto gave a slight wave to the camera before taking your hand and walking with you down the airstairs to the waiting black SUV. The video was shot from far away and looked grainy, but you thought you looked pretty good. You were no Michelle Obama, but you certainly weren’t 2007 Britney Spears either.
To say that Seto was being monopolized the moment you set foot into the hotel was putting it lightly. You were expecting that and your own security guard, but it still felt strange to see the few times the light from camera phone’s flash practically blinding you. Not only that, but it felt strange to have someone paid to pretty much take a bullet for you.

With Seto’s popularity, you were led away from him and brought to a staff-only service elevator. Once the doors opened, your bodyguard—whose name you did not quite catch—told you to stay put until there were no eyes watching to see which room you would enter.

The room was nothing like the Waldorf-Astoria, but was still someplace you knew you would never be able to afford yourself. There was a small welcome basket that you looked over. It was for Seto, obviously, but you had nothing better to do. You badge was sitting on the table next to a welcome letter and while it was tempting to look around the convention, but you wanted nap. No. You needed a nap.

Your luggage had yet to be delivered, so your only option was to sleep in your overly expensive rental dress. After making yourself comfortable on the couch, you turned on the TV and flipped through channels until you found something you could listen to until you fell asleep.

Some time later, you awoke to the sound of the door opening and two people talking to each other until they spotted you.

“Just put the bags near the bed,” one of the men instructed the other in a shushed tone.

You pretended to be asleep until the door closed. You then checked the time and mentally kicked yourself for not setting an alarm. Seto told you that he would be attending an industry mixer and you did not even have to ask: as his date, you were expected to attend as well.

Sitting up on the couch, you began to rub the sleep from your eyes and sighed when you pulled your hand away to see it smeared with your eye makeup.

Well that was just great...

Standing up, you stretched out your arms and let out a loud yawn while you cracked your neck and back loudly. “That’s much better,” you sighed to yourself.

You located the ironing board, plugged it in, and got to work on glamming yourself up.

You were in the middle of doing your makeup while trying to follow along with a Youtube tutorial when Seto returned to the room, looking like he was ready to collapse.

“Do you want me to dab some makeup on you?” you asked when he opened the bathroom door and saw you had turned the bathroom counter into your own personal workstation.

“Very funny,” he deadpanned.

You were actually really serious. A little concealer under the eyes could go a long way…

Instead of insisting, you just scooted over and made room for him to use the sink. Seto splashed some water on his face and stared at his reflection.

There was no denying that Seto was handsome. Yet, his premature wrinkles looked so prominent at the moment while his lips were pale and chapped. His eyes looked tired. You had seen the creams and moisturizers Seto applied to his face each night to keep his skin healthy. If he were Caucasian, you had no doubt that his skin would be red and blotchy because it looked like he had not been
taking care of himself this past week.

“If you’re not feeling well, maybe try drinking some water?”

He was definitely dehydrated. You weren’t naïve enough to believe the bullshit he told you on the plane, but if he was going to keep that up, he should be drinking a lot more water.

Seto’s eyes shifted towards you as if he was suddenly aware of your presence in spite of you being here the entire time. His eyes narrowed in a predatory manner. In your opinion, it only accentuating his crow’s feet.

“Just what I need,” he said scathingly, “Medical and lifestyle advice from you.”

A few years ago, you would have gotten into his face, demanding to know what he meant while metaphorically spewing vitriol. Now you told yourself you would be as calm and zen as a Hindu cow, Seto did not mean that; something else might have meant that, but Seto did not mean that. He was just stressed.

You gathered up your makeup and put it back in your traveling bag. “I’ll let you be,” you said as calmly as you could before exiting the bathroom. You checked the full-length mirror and decided your makeup was good enough at this point. Grabbing the evening dress you ironed earlier, you quickly dressed and by the time Seto exited the bathroom to get changed, you were already sitting on the couch, playing on your phone.

“I’m ready whenever you are,” you said mildly.

In order to save the battery life, you put your phone away and occupied yourself with looking out the window, watching as the city switched from day to night time. You didn’t need the Millennium Necklace to know that you were going to need to conserve the battery for as long as possible tonight.

*The Millennium Necklace…*

You had stopped wearing it, much less dragging it around with you. Brows knitted together. When had that happened? You last wore the Necklace last week, so it had to have been recently.

You knew the answer to this...

The memory was there, but trying to recall the specific instance was like unraveling a tangled mass of thread that was just out of reach...

“Alright.” Seto’s voice pulled you from your thoughts.

What had you been thinking about again? Oh yeah, bar time. You had been trying to remember when the bars closed.

You turned from the window. Seto had feathered his hair back just slightly and with his tailored Zegna suit, the aura of power he possessed was almost palatable. You were supposed to be standoffish with having the moral high ground. Like a magnetic field, Seto—or this bond—drew you back in.

Seto’s gaze panned up and down your figure before he looked past you, out the window.

“You...look nice,” his voice had the edge of a reluctant apology.

“Thank you.” This was probably the best you were going to get, so you decided you might as well
just try to move past his shitty behavior.

You had been instructed to text the KaibaCorp personnel before leaving the room and after Seto sent out a message to his security team, there was a knock on the door. You then followed Seto while a convention staff member led you the service elevators and down to the basement. The staffer told you that the hotel was connected to the convention center via other tunnels and this was how the other high-profile guests were able to navigate the convention without being swarmed.

“There are a lot of important guests and celebrities here right now, along with some press,” Seto warned in Japanese. “Behave.”

You seriously doubted the staff handler knew more Japanese than you did beginning in September, so you kept your expression neutral. “So no sneaking off to give you a blowjob?” you asked quietly. “You don’t know what you’re missing out on.”

“Act your age,” Seto snapped as you both entered the ballroom that had been set up.

Aaaand there it was again: him being a douche for no reason whatsoever. What the fuck ever. The joke was on him because you were acting your age; you were old enough to know better, young enough not to care, but wise enough not to get caught.

As you two made your rounds, you realized that no one cared who Seto Kaiba was with. You were more like an accessory and imaged that he could be dragging a blow-up doll around and would elicit the same reaction.

People were civil to your face when the odd inquiry was made about you or Seto remembered to introduce you.

Your agitation shifted and were beginning to feel a little depressed at that thought. You were the girlfriend (or data) of Seto Kaiba and younger sister of the American Duel Monsters champion. No one special, just around people who were.

Remembering how you were able to control the bond last weekend, you did your best to shield your gloomy mood from Seto. You had been drunk when you were full-on manipulating the bond and without feeling remotely confident in yourself, you were not going to bother trying.

You became aware of the fact that Seto was speaking to someone and did your best to look as pleasant as possible.

“And who is this?” he asked, looking at your direction.

“My girlfriend,” Seto replied.

On cue, you introduced yourself by name and extended your hand to shake his. Instead, your hand was grabbed and the man kissed it. Without looking at him, you could just sense Seto’s body growing rigid.

“A pleasure to make your acquaintance,” he greeted before looking over at Seto. “Careful, Kaiba. Someone this beautiful might run off with someone else if you don’t treat her right.”

You were not going to look at your boyfriend’s expression. However, you could imagine how it must be because the man standing next to him chimed in, “You two make a lovely couple. You both seem well-suited to each other.”

“Thank you,” Seto replied smoothly before he excused himself from the conversation. After a while,
you were beginning to grow impatient and more than a little hungry.

There were not many faces you recognized from the guest list on the con’s website, so more than likely, everyone was here to promote themselves as opposed to having an enjoyable evening. It bothered you to see indie game designers desperate for Seto’s attention and he politely yet firmly blew them off.

This sucked…

“So?”

Your head turned to see a conservatively dressed woman approaching you. She wore minimal makeup and her hair was in a smart updo and it was all she had to do because in spite of looking older than Seto, she was beautiful. There was no denying that.

“I never thought your sexy ass would come to one of these shows,” she said in Japanese.

She adjusted her glasses while looking at you and you did your best to stand up straight and match her icy gaze with a fiery stare. Even if you were not the jealous type, you wanted nothing more than to grab a knife and ask whose boyfriend she was calling sexy.

Unphased, the woman continued. “She doesn’t seem your type. Where on Earth did you find her? The local high school?”

You were going to destroy this bitch.

“You’re hospice nurse seems awfully nice. I never knew they let geriatric patients on field trips,” you remarked in perfect Japanese.

You were going to say more, but Seto wrapped his arm around your waist and pulled you close. “Naomi,” he said before leading you away.

“A head’s up that your ex was here would have been nice,” you growled as he led you away.

“Since you clearly can’t be an adult, should I give you a briefing before on who is there before I bring you to any type of gathering?” Seto countered keeping his voice low and steady.

“Maybe just the ones you’ve fucked,” you answered doing the same since you were both in public and did not want anyone to hear you fighting. “I like to be prepared before someone makes a shitty comment about me.”

“Naomi should not have insulted you,” Seto said. “I expected that you would be the better person.”

The argument had to be periodically paused to put on appearances for individuals Seto was talking to.

“Sorry that I am not someone who can keep putting up with shit before I snap,” you countered once the latest individual decided to stop making small-talk with Seto. His arm was looped through yours and you only stayed in place looking composed so Naomi would not see that she caused you two to have your first fight.

“So you’re okay with insulting others, but can’t take it when someone says something remotely offensive about your age?” Seto questioned. “Because I am pretty sure that insult was geared more towards me than you.”
Another interruption. This time, you both were getting drinks since it was becoming painfully obvious that you two were not drinking. Seto drank, but you only took a few sips since you were going to prove that you could control your vices.

“Let’s back this crazy train up a little bit, shall we?” you finally said. “What do you mean that I am okay with insulting others? I hav—“

“Let’s backtrack then. How about insinuating you can do better than my employees? Or rubbing it in my face that you go to such a prestigious university for graduate school when you know I never finished high school.”

“Okay. First of all, I had no idea you never finished high school.”

“I dropped out when I was sixteen,” Seto answered.

Normally you might be taken aback by that revelation, but Seto took over a conglomerate when he was only fifteen years old. That was not a big deal to you.

“Like I said, I didn’t know. I didn’t mean to insult you or your employees. I was trying to be helpful.”

“So helpful,” Seto mocked. “Just like you were helpful when you offered to do my makeup and told me to drink water I did not realize I repulsed you so much.”

“Because I care!” you exclaimed and received an immediate reproaching look.

“Way to go,” Seto continued. “I’m trying to work things out with you when I have millions of dollars and me reputation on the line and you can’t even appreciate that enough to keep your voice down.”

“I do care, Seto,” you insisted. “I’m not trying to throw this in your face or insult you, but I am not stupid. If you’re going to do that,” you scratched your nose. “Then for fuck’s sake, hydrate.”

The fragile control Seto had over himself was beginning to come undone. He his eyes were like solid ice when he stared at you before pivoting and walking away towards the tables. Others were beginning to take their seats, but a few people were still standing around. With nothing else to do, you handed a waiter your drink and said you were not a fan of it before heading to get something else while you decided to go get another drink. It would allow you enough time to decide whether or not you should take Seto’s retrieval as a hint to leave him alone.

You could feel Seto’s gaze on your back and wished he would just throw an icicle spear at you already to end the torment. You were about to gulp the drink down and leave the party when one of Seto’s acquaintances turned towards you.

“I know it is none of my business, but is everything alright?” he asked. “I could not help but notice that you were looking a bit upset.”

“You both discussed your dietary choices as you were making your way towards Seto. He and Seto obviously knew each other since the guy debriefed Seto on what you had talked about. The man’s wife—Tiffany—made conversation with you as he and Seto talked.
Eventually, you checked the time on your phone and saw that Seto had text you while you had been away. You turned away from him so he could not see your phone screen. He had text you a link to an article before sending another text message *Don’t lie to me about not knowing that I dropped out of high school. It is insulting. I know you were looking me up on the Internet as soon as you learned who I am.*

The article was in Japanese and was criticizing Seto for not completing high school and Mokuba for completing high school and only taking a few classes at Tokyo University.

_Nice read! First time hearing any of that information. What classes did Mokuba take at Todai?_

You were finished with your drink and were taking the first few bites of your dinner when you just felt nothing but pure rage and pulled out your phone.

_So. Along with looking @ my Internet history, you decided to monitor my laptop to see what I was doing on my OWN time. Do you go into my phone when I am asleep? How about my email? I bet you would not like it if I did that to you!_

_How long have you been monitoring my electronics?_

You hit send and it took several minutes before you could see Seto pulling out his phone to reply. Your phone was currently on vibrate, so you silenced it and explained that you were emailing a professor about something you left at school. And yes, you were going to _the_ University of Chicago! The private one!

_You can access information about me online but I can’t access anything about you?_ Came Seto’s reply.

He was missing the point and trying to turn this around on you.

_Hell no._

_That information was public. Looking at my LinkedIn profile and accessing my devices without my permission are completely separate issues._

_Relationships have boundaries! You have crossed so many of them…_

_I’m entitled to some degree of privacy._

You were just going through the motions of looking prim and proper. Seto must have either zero emotions or be a grade A sociopath to look so cool and composed all the time. It was maddening.

Eventually, he was on his phone for just a few moments before he turned his attention back to the conversation.

_This was a mistake._

_If you don’t like it, then leave._

You waited a few minutes before politely excusing yourself and said you would be right back.

Your purse was a bit heavier than you remembered it and were annoyed at yourself for throwing so much makeup in your bag. The bathrooms were outside the ballroom, so you pretended to head in that direction before you glanced over your shoulder. Seto must have let his security team know that you would no longer be needing their services since they were not even looking in your direction.
You had left your coat back in your room and since you were not with Seto, you doubted you could use the tunnel system to get back to the hotel. The night air was uncharacteristically warm, but you had heard that it was going to rain and bring a cold front. So you supposed you lucked out. You were unfamiliar with the area and relied on your GPS to get to the hotel. Along the way, several congoers asked what you were cosplaying as and you just continued past them without replying.

Seto had said this was a mistake. Being in a relationship with you was a mistake.

Feeling petty, you pulled up your messages and began to compose another text to Seto: *Best of luck trying to find Yugi. I would call him your friend, but...yeah. I don’t think you have any.*

Before you could hit Send, you discarded the message. Even if you had been dragged into all of this unwillingly, it was best not to go there.

You dug around your purse until you found the key card you tossed in last minute. Your hands brushed against metal and you immediately knew why your purse was suddenly heavier.

Ignoring the Millennium Necklace, you got on the elevator. You could see how unnatural your eyes looked in the reflection of the elevator door and wondered if there was any reason for you to have survived that day. If you had just been a little earlier or even remotely on time.

You did not even want to look at yourself. Maybe it would have been better if you died that day.

That was not the first time you had those thoughts and you knew survivor’s guilt was as much of you as your hair was. You would just get back in the room, charge your phone, change, grab your shit, and try to get the next flight back to Chicago. Then you could resume some kind of normalcy.

As you approached the room, you could feel your eyebrows knitting together. The door was a little ajar. Was this the right room...?

Maybe you were not on the right floor...

Curious, you used the keycard and the lock light up green on the second swipe.

Your palms were beginning to sweat and you reached for the door, hoping that someone forgot to shut the door tightly.

The room had been ransacked.
Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

In my notes, chapter 22 was supposed to be the final chapter. I apparently have a hard time of not going on tangents.

It took several moments while you processed the scene; every drawer and cabinet had been thrown open while clothes and papers littered the floor.

*Mom's jewelry...her purses...*

You stepped over the threshold and felt your heart sink at seeing how carelessly everything had been thrown about.

What were you even supposed to do...?

You closed your eyes and took several calming breaths. First, you needed to call the cops about this. The Millennium Necklace suddenly materializing in your purse might not be a coincidence. Whoever had done this might be very well organized and the last thing you needed was to have anyone even think that you, feeling vengeful after the fight with Seto, tore apart the room.

It took you three tries before you finally got the right district. You had to open the door and look at the room number before you gave it to officer on the phone who advised you not to touch anything since it may compromise the crime scene.

Once the call ended, you text Seto: *Someone broke into the room. NYPD is on its way.*

After you sent the text, you decided to stuff anything incriminating into your bag before someone saw it. You could be thanked later. Once that was complete, you turned on your video camera and began to silently record the room’s destruction. You weren’t sure why since the cops were probably going to take pictures of it anyway, but figured it might come in handy.

You were rounding the bed when you realized that you were recording in vertical. No one liked people who filmed in vertical, but as you switched how you were holding the phone, you lost your grip and dropped it. The moment you bent down to pick it up, you heard the door open and froze momentarily before going flat on the ground.

There was no way NYPD or Seto got here that fast...

“I can see your fucking shadow, Graham,” came a male voice. “Finish whatever you’re doing fast. Mr. Kaiba apparently got in a fight with his girl and he’s on his way back to the room. Take the stairs when you go.”

You then heard the door slam shut. Your heart was pounding and your palms were sweating. Fueled by adrenaline, you practically sprinted to the door and used the deadbolt to lock it.

Retrieving the phone, you checked to see if it was still recording and let out an audible sigh of relief to see that it was. Once you saved the recording, you leaned against the wall and slid to the floor, too mentally drained to even think about moving.
That had to have been one of the luckiest things to ever happen to you. Without any kind of weapon, that could have turned out terribly…

*Without any weapon,* you repeated the thought to yourself. You had the Millennium Necklace…

There was that feeling again, it was the type when you knew you were forgetting about something important.

You were still mulling that over when you heard the sound of footsteps before someone tried the keycard. You jerked in response to the sound before slowly making your way towards the door to look through the peephole.

“Open the door,” came Seto’s voice before you could even look.

Unlocking the deadbolt, you opened the door and was relieved to see that Seto was alone.

Seto stormed into the room to survey the mess before turning to you. “What time did you call the police?”

You went to your phone and looked through the call log. “5:59,” you answered.

Before you could bring up the video, Seto began picking through his items and given his thunderous disposition, you did not have the courage to tell him that you had been told not to touch anything.

“How big is your purse?” he asked suddenly.

“Not very,” you answered.

“Did you happen to pack any large purses?” he continued.

“Um…” You began to look around the room and spotted one of your mother’s purses that had been rather large. A Gucci tote bag. “Yeah,” you finally said and picked it up to show him.

Seto thrust the Millennium Rod in your hands.

Huh.

You lucked out with your Millennium Item showing up in a convenient spot. You wondered if Seto had been as lucky.

“Put this in your purse and hold on to it,” that came out as an order, not a request. You paused for a moment before you dumped your own purse into the tote bag and put the Millennium Rod on top of it. Miraculously, you were able to snap the bag closed. It was heavy and you hoped you did not have to carry this around for long.

“I take it you have the Millennium Necklace?” he asked once you shifted your purse to a more comfortable position.

“Yeah,” you replied. “But before you say anything else, watch this.”

You pulled up the video and scrolled about a quarter towards the end. You had yet to drop your phone, but whatever. Good enough. After turning the volume up all the way, you handed him the phone.

“What am I supposed to be watching?” Seto asked.
“Just watch,” you insisted.

You flinched at the sound of your phone hitting the ground and ignored the harsh stare Seto sent you. You were still fighting, so you were okay with being a petty bitch. His eyes shifted back towards the phone when he heard the intruder. Seto replayed the audio twice more before forwarded the video to himself and handed the phone back.

“You will not show that to the police or even mention it,” he ordered. “I am going to tell them that several important documents were stolen and I am missing a few flash drives.”

“Why?”

That seemed like a terrible idea, especially since you had audio of one of the intruders naming the other one!

“Because nothing has been stolen,” Seto stated flatly. “They were looking for the Millennium Items. More than likely, my office and your home will be in a similar state.”

Your stomach dropped at the thought of coming home to a similar mess. Everything you owned might be sifted through and tossed about carelessly. You did not even want to think about it…

Still, it did not make sense why you would not let the cops know about this. Especially if someone might be at your home...

You did not miss seeing the way Seto smirked. It reminded you of a wolf, smug at the certainty that its prey would be within its grasp. “I will personally make sure those responsible know the consequences of trying to steal from us.”

Seto turned away from you momentarily to look out the window. “I still intend to host my panel tomorrow,” he began.

You had figured as much. Duel Links was something Seto had poured his heart and soul into for so long and this was his first opportunity to offer the public a glimpse of it.

“Call Mazaki or anyone in the city you know. I will sleep better knowing you’re with them. Attend the panel as planned, but as soon as it is over, I want you on the first flight back to Chicago.”

Mazaki…?

Oh.

Anzu.

Right. You should have known that.

With the way you felt, you wanted to be on your way back to Chicago right now. There was no reason for you to stay in New York and you were not going to feel any better until you made sure everything was okay at home.

“I will be returning to Japan,” Seto continued and you did your best not to look crestfallen at the fact he was already going back to Japan.

He must have felt your emotion through the bond because Seto turned from the window. “I will be back as soon as I can. There is business I will need to attend to. In the meantime, I want you to stay with Mokuba.. He is the only one I can trust to keep you safe.”
To keep you safe…?

“So you’re not mad at me anymore?” you questioned.

Seto sighed and turned back towards the window. He closed his eyes and leaned his forehead into the glass. “No,” he finally answered. “This is more important than a stupid argument. When this is over, we need to talk. Until then, I would prefer to move past what happened tonight.”

Truth be told, you were still more than a little pissed. However, Seto was right. There would be time later and right now, this was more important. Also, you preferred having Seto on your side than mad at you.

“What about my house?”

Seto turned away from the window and stepped close to you. He looked down at you with his eyes full of an emotion you could not decipher and wondered what had happened to change his mood so suddenly. His hand reached under your chin to tip your face upwards.

“I will take care of it,” he replied before his lips met yours. The kiss intensified and Seto bent his knees to stoop and capture his mouth with yours more thoroughly. Your arms snaked around his chest and in spite of the weight of your purse, you felt yourself melting into his kiss, pressing forward and with more urgency. Seto gripped your ass, pushing you closer to him.

The knock on the door interrupted the kiss. For a moment, it was as if Seto was not going to pull away, but the second knock caused him to sigh before pulling away.

“Call Mazaki when they leave,” he reminded you before answering the door and greeted two detectives, hotel manager, convention chair, and head of security.

_The cavalry has arrived_, you thought dryly.

The investigation and interview was surprisingly fast and just as Seto predicted, nothing was stolen. Well, nothing except for Seto’s flash drive and some documents you saw him working on earlier. Or so you told the investigators. After the field Museum, lying to law enforcement and federal agencies was starting to become easy.

During this, you and Anzu were texting back and forth and after learning what happened, she immediately called you and said she would pick you up.

Seto had taken the phone from you and stepped into the bathroom. When he handed you the phone back, an annoyed-sounding Anzu said that she would meet you at a restaurant nearby.

When everyone had left the room, you returned the Millennium Rod to Seto along with the contents you picked up and stuffed in your purse. Seeing as how you were not going to be staying here, there was no point in looking fancy. You gathered your actual clothes and stuffed a few essentials into the tote bag before changing. Seto told you to just leave the rest of your belongings and he would take care of it.

You were not going to argue.

With a final good-bye kiss, you left the room and tried not to think about what he would be doing when you left.

You tried to do a lot of ‘not thinking’ while your GPS led you to the spot. Of course, that was like giving someone explicit instructions not to think of a pink elephant and fully expect them to comply.
Everything was beginning to weigh heavily on you and the events over the past few hours—the fight with Seto, his attitude, the break in, and picturing your home a disaster—only increased your burden.

Dodging and moving past the mass of people usually helped make you feel anonymous and forget about your day-to-day problems. Now, it just reminded you how isolated you felt. You just wanted to be at home, in your bed where you could just have your own private pity party.

Returning home from the Middle East and adjusting back to civilian life had been easier. There were others who understood or at least empathized. There were documentaries and a plethora of peer-reviewed articles your family and friends could use to help understand your experience.

All those people who had been there when you got home from deployment, when you finally got out of the military...they were pretty much gone. Or probably too sick of your shit to want to hear more of it.

Then again, how could you explain? How could one even begin to talk about the past month? You had survived an explosion, were now an owner of an ancient Egyptian artifact that liked randomly appearing (Oh, and that artifact? You were sure authorities would not understand your explanation). But in any case, the artifact is capable of sending people’s souls to hell and was supposed to allow you some precognition.

Maybe using the Millennium Necklace would be a good idea, but every time you thought of it, you just had zero desire to do so. It was like someone asking if you would want to spend a night in a haunted room full of clowns and spiders: No. Hard no.

Speaking of haunted things, there was Bakura. You had no idea how to even tell a sane, rational person about that hot mess.

But wait—there was more! People were honestly expecting you to have a goddamn clue how to find a missing person by using that magical ancient Egyptian artifact. You weren’t Sherlock Holmes! How were you expected to find Yugi? Who in their right mind elected you to be the responsible party?

You hated it when you were handed flyers, religious propaganda, or other stuff randomly on the streets or campus. It was always like, ‘Great, now I have to be responsible for recycling this paper.’ Now you were supposed to be responsible for ensuring someone’s survival. If Yugi died, you had no doubt in your mind that everyone would blame you.

Guilt, much like grief ebbed and flowed and when it was bad, escapism was easy. Yet, it was always one thing after another and there was no way to fall back into old habits.

Even if you did, you were not going to be the only one affected. The bond ensured that Seto would have to deal with the consequences of your actions. That was because in the midst of bombing a museum and stealing magical artifacts, someone had the great idea to use some type of magic to bind you to the CEO of KaibaCorp. You two constantly living in a state of constant readiness for sex was not such a bad thing; Seto was smart, handsome, and practically hemorrhaged money.

Anyone would want to hit that so hard that anyone who pulled Seto out would be proclaimed the rightwise born King of England.

Except you were

...Well. You.
No matter how Seto insisted that he had been initially attracted to you or how you reminded yourself that instead of banging you whenever he felt that he needed to before kicking you out of his bed, Seto was willing to pursue a relationship with you. Still, you could not change the way you saw yourself.

On top of that, your emotions were being broadcasted to him *constantly*. That meant that you needed to snap the eff out of this mental breakdown or whatever you were in the middle of because Seto did not need this.

“Leave me the fuck alone!” you snapped at a panhandler while you kept walking.

Your GPS let you know that the restaurant was in 300 feet. You spotted it from across the street and closed the app. There was not a bench in sight, so you sat on the fencing that surrounded a tree. You needed a minute to get yourself together.

Talking to Seto about everything was not an option. Not only did he have his own shit to deal with, but you imagined how it would go: Seto would ask if you were finished and when you replied that yes, you were done pouring your heart out, he would probably grunt and tell you that it was best to kill all your emotions. Or something. Either way, empathy was not his strong point.

Mokuba…

You did not know him that well, but he seemed a lot more empathetic and would understand this wild ride you had been thrown on. Yet, he also had his own shit since the only person above him at KaibaCorp was his brother. Besides, he seemed like the type to take you out clubbing to get your mind off things and that was something you could do just fine on your own.

Who did that even leave?

Seto had to have told you to go to Anzu for a reason. He must have felt your building anxiety through the bond. Did he hope that you would talk to her?

You did not know and were not planning on asking him tonight. Instead, you just sat for a few more minutes until you felt too self-conscious about loitering about and headed across the street.

You spotted Anzu sitting in a booth next to a guy with black hair and the prettiest green eyes you had ever seen.

“He is such an asshole,” you heard Anzu say as you approached the table.

“Reply to the text and say that we are going to completely corrupt her with the power of friendship,” the man insisted.

“Hard no,” Anzu replied. “If you want Kaiba to possibly *murder* you, then you can text him yourself.”

The man already had his phone in hand and was leaning over, but snapped a picture before Anzu realized what he was doing.

“Don’t worry babe, I’ll say I stole your phone, he promised.

Awkwardly, you took a seat across from the two. It turned out that the guy was Ryuugi Otogi. Apparently he was Anzu’s high school friend and Anzu shot you a look that was practically part of the Girl Code. It was the apologetic look you gave your squad when you did not want to invite bae out to Girl’s Night, but you could not blow him off, so here you both were.
Except they were just friends. They insisted.

“I am really sorry about the...you know,” Otogi began.

“It’s fine,” you said quickly, shutting down any further inquiries to your mental well-being. “Things happen. It’s life.”

“Still,” Anzu cut in diplomatically. “I can’t imagine any of this is easy for you--”

“Especially the dating Kaiba part,” Otogi added. “I think the Vatican should canonize Mokuba already.”

Anzu shot Otogi sharp glare and you had no doubt that she was currently kicking him until he shut up or currently stepping on his foot.

Yeah…

A few hours ago, you would happily talk shit about Seto to anyone with an ear to listen. Now, you just picked up the menu and pursued it like it held the meaning of life.

“Did you guys already order?” you asked. “I had a salad a few hours ago, but am totally willing to go halvesies on a pizza.”

Even if it is an inferior New York style pizza, you mentally added.

Eventually, you all came to a consensus on the type of pizza and placed the order. Once the waiter left the table, the awkward silence resumed.

“We poke fun at each other, but don’t mean any harm by it,” Anzu began while side-eyeing Otogi as if to warn him to keep his mouth shut. “Kaiba and I went to high school together and while we butted heads, I kind of think that is how things go when you’re a teenager.”

Thinking back to your own teenage years, you could only nod in understanding.

“Anyway,” Anzu continued but paused while watching patrons and restaurant staff move around the table. “You speak Japanese, right?”

Again nodded your head. Although Anzu was now speaking in her native tongue, she still lowered her voice. “Things were pretty crazy back then. I don’t know if you heard the stories, but our lives had some pretty dramatic moments.”

You were vaguely familiar with events. Or Bakura’s version of events.

“A little,” you admitted.

“It took years for me to look back on all of it and realize how much Kaiba always strived to do the right thing. I don’t think we could have made it without his help.”

You knew Bakura’s account of Duelist Kingdom, Battle City, and that RPG were extremely biased against this group of people, but you were pretty sure Anzu laying it on pretty thick right now.

Anzu looked down at her hands before looking back up at you. “I am pretty sure that I would not be alive right now if it were not for him,” she said quietly.

Otogi took a sudden and deep interest in his water.
You looked between the two and had to make sure that your jaw had not fallen off before you spoke. “Um...What?”

There was that coil of jealousy and you quickly told yourself that Seto would not suggest you go to Anzu if there had been anything romantic between them. Not after what happened earlier that day.

Still, no one dropped a bomb like that without finishing the story.

“What happened?” you asked. “I mean, if it’s a hard topic, you don’t have to go into it.”

Anzu leaned back in the booth and tapped her finger against her lip while she thought. “Well, to make a long story short: During the Battle City tournament, Yugi and Jounouchi were forced to duel each other in a death match. To ensure that they would duel and there would be no outside interference, I was restrained to a chair by this---gosh. I am trying to think of the right way to describe them...”

“The Ghouls?” Otogi asked and without preamble, he began to list off a bunch of synonyms for them. “They were bootleggers, thieves, kidnappers, probably murderers, and overall criminals.”

“What he said,” Anzu continued before you really had time to process that bit of information since Bakura conveniently left the Ghouls out of his story. You had thought Malik had been working alone.

“They...The Ghouls, that is, operated a crane carrying a crate wired with explosives and positioned it over my head. That way, if anyone interfered, they would release the crate. I am sure you can fill in the blanks on what would happen....”

Anzu’s eyes took on a faraway look for a moment as if she were once more on that dock, facing the possibility of being crushed to death.

“Kaiba tried to make it look like he was just trying to pay Anzu back for helping Mokuba out earlier that day, Otogi said to fill the silence. “I should probably let Anzu finish the story; she probably tells it better.”

Anzu seemed to snap back to reality. “I obviously did not hear what was being said, but I just remember wondering what Kaiba was doing since he was talking into his coat or something.”

“There was a microphone in his lapel,” Otogi added helpfully in spite of him saying he would let Anzu tell the story.

“Anyway, your boyfriend used a drone-- I think it was a helicopter drone, but a drone nonetheless--to crash into the crane, knocking it into the ocean. As this is happening, Kaiba draws a card--a Blue-Eyes White Dragon, no less--and uses it as a projectile to knock the remote controller that operated the crane right out of the Ghoul’s hand.”

“That’s some Bond level shit right there,” you breathed.

“No kidding,” Anzu agreed. “As the Ghoul is reaching to pick up the remote, Kaiba lunges at the guy and knocks him back down.”

“Let’s be real here: he had to go retrieve the card,” Otogi pointed out.

“I am sure we were all thinking it,” you replied because you knew how Seto felt about his trading cards.
You then looked back at Anzu and could not even begin to imagine how terrifying that had been. There had to be a lot more to that story and you were not going to pry. Still. They had been in high school at the time, a decade younger than you, and they managed to go through all of that before living normal productive lives.

“I admire your resilience,” you said solemnly. “That is a lot to go through when you’re so young.”

Any further conversation was put on hold when the food was brought to the table. The conversation took on a more lighthearted quality. You got some good information on how much of a drama queen Seto was in high school and learned that Mokuba had always been a little shit. Though Anzu and Otogi kept doing that thing where two people chat and semi flirt while completely oblivious to the fact the rest of the world knew they wanted to bang.

And they still haven’t gotten to their Settlers of Catan story. They had mentioned a Settlers of Catan story and any time they were about to get to it, there was always a new digression.

After some time, you were feeling a bit like a cockblock and decided to go waste a good five to ten minutes redoing your makeup in the bathroom, checking Facebook, and generally wasting time.

“I thought we were going to try to get her to talk about what’s going on with Yugi,” Otogi said after he waited a good thirty seconds once he assumed you were out of earshot.

“You’re such an ass,” Anzu muttered as she stirred her drink instead of glaring over at Otogi. “Can’t you see she’s upset? I am not going to pry information out of someone that doesn’t need any more shit right now.”

“So we just remain in the dark about Yugi?” Otogi questioned. “Just forget about him?”

“Of course not!” Anzu kept her voice as level as possible while she angrily stabbed at an ice cube with her straw. “He has been my best friend since we were in elementary school. Do not even suggest--”

Otogi threw his hands up in defeat. “Okay, okay. I didn’t mean to be a jerk about it. I just know that Kaiba’s got connections and is probably doing something shady right now, leaving us with babysitting duty.”

“You agreed to come,” Anzu pointed out.

“I seriously doubt Kaiba will say one thing to us if he has any leads. But you know how guys are when they let their guard down around women. They talk--”

“And ramble,” Anzu pointed out. “Like now. Get to your point.”

“She’s dating Kaiba. We know that he is an absolute psychopath who built an amusement park to try to kill you guys before.”

Anzu tilted her head towards the Gucci bag you had left in the booth. “Knowing Kaiba, that thing is probably bugged. I don’t know about you, but I’m not paying back a dime of that shush money, so shush.”

Otogi thought for a moment and decided that he was not going to risk finding out whether or not Kaiba bugged his girlfriend’s bag. “I just don’t see how asking someone for information will psychologically damage them.”

“There’s a time and place for everything,” Anzu said. “Like a diner at two o’clock in the morning
after an enjoyable night of drinking and dancing. That's when you really start talking.”

“So what am I, the honeypot in all of this?” Otogi asked while pretending to be offended. It did not work. “I mean, I know you would sell me to Satan for a decent bowl of ramen most days, but to whore me out to Kaiba’s girl?”

“If you’re really going to call it that, we’re the honeypot. Just don’t grind my ass all night and keep your hands off of her,” Anzu replied.

“For a honeypot, you drive a hard bargain.”

As if on cue, you had gotten bored and returned to the table. Taking a look at them, you decided you returned at a terrible moment. “So,” you began as an attempt to break the silence. “How about that Settlers of Catan story?”

Even when the check came and Otogi picked it up, paid, and you all headed towards the subway to Anzu’s place, they did not get to the Settlers of Catan story.

On the walk from the subway station to Anzu’s, you decided that there was no Settlers of Catan story; it was just an analogy to the futility of the human condition.

You were lost in thought, just kind of dragging behind Anzu and Otogi when Anzu turned her head towards you. “You look like you could use some fun. Would you be up to going out tonight?”

Who did they think you were? Some borderline alcoholic who jumped at any excuse to drink, dance, and shout ‘Whoo~ like you were at Coachella or something?

You could fool the world, but you could not fool yourself. That was exactly the type of girl you were.

“Don’t you have work tomorrow?” Otogi pointed out.

“I think I might have to take a sick day,” Anzu replied while shooting Otogi a look that was all like, *I thought we talked about this.*

Huh.

You wondered what that was about. You decided this was honestly none of your business. If it did not directly concern you, you were not going to pay any attention to it. After all, you has been close to complete mental breakdown in the heart of Manhattan a little over an hour ago. You wanted a cocktail.

No.

You *earned* a cocktail! Bonus if it had cute fruit and an umbrella garnish.
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Hopefully, everyone enjoyed the April Fools’ chapter. I keep telling myself it was super lame since I wrote each section during a break from grading midterms. (I am not sure why I’m trusted to teach undergrads a thing or two about psychology, but my department apparently thought it was a good idea). I am probably going to leave the chapter up for a few more days. I am going to post it on my Tumblr - xoxo--me.tumblr.com

But here’s the real chapter 23!

Kenneth Graham had been employed at KaibaCorp for the past six years. In Graham’s opinion, anyone who said they enjoyed their job was either lying or had not been working long enough. A former Marine, Graham figured the line of work was a lot better than being a cop. KaibaCorp paid well enough and the benefits were nothing to scoff at. Most days, he could get away with having extended cigarette breaks or playing random mobile games for a couple hours. Kaiba could be dick, but Graham usually did not have to put up with his moods long enough to really hate the guy.

Overall, he made an honest living; he was able to put food on the table, send his kids to private school, and make his monthly mortgage payment. A week ago, if anyone had told him that he needed to break into his boss’ hotel room, Graham would have told the person to fuck off.

That changed last Tuesday. Graham’s phone alarm had woken him up at usual, but when he went to turn the alarm off, he had noticed that the battery drained overnight from all the background applications running. His wife was still asleep and needed her phone charger for her own alarm. She had taken his charger to work (and kept forgetting to bring it back), so Graham wandered into the kitchen where the spare was to put his phone on to charge while he showered, shaved, and got ready for the day.

With his brain on autopilot, he had almost forgotten to grab his phone before leaving for work. However, his wife stopped him by telling him to not forget the envelope on the counter.

There had been no envelope on the counter that morning.

Confused, Graham returned to the kitchen to retrieve his phone and manila envelope that definitely had not been there that morning. Once he got to his car, he tossed the envelope in the passenger’s seat and forgot about it until he got back to his car that evening.

The moment he saw the contents of the envelope, he knew that he was fucked. The life he had built for himself, his family, everything. He was about to lose it all.

In order to save everything he had worked for, Graham had to do was one thing. The contents of the envelope outlined it in careful detail and at the same time, warning him of the consequences if he chose to ignore the missive.

Graham was not sure why or how Jenner, Butler, and Hayes had gotten involved in this, but he was not going to ask. He had himself to worry about.
Everything had gone well; the security cameras had gone offline like they had been told. All members of Kaiba’s security detail had keycards to enter the room, but they needed to break the lock to make it look like a random break-in. That was where Hayes came in.

Now inside the room, they had exactly twelve minutes to find that staff and necklace and get out. The plan had been to grab valuables and leave. Once he dumped the girlfriend’s suitcase, Graham just could not bring himself to take anything.

“This is the same laptop I bought my sixteen-year-old daughter,” Hayes commented. “Trust me when I say it was cheap.”

Graham left like he was looking at his wife’s closet. There was some nicer looking stuff, but not enough to scream ‘daddy’s money’ like he pegged the girl as when he saw her.

“Leave the girlfriend’s stuff alone and let’s keep looking,” Graham said.

Almost seven minutes in, Hayes got a call on his radio and had to leave Graham. According to his timer, Graham had four minutes and two seconds to go before he needed to leave before the security camera came back online.

Two more minutes passed until he got a call on his radio from Butler. The girlfriend got into a fight with Kaiba and was just spotted entering the hotel lobby. There was no sign of the items and Graham just swore before making his way out of the room.

Graham had returned back to his post and put on his best poker face. Throughout the remainder of the evening, Graham surprised himself with how easy it was to follow protocol while appearing guileless.

Kaiba transferred to a different hotel and when Graham entered the room to give the evening report, he noted the girlfriend’s absence along with all of her belongings.

The fight must have been pretty nasty. Either that, or she was too spooked to stay in New York.

In spite of the late hour, Kaiba was still dressed in his suit and facing the window with his arms folded. Graham could see his boss watching him through the reflection of the windows.

“Kenneth Graham,” Kaiba said in greeting in his usual clipped tone. “If I recall correctly, you have been employed by KaibaCorp for the past six years. Generally good performance, no major disciplinary actions asides from a tardy every now and again.”

Graham tensed, feeling like a caged animal under his boss’ scrutinizing gaze.

They fucked up.

Swallowing, Graham tried to reason with himself. Butler, Jenner, and Hayes were fine. There was no way Kaiba would suspect him without any of the others. Unless they had ratted him out. That seemed unlikely, given the fact that there was no way to not implicate them.

“That’s right, Mr. Kaiba,” Graham tried to keep his voice level and remain calm.

Graham’s heart was beating so that he could hear the lub, dub as the muscle began to beat erratically. He swallowed hard while trying to steady his breathing.

The silence persisted.
Finally, Kaiba’s low voice cut through the air like a knife. “Tell me, Mr. Graham. Do you play chess?”

For the first time, Graham took note of the chessboard that had been set up at the small dining table.

Graham recalled talking to someone about chess at some point in time during his time at KaibaCorp, but did not remember who he spoke to. His paternal grandfather had taught him how to play chess.

During his adolescence, his mind often went into a frenzy from all the anger at home and school. Graham found serenity in the game. As a junior in high school, he had joined the chess club. His father had been a mean bastard and when he found out that his only son had been lying about where he went after school…

Well, the rest was history.

Graham debated denying that he knew how to play but thought better of it. His nerves were getting the best of him, he decided. More than likely, Kaiba was just looking for some company since his girl was gone.

“It’s been a while, sir,” Graham admitted.

“Likewise,” Kaiba replied. He turned from the window just enough to gesture to the chess board. “Please join me for a game.”

Graham remembered one of the many urban legends surrounding his boss. Rumor claimed that both Seto and Mokuba Kaiba had been adopted by Gozaburo Kaiba after Seto beat the man in a game of chess.

There was also the rumor that his boss had cheated during the chess match and Gozaburo had been impressed enough to adopt the boy. While Graham was not certain how one could cheat at chess, that rumor seemed more viable. Gozaburo Kaiba had been a Grandmaster and once achieved, the title was held for life. Yet, beating a Grandmaster was no easy feat and a child doing it seemed impossible to Graham.

Still, it meant that Kaiba was very good at chess. Graham just wanted to give his report, call his wife, tell his kids goodnight, and assuage his guilt and worries with a bottle of Grey Goose. Yet, he could not tell his boss no.

“Of course,” he replied.

A few moments later, he sat on the opposite side of the chess board from one of the most powerful men in the world. He was black while Kaiba was white.

Graham began to debate what his opening move should be. Kaiba lifted his eyes to meet Graham’s. He could see his own reflection through Kaiba’s burnished silver eyes. Graham felt a brief jolt of shock. He had thought his boss’ eyes were blue. Then again, it was possible he had been wrong.

What disturbed him was the coldness in the other man’s gaze. It was like death and Graham was afraid. Very afraid.

“A regular game of chess is rather boring, isn’t it?” Kaiba asked. He set his phone on the table next to them and Graham really hoped that Kaiba was not expecting any calls. He just wanted to get this game over with.
Still, Kaiba was expecting an answer.

“I guess so, yeah.”

Kaiba’s mouth moved a bit at the corners to attempt a smile. “I like your attitude, Mr. Graham. That is why you have been such a valuable employee.”

Graham frowned at how Kaiba immediately stood up from the table and unbuttoned his suit jacket. However, he felt his entire body tense up at what Kaiba was hiding in the breast pocket of the suit.

With one hand, Kaiba laid the suit jacket over the back of his chair before taking his seat with the Millennium Rod in hand. “Were you looking for this?” Kaiba asked, indicating the Millennium Item.

There was nothing he could say. Graham just stared forward, completely stupefied.

Ignoring the other man’s lack of response, Kaiba reached for his phone and thrust the device at Graham.

“Press Play,” he ordered.

Shakily, Graham did so and he expected to find a video of himself either entering or exiting the hotel room. Instead, he was watching a video of the disaster they had left the room.

Whoever was filming was filming in vertical. Who the fuck filmed in vertical?

The cameraman (or woman as Graham was guessing it was the girlfriend that was filming) somehow realized this. When she tried to turn the camera, she ended up dropping it to the ground.

He flinched at the noise, but a moment later, he heard Hayes’ voice addressing him by name and telling him to finish up.

While Graham sat in stunned silence, wondering how he was going to explain this to his wife, Kaiba snatched his phone back. Graham barely registered that happened. His brain was moving in slow-motion as his world collapsed around him.

Kaiba eyed him like he was nothing more than a bug.

“I will make a deal with you: beat me in a single game of chess and you will walk out of this room a free man. Make no mistake, your employment at my company is terminated, effective immediately. HR will confirm the dates of your employment as well as the reason for leaving my company, as I am legally required to do so,” Kaiba spat out the last part as if the idea sickened him.

“So…You won’t call the cops then?”

“That is correct,” Kaiba confirmed. “If you beat me, I will give you exactly ten seconds to get out of my sight and never cross paths with a Kaiba ever again.”

A glimmer of hope. He would need to find a different job, probably in another state, but that was something he would figure out on the way back to Illinois.

“Alright.” Graham breathed. He had no doubt in his mind that Kaiba had his phone out to contact the police if he refused the offer. “Let’s do this.”

All around him, a sickening mien surrounded them like an ocean.

It’s darkness.
“The first rule of business: never agree to a deal without knowing all the terms of that agreement,” Kaiba reprimanded in a tone that made it seem like he was undisturbed by how the entire atmosphere in the room made it seem like the shadows were about to swallow them all. “This game of chess will now be a Dark Game. This particular game will test your stamina and mental fortitude while drawing out your true character.”

Graham would call Kaiba absolutely insane for suggesting a game was capable of that. However, everything that was happening made Graham question whether or not Kaiba was telling the truth about this Dark Game.

“S-So what,” Graham stammered. “Whoever loses...dies Or what?” Nothing Kaiba had just said would suggest it, but everything around him had the pungent odor of decay.

Kaiba seemed to consider the question before those eyes fell back on Graham. “I was once told that defeat is the equivalence of death. So let’s see who is worthy of survival.”

With that, Kaiba made his opening move.

From that moment on, Graham was on the defensive and in just a few moves, his first pawn was captured. Then a second and a knight.

He just needed to think! If he could not win, the most he could hope for was a stalemate.

Graham felt sweat dripping from his hands each time he reached for another piece. He was surprised he did not drop anything or knock over another game piece.

Try for a stalemate, he reminded himself.

“Check,” Seto said evenly.

Graham studied the board. His King had been put in check by Kaiba’s Bishop. He had two ways to counter this: capture the Bishop, block the line of fire with his last Rook, or move the King.

Throughout the match, Kaiba had been relying too heavily on his Queen. Graham’s best course of action would be to try to capture the Queen. It would be an offensive move and might leave his King exposed, but right now it was his only hope for a stalemate.

In a few moves, Graham was able to move his King to safety and with how he kept moving his Queen away from him, Kaiba was now on defense.

Graham could see how Kaiba’s hand suddenly stiffened when he made his next move. Graham had to study the board for longer than he anticipated.

Had Kaiba made a mistake?

Graham became pensive. Throughout the match, Kaiba had been paying too much attention to his Queen. That reliance now made him vulnerable.

Graham wiped his sweaty palms on his pants and thought through his next few moves and any counters because this was almost too good to be true. Graham expected Kaiba to chuckle and inform Graham that he had been bluffing. Yet, the next few moves were executed perfectly.

Maybe Kaiba had been right about this darkness bringing out one’s true character. Maybe he had proven to be the better man, after all.
He was now so close to victory...

One more move and Kaiba’s Queen would be knocked out of the game.

Kaiba looked up from the board and quirked an eyebrow at Graham. The other man just ignored it. Kaiba could intimidate him all he wanted, it did not change the fact that he had been outsmarted and was about to lose--

Kaiba’s Queen captured his remaining Knight before Kaiba leaned back in his seat and regarded Graham as if he were nothing more than a chess pawn whose usefulness was about to come to an end.

“Checkmate,” Kaiba said, nodding at his Queen. “You lose.”

Graham went over any possible move his King could make while his hands trembled.

“Armature,” he heard Kaiba mutter.

None, Graham realized. There were no moves he could make.

How?

“I told you that a Dark Game draws out our true character,” Kaiba reminded him. “There is always a price to pay for hubris, Mr. Graham. You let your guard down when you thought victory was in your grasp. Because of your ambition, you became blind and forgot who your enemy was.”

Was Seto Kaiba lecturing him about arrogance and blind hubris? Was it really over?

It was not going to end like this. He was not going to let some corporate scum ruin everything he worked for over chess. No fucking way!

With one swipe of his hand, Graham knocked the chessboard to the floor and did something nearly every KaibaCorp employee wanted to do at some point: laughed in Seto Kaiba’s face.

“You are the most selfish, egotistic fuck I have ever met! Don't you dare lecture me about hubris, you piece of shit!” Graham spat at an unflinching Kaiba. “You never had to work for a living because you stole daddy’s company. No one can fucking stand you. You’re what--in your mid-thirties--and still unmarried? No kids. You’re so obsessed with a freakin’ dragon that you can’t even keep a real woman around. Congrats on that, bro. You're a billionaire and can't keep a woman. Think about it.”

Graham was unsure if he was shaking out of rage or fear, but he turned to leave. He needed to get out of the hotel as quickly as possible and call a lawyer.

“Remember Graham, you lost,” came Kaiba’s voice. “You have to pay the penalty game.”

Graham snorted and shot up his middle finger. However, he was unable to move another step forward. In fact, he could not even move. His eyes were the only part of his body he seemed to be able to control and they darted back and forth wildly as he tried to figure out what was happening to him.

“That was a very entertaining little speech,” Kaiba’s voice was getting closer. “I am sure you’re the type of person to lash out at someone and defend your callousness by saying that the truth hurts Or do you just tell it like it is?”
Graham could feel sweat dripping down his brow. He...he may have said those exact things at some point in time.

“So from now on, you’re only going to be able ‘to tell me how it is’. In fact, that is all you will be able to do from now on.”

Darkness devoured him and Graham tried to scream, but no sound came out. He fell to the carpet, dry heaving.

The room had returned to normal, but Graham knew that nothing was normal and would never be normal again.

“You seem like you need to get off your feet.” Graham’s head spun around to see Kaiba leisurely sitting on the couch. He pointed to the chair across from him. “Have a seat. I think you have a lot to tell me.”

You had only packed your normal clothes, not the fancy clothes you would wear going out. Anzu had rummaged through her closet and laid a few dressed out for you while you two chatted.

“Earlier, you mentioned that you admired how resilient I was,” she began when she held up a dress for you to look at.

You nodded in approval at the dress and she set it on the bed along with two other dresses for you to try on. You felt her hand on your shoulder and while you immediately tensed from the sudden contact, you allowed your muscles to relax.

“Back then, I had my friends looking out for me. I am sure that Kaiba is great, but…I just want you to know that I consider you a friend and you’re not in this alone,” Anzu finished with a smile.

You had tried to be strong, but you felt your lip quiver and soon, the entire dam holding back your emotions broke. For the next hour or so, you found yourself sobbing onto Anzu’s shirt, going on about how hard things had been. When you managed to calm down, you had used most of Anzu’s Kleenex, alternating between wiping your eyes and keeping the snotty mess your nose was becoming relatively mucus-free.

Showing this much vulnerability was humiliating, yet it was as if your body was finally able to let go and express all the pent up fear and trauma into one singular action. It felt cleansing.

Anzu had rubbed your back and handed you tissue after tissue until you calmed down enough to recount everything that had happened. Someone had handed you tea and since Anzu never left the room, you figured it had to have been Otogi.

You were surprised at how candid you were being, but Anzu just listened without judgment. It was like the last time you were able to talk to your…

You could not go there, not without the floodgates reopening. You quickly pushed that thought aside.

“I’m sorry,” you apologized while bundling up the Kleenex you had used. “I’m so fucked up.”

Anzu touched your wrist to stop you. “You are not fucked up,” she reassured. She shook her head before continuing. “I know I went through a lot as a teenager and after the dust settled and I realized it was all over, I knew I could not go to any therapist about it. Sometimes I still have nightmares about being held hostage, fighting for autonomy of my own body…It took years of trying to ignore
the pain, sleep it away, just work until I felt nothing, or even just fuck the pain away to get over it, especially when I moved to America. I was in a new country without the people who understood me the most and I made a lot of mistakes...Even after all these years and those mistakes, I don’t think I will ever fully be over it.

“I remember when I was seven years old. My mom bought me a beautiful yukata. It was white with cherry blossoms on it in various shades of pink and just so gorgeous. My mom could not stop me from wearing it everywhere we went that summer. I ended up tripping somehow…I really don’t remember. I just remember how the grass stains would not come off of it. I cried and cried over it and was inconsolable.

“One day, my grandfather took me aside and explained what’s called wabi-sabi. I forget how he put it. But basically, sometimes, things we perceive as pure and flawless get stained and dirty. That does not mean they are now flawed. Rather, they are different and it is beautiful. The idea wabi-sabi is to brace imperfection and from that idea, came kintsugi. It’s where you take some broken pottery and repair it with gold lacquer. I guess the idea is to see something that has gone through a lot of hardship as beautiful by embracing how it is now instead of how it was. It may seem silly, but that helped me through some pretty rough nights.”

Anzu finished and she looked down at her hands in embarrassment as you took it all in. “That probably wasn’t very helpful, was it?” she asked sheepishly.

“No,” you protested, “it makes sense! Thank you for listening, Anzu. I really do appreciate it.”

Anzu smiled warmly at you before her eyes fell on the dresses she had previously laid out. “I am going to put these away,” she said more to herself than anything

Your train of thought suddenly derailed and took a complete one-eighty. “Oh. You don’t want to go out anymore?”

Anzu regarded you as if you had grown three heads. “You still do?” she questioned.

“Unless you don’t,” you replied carefully. You were the guest and did not want to drag anyone out if it was getting too late.

“No no. I would love to,” Anzu insisted “I just did not think you would be in the mood to.”

“I feel a lot better, actually,” you replied while playing with a discarded Kleenex. You had been ready to lay down in a ditch somewhere about an hour ago. Now, you felt like you could perform some athletic feat, like punch a giraffe in the face. “I think you should start charging people for therapy or something.”

And honestly, you had felt so emotionally drained not too long ago. Now you were beginning to feel more and more energetic to the point that if you did not get rid of some of this energy, you were going to end up agitated and pacing the hallways all night.

Anzu studied you and you could not explain what was happening. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"Yeah, it's just...I'm not sure. It's like I got a second wind, but before coming to meet up with me, it chugged several Red Bulls."

The other woman's brows knitted in thought. "Is it the bond?" she asked and you felt a quick jolt of embarrassment since you did tell her everything. Literally everything. This girl had to have studied the sacred arts of mental kung fu on top of a mountain somewhere because she pretty much had you liking her the moment Mokuba introduced her back in Chicago.
Anzu was on to something though. Something had to have been going on with Seto. "I'm going to check in on Seto," you replied while reaching for your phone.

"We can wait until you hear back from him," Anzu suggested.

"Do you really think Seto is going to tell anyone if something is going on?" you deadpanned. By now, you were shaking one of your feet while typing out a text message.

You hated to bother him, but you wanted to put your mind to ease. 'Is everything okay? I'm feeling kind of. Not in a bad way! Just want to make sure you're okay though.'

Seto was not sure what time he allowed Graham to finally leave, but he was sure that it was late. It had been a long day and Seto should be exhausted. Yet, he felt energized after the raw, undiluted power surged through him throughout that Dark Game.

He went over what Graham's little 'This is why you suck' speech and his thoughts inevitably drifted to you.

Only hours ago, Seto was content to ignore you for the remainder of the weekend, He had hoped that you would be able to find a good deal on a flight back to Chicago since he was not flying you home. Throughout the week, Seto had been experimenting with his end of the and the best way he could describe it was being able to pull vertical blinds over it. While the blinds would not keep out the sun, he could at least get some peace.

You had left the mixer and Seto had assumed you would stumble back to he hotel room at some point to gather your belongings. However, the sudden surge of panic he had he sensed from you made Seto practically bolt out of his seat. It took several polite words and apologies until he practically jogged through the tunnel on the way back to the hotel. His phone vibrated and Seto ignored it until the second panic that did not fade was felt through the bond.

He read the text message about a break-in and turned to the security detail that were trailing behind him. Seto quickly noted that Jenner was present instead of with you. That would be addressed later.

For now, Seto issued instructions on contacting hotel and convention security before he hurried back to the room.

He had used the Millennium Rod to create an aversion to using the Millennium Necklace. Seto was well aware of the fact that left you as defenseless as a declawed kitten.

If anyone so much as laid a finger on you…

Death would be too good for them.

In the end, you were shaken, but unharmed. Next, Seto would deal with the defectors. The information he learned from Graham was minimal, but Seto knew who each of the co-conspirators were and had a general sense of where to begin looking to figure out who had been blackmailing his employees and why. That would have to wait until he was back in Japan.

For now, there were other tasks that demanded his attention. Such as a text message from you. *I am fine.*

Once he replied to your text, Seto made his way to the bathroom and turned the water on Cold. He splashed his face a few times before looking at his reflection. You had been right, he reluctantly
agreed, he did look dehydrated. He would also need to shave in the morning.

While staring at his reflection, the energy of the room shifted and once more, Seto could feel that raw undiluted power no mortal had touched for millennia. Hunggrily, Seto embraced that force and he knew exactly what to do.

It may have taken years to master, but Seto had become well-versed in the concept of not leaving any loose ends.

Graham had been allowed to keep his mind.

Living life as a thrall was like a prison. He could see his body obeying commands issued by an unseen presence. Yet, Graham could not open his mouth to scream while he wrote every word. If he were able to, Graham would cry and beg for mercy, but he could only hope for oblivion to come quickly. He put down the pen, switched off the light in his hotel room and Graham watched in horror as his legs carried him to his doom.

Seto placed the Millennium Rod securely in his briefcase before he finally decided to change out of his suit. It was well after midnight and while he had another long day ahead of him, he knew he would be unable to sleep.

Whatever Seto had done, the blinds that shielded him from the force of the bond had been thrown open and he could practically feel the vibration from the music and raucous energy of whatever club you were at. If he concentrated, Seto could almost smell the familiar scent of your body wash.

That power...You...

It was innervating and yet, it invigorated him to the point that Seto knew he could not sit around and concentrate on his work much less sleep.

Seto was never as promiscuous as his those closest to him. That list only consisted of Mokuba, so he supposed that was a poor comparison. Even so, Seto's sexual attraction to another person could wither as quickly as it sparked to life. He had made a grave error in believing that getting you out of his system would be enough. That first taste quickly spiraled into an addiction. Once again, he felt that persistent mindless desperation that refused to satiated until he was buried deep within you.

Seto had been with others who were more attractive, successful, or more intelligent than you. Yet, your allure transcended the bond you shared and he could not comprehend why or how it was possible.

He needed to get out.

Seto heard the alert of a text message from a number that was not in his contact list.

He frowned at the picture and subsequent message, but he could see the geolocation on the photo and knew just where to go.
Otogi insisted that he had a few ins at a couple of ComicCon after-parties.

Looking at the line, you were skeptical. Really skeptical.

After nearly a half hour, Anzu was now looked like she shared your skepticism. Meanwhile, you were practically bouncing from foot to foot to let off some of your pent-up energy.

A few more minutes passed before Otogi waved to someone outside having a smoke. “Hey, Spiff,” he greeted. “How’s it going?”

The guy--Spiff, evidently, called back in and security immediately opened the red velvet ropes to let the three of you in.

“I told you that I had an in,” he told Anzu. “I’ll meet you ladies inside. I’m going to go catch up with Spiff for a minute.”

“Is that guy’s name really a verb?” you asked Anzu.

“I’m not sure,” came Anzu’s reply just as you got to the front door. The bouncer waived the cover fee as soon as he spotted Otogi.

Once inside, you were going to check your purse into coat check, but the moment you saw the sign ‘Cash Only,’ you muttered to yourself, “I thought this was America.”

Fortunately, the weather was still nice enough not to need a coat. Otherwise, you might have caved and used the ATM that would automatically charge you $10 for the privilege of accessing your own money.

Luckily, the bar accepted debit cards.

While you were waiting at the bar for your drink, Otogi returned and announced that he got the group a table. It was not your group’s table, per se--you just ended up joining Spiff and some other people Otogi apparently knew. Which was good for you since you hid your purse under the light jackets and hoodies that were already at the table.

The music had a rough unmanaged style that just begged to be danced to. Sure, the cocktail did not have the garnish or umbrella you had hoped for, but that did not matter because you downed it and yanked on Anzu’s arm.

“Let’s dance!”

For a good while, that is exactly what you did. And goddamn, you knew Anzu was a dancer but you insisted for some lessons on the spot because she was making you look bad by comparison.

Time seemed to blur together and more than once, you were physically dragged back to the table to get some more water. Of course, it did not stop you from joining another girl in the group going to the bar to order another drink. Selfies were taken and Instagram names were exchanged so you could get a copy of the aforementioned selfie.

Throughout the night, it was apparent that you were the only one of your newly formed group who was not paired up. You were not going to pretend you were not feeling awkward about that. You
ignored the empty hollow hole in your chest by doing a lemon drop shot with Amber. She was apparently Spiff’s fiancée.

You threw your arms around Anzu and Otogi, who appeared to be having too serious of a conversation for your taste and proclaimed that they were your ride-or-die crew. Luckily for them, a new song came on and after you and Amber loudly announced that “This is my soong!” you both went back on to the dance floor.

Fortunately, every girl has been the only single one in a group at least once if not twice in their life and danced with you out of solidarity or to ward off the occasional creeper. Even then, you tried not to think about Seto.

“She’s like a fucking Energizer bunny,” you heard while you were trying to gulp down water Anzu thrust in your direction after she decided you needed another break.

You were not sure what had gotten into you, but at this point, you were pretty sure the only thing to calm you down would be tranquilizer guns used for elephants. You dutifully finished the water before disappearing back in the crowd.

“We need to put a leash on her,” Otogi said once he saw that you took off again.

You took a moment to reflect on your antics throughout the night. You knew you should feel a mild sense of horror at being ‘that girl.’ You just could not explain why you were doing any of this. You just felt so...tingly!

The energy from the crowd fueled you with how each body pulsated to the rhythm of the music. You were not even thinking about the time, how obnoxious you were coming off as, or how Anzu and Otogi might prefer to go home and sleep instead of babysitting your drunk ass.

No, all of that was lost to you as you rolled your hips and moved your body along to the beat of each new song. You were practically feeding off the energy of your fellow clubbers. Combined with the encouragement of the music and alcohol coursing for your system, it was a high in of itself.

Your body was slick with sweat and anyone looking at the way your eyes glimmered in the club’s flashing colored lights would need to do a double-take to make sure that they were real. You remained cognizant of others around you, of course. Yet, you paid no attention to anyone else unless some rando decided to try to dance with a lone woman. They were pushed away hard enough to let them know that you were not there for them.

One of your guilty pleasure songs finished. You ran your hands down your hips, shimmied and blinked as the flashing lights almost blinded you. Blinking several times, you spotted the bar and noted that it did not have a very long line. Swaying towards your destination, you were in your own world and unaware of anyone watching you.

Once you placed your order, you returned to the floor with the drink in hand as your prize. Taking a sip, you fished an ice cube out of the glass and rubbed it along your neck much to the delight of two broskis nearby.

“Want to do that to me next?” one of them asked.

You wrinkled your nose. Ew.

“Pass!” you called and moved away from them. None of them held a candle to Seto.

You tossed the ice cube on the ground and stomped on it with your heel. There. Now no one would
trip on it or anything. You were the responsibility champion~!

You scanned the club until you found Otogi and Anzu. They kept glancing over at you before bowing their heads close and speaking to one another.

You knew that look.

Slightly concerned, you and your cocktail made your way towards them. You really hoped they were not going to tell you they were leaving. They were your ride-or-die crew! You called each other that earlier.

Okay. So maybe you had thrown your arm around their shoulders after doing that lemon drop shot with Amber (Or was it Amanda?) and called them that. But still, they did not argue with your proclamation. Which was as good as them agreeing to ride this wave with you until it crashed!

Your argument was already forming in your head on how maaaybe if they wanted to be lame and leave, you could quietly take an Uber back to Anzu’s?

If you were sober, you would have realized how rude that was.

You were ready to roll a real-life Persuasion Check when you saw Otogi glance up from Anzu to look at whatever was behind you. His green eyes widened and mouthed the words, “Holy shit.”

Soldier and survivor instincts kicking in, you were about to use the nearest person as a human shield when Anzu just pointed behind you while giving you an indulgent nod. “Look who’s here.”

Still cautious, you glanced behind you and nearly dropped your drink. You would have demanded to know if it was Anzu or Otogi that ratted you out if they did not look equally stunned to see Seto approaching you.

Turning fully, your eyes locked. Seto had styled his hair differently probably as a way to make him look younger or trying to hide his identity. He was wearing his colored contacts, but the lighting effects made the lenses translucent enough to see his mirrored irises.

Seto did not look annoyed or angry that he had to come collect you after a night of making an ass out of yourself. Nor did he look like he was ready to murder you or anyone else out of testosterone-fueled rage.

Instead, Seto grabbed your glass from you and took a long gulp. He made a face like he had just drunk sugar, spice, and everything nice.

“Missed me that much?” you asked, taking Seto by his free hand. He allowed you to raise his arm so you could do a little twirl, much to your own inebriated amusement.

“Is this happening?” Otogi asked, bewildered and out of earshot. “Is this actually happening?”

“This is actually happening,” Anzu confirmed.

Seto handed you the drink back. He then took you by the arm and led to back to the bar so he could order his own drink. “Do you need another one?” he called.

“Nah, I’m good!” you replied, still trying to wrap your mind around the fact that Seto was actually here! That thought led to you remembering that your debit card was still open.

“Can I close my tab?” you asked a bartender while Seto was busy ordering his drink. You told them
your last name and your bank. You caught Seto’s eye and raised your drink as a cheers before you set about finishing it so you could leave the empty glass at the bar.

You began to drunkenly fill out the receipt and even after you decided to just move the decimal point to make it a twenty percent tip, you still needed to add that shit up…

Glancing over at what you were doing, Seto just told you what the total should be before he downed double shot like the goddamn champion you knew he was.

You hooted in appreciation because he barely even flinched doing that.

You signed your name on the receipt and Seto placed your credit card in his wallet for safekeeping. He then led you away from the bar.

You expected that he would march you right to the exit before giving you a look you would imagine a disappointed father gives his daughter after she comes in an hour after curfew and proceeds to throw up on the new carpet. Instead, you were moving further onto the dance floor.

Seto stared down at you with an indescribable look on his face. With a shrug, you flipped your hair and did an adequate piquette. You then fixed him with a raised eyebrow.

The corners of his mouth turned upwards in amusement at your antics.

Just staring up at him…

You knew he was not big on PDA and you well past the stage of your life where you thought constantly holding hands or touching your significant other in public was a sign of a healthy, functional relationship. Yet, you could not hold yourself back and wrapped your arms around his waist. You buried your face into his chest, just enjoying his scent.

The thought of him going back to Japan made you hold on to him even tighter.

“I don’t know what’s happening to me.”

Instead of replying, Seto’s hand wrapped around your own waist before it ran up your back and downwards, stopping just before he touched your tailbone. You were both just lost in each other’s touch that neither of you realized you started to move to the music until you felt Seto loosening his grip on your waist while he led. Seto was obviously more familiar with more formal dancing. However, you were able to pick up on his counts and move accordingly.

“I didn’t know you could dance,” Seto said.

You just smiled in the most charming and demure way possible. You were more familiar with solo dancing, but you had taken a swing dance class with your (at-time) boyfriend. You had both watched the Great Gatsby and it seemed like a good idea. That had been the beginning of the end of that relationship and to this day, you maintained that he had no rhythm while he accused you of being too aggressive. (Well yeah, you had to be because he had no rhythm whatsoever).

Seto did not need to know that and you did not even want to think about that. Not when you were together with someone like Seto. This fine specimen of a man that he was.

With your heels adding to your height, you were able to throw your arms around Seto’s neck. Rolling your hips into his, Seto picked up on the hint. He moved in closer to you and placed his hands on your waist and the way he slowly slide them downwards sent waves of heat throughout your body.
His hands stopped at the proper spot and your disappointment lasted only until the new song started up. Immediately, you canted your hips forward and both you and Seto began to dance sensually to the music.

A low hum of pleasure began to build up each time your hips molded into one another’s. Seto’s hands were teasing, his fingers ghosting their way down your body, following every curve and contour of your form. You closed your eyes and simply let the music and sensation of him guide your moment.

All the problems that seemed so catastrophic just hours ago was nothing more than a memory as long as this man’s gaze was upon you. It felt like the electrical charge in the air right before a thunderstorm. If you had gotten a rush from before, being with Seto like this was practically a needle right into your arm.

Craning his head forward, Seto’s lips left butterfly kisses along your throat and you tilted your head back, offering your throat to him like he was a predator and you the prey.

You let out a cry of pleasure as those butterfly kisses became more heated, not caring about your surroundings. At this moment, your awestruck new friends were irrelevant. Especially not when yours and Seto’s mouths came together, causing every inch of your body to thrum with a mixture of heat and desire.

Once again, your bodies practically molded together and you allowed yourself to tilt your head up at Seto. His face bathed in the rapidly changing color lights while he stared down at you, getting an ample view of your cleavage. The urge to feel his hands against your naked flesh began to crescendo.

“Let’s go,” Seto’s heated words were inches from your ear. Still too drunk on this sensation, you nodded complacently. You were too lost in a world that consisted of each other to feel remotely embarrassed when you heard Anzu call out your name.

You still could remember, however.

“My purse!” you exclaimed. You spun around and gave Anzu a hug as thanks and apology for being a dumb drunk bitch. In doing so, you all but collapsed in Anzu’s arms with her practically helping you outside while Otogi carried your purse.

Anzu, bless her heart, insisted it was okay. Seto was stone silent behind you and bristling like a pissed off cat

“You are my ride-or-die crew, you know that?” you slurred as Otogi handed you back your purse.

“I think that’s the third time you said that,” Otogi replied while stepping a respectable distance from you.

“Fifth,” Anzu insisted.

Shrugging, you made your way back to Seto, giving the light post a quick twirl on your way. You then latched onto Seto’s arm like it was a life preserver and you were on the Titanic. Except you would not be dumb like Rose and get Leonardo DiCaprio killed. Fuck that!

While you were planning on how you would share that stupid door with Seto to avoid him dying from hypothermia, plans were made. Otogi would meet you (and probably a supervising Seto) in order for you and Anzu to get your respective belongings bags. You were wearing her clothes and she had your Gucci bag.
You tried to remember where you put the Millennium Necklace and patted the outside of your purse to see if it was in there. You gave up after a moment or two. Ah well, you thought, it would find its way back to you eventually.

“Are you two going to be okay?” Anzu asked. By now, you were lightly swinging Seto’s arm back and forth since it kept you entertained instead of making out with him on the spot.

“We’ll be fiiiine,” you insisted practically snuggling Seto’s arm at this point. Realizing that your boyfriend was probably not thrilled with your public display, you decided to just hold his hand. He tolerate you so sweetly…

“Didn’t you need to get away for the night because of the break-in?” Anzu questioned while looking up at Seto for answers. He remained silent because he was probably having some kind glaring contest with Otogi.

Which meant that you had to be diplomatic. You were good at diplomacy.

“Seto makes good decisions,” you dismissed with a hand wave. “It’s probably fine.”

“Alright then,” Anzu said, unconvinced that everything was okay.

“Oh shii--I forgot to call an Uber,” you mumbled to yourself before looking up. “Oh hey. A cab!”

As if remembering your manners, you looked over at Otogi and Anzu. “You guys can have this one,” you insisted with a nod that would seem fitting on an empress granting her subjects a boon.

“We took the rail here, so we’re going to take it back,” Otogi reminded you.

Ah well. You tried to be polite.

After waving farewell, you tilted your head up to look at Seto. “Do you want to take a cab?” you asked.

As a reply, Seto practically stuffed you in the cab before barking out instructions to the driver.

You were not wearing a seatbelt, so Seto pulled you closer to him and put an arm around your shoulder. Immediately, you snuggled up into him. “How come it seemed like you wanted to punch Otogi?”

“He sent me a text,” Seto replied. Without moving you, he reached in his back pocket for his phone and you tried to memorize his lock screen pattern to no avail. He pulled a text where you were dancing with Anzu and Amanda (or was it Amber?) with the caption ‘~Friendship is Magic~’

Otogi sent another text, damning Seto for as Otogi put it, ‘Unleashing this horror on them.’ The final text was Otogi asking if you had an Off button or if he would have to find a tranquilizer gun.

You wondered if there was any beef between the two men because while that was kind of rude, Otogi was not really saying anything that was not true. Overall, it was harmless. Then again, you were definitely more laidback than Seto. So if you considered something harmless, Seto might take it as an insult to his great ancestors.

But hey...That picture.

“Send me that pic. My hair looks on point,” you mumbled into his shoulder.
Immediately, you sat up because you had a new idea. You dug through your own purse (oh hey, there your Millennium Item was!) and pulled out your own phone. “C’mon, let’s take a selfie!”

“No.”

You ran your hand up Seto’s thigh and leaned against him so your breath was on his ear. “Seto,” you purred, flicking your tongue against his earlobe while your hands traced their way around his knees, moving further up his body. You paused right before his crotch. All the while, you could hear Seto inhale deeply.

“You’re leaving tomorrow and won’t be back for a while. I just want to have a cute picture with my boyfriend. Please…?”

Seto exhaled and rested his head against the seat rest momentarily as he considered giving in. You decided to sweeten the deal by running your hand over the growing bulge in his pants. “It will make me happy…”

Your fingers began to inch towards his zipper.

“Give me your phone,” Seto breathed.

You already had the camera opened when you handed him the phone. Seto decided he did not like the first picture and had to take three more until you were both satisfied.

“Since you wanted a cute picture, let’s do one more.” He kissed your cheek while you looked positively delighted. That was definitely Facebook Profile Picture worthy!

“Now I just need to get one with your three Blue-Eyes and I can die happy,” you said, reviewing the pictures. Seto impatiently traced his thumb along your thigh.

“You will have to convince me to let you first,” he replied while looking to see whether or not the taxi driver was studying them in the rearview mirror.

“You throw a Blue-Eyes White Dragon card around like a goddamn shuriken, but you won’t let me in a picture with it?” you questioned. Honestly, you were not sure if you should be offended or not.

“Who told you about that?”

“I just watched the gif of it online a few days ago,” you replied sarcastically before eying him. “Who do you think?”

“I am just surprised you and Mazaki talked about that,” Seto concluded.

The taxi began to slow down and pulled up outside of the hotel. Seto reached for his wallet, but you got your debit card out first.

“I can pay,” you insisted. “I wanna feel like I contribute equally to our relationship. I know you hemorrhage money, but it is jus’ how I was raised.”

You did not want to talk about your family or upbringing, so once you got out of the cab, you decided to change the subject. “Have you ever just threw cash in the air to make it rain?”

“Would you like to see it?” Seto asked lowly.

“Babe, I would fucking twerk if it meant you stuffing twenties...or even singles in my panties. Fuck, you could even use Monopoly money for all I care. As long as it’s you”
It was late (or very early, depending on one’s perspective) and if Seto cared about you talking loudly in the hotel lobby like that, he made no indication of it. Instead, he looked pensive as if he were considering heading to the ATM to see if you would really do that.
Chapter 25

You did not know the new hotel, but you confidently led the way to the elevators. It may have taken a bit longer than if you just let Seto guide you, but you were determined. You finally pressed the button and nodded at your boyfriend. You were still contributing to this equal partnership.

As soon as the elevator doors closed, Seto pulled you towards him and ran a hand through your hair. “Do you still feel weird?” he asked.

“I feel drunk,” you replied but with how serious he was looking, you added, “No. I think I’m back to normal. How ’bout you?”

Seto just nodded his head and took your hand once the elevator doors slid open. While walking, you mused that once again, alcohol was the cause and solution to all of life’s problems.

Seto unlocked the door to the hotel room and laid down on the couch with his arms tucked behind his head. There were some bottles of water sitting out and you started downing one.

“So,” he began once you came up for air, “If you want to take that selfie with my Blue-Eyes, you’re going to have to do exactly what I say.”

Instead, you capped the bottle of water, set it aside, and patiently waited for your first order.

“Make me a drink,” Seto ordered.

“Whaaa? Oh. Sure. I mean, right away, sir,” you replied with a half-assed curtsey. You looked around the room for alcohol and only spotted the mini bar.

You staggered to the fridge and felt yourself become just a little more sober when you saw how much everything cost.

“Um...Do you really wanna pay for this? I mean, it’s kinda expensive,” you questioned. Seto could wipe his nose with $500 and not care. Still, you needed to be sure. You didn’t need him to be all pissy with you.

“I don’t care,” came the reply.

You just shrugged and surveyed the contents of the mini bar before deciding what you were going to make. You could turn on the coffeemaker to boil some water for simple syrup, but you decided the microwave because you were too drunk to figure out the coffeepot.

Seto watched while you went to work mixing the water and sugar. His expression took on a look of mild horror once you stuck the coffee mug in the microwave. “Relax, I made microwave cake before. I got this.”

Somehow, that did not improve Seto’s faith in your abilities. You could not imagine why. Whatever, you just continued to drink your water and hoped you would not puke.

You pulled the mug out of the microwave and stirred before setting it on the counter. Usually, you would grab a bunch of citrus fruit at the continental breakfast and store it in the fridge, but you could improvise with some Sprite. That was kind of citrus-like.

There was also no Vermouth, so you really had to get creative with the champagne. That was kind
of like Vermouth. Maybe.

This was not going very well. At least they had whiskey.

Grabbing a glass, you slowly added your ingredients before mixing it all together. Faking confidence, you handed the glass to Seto. “A hotel room Manhattan,” you announced.

Seto took a slow sip and waited a few moments. “It’s not bad,” he concluded.

“I told you I was an expert,” you reminded him. “I was gunna use the white wine for the Vermouth, but I then ‘membered you said something like, real men did not drink wine.”

“Much obliged,” Seto replied.

For your own drink, you used the champagne and mixed it with some juices. You opened the bottle of cheap champagne, so you might as well drink it. You moved the glass to your lips before you decided maybe you needed one more bottled water before alcohol.

“What happened earlier?” you asked, taking a seat on the chair near the couch.

“What do you mean?” he asked.

You spotted something from the corner of your eye and reached under the coffee table to pick it up. It was a white queen. Chess?

You had been wondering why there was a chess board on the small dining room table. Weird.

“You haven't had any weird feelings or anything?” you inquired while fiddling with the chess piece to keep your hands busy. “As in weird enough to want me to go with Anzu. But then, track me down, drink, ‘n dance with me.”

“Nice alteration,” Seto commented. He studied you over the glass you had made the cocktail in before draining it. “I will take another one.”

You rolled your eyes, set the chess piece down and stood to go make him another goddamn drink. “Do you want a sandwich while I am up?” you asked dryly.

“I’m not too sure if you’re being sassy or just being a bitch right now.”

“I thought it was a woman’s job to bring her man a sandwich,” you replied innocently, deciding to make a lot of simple syrup right away so you would not have to do it again.

You put the mug in the microwave and turn it on for a good twenty seconds. “There’s a turkey sandwich. A ham sandwich...And...I think that was it.”

“I’m good,” came Seto’s reply. “Glad you're not being a bitch right now.

With a slight self-deprecating chuckle, you gave him the most loving one finger salute before turning back to the microwave.

You opened the microwave with three seconds left and began to stir the concoction. “I’m not complaining or anything. Especially because I don’t like being a bitch. I jus’ like seeing this side of you.”

“Being drunk and honry?”
“The fun side of you, asshole,” you corrected.

“I’m glad that I could practically hear the comma or I would be a little concerned.”

Seto was using this little tête-à-tête as a distractor in hopes that your drunk ass would take the bait and change the subject. You were on to his Jedi mind tricks!

“Well now, aren’t you just the most clever boy in class?” you cooed. You finished mixing the alcohol in with the rest of the ingredients before handing him the drink.

Once more, Seto sat up and took a long gulp and glanced over at you when you took your own seat next to him. “Like I was saying, it is not as if I am complaining. I was expecting to--I dunno, pass out on Anzu’s couch and not get to spend these extra few hours with you. So this was all like, super nice...A pleasant surprise. Yet...I don’t know what happened. I had a blast, don’t get me wrong. I just know I looked like I ended up snorting--”you immediately caught yourself and finished with “...Pixy Stix.”

You pulled at a loose string on the couch pillow while. Seto was studying you to see if you would continue or not. While you were quite intoxicated, you knew that you would need to make sure this next part did not come off as an accusation or overly demanding.

You were going to have to bring out the big guns.

You placed a gentle hand on Seto’s knee and looked up at him with a beeching gaze filled with pathos. “Did something happen?” you asked quietly. Your eyes were no longer the correct color to give a perfect puppy-dog eyes, but you hoped it would be close enough.

Seto’ remained silent. It was fine, he had Mokuba for a younger brother, so you expected him to have some resistance to the youngest child charm. Seto was good, but you were better.

You also had the advantage of making him feel your concern.

You just sighed and squeezed his knee. “It’s fine,” you said with a hint of sadness in your voice. “I just worry, y’know?”

You slowly stood up from the couch. “I’m going to get some ice,” you explained. You were glad that your back was facing him. Otherwise, he would have seen your self-satisfied smirk the second you heard the sound of his glass hitting the coffee table followed by Seto saying your name with a sigh.

“Sit down,” he ordered.

With your eyebrows shot up in surprise, you turned around to look at Seto before taking a seat next to him. Seto grabbed you by the waist and hoisted you in his lap.

“Let’s just have a nice night,” Seto said, wrapping his arms around you. He began to plant kisses on your neck, leading down to your breast. With each kiss, he began to speak. “There will be plenty of time for questions when I get back. It’s just like you said, we get to spend some extra time with each other.”

You were like putty and could only nod your head, agreeing with him. You liked this much better than fighting and grinded your ass into Seto’s crotch, eliciting a pleasant groan. Seto’s arms tightened around your hips and drunkenly thrust into you.

You threw your head back and met Seto’s lips in a heated kiss. “So. About that selfie with your
“Right now, you have only earned a selfie with one of them. I’m not convinced you earned the right to the other two.”

You thought for a moment before you came up with a plan of action. Standing up, you dug your phone out of your purse and pulled up a Spotify playlist. You chose five songs and created a new (private) playlist and just ran your hand across the screen for a random name.

Once done, you looked in the bedroom and spotted a speaker dock. Placing your phone on it, you headed back to the living room/dining area and grabbed one of the small dining room chairs. It took a couple of tries to balance it, but you were finally able to carry it into the bedroom.

Seto had been watching you with a mild smirk because he did not have to be a bona fide genius to understand what you were planning.

You emerged from the bedroom and grabbed the bottle of champagne before putting your lips around it and taking a swig. You were starting to sober up and needed a little boost of liquid courage.

Making your way back to the bedroom, you stopped and glanced over your shoulder. “I would ask if you’re coming, but I already know you will be by the time I am through with you.”

Seto drained the rest of his glass and followed you.

“Take a seat, Mr. Kaiba,” you purred the moment he stepped into the room.

You waited by the docking station on the nightstand. When he took his seat, you hit Shuffle. Immediately, you wanted to hit Shuffle again, but decided to roll with it. You used the introduction to move to the other side of the room before you threw your head back, then spun around.

Making eye contact, you licked your lips and canted your hips. Reaching behind you, you unzipped your borrowed dress and let it pool around you. Stepping out of it, your hips moved in time to the music while you approached Seto in a slow meandering saunter.

You reached down to undo a few buttons of Seto’s shirt before circling back around. You threw your hair back to make sure that Seto had his eyes firmly on you. With a smirk, you mouthed along to a few words of the song. You then moved into a low squatting stance and thrust your hips.

To show off how strong your leg muscles were, you stood back up, bent your knee and moved into a retiré. You then moved to perform a one leg squat. Even with alcohol numbing your sensation of pain, your muscles protested, but you did your best not to let the stain show on your face. The move still had its intended effect.

Once again moving into an upright position, you quickly stretched your abused leg muscles before moving back to Seto.

“I think I just earned the privilege of holding the second Blue-Eyes White Dragon,” you announced.

“Did you?” Seto inquired.

You roughly pushed Seto’s shoulders against the chair and kept your hands firmly on them. Straddling his hips, you rotated your hips while moving against his thighs. Straightening yourself out, you turned and promised yourself that you would not wear heels for the remainder of the month if your muscles just continued to be the champs you knew they were.
You leaned back with your shoulders against his chest, moving down slowly until your ass was against his erection. You grinded against him once and immediately shot up once Seto grabbed ahold of your hips.

“Naughty boy,” you playfully admonished, “I never gave you permission to touch.”

You licked your finger and traced your cleavage, circling your breast while maintaining eye contact with him. You could touch all you wanted, but he couldn’t. You tracing the skin of your body and fondling your breasts was driving Seto wild.

You then had an idea and grabbed the champagne bottle, holding it to Seto’s lips while he took a long drink.

Once Seto indicated that he had enough, you moved back away from him, your free hand grazing over his erection. You then brought the bottle to your own lips and tipped your head back.

The champagne got on your mouth, mostly. It also missed a lot more of your mouth, running down your face and neck.

Fuck!

You could play that off as intentional, you totally could.

Guiding your hands from your neck to your breasts, you pretended to rub the champagne in and just knew that it was going to be sticky and gross in the morning. At least you were not wearing Anzu’s dress. Still, it forced Seto to watch as you continued to touch yourself.

The straps of your bra fell down your shoulders and the cups holding your breasts were beginning to droop as well. Once more, you returned to Seto and dropped down towards his lap while continuing dancing.

“I will take off one item of clothing if you say I earned the third Blue-Eyes,” you said.

“And then you’ll stop?” Seto asked.

“Why would I stop at that when I am after the Ultimate Dragon?” came your reply.

Seto’s eyes darkened and immediately, they reached out to unhook your bra straps. He tossed the bra aside and pulled you onto his lap, pressing his lips urgently into yours. With your breasts bare, he kneaded it hard before moving down to mark your neck and chest to claim you as his and punish you for teasing him.

Seto’s tongue lapped at a hardened nipple before lightly grazing it with his teeth. You inhaled deeply, just savoring this moment. When Seto’s hands found its way down your stomach and between your legs, you playfully swatted them away.

You stood up and looked at him with all the authority you could muster. “Take your clothes off,” you commanded. “I told you that I am after the Ultimate Dragon.”

While you helped Seto with unbuttoning his shirt, you stood back and waited while he undid his belt and stepped out of his pants and boxers. You gestured for him to sit back down, you pulled your hair back and dropped to your knees.

Okay.
You were doing this.

You had tried giving Seto head before and he had stopped you. He still looked apprehensive, but did not try to stop you this time.

You (and pretty much every hole) were no virgin, but giving a new guy head for the first time? You had to take a moment to tell your brain it was no big deal to put your mouth around someone’s dick.

Your tongue flicked the head while your hand made sure to pull down the remaining foreskin. Circumcision was so common in America and you never really thought about the fact that it wasn’t as common in Japan until literally just now.

At this point, you were not sure how many times you and Seto had sex. However, having him buried balls deep inside you was much different than sucking him off. Now that you were truly up close and personal, you were not sure how you could take all of him.

You did allude to the fact that his cock was the *Ultimate* Dragon...

Your hand moved along his shaft while you continued to tentatively lick his head, ignoring the precum. Definitely ignoring the precum.

Seto’s body initially tensed at the contact, but relaxed when his brain reasoned that it was you and you would behave yourself down there. Finally deciding to just go for it, you took him in your mouth and heard Seto grunt. With your hand moving to the base of his cock, you continued to take more of him.

You hollowed out your cheeks to create more suction before you began the familiar motions of bobbing your head. After doing that for a little bit, you raised your own mouth away from him to breathe. Allowing your tongue to slide down the vein on the underside of his shaft, it traced its way back upwards before you took his entire cock as deeply as you could.

You moved your head up while making use of your tongue. Seto thrusted into your mouth and you had to fight to control yourself as your gag reflex gave a warning clench. You came up for air and to settle your stomach. Meanwhile, your hand cupped his balls just as you ran your tongue along the underside of his length. The sound of Seto genuinely *moaning* was all the encouragement you needed to take his cock back into your mouth. While you let Seto enjoy the warmth and wetness of your mouth, you caressed his balls with the palm of your hand.

“You’re too good at this,” Seto breathed.

That was not the first time you had been told that. Instead of answering, you just hummed as a response to create vibrations in your throat. Now that you were getting into it, you swirled your tongue around him as you once again, took as much of him as you could without gagging. You used the natural lubrication to alternate stroking and pumping what part of him did not fit. With your other hand, you alternated with how you stimulated his balls.

Soon, you felt his cock begin to throb and knew he was getting close. With a regretful groan, Seto pulled you off of him and onto your feet.

“Wait,” you began, “don’t you want to--?”

Immediately, you shut up when Seto practically ripped off your panties. You understood the message, loud and clear.

Reaching for the bottle of champagne, you took a gulp before swishing the alcohol around your
mou

“Is the taste of my cock really that bad?”

Swallowing, you knew exactly how to reply. “I don’t think guys like to taste themselves. Next time, however, you’re going to cum in my mouth.”

Seto did not know how to reply to that.

Climbing on to Seto’s lap, you pressed his tip against your folds before easing yourself onto him. Seto’s head fell backwards with his lips slightly parted.

Seto wrapped his arms around your waist to steady you while you rode him, hips grinding into his. Fuuuuck. You slowed down your pace to delay your own orgasm. Your lips were now only centimeters apart, allowing your pleasured breaths to mix together.

You looked up to see that Seto was already gazing down at you. He closed the distance between your lips and you could not help but moan into him. As the kiss deepened, Seto’s hands glided along your curves until they reached your breast. With both his hands, he began to thumb your nipples, creating even more stimulation. You felt yourself pick up the pace and Seto met your thrusts; the skin of his thighs slapping against your ass. You rolled your hips one final time before you rode out your orgasm.

You buried your face into the crook of his neck and with several more thrusts, you heard him breathe your name before reaching his own climax. For a moment, you two held on to each other while you caught your breath.

Finally, you spoke up. “Please tell me that I am not the only one who thought Neutron Blast as you were cumming.”

Seto’s short refractory period and sudden kiss told you that no, you were not alone.

Bzzzzt Bzzzzzt

Your phone vibrating in the speaker dock alerted you to the fact that it was morning. Wearily, you reached out for it only to become aware of the fact that Seto’s arms encircling you preventing you from moving. It also was majorly cutting off your circulation.

Who was calling you this early? Anyone close to you knew never to call you before noon on a weekend…

You managed to wiggle your arm free enough to reach out and grab the phone. You hit the side button to silence it before it work Seto up. Meanwhile, your bleary eyes began to adjust enough to read the screen.

Alarm.

Why was your Alarm calling you…?

Oh.

You were an idiot. You had set your alarm sometime after the sex but before you blacked out from insisting you and Seto needed to finish the champagne bottle.

Ugh... Why did you think that had been a good idea?
You slipped out of Seto’s arms and landed on the floor. In response, Seto groaned and just turned over to continue sleeping. Which was fine, he was the one who needed the sleep more than you did.

All you had to wear was Anzu’s dress and whatever clothes Seto had haphazardly thrown out for you when you insisted you needed something to wear in the morning. It consisted of sweatpants, a t-shirt, and hoodie plus Anzu’s shoes.

Once you had the t-shirt on, you slowly and quietly looked through Seto’s stuff until you remember about his pants from the night before. Taking the belt, you slipped on the sweatpants and pulled the string as tightly as it would go before tucking the shirt in. The pants still hung on you, so pulled them up as high as possible. You used the belt to try to make it fit a little better. That barely worked, but it was better than nothing. At least you were going to wear a hoodie over it.

Your only option was to wear the shoes from the night before, so you slipped them back on.

Looking at your outfit in the mirror, you looked like the very definition of Walk of Shame. Your luggage was already on its way back to Chicago or in Chicago, so you would have to wear this until Otogi showed up with your clothes.

You were sure that you could buy some flip flops, yoga pants, and a t-shirt from some hotel’s gift shop, but you were not going to pay for that. Nor were you going to wake Seto up and ask to borrow his credit card.

Pulling the hood up all the way, you grabbed Anzu’s dress, your bra that was still sticky from the champagne, as well as your panties, and went to guest services to see about getting it laundered. Initially, the receptionist had been snippy with you since you were not technically a guest. However, there was a complete attitude change when you showed your key card (that you swiped from Seto), Comic Con guest badge, and she saw who would be footing the bill.

“Both Mr. Kaiba and I would appreciate it being done as quickly as possible. Do you have an estimation on how long that would be?” You looked and felt like death warmed over and were surprised how utterly bougie you sounded at that moment.

“I think we could have it back to your room in an hour and a half. Would that be acceptable?”

“Perfect!” your perky voice hurt as did smiling, but you had one more thing you needed to do before you could go back to bed.

You turned on your GPS and was thankful to see that you did not have to walk too far to get to your destination. The moment you stepped outside, you wished you had your sunglasses. Your head instantly began to ache as the sun’s ultraviolet rays beat down on you like beams from a death ray.

You hated yourself so much for where you were going. But the nastiest, most unhealthy food was a cure for a hangover. You were confident that science would back you up on this one.

About halfway there, you felt your stomach lurch. You plugged your nose and leaned over a garbage can in case you needed to puke.

Oh, you hoped that you did not have to puke in the middle of Manhattan while looking homeless. Luckily, a few deep breaths calmed your stomach down and you continued your journey.

Once inside, you stared hungrily up at the menu.

“Welcome to McDonalds. What can I get you today?”
“Fuckin’ everything,” you muttered.

“I am sorry, what was that?” came the too perky reply.

“I’m going to need a minute,” you corrected. You were not sure what Seto would even want, so you just guessed and ended up ordering nearly $20 worth of food.

The walk back was more agonizing since you had all the food, beverages, (and ice-cream you stupidly ordered) to carry back. You, however, used that as an opportunity to start drinking your smoothie and stuff a hash brown into your mouth.

You ditched the evidence of you eating before you got back into the hotel.

In spite of the fact it was only 6:53 in the morning, you still received a few amused looks during your outing. You were just going to focus putting one foot in front of the other. Then you focused on getting back into the room as quietly as possible. At last, you set out the food before remembering that you ordered a McFlurry and had no freezer to put it in. With the McFlurry in hand, you peeked in on Seto.

“Where did you go?” came his tired voice.

“I went to get breakfast. Do you want me to bring you something?”

Seto just grunted and turned away from you before burying his head into the pillow.

You were just going to let him be.

While enjoying your McFlurry, you decided to look over the photos from last night. You raised your spoon in triumph when you saw the first few pictures. Seto really DID let you take pictures with all three of his Blue-Eyes White Dragons!

“Is that ice-cream?” Seto asked, taking you from your reverie.

“Noo,” you lied while taking another spoonful of ice-cream.

You did not even have to look to see if Seto was wearing his colored contacts. With the way his eyes were painfully blinking, you could assume that he slept in them.

He really needed to learn to take his contacts out at night.

“Why did you get McDonalds?” he questioned.

“You eat McDonalds, shower, then go back to bed for a bit. Then when you wake up, your hangover will be gone,” you sagely advised. With another spoonful of ice-cream, you nodded and looked wise.

“I didn’t think vegetarians even liked McDonald’s,” Seto commented while shifting through the bag. He looked at all hash browns and put them aside. Next came the yogurt parfait.

“All-day breakfast was a game changer, you replied. You decided to put the McFlurry down so you could keep an eye on the hash browns. If Seto thought he would take them all, you would seriously fight him.

Seto finally discovered the McGriddle you got for him. He peeled back the top to make sure there was meat on it before he took a seat next to you on the couch. “You got a lot of food,” he commented after he took his first bite.
“I’m considerate,” you replied. You wanted another hash brown and coffee, but the act of getting up and walking the ten feet to get it was too much effort. So just decided to suffer. “I had like, one college roommate that I actually got along with. We just bought an insane amount of McDonalds and just ate it and watched SVU before going back to bed. When we woke up, we felt better. It’s like magic. You can’t explain that.”

“Was that the same one you tried to order margarita McFlurries with?” Seto questioned.

You finally decided to trudge your way over to get the hash browns and you were mid grab when Seto asked that question.

Oh gawd...You had told him that story!

“Yes,” you admitted. You and the roommate had even tried to make motorcycle noises in the drive-thru and everything.

You opened a ketchup pack and artfully sprinkled it over the greasy potato goodness before you sat back down.

Seto could only eyeball you before you raised your own eyebrow. “It’s a Midwest thing and I won’t apologize,” you declared before taking a bite. It was probably more of an ethnic thing than a regional food quirk, but you were just going to roll with it.

“You can take the first shower,” you offered as a way to make him stop staring at you eating your delicious food. “I need to wait for my laundry.”

“Are you going to wear that to the panel?” Seto asked.

“It’s all I have,” you replied. You thought you guys went over this last night. “I packed something for the panel before leaving last night, so I can just change into that when I get my bag.”

Seto muttered something under his breath before slowly making his way to the other room. He spotted the coffee you had purchased and grabbed one before going inside the bedroom. You could only hear bits of the conversation.

“It’s Kaiba...I am going to need...Yes, before the panel….I think she’s a size...One moment.”

Seto reappeared in the doorway and practically thrust the phone at you. The person on the other line remained professional and you rattled off your measurement, dress size, pants size, bra size, shirt, and shoe size before being thanked and asked to put Mr. Kaiba back on the phone.

When Seto gave his credit card number, you tried not to listen. Even so, your brain decided to commit the first four and last four digits to memory. It started with a 4, so that meant the card was a Visa.

Shit, you were a terrible person.

“Thank you, Seto,” you said once he hung up the phone.

“I would have rather you never left the room wearing that,” he said looking at your attire.

Did Seto not remember loaning it to you for the specific purpose of leaving the room?

A horrifying thought occurred to you.

If he didn’t remember that, then did he remember how awesome you were at head?
Seto saying something interrupted your inner monologue. “Huh?”

“I said we might as well save some water,” Seto repeated as if the idea of showering with you was the noblest thing in the world.

“Saving a tree is such a turn-on,” you purred with obvious sarcasm.

This would be the last time you two would see each other for a while, but you were too hungover for shower sex. There was no bath mat to prevent slipping and very few spots to put your legs. You mean, you were flexible, but not a goddamn miracle worker. So it was probably for the best.

Seto was as much of a hot water hog as he was a blanket thief. While you were forced to freeze to death outside of the stream of warmth and happiness, you decided to spend your time (until you died from hypothermia) scrubbing the smell of alcohol out of your pores. Sometime between your untimely death and scrubbing you skin off your bone, you noticed Seto giving you a nervous glance.

This was not your first rodeo. You picked up the shampoo and closed your eyes to lather your hair, allowing Seto to wash his scrotum and anything else he would not want his girlfriend seeing. Since Seto’s back had been towards you, it gave you opportunity to quickly do attend to your own personal hygiene.

You were finally allowed to switch spots with Seto and basked in the glorious hot water. You might have even muttered your thanks and praise for the hot water as it saved you from freezing to death. Finally suds-free, you examined the tiny bottle of conditioner. You could work with this, but only if Seto did not need to use the conditioner.

Seto had a major function to attend, but you had long hair.

“How much conditioner do you need?” you asked nervously.

Seto just sighed and put a little bit on his hand before working the conditioner into his hair. It gave you the chance to empty the rest of the bottle onto your hair, paying the most attention to the ends.

Seto got out of the shower first and eventually, you decided that if you stayed in any longer, you would fall back asleep. Turning the shower off, you saw that Seto was busy shaving and ignored you while you dried yourself off and put his clothes back on.

“Wake me up like an hour before we need to go anywhere,” you mumbled before going to the bed. You put a towel over the pillow and promptly fell back asleep.
You woke up from your nap, feeling much more refreshed than you did right before you passed out. Concerned that you overslept, you quickly looked over at the time and breathed a huge sigh of relief. It was only a little after ten.

Now that the brief moment of panic passed, you ran a hand through your damp hair. You kind of hated yourself for falling asleep with wet hair. Now it was going to be a frizzy limp mess and you were going to have to wear a bun or something to the panel to hide your shame.

You decided that laying on a moist (Eww, did you really just think that word?) towel was not an ideal way to spend the day. Which meant getting up.

It required moving.

You were going to do it, that whole moving thing. You totally were.

Any second now, you were going to get out of bed.

Finally, you convinced yourself that laying on a damp towel was equivalent to sticking your face into a pile of moldy towels. That finally made your brain summon the mental strength to move your limbs and get out of bed.

Groaning miserably, you threw the back the blankets and grabbed the towel before unceremoniously plopped it on the bathroom floor. Now that you were feeling slightly more awake, you realized that you did not hear Seto in the adjoining room.

Concerned, you went looking for him and saw that Seto was already dressed in a suit and tie. He had been sitting on the couch and now his head was tilted backwards and his mouth slightly open as he slept.

You could see that your laundry had arrived, but not the clothes Seto ordered. Your attention went back to your boyfriend. You could be a total douche and wake him up in a number of increasingly evil ways. However, you just gently touched his shoulder and called his name. The moment your hand made contact with him, Seto immediately jolted up into wakefulness.

“It’s only 10:07,” you said when he leaned forward to unlock his laptop. “Do you want to sleep on the bed for a bit?”

“My suit will get wrinkled,” Seto pointed out.

“Then just take off your jacket, pants, and undo your tie,” you replied as if it were the simplest solution in the world. Because, um...Duh, it kind of was. “I can’t imagine it would take that long to put back on.”
Really now, sometimes it seemed that Seto took pride in making his life as difficult as possible.

Seto did not reply. Instead, he scrolled over the outline for his presentation before looking over at you. You wish that he did not choose that moment to pay attention to you since you were in the middle of attempting to choke down the lukewarm McDonald’s coffee.

Caffeine withdrawal was no joke. In your heart, you knew you earned this awful coffee by getting addicted in the first place and being too hungover to get something better. Or make your own coffee like some kind of coffee wizard. Again, you had been too hungover for that.

“Are you going to go back to bed?” he asked, politely ignoring whatever stupid face you were no doubt making at the moment.

“I’m pretty awake right now,” you replied while you took the top off the coffee cup to see how much more you had to punish yourself with. “So, no.”

After a moment of additional contemplation, Seto decided that yes, he would take a nap. He issued you instructions on things that needed to get done before he carefully took off his suit, tie, and pants. He placed them on a hanger then pretty much collapsed face first on the bed.

You saluted the bed while you passed the room to start working on the laundry list Seto gave you. Mid-step, you paused and cursed your own stupidity. Seto was now asleep and you just blew any chance of blow drying your hair.

Once you accepted that unless you went to a stylist, your hair would look terrible, you decided to get to work.

You were in the middle of scrutinizing a couple of documents when you heard someone knocking at the door. Your fingers were frozen on your keyboard before you snapped out of the temporary confusion and rushed for the door. Thankfully, you opened it just before a second knock.

“Oh hey,” you greeted Otogi and Anzu. “One second.”

Seto had told you he had text Anzu with the room number, so you were expecting them. That was definitely a lot easier than meeting up with them before the panel. Seto was obviously the brains in this relationship while you were…

You were not sure, but decided not to dwell on that at the moment.

Instead, you flipped the deadbolt so the door would not shut all the way before grabbing the laundry bag. You had already taken your own items out of it and grabbed Anzu’s shoes before stepping out into the hallway. Careful of not making any unnecessary noise, you quietly closed the door behind you until the deadbolt caught it.

“I’d invite you in, but Seto is taking a quick nap,” you explained.

“It was a late night,” Otogi said in a tone that told you that he was holding you completely responsible for keeping him up late.

Oh, he could just go fuck himself.

Remembering your manners, you simply smiled apologetically. Be an adult, you told yourself.

“Sorry about that, you started while trying to say the most adult thing you could think of. “If you’re ever in Chicago, I’ll buy you an apology drink. Or coffee.”
Nailed it! Your inner monologue cheered.

The three of you exchanged pleasantries, and handed off items to their respective owner. Once it was becoming obvious that enough polite conversation took place to maintain some level of friendliness with one another, you thanked Anzu profusely for everything.

Apparently, they were still planning on going to the panel. However, the line was already quite long and they were doubting their chances of actually getting inside the panel much less the room where a simulcast was being set up. With a final hug from Anzu, the two left and you went back into the room.

If you were in Otogi’s shoes, you would probably be a little miffed at you too. However, you were in your own shoes and decided Otogi was an ass right there and then. At least you would not have to see him again, you decided while you began to apply your mascara.

A little while later, another knock on the door almost made you eff up your liquid eyeliner. You held your eye closed and made your way to the door for a second time.

This time, one of the KaibaCorp employees asked if you were...well...you. Upon confirming your own identity, you were then then handed shopping bags along with several receipts.

“You kind of have a little...” she indicated the corner of her own eye. It was where you had just been applying makeup.

“Ah crud,” you muttered. “Thanks for the head’s up.”

You also thanked her (whoever she was) for getting your stuff. Again, you went back in the room and set the bags down before deciding to check in on Seto. Since you were in the vicinity, you also grabbed a few q-tips from the bathroom. You nodded to yourself since he slept on.

Seeing as how you were going to forget about them, you put the receipts next to Seto’s laptop. Instead of moving, you stared at them. It really was none of your business, but…

You were never very good at resisting temptation. You picked the receipts up and looked at how much was spent in each store.

Blinking, you immediately placed the receipts back down and slowly backed away from them. Fixing your smudged eyeliner, you decided to get dressed in your new clothes before attempting to redo your makeup.

If you were going to be honest with yourself, you really just wanted to play dress up.

Feeling absolutely giddy at the prospect of doing this, you closed the drapes and began your own private fashion show. A few color choices clashed with your skin tone or just was not in your taste, but the fit was on point.

You turned to see how your butt looked in a pair of pants when you saw that Seto was awake and watching you from the doorway with a look of amusement. The moment he realized that you noticed him, his expression returned to his natural resting bitch face. For added effect, he shook his head. “Women and clothes,” he muttered while looking at the receipts.

Now that you could no longer pretend to be a modern day Disney Princess (without feeling terribly silly), you returned to choosing an outfit. Just with a lot less imagination. However, you easily noted that Seto was working on his computer. Not only that, but he angled himself so that he could glance up at you whenever he wanted.
Once or twice, you sent him a flirty wink and Seto quickly returned to his work, completely pretending that he was not perving on you.

Finally, you tried everything on. You then had to make a final decision on what to wear. It broke your heart to place the rejected items back in the shopping bags to be returned. Each time you neatly folded something or closed a shoebox, you silently apologized to it, telling the extremely expensive article of clothing that that it was not as if it were not good enough. In fact, you were sure it would find a lovely home. Maybe Katy Perry or Kylie Jenner would buy it. Wouldn’t that be nice, you quietly asked a pair of shoes.

“If you like something, just keep it.”

You paused to make sure that it had been Seto to say that and not the Prada shoes you were saying your goodbyes to. “What do you mean?”

“Don’t do this,” Seto warned. “Keep whatever you want and put whatever you don’t like in the bags. I don’t care.”

Instead of really replying, you pretty much launched yourself at Seto. You were in his lap, kissing him as thanks while telling him how wonderful he was and how much you appreciated him.

Seto endured your attention, thanks, and praise. Eventually, he patted you on the knee and told you to finish getting ready. You happily obliged and went to separate the items. You were so immersed in what you were doing that you barely heard the knock on the door.

From your spot on the floor, you quizzically looked over at Seto to see if he had heard that too. Instead of answering you, he strode over and opened the door. You had only seen teams of makeup artists enter a room on TV. Seeing it in real life was surreal.

You recognized one of them as the woman who went shopping for you. There were a few KaibaCorp employees who went about speaking to Seto as last-minute prep work. At the same time, towels were draped over his shoulders. Someone opened the blinds before the team of hair and makeup artists got to work.

Briefly, you recalled hearing about the Kennedy-Nixon debates; Nixon refused to wear makeup prior to going on camera for a presidential debate. As a result, he looked haggard and washed out compared to Kennedy. So it made sense that Seto would require a team of stylists before going on stage.

Now that everything was sorted into nice neat piles, you and your new loot were content to stay out of the way. In fact, you would take everything you wanted to keep in the next room and do your own preening. You felt a soft tap on your shoulder and looked up from the pile you intended to keep. Two individuals introduced themselves as your hair and makeup stylist.

Well, then.

The three of you decided to stay out of the way in the main room and you enlisted their help in carrying everything from your ‘keep’ pile into the bedroom. Seeing as how they were the professionals, you let them know you were cool with however they wanted you to look. At last, you were instructed to take a seat in the chair you had a lot of fun in the previous night. While one stylist went to work on your hair, the other set about wiping your makeup off and expertly reapplying it.

By the time they were finished, you had to dig through your purse for an Excedrin from craning your head and sitting as stiffly as you could. Since you did not want to ruin your lipstick, you decided to
swallow the pills whole before tidying up and finish packing.

While you had been digging through your purse for the Excedrin, Seto asked for your deck. You were skeptical, but retrieved your deck case and handed it over.

Soon, you were following Seto out of the hotel room and into the elevator. Unfortunately, all the KainaCorp employees decided they wanted to share the same elevator. As a result, you were given space, but ultimately ignored. Seto was speaking with employees. If you were able to hear him over dozens of people having different conversations, you would have immediately gave everyone the slip and headed for the airport immediately.

You, however, were lost in your own thoughts. It was still the beginning of October and after today, Seto would be gone until the end of the month. You continued your quiet sulking while the entourage took the tunnels to avoid the crowds.

Another elevator would lead you up the main level. This time, Seto’s eye caught yours and he raised a quick eyebrow. You had been projecting your sulkiness, you realized. With a quick smile, you gave him a thumbs up and focused on holding off being depressed until you got to the airport.

When you stepped out of the elevator, Seto laced his hand in yours and walked with you through the crowd. You had no prep work, but decided to follow Seto head whenever he turned to look at a camera. Hangovers did not magically go away and you admired Seto’s poise since he was probably suffering more than you were.

In spite of the barrage of flashing lights practically obscuring your vision, you did your best to keep smiling. Especially whenever Seto waved off a reporter or pointedly ignored a question.

“There will be a Q&A session immediately following the demonstration,” Seto assured a particularly nervous looking reporter.

Comic Con staffers arrived to escort Seto backstage and lead you to your VIP seat. Before letting go of your hand, Seto leaned over to speak to you. “See you in a little bit,” he said before letting go of your hand and departing.

That sounded vaguely threatening, you realized. Oh gawd, what was he planning?

You followed your escort to your seat and gave the few people around you the best charming yet perfectly disarming smile you could muster. You noted that there were several other KaibaCorp personnel seated in the same section as you, but none you recognized. Thankfully for your eyesight, it was dark and the Excedrin was beginning to work its magic. So you just folded your hands and wondered what Seto was doing with your deck and what he meant when he said he would see you later.

Finally, the lights on stage went on. Instinctively you leaned forward and then tried not to groan.

You should have seen it coming. Before a huge event like this, some self-important asshole always gave a speech disguised as introducing the guest of honor, but really was some self-congratulatory way to make themselves feel important. It was pretty bitchy of you, but you never would call yourself a good person. You hated this shit and just wanted to see your boyfriend’s legendary charisma in person. For things like this, you had heard how Seto emanated a certain magnetism that you had yet to be privy to.

Finally, Seto took to the stage with all the drama you imagined him capable of. His piercing gaze scanned the crowd before he began.
“I’d like to call him daddy,” you heard someone behind you say and you resisted the urge to leap out of your seat and beat their face into a bloody pulp.

He did not look your way, but still tried not to swoon because yeah, your man was hawt.

“Duelists! Today, KaibaCorp will unveil the next level in SolidVision by showing you that there truly are no limits to Virtual Reality! The moment we humans are born into the world, our limitations are set and defined by our own feeble anatomy. If whoever came up with how fragile the human condition is were under my employ, he would be immediately fired. I was never satisfied with anything less than perfection. I never accepted any constraints imposed upon myself, and neither should you.

For you all, I have designed and structured a system that allows our minds to transcend the limitations of our bodies.”

Several hologram screens appeared. Seto did not tell you much, but you were somewhat familiar with Duel Links. Seeing how much potential the system had made you share the same awe as everyone else.

“Nationality, language, creed. Duel Links will redefine barriers and social constructs. Duel Links will allow ourselves to move forward with a new future!” Seto continued. You then noticed how the prototype of the new Duel Disk seemingly materialized on his arm.

KaibaCorp had created holograms of explosions. More than likely, Seto masked the Duel Disk with a hologram…Somehow. It would explain why he kept one arm at his side while he gestured with the other.

“We at KaibaCorp will continue to go above and beyond for our consumers. Now, we are proud to unveil the new Duel Disk system.”

Several holograms of various dragons appeared and disappeared as Seto explained how the new system would work. He was clearly using his deck, which made you once again wonder what he wanted with your deck.

“And now, what I am sure you are all waiting for: a duel to demonstrate the capabilities of the new system.”

Seto’s eyes found you in the crowd and the corners of his mouth lifted into a smirk before he called your name and invited you on to the stage.

New York Comic Con had over 150,000 attendees and at that moment, it felt as if all of those eyes were on you. That fucker. He didn’t just give you those clothes out of the kindness of his heart; he was honeypotting you! You were going to take back every nice thing you said about him!

On, and you were going to keep the clothes!

You could run for the doors right now, but you knew that was no longer an option.

Instead, you slowly stood from your seat and ignored the several flashes from cameras and what people were mumming to their seatmates. Your heart was racing and as you made your way to the stage, Seto began introducing you. “I am sure you will recognize her name. She is the youngest sister of the reigning American champion…”

You exhaled deeply at hearing your brother’s name and attempted to tune out the reaction of the crowd. Seto could easily have let the public speculate. It would create some intrigue and bring your
brother into the spotlight by forcing him to confirm or deny your relationship. By introducing you right off the bat, you had an idea on what kind of plans Seto had for you.

“...but is more than capable of taking the championship for herself. For that, I consider her a worthy enough opponent to provide me with a challenge.”

That confirmed it: Seto was setting you up to not only introduce you as a duelist, but pressure you into competing for your brother’s title. You also suspected this duel was to show your hidden enemy that you were a formidable duelist and not to be trifled with.

If he had warned you that he would be doing this, you would have entered the hotel through the front door and as soon as Seto’s back was turned, you would be exiting out the back. Damn him for knowing you enough to predict your vanishing act!

“With my new Duel Disk, you will see that I have spared no expense to ensure nothing but perfection,” Seto continued as you were getting set up for the duel.

A KaibaCorp employee handed you a Duel Disk that you strapped on the arm opposite of your dominant hand. Next, you were given a headset and some quick instructions. Seto had moved to one side of a stage and was standing at an angle, so you moved to the opposite side. Your hand would be a holographic projection and you did not want just anyone to see your deck.

Seto had taken the liberty of uploading your deck onto the server, making shuffling or drawing cards irrelevant. Your opening hand appeared in front of you and you recognized your little eldritch horrors from your Evilswarm Deck. However, you had handed Seto your **Burn Deck**. He had to have gotten your deck list from the Dueling Network and unless there was an error, Seto had made a major decision without your knowledge or consent.

You were on stage with thousands of people watching you and countless more were watching what you were doing on livestream. Maintaining your composure was quintessential, but that was your deck! Regardless of your chances of winning Seto had dictated how you would duel.

You locked eyes with him and hoped he knew how fucked up his little move was. Seto’s pride exceeded the comprehension of mere mortals. That meant that there was no way he would be willing to lose in front of all these people. Seto ‘optimizing’ your deck meant that he at least wanted you to give him one hell of a challenge.

Once this was over, Seto and you were going to have a long chat. For now, you would focus on trying to make him look good and hoped that he would do the same for you. The Duel Disk indicated that you had the opening move.

You set Mirror Force and Call of the Haunted down and ended your turn. Mirror Force would take care of whatever lame ass dragon he played next turn.

Sure enough, Seto summoned a dragon. He then looked skeptically at your two face down cards. You exaggerated some type of boredom by pretending to yawn before examining a nail.

Seto had seen your deck and knew your strategy by now. Still, he attacked. You flicked your wrist just slightly to activate Mirror Force.

“You’re going to have to play better than that,” he warned.

“I play Rescue Rabbit,” you announced. Quickly, you covered your mouth to hide your girly little smile when it materialized on the field. Rescue Rabbit went on its hind legs to sniff the air. From
your vantage point, you could even see its little bunny nose moving. Plus, it had its cute little walkie talkie, goggles, and adorable little hardhat.

“Isn’t it just the kyuutest~?” you cooed at the audience since they were already laughing at you. “It breaks my heart to do this, but Rescue Rabbit? You gotta go. I activate its special effect and banish my wittle wabbit to summon Evilswarm Heliotrope and Evilswarm Heliotrope!” you selected the corresponding cards and summoned them both into battle position.

You could then special summon Ophion, but decided to hold off since you had the magic card you needed in your hand. “I now activate Infestation Pandemic. This card renders your two trap cards useless for the remainder of my turn.”

You attacked and while it was a hologram, seeing your monsters appearing like they were stabbing the shit out of Seto was oddly satisfying. You also knocked his Life Points down to 4100.

Since your two monsters were going to be destroyed during the end of your turn, you waited until the Duel Disk indicated you were in your second Main Phase. Selecting your extra deck, your hand hovered over your cards. You had all of the cards you placed in your extra deck. Plus one addition.

Glancing up, Seto just smirked. He remembered your first conversation you had, the one where you called him a douche (or was it an asshole) for banning Evilswarm Exciton Knight.

More than likely, Seto expected you to summon it to the field as soon as you could. However, you decided against it. No way in hell would you deal with people accusing you of cheating! Especially when this card would prevent him from summoning his Blue-Eyes.

“I XYZ summon Evilswarm Ophion!” you announced.

There was only silence until Seto laughed. “You made a good move,” he said. “But that’s the last good move you’ll be making.”

“Oh?” you questioned. “Did you forget about my dragon’s special effect? As long as I have XYZ material attached to it, you cannot summon any Monster that level five or higher.”

There, it gave Seto the opportunity to remove Ophion from play. Which was fine, you would just bring it back next turn.

Seto played Vanguard of the Dragon next and discarded three cards, bringing its attack to 2600. Now that Ophion was off the field, he played Dragon Shrine, he played the magic card Silver’s Cry, allowing him to special summon Blue-Eyes White Dragon from the graveyard.

Your Life Points took one hell of a hint, but you just smiled sweetly. “Hey Blue-Eyes, what’s up?” you asked. “See you around, I guess.”

You activated Dark Hole, destroying all monsters on the field. Since you had no monsters on the field, you complained on how left out you felt. To ease that pain, you activated Call of the Haunted, and brought Ophion back to the field. You then invited Evilswarm Thunderbird to the party before setting Mirror Wall down since you knew his Vanguard of the Dragon would be special summoned from the graveyard.

And it was!

The duel went on like that and you were down to 2600 Life Points while Seto had 2500 left. He had
Hieratic Sun Dragon Overlord of Heliopolis on the field and activated its special effect to destroy a card on the field each time Seto discarded one card.

Its effect cleared the entire field. Except for one remaining trap card: your Magic Cylinder. If you played the card, it would negate the attack and inflict 30000 points of damage to Seto’s Life Points. You would win the duel.

You did not want this kind of attention and winning would not only make Seto regret switching your deck, but he would regret ever forcing you into this kind of position. You could only imagine that it would elevate you to instant celebrity status. Not even your brother could say he beat Seto Kaiba.

On the other hand, you would humiliate Seto and the fallout would be apocalyptic for not only him, but the company. Your moral compass was always a bit off, but even then, you could not do that to him or KaibaCorp. Not only that, but your victory would be the immediate end to your relationship and the thought of never being in his arms again…

No victory was worth it.

You spread your arms out in a shrug before he attacked. Your Life Points hit zero and the thunderous applause was instantaneous. From the stage, you could barely make it out, but it was obvious that they were cheering for someone who had been no one of any importance until a half hour ago.

The Duel Disk may have contained data on what card was face down, but you decided right there and then that unless someone checked, you would insist it was Infestation Infection. You were not sure how Seto would react to learning that this victory was not really his. You were not going to find out, ever. Instead, you nodded your head at Seto before approaching him to congratulate him on showing you who was boss.

You stayed on the stage long enough to make it seem that you were the gracious loser. As soon as you thought proper, you made your retreat backstage. Handing off the Duel Disk and microphone, you found a nice quiet corner and just leaned against the wall. Seto’s built in GPS could find you when it was time to leave. Right now, you just needed some time to compose yourself.

Eventually, someone found you to let you know that you were needed for the Q&A session.

You waved your hand Jedi style and said, “This is not the duelist you’re looking for.”

“Funny,” the Comic Con staffer said. “But seriously, Kaiba said to come grab you.”

There was an Emergency Exit door several feet to your right. You were not above making a run for it.

“Can’t you just say you couldn’t find me?” you implored sweetly.

“Tell him yourself. I’m just trying to do my job.”

That Emergency Exit sign was calling to you like a siren’s song.

“And I’m just an attendee. So I am not contractually obligated to listen to you. You, however, can confiscate my badge for not listening to a reasonable request. I am more than willing to surrender my badge because there is no effing way you’re getting me to go.”

“I’m getting my supervisor,” the staffer sighed. While they were gone, you decided you would make a hasty retreat back to your hotel. There, you would wait for the press conference to be over with.
Seto would find you, get mad at you for ditching, then you would have the moral high ground when you mentioned you were upset about switching your deck. There would be words, but things would ultimately be forgiven.

You definitely liked that idea.

You smile and nodded at a couple of KaibaCorp employees and easily walked right past them. As long as you kept heading in one direction with an air of confidence, people would not question you. Social engineering, you believed it was called.

Unfortunately, nothing in life was that easy. Just as you thought you could disappear into the crowd, Seto grabbed your hand. “Quit screwing around.”

“Please don’t make me do this,” you pleaded with all the sadness in your voice that you could muster. You sounded like a sad kitten lost outside in the rain and hoped it would soften Seto’s heart enough to give in.

It may have worked last night, but today, Seto steeled himself against your feminine wiles. He just sighed and leaned in to speak to you privately. “People will be curious. Just answer a few questions and I will make sure we leave earlier than planned. We can have a late lunch and I will stay with you at the airport until your flight leaves.”

Well, you supposed when Seto put it like that…

“I think this is what we call a compromise,” you agreed.

There were only a few questions aimed at you. Why an Evilswarm deck? Because you read too much H.P Lovecraft as a child. Did your brother know you were here? He probably knows now. Were you and Mr. Kaiba really dating? Yes, really. Did you plan on completing for your brother’s title? Sure, why not? What was your favorite Pokemon? Eevee. Duel Monsters card? Fencing Fire Ferret.

Even if you were lying through your teeth, those were the answers you gave.

True to his word, Seto cut the questions somewhat early. Lunch was uneventful, but with traffic, you barely made it to the airport with enough time to get through security. You were fortunate that the only bag you had was your purse, so you just checked in for the flight at the kiosk. KaibaCorp personnel had already saw to having your Gucci bag and all of your new clothes packed into a small suitcase that was already checked. Your delay in arriving on time for your flight meant saying your farewells to Seto before you got out of the car.

You could not help but blink back tears when you finally boarded the flight and found your seat. Since you did not have the time to purchase a book or even crossword puzzle, you did not have much to entertain yourself with. Fortunately, you were dating a man familiar with air travel and he had reserved your flight on JetBlue. That meant you could at least watch TV for the duration of your three hour flight. Shortly after takeoff, you ordered a drink and fell asleep while watching Keeping Up with the Kardashians since it was mindless enough to pay attention to but not really care about. The episode also did not have any of the best Kardashian in it, so it ultimately did not matter.

To save the battery, you had just turned your phone off. The second you touched down in O’Hare (ugh), you turned it back on to finally see the text messages and missed calls. Seto had text you twice.

Saying good-bye was harder than expected.
Text me when you land.

You composed a reply right away. Not going to lie, I think someone may have been chopping onions during the flight. Just landed. Taxiing now.

Another Seto reply: I will call you before I leave American airspace. When I get back to Japan, I will have my regular phone on me.

Alright. Take care and have a safe flight. (That was an order, btw)

Finally, you started going through your other texts. A few from your dearest brother. Calls from friends. And several from Mokuba.

Mokuba was supposed to be your ride, so you looked at his frantic texts next. Apparently, he thought you were going to fly into Midway and just realized that he effed up. You replied, telling him that you can just hop on the Blue Line and walk a few minutes to get home.

Since everyone was standing up and waiting to get off the flight, you just leaned back and continued replying to texts. With the extra legroom, you were feeling like a celebrity. After a moment of reflection and a quick look on Google, Tumblr, and Reddit, you supposed that you now kind of were. At least for the moment.

Finally, you disembarked and made your way to the baggage claim area, hoping that you would be able to identify your bag somehow since you never actually saw the suitcase everything was packed in. Fortunately, it was the one bag on the carousel with the KaibaCorp logo on it.

In the deepening dusk of the evening, you made your way to the Blue Line terminal and pulled your Ventra card from your purse, tapped it against the sensor, went through the turnstile, and boarded the train. To avoid all human contact, you immediately put in your earbuds.

About twenty minutes into the ride, you observed two teenagers--probably around seventeen or eighteen--looking at you and whispering to each other. Once you spotted a Duel Disk, you figured they probably recognized you from earlier today.

Initially, you intended to just ignore them, but the two teenagers got up at the next stop and sat down across from you. Seeing as how you had no choice but to engage them in a conversation, you took one earbud out.

“Are you--?”

“Oh gawd, that’s like the third time I got that today,” you said with a fake laugh and an even faker accent. “No, I am just here from Wisconsin.” You made sure to form the W as a soft ‘Wuh’ followed by a hard ‘Scansin’ just like the natives did it.

“It’s the outfit, isn’t it?” you asked before shaking your head and putting your earbud back in. They got off the train about two stops before yours.

By the time you got to your front door, you were preoccupied with your thoughts to see that a red Prius was parked in the driveway but not really pay too much attention to it until you saw Mokuba Kaiba just hanging out in your living room.

“How did you get in?!?”

“You really need to be more alert,” Mokuba chided without putting down his phone. The house did not look ransacked like you had feared. Instead, it was quite possibly the cleanest it has been in
months, if not years. Like, you kind of wanted to invite people--especially relatives over just to marvel at how clean it was.

During your marveling, you caught sight of two KaibaCorp suits and recognized one of them as Isono.

“Did anyone try to break in?” you asked Isono since Mokuba was still preoccupied with his phone.

“No,” came Isono’s succinct reply.

Okay, cool. This was a pleasant homecoming.

You looked between the men awkwardly before you just decided to make your way towards the stairs so you could maybe take a bath, listen to sappy pop music, and feel sad. No one looked like they were about to leave. “Well...I really appreciate you guys watching the place for me. I’m going to head upstairs now.”

You hoped it would be evidenced by the fact you were saying this from the stairs, but they did not seem to get the hint to leave. “And maybe take a bath. Then lay down.”

Still nothing.

“And go to bed,” you added helpfully. “As in sleep.”

“...Kay,” was Mokuba’s indifferent reply. “Are there any good delivery options?”

“You’re going to stick around for a bit?” you asked politely yet in a tone that suggested you were not okay with that.

“Seto doesn’t want you alone,” Mokuba said, his tone flat.

You did remember him saying something like that. While you were not the most astute person alive, it was pretty obvious that Mokuba was pissed about something. You took the stairs two at a time and sat on the opposite side of him on the sectional. “You okay?” you asked.

Mokuba just gave a slight shrug in response and pursed his lips before returning to whoever he was texting.

“Well, you seem kind of pissed...” you continued because if he was going to hang out here and be a bitch about it, you were ready to enact a house rule of ‘Don’t be a Bitch.’

“I had a date,” he finally admitted.

You blinked then tried to stifle a laugh. So that explained why he was acting like an overgrown teenager.

“I was trying to get her to go out with me for the past three years. It wasn’t easy, but she finally agreed. Now I had to cancel.” the way Mokuba added made it seem like it was entirely your fault.

There were suits just doing their bodyguard thing and more than likely, Isono would report what you were about to say to Seto. So you slowly rose from couch and headed towards the kitchen. Isno stepped aside to let you through the narrow hallway and you turned to Mokuba.

“I’ll show you where I keep the delivery menus,” you said to Mokuba.

You waited until Mokuba joined you in the kitchen before you turned on the faucet to hide the sound
of you unlocking and opening the back door. You turned the faucet off and quietly opened the screen door and stepped outside into the back yard.

The back yard consisted of a small deck and stairs that led to nowhere but the neighbor’s garage area. You held the door open for Mokuba and pointed to the garage. He nodded at you. Before you quietly closed the door.

Within seconds, you joined Mokuba in leaning against the garage. “I appreciate Seto’s concern, but this is kind of ridiculous,” you began.

“You’re going to have to talk to Seto about it,” Mokuba replied, giving nothing of his own personal thoughts away.

“Oh,” you continued. “We can just do our own thing and check in with each other. That way, you can go on your date and relax at home. Alone.”

Mokuba looked like he was about to protest, so you cut him off before he could start. “He asked you to keep an eye on me, not be my shadow. I’m sure the bodyguards would appreciate just watching the house instead of trailing after me.”

Mokuba reached for his packet of cigarettes before he seemingly decided against it. Once his pack was safely back in his hoodie, he let out a long sigh.

“There will need to be some conditions,” he began. “One, someone will be watching the house at all times. No exception. You will have someone with you whenever you leave. If you decide to be sneaky and leave without telling anyone…let’s say it will not be pleasant. I will have bodyguards inside the house three times a day at random intervals to do a quick walk-through. If you don’t open the door, we do have keys. Lastly, you will check in with me three times a day. You can do it via text message, Facebook, or even Snapchat for all I care. Three times, at least four hours apart.”

It was excessive, but it beat having a stranger in your house at all times. “Fair enough.”

Mokuba nodded and began to head back inside. Pausing, he looked over his shoulder and you noticed a particular glint to his eye. “Also,” he continued. “When Seto inevitably finds out about this, be prepared for me to throw you under the bus.”

“Have fun on your date, Mokuba. Make good decisions and practice safe sex,” you said dryly.

Mokuba continued to stare at you for another moment. Whatever he was thinking about, he gave no indication. “Seto changes like a goddamn transformer when it comes to you. So unlike me, you would at least be getting off easy.”

You did not exactly believe that, but humored Mokuba by making some noncommittal sound. “I’m going to hide out upstairs while you call off the hounds.”

About a half hour passed and you paused at the end of the hallway. You could still hear someone downstairs. You opened the balcony door and leaned over the railing to look in the driveway. Currently, your car was the only one in the driveway.

Suddenly alarmed, you quickly went into survival mode and crept to your room where you kept your gun and ammunition. You loaded the magazine and switched off the safety in a series of satisfying clicks.

Now armed, you advanced a few feet before pausing to listen, raising the weapon slightly. You stood like that for several moments before lowering the pistol and taking a few more steps forward.
The stairs were the challenge. You did your best to remember your training on stairs during your training on raids and clearing a room. *Walk along the sides of the stairs where the steps are supported, they make less noise. Apply slow foot pressure.*

Once again, you heard the sound of footsteps. Tensing your muscles, you raised your weapon. Finger poised over the trigger you moved into a shooting stance. When you saw who it was, you kept your aim steady for a moment longer before you sighed and lowered the weapon.

“I never thought they would leave,” Bakura said in greeting. He nodded down at your gun. “Oh good, we’re going to need that. Glad to see that you’re thinking ahead for a change.”

You really should have just shot him.
As Bakura went over the travel plans he made for you both, you became more and more convinced that you should have just shot him when you had the chance.

“Grab your stuff,” he said. “We’re leaving.”

“Right now?” you questioned skeptically since it sounded like he wanted to leave right at that moment. Also because you were not going to be going anywhere but dreamland.

“There is no time like the present,” Bakura replied smoothly.

“I just got back from New York.”

“That means you’re all packed and ready to depart then. Excellent.”

“No that means that I am exhausted,” you complained. “I just want to relax a little.”

“That sounds more like a personal problem.”

“But…” you began, trying to think of a way to get out of heading up to Wisconsin right there and then. “It’s...Shark Week,” you finished feebly.

“I fail to see how that is relevant here.”

“Because it is Shark Week,” you emphasized.

You could see the lotus of understanding begin to bloom in Bakura’s head. For an ancient Egyptian spirit, you had expected he would be less squeamish about these sorts of things. However, his face took on a slight shade of green before he took a few steps away from you.

“Oh.”

“So you understand why I need to take it easy for a night,” you called over your shoulder while you made your way upstairs. You put the gun away because no matter what Bakura said, you were not going to take a firearm across state lines.

Remembering that you wanted to take a bath, you grabbed a robe and some pajamas from your room. You then went to the bathroom and after flicking on the lights, you took a moment to appreciate the pristine tiling that must have taken forever to scrub clean, an empty garbage, and how
well organized everything was. In all honesty, you gave it a couple of weeks before messing everything up again.

Cleaning was just so...Sisyphean.

Wow. Someone had even polished the faucets and pipes, you noted when you reached down into the tub to plug the drain. You turned on the tap and let water splash over your hand until it reached the desired temperature before pouring some bubbles into the tub.

While the tub filled, you pondered how you were going to tell Seto about Bakura’s reappearance. If you were not under surveillance, maybe you could get away with not mentioning it at all. Seto was supposed to be calling sometime tonight. Which meant that you needed to think of a plan before then.

Bakura was to say the least, terrifying. Yet there was sense of comradery; you never saw someone successfully steal from a vending machine before. Respect was given where it was due. You even got a free Snickers from that. Bonus!

While you did not agree with it, you could understand Seto’s point of view. There was that nagging suspicion that Bakura would double-cross you if it benefited him. Even so, Bakura was someone you would rather work with than have him working against you.

Once the water got to a certain point, you turned the faucet off. Right as you were disrobing, you noticed something. After grabbing some toilet paper, you looked down at it, threw it in the toilet and muttered to yourself.

With the IUD, your menstrual cycle came every couple of months—if that. So of course, you would get your period as soon as you used it as an excuse to get out of something. That was just the way your life worked.

Before getting into the tub, you placed a tampon on the sink so you had one. You weren't going to risk having your freshly clean bathroom look like a crime scene. Your hair was still partially styled, so you just left it for the moment. It would be easier to avoid having the ends get wet.

At last, you sank into the tub and felt your muscles begin to relax. Finally, you were able to just enjoy a few quiet moment of serenity. Just as you were finally beginning to feel more at ease and less tense, the bathroom door swung open.

“BAKURA!” you shrieked, sinking further down into the bubbles.

Bakura was like a goddamn bloodhound who would not let you have a moment of peace. And to top it off, your hair was now wet. Bakura had long hair and should realize the pains that went into maintaining healthy locks in a world where split ends existed. Oohh...you really hoped he was pleased with himself!

“Oh please, you have absolutely no sex appeal.”

Narrowing your eyes, you picked up the nearest object (face wash) and while remaining hidden in the safety of the bubbles, hurled it in Bakura’s direction. Unsurprisingly, it hit the wall instead of him.

“Next time I won’t miss,” you lied.

Bakura just snorted derisively in reply. “Why are Kaiba’s hounds outside your home?”
You would have completely submerged yourself in the bath water in hopes of drowning and not having to answer questions while in the bath. However, your hair still looked too fabulous to get wet. “Can we talk about this later?” you pleaded.

“No.”

You sighed loudly. Bakura was leaning against the doorway, his arms folded across his chest while he his head was politely turned towards the hallway.

“If you're going to interrupt my zen time with your questions, at least get me a drink first.”

“No.”

What was with guys and acting like teenagers this evening? Was there a miasma or something?

So if Bakura was going to be that way and leave you feeling so vulnerable, you would just carry on with your bath and be as obvious about it as possible. You stuck you calf out of the water and made sure it was nice and sudsy before you realized you would have to stand up to retrieve your razer.

You blinked and looked over at the shower curtain. Why did you not think of this earlier, you berated yourself before you pulled the curtain shut.

While shaving your legs, you began to tell Bakura all about the break in. Of course, you left out the part about the fight and the euphoric energy spike. You also altered the narrative a little bit; instead of dancing with you, Seto had to come to the club to drag your drunk ass back to the hotel.

“Did he lecture you on the way home?” Bakura cooed. “Is that why you're back in Chicago? Kaiba grounded you?”

“No...He just gave me the silent treatment.”

“That is probably the best outcome,” he snickered.

“So what else all-important Kaiba doing in New York? Drinking the most expensive alcohol, partaking in the local attractions? Using any means necessary to distract himself from his own miserable existence?”

“Yeah, that is pretty accurate,” you agreed since you tuned him out while he was still on his first sentence.

“That is quite surprising. I never expected you to agree with me on that.” A chuckle. “You're not as stupid as you look, my dear.”

“Mmhmm...Thanks,” you mumbled in reply since you were shaving closer to your ankles and always effed those up.

“You realize that I am going to have to tell Seto that you showed up again, right?” you asked suddenly. “Which reminds me: where did you end up disappearing to? I know I didn’t hear anything about the neighbors missing any pets recently…”

“Go ahead and tell him. There is not much he can do anyway; I can already sense that the Millennium Rod is traveling east. Back to Japan, I assume. As for what I was doing in my absence…”

Bakura trailed off and you moved the shower curtain just enough to peek out at the spirit. He had not
moved from his spot and you quickly put the curtain back before he noticed you.

“Let's just say that I have been doing research,” he concluded.


“If you’re not up by seven o’clock, I will be dragging you out of bed,” Bakura warned before you heard the bathroom door close and the sound of footsteps.

That had quite possibly been one of the most uncomfortable experiences of your life. To top it off, the ends of your hair were wet and the bathwater was now tepid. You made sure Bakura was really out of the bathroom before you got out of the tub and threw your pajamas and robe on.

Your makeup had smeared horribly and your hair no longer looked as pretty as it had before, so you went about taking out the bobby pins and washing your face (retrieving your face wash from the floor in the process).

After brushing and flossing your teeth, you left the bathroom and retrieved your phone. Seto still had yet to call or message you. You kept your phone on you just in case he called and went downstairs. As expected, Bakura was using your Netflix yet again. Since you were not saying anything to him, Bakura ignored your presence.

You took a few Melatonin and went back to your room. With how exhausted you were, you probably did not need it. Before drifting off to sleep, you set your alarm and made sure your ringtone was on full volume.

A little after 2am, you woke up to a new text message. It was from Seto, letting you know that it was late and he would talk to you later. Logically, you knew Seto was the President and CEO of KaibaCorp and should be thankful for any time you had with him. Emotionally, you felt a pang of both disappointment and frustration at not being able to talk to him while he was on the same continent as you.

Instead of answering, you just rolled over and wiped away the tears that were forming. It was petty, but it was hard not to be petty when Seto said that he would call, not send a text message.

At least he contacted you somehow, you tried to reassure yourself. It did not help. In an effort to distract yourself, you decided to listen to a podcast and fell back asleep to that. You remained asleep until your alarm went off at 6:59am on a Saturday morning.

Ugh.

Before you asked, Bakura brusquely informed you that you were not going to stop at Starbucks on the way to the Blue Line. He did not know you had the mobile app and just choose from the several locations between the Blue Line and Union Station.

Bakura said nothing when you walked right inside and grabbed your latte before walking right out. He just did not seem too amused. “It’s not as hot as it should be,” you said as if that should be punishment enough for your Starbucks addiction.

At Union Station, he had thrust a ticket in your direction. You looked down at it and saw the name written on it was not your own. That was slightly concerning, you really hoped a Kylie Donovan was not on the train.
An Amtrak ticket. \textit{Niiice.}

You had a feeling that the only good thing that would come out of today was the fact that you did not have to drive. Still, you were sitting on a hard wooden bench in Union Station at a little after eight o’clock on a \textit{weekend} morning. Nothing good would ever come out of such a rough start to the day.

The moment he heard the announcement for the 8:25 Hiawatha train from Union Station to Milwaukee (with convenient stops in Glenview, Illinois; Sturtevant, Wisconsin; and General Mitchell International Airport), Bakura made his way towards the trains. He kept moving from car to car until he decided that this one would not be as populated. You did not want to say it, but you highly doubted that anyone would be on a train this early on a Saturday.

Instead, you drank your coffee and made use of the outlet for your phone and portable charger. You waited until the train started to finally ask. “Why are we going to Milwaukee again?”

“Reconnaissance.”

“So I gathered. Oh, before I forget---good job on figuring out that I saw Milwaukee in my vision. You’re like freakin’ Nancy Drew over here. Anyway, what \textit{exactly} are we doing in Milwaukee?”

“Just follow me and do what I tell you to do and you’ll be fine.”

You really did not like the sound of that. There was an announcement of having your ticket out for the conductor.

“You’re not going to do anything to get us arrested, right?” you asked quietly. A glance around the car confirmed that no other passenger was present. Or maybe you just had been right about no one wanting to go hop a train on a weekend morning.

“When I had my own body, I was hailed at the King of Thieves. Civilization along the Nile knew and feared my name. Do you really think I would be foolish enough to get arrested?”

He gave you an appraising look before continuing. “Me? No. You? More than likely. So make sure you be a good girl and listen to me, hmm?”

You took a long gulp from your latte and pointedly ignored that. After a few moments you opened your mouth to continue, but promptly fell silent when the conductor entered the car. Lost in thought, you and Bakura silently handed over your tickets and were given the stub back.

Without meaning to, your eyes fell on Bakura’s ticket where you could see the pseudonym he was using. The name Bakari seemed awfully familiar, you just could not place it.

Suddenly you remembered what you were about to say, “Last night, you mentioned something about sensing Seto and his...um...Item, moving. Can you sense the others?”

Yeah, you knew that the Millennium Ring had the power to split the wielder’s soul, seal it into other objects, and other broken OP bullshit. There were also the prongs (or whatever they were called) severing as an ancient Egyptian GPS that could track all the other Millennium Items.

“Indeed. The Necklace is here. No doubt in your possession. The Rod is more than likely in Japan at this point. The Scales, Key, and Eye keep moving north and south while the Puzzle has been stationary. Yet, I cannot exactly pinpoint the location of the Puzzle.”

You nodded. Not for the first time, you wondered about the Millennium Puzzle. If the Millennium
Ring was this broken, how powerful was the most powerful of the Items? Instead of inquiring, you knew you needed to focus and learn as much as you could before you got to Milwaukee.

“Did I tell you about the Halloween theory yet?” you asked. The eyebrow raise told you that no, you had not shared that information yet. So you relayed what you knew about Samhain—even if it might be unnecessary because hello? Bakura kind of lived through that period of history. He might not have been in the right country at the time though.

Then again, Bakura once claimed that he had numerous ‘hosts’ throughout history, including Alexander the Great. If that were true, maybe he would have had contact with the Celts…? You were not really sure, so you just relayed what you knew. Bakura listened intently and once you finished, he patted your head.

“I knew you would be able to puzzle it out,” he beamed. “Even if you incurred spiritual damage from your boyfriend’s Penalty Game, it appears that your brain can in fact, function once in a while.”

“Um, what are you talking about?” you questioned. “Seto and I never challenged each other to a Dark Game.”

Unless…?

No, you immediately concluded. You would have known if you were in a Dark Game and Seto would never do that to you. Period!

Bakura stared at you with such intensity that for a moment, it was like it was staring beyond you and into whatever part consisted of your life force. It was unnerving. Finally, he just chuckled and leaned back in his seat. “You would know best, wouldn’t you?” he asked. His hands went behind his head and he stared up at the ceiling, a knowing smirk flitted across his face. “My mistake.”

You were not sure what Bakura was trying to say. For now, you decided to not press the issue. If anything, maybe you and Seto could bond over how many ridiculous shit Bakura said during this trip.

“What’s up?” you asked since Bakura was looking a bit too pensive.

“Think about what you just said.” At your blank expression, Bakura sighed. “What did you just get done telling me?”

“About Samhain” you questioned. Bakura’s expression was silent and his expression was unreadable. You uncrossed and crossed your legs and while you thought, you bounced your foot. The sound from the zipper hitting your boot made Bakura give you a warning stare, so you stopped.

Within a few seconds, you were doing it again. At last, you finally spoke. “Okay, so. Let’s go on the assumption that any of us know what happens after death and that there is an afterlife. With that assumption, Halloween supposedly the day the fabric between this world and the next is at its thinnest,” you said, thinking out loud. Regardless of how many supernatural activities you have witnessed, it took a lot to let go of your religious beliefs (or rather, lack thereof).

“You’re close, but not quite there. Instead of a shroud or any fabric, think of it as a door;” Bakura prompted.

“So the door is at the thinnest?” you questioned skeptically. This metaphysical shit made absolutely no sense. “Why would the thickness of a door matter in a metaphysical sense.

“Did you really just say that?” Bakura replied tersely. “Does that make any sense to you?”
“No,” you answered, feeling a little stupid. “Because doors open and close.”

“You know how doors work. Congratulations,” Bakura deadpanned. “I can see that they only let the best and brightest into that graduate program of yours.”

You tried to think of a good retort, but realized that would just make you look even worse. So you mulled things over.

You had to think about doors, except not in the literal sense. Or the band. More, metaphysical.

A door yet not a door.

Wait…

A door that was not a door was a false door!

“So it is less like what the ancient Celts believed and more like how the Egyptians believed in the idea that there was a door between this world and the next. I mean, they painted false doors in tombs to symbolize this.”

“You really need to work on your delivery,” Bakura admonished. “But yes, you are on the right track. Is there anything else?”

Bakura was using the Socratic teaching method. You hated Socratic questioning! No matter how much you begged or demanded, you knew that Bakura would not simply tell you the right answer. Part of you was sure he was playing this game simply because you referred to him as Nancy Drew.

You sighed deeply and rested your head against the seat rest.

“If the ability to open the door that separates this life from the next is...I guess this door is easiest to open on Halloween. That means someone wants to open that door to pass into the afterlife. Or…”

“Go on.”

“This...temporal door won’t work like a normal door. Well, duh. Rather, the door opens from one side to let a soul, ka, spiritual energy--or whatever--through to the other side--the afterlife. However, this door can only be opened from one side and requires a person’s soul--let’s just call it soul---to open it. More than likely, someone wants to open the door to let someone from in afterlife back into our world.”

“Why would someone do that?” Bakura pressed. “What would they gain?”

“I don’t know!” you huffed, throwing your arms up in exasperation. “For fun?”

“Think,” Bakura ordered, yanking your arms and dragged them back down. “You’re a fool girl, but you’re not stupid. You already know the answer, but refuse to do any of the heavy lifting.”

You felt your wrists ball up in anger as your frustration peaked. This was not your area of expertise! How the hell were you supposed to know any of this?!

Getting angry and lashing out at Bakura would not end well for you. Although you wanted to storm off into another car to calm down, you closed your eyes and went through mental exercises until you were more composed.

With a clearer head, you had an idea. You may not be good at connecting dots that just were not there, but you were good at something: using Google. The moment you reached out for your phone,
Bakura pushed your hand away.

“That is the problem with your generation. Instead of solving something for yourself, you just use the Internet to do the thinking for you.”

“Yeah?” you replied, chin raised in defiance. “So?”

Like he was really going to stop you...

“If you so much as look at that phone one more time, that phone will be thrown off this train,” Bakura warned.

Seto still might call and you did not want to have to pay for a replacement phone. Not to mention, you had so much on there that wasn’t backed up.

“That’s a little extreme…”

To show that you were not using the phone, you turned your body towards Bakura. “Give me one hint,” you implored.

“You were on to something with Egypt and the false door,” Bakura replied.

“Egypt,” you repeated, pressing your lips together. You went over everything you knew about ancient Egypt. Nothing you read in the Field Museum stood out. All you could really recall from that day was arriving at the museum, briefly spotting Seto in the mass of people, the explosion, the encounter with the wielder of the Millennium Eye, and Seto practically dragging you to the paramedics.

Slowly, rusted and cobwebbed cogs came to life in your mind squeaked loudly as they came to life and began to turn. Seto had already explained what the mysterious big bad was after.

“Does it have anything to do with the Pharaoh’s true name?” you inquired. Bakura only raised his brows, so you continued. “Well, the Egyptians also believed someone’s true name had power that could be used to control, summon, or as a conduit of magic.”

Bakura said nothing. Instead, he stretched with feline grace before fixing you with a Cheshire grin. “Did some priest tell you that?” he inquired.

“No, just Seto.”

Bakura snorted. You folded your arms defensively; he was clearly enjoying your answer. When he spoke, he used a tone that one would take with a child. A very slow child at that. “Tell me, how did the CEO of an electronic gaming company come to learn so much about Ancient Egypt?”

“I dunno, the same reason I learned what I know: I was interested and learned,” you shot back. “Someone taking an interest in an area outside of their industry. Heaven forbid...That is sarcasm, by the way.”

Then again, there might be something to Bakura’s statement. Not that you would ever let him know that, of course. When you were still having those extremely vivid erotic dreams about Seto, he had been an Ancient Egyptian priest. Seto had also had been a Pharaoh in one or two of those, you reminded yourself.

There were many ways for Bakura to have guessed the contents of your dreams. After a couple of cocktails, you tell anyone what they want to know. For all you know, you mentioned something to
Bakura during a drunken stupor. That sounded like something you would do.

“Oh my sweet summer child…”

Your eyes narrowed dangerously. “Have you been watching Game of Thrones on my HBOGo account?” you demanded.

“It’s not even your account.”

“Which is why we need to respect it. I don’t want my ex to figure out that he never changed his password,” you said as seriously as you have ever been in your entire life. “From now on, you need to delete your browsing history.”

Instead of making a further comment Bakura once more folded his arms behind his head, a lazy smile playing about his features. The glint in his eye told you that he was not quite done with you yet. “It seems like we established that you, much like Jon Snow, know nothing. Let’s see if you can at least put the missing puzzle pieces together.”

“Didn’t I literally just do that?” you groaned.

“In a way, but you’re missing something. To recap for a moment: if a Name can summon, what can make the Door open?”

“A soul,” you answered.

“Correct. The doors,” Bakura shot you a sharp look when you tried to suppress a grin at hearing the band name. “As I was saying, the door or doors open just enough and close as quickly. A soul requires that gateway to open. How would this fit with the Name?” Bakura prompted.

“Yugi was kidnapped and from what I learned, the Nameless Pharaoh--Atem--possessed the Puzzle. So someone wants to open these doors, summon Atem, and I don’t know, use his name to control him?” you guessed. “Take his powers?”

“That’s my girl,” Bakura praised. “Now, why Milwaukee?”

“I don’t know, you admitted. You frowned and there were only two things you thought of when you thought of Milwaukee. Okay, three. Harley's, beer, and, “Dahmer?”

“Who?”

“I would show you a Wikipedia page, but you banned me from using my phone,” you knew you sounded as snotty as an angsty teenager, but did not care.

“You can use your phone,” Bakura grumbled.

Out came both your phones, but you pulled the Wikipedia out first since you had already connected to the train’s free WiFi while Bakura was using his crappy data plan. To be a good sport, you turned the screen so Bakura could see it. “Cannibal. Killed seventeen people. He apparently killed twelve people in one apartment that is now a parking..I mean, vacant lot.”

“Do you believe someone will conduct a ritual in the middle of an empty lot?” Bakura asked incredulously. “Out in the open?”

“Maybe it’s not the best neighborhood?” you suggested with a shrug. After the side-eye you received from Bakura, you amended, “Maybe not. The only thing I can think of is some kind of business
partnership between a place in Chicago and Milwaukee.”

“And that is why we’re doing reconnaissance,” Bakura concluded. By now, the train was approaching the Sturtevant station. Without preamble, Bakura rose from his seat and moved over to another seat. He then pulled out his Nintendo DS and proceeded to ignore you.

Which was fine with you, honestly. You needed some time away from Bakura. After his inane questioning, you really wanted to push him off of this moving train.

Since you had about another half hour of your ninety minute train ride left, you decided to be somewhat productive. As per your agreement, you text Mokuba letting him know you were alright. Seto still had yet to contact you, so you decided to email him:

> Hey,

> Got your text message and by the time I got it, I figured it was too late to reply. Hopefully your trip back to Japan went well.

> I’m actually on my way to Milwaukee.

You then went on to detail what had transpired over the past twelve hours; Mokuba and you coming to an agreement on how you were an adult, so you did not need to be under constant supervision (honestly, that was exaggerating the conversation more than a little, but whatever). There was also Bakura reappearing, and dragging you to Milwaukee. You also went over the conversation Bakura just forced out of you.

> Trust me, I am not exactly buying what he’s selling. Apparently, I incurred “spiritual damage” from a Penalty Game (LOL wut?). He (It?) insinuated that you did that. Which, yeah, is complete bullshit. He also hinted you were an Ancient Egyptian priest. Not sure how that works because I am pretty sure the Egyptians did not believe in reincarnation.

> I don’t know what I’m saying--I am just super tired and frustrated right now. In any case, I just wanted to let you know everything is fine and trust me, I am taking what the spirit is saying with a grain of salt. Hopefully I will have more answers by the end of the day in CST time zone since that is the only time zone that really matters, tbh.

You finished it with imploring him not to be angry with you and once again, letting you know that everything was fine. The train began to slow down and the buildings were growing progressively taller (for Wisconsin away), so you started packing your belongings up.

You waited until the doors opened before following Bakura off the train. He led you through the intermodal station an out the glass doors leading to the streets of the Brew City. Overall, the temperature was a little cooler than Chicago. Still, the weather was unseasonably warm and in spite of all the warnings about global warming, you were perfectly content with that.

A quick glance around your surroundings made you feel more than a little concerned. There was an empty lot across the street and catercorner, was an imposing building advertised as a self-storage facility.

> “Are we going to get an Uber? Maybe rent a car?” you questioned before sparing a glance at the parking lot down the street. “Steal a car?”

> “You really are not doing your generation any favors,” Bakura commented. He stuck his hands in the pocket of the fall coat he wore and began to walk east.
So you were footing it.

Great.

Bakura barely glanced over his shoulder to make sure you were following along. You had to break into a quick jog to keep up with him, your coffee spilling out of the lid and onto your sleeve.

With an overdramatic sigh, you chugged the rest of your (now cold) latte. You would throw the cup into the first garbage you came across.

Maybe it was the dilapidated road and sidewalk (or the several buildings that looked like they were constructed during the Soviet era), but this did not seem like the best side of town. Less than five minutes into the walk, you were beginning to notice signs of civilization and could see traces of what you assumed was downtown area once you made it past the concrete monoliths.

Finally feeling like you were in an actual city, you began to relax a little. The area was even beginning to look a lot nicer. However, you were not paying attention to that. Rather, your attention was fixated on the bridge up ahead--more specifically, the green arch. Right now, you were too far away to read the lettering, but you had a feeling you already knew what it said.

“Is this beginning to look a little more familiar?” Bakura asked when he saw your expression.

“I don’t know,” you answered slowly.

Both of you continued on in silence until you were nearly underneath the arch. “This isn’t the place,” you concluded. For starters, the downtown cityscape had been right in front of you, not to your left.

“We can try looking that way”, you indicated towards the left. There was a pedestrian pathway leading down to riverwalk that you ignored. You had been on the street in your vision.

Since you had been running with the flow of traffic, you and Bakura waited at a light until a crosswalk sign indicated that you could cross. A couple of the buildings towards the north looked vaguely familiar.

Bakura spotted it before you did. “Don’t even think about it,” he warned.

“What do you mean--?” you began and then saw what he was looking at. “--Oh.”

There was a Starbucks up ahead.

“Maybe in a couple of hours,” you mused out loud. Your gaze then fell on the dog on the sidewalk. He (you were just going to call it a he) had been tied up and was looking inside the large windows, whining sadly. The dog, a Pomeranian by the looks of it (probably a throwback, judging by his size) had fawny fur and a melanistic mask. The dog looked familiar to you. Like really familiar.

“Have we met?” you asked the pooch, who only seemed mildly interested in your approach.

“...You have got to be--” Bakura began and muttered the rest of himself.

As if on cue, the dog’s attention went to the glass door that swung open. “Sorry Rose,” came an eerily familiar voice. You glanced over your shoulder to confirm who it was.

She did not give either of you a passing glance. Instead, she quickly set her coffee down before taking the lid off of a cup of water. Then, she bent down, tilting the cup forward so the dog could drink. You instantly recognized her.
Petite and pale, she had the perfect doe-eyes. Her long brown hair was currently tied back and you knew from your experience with this girl, that she shed worse than the Persian cat she owned. Overall, she was above average looking but there was something about her features--perhaps her small petulant mouth or the fact that her eyes were just a little too wide apart--that made it so she could only be called cute.

“Hey bitch,” you said in greeting to your friend and old college roommate. “How’s it going?”

Layla looked up at you. Her head titled to the side as she did a quick-double take before she quickly came up with a rebuttal. “That is extremely rude. Roscoe is a boy dog!”

“My mistake,” you said while reaching down to finally pet the dog. He just turned his big brown eyes up to look up at you momentarily before going back to lapping up his water. You knew you had met this dog before! Of course, it was not Layla’s dog, he belonged to Layla’s mother.

Who was…

“Is Roscoe your dog now?” you inquired since dead people did not own dogs. You felt a pang of sadness knowing that she now joined you in the Dead Mothers Club. Layla’s mom had always been really cool, serving as a pseudo surrogate mother by buying you some Christmas and birthday presents since dead parents usually meant spending holidays forgotten about.

There was a tiny flicker of guilt. You last talked to Layla at her mother’s funeral six months ago. As someone who knew what it was like to lose a mother, you could have reached out more. Then again, a voice in the back of your mind replied haughtily, you only wished your own mother lived as long as Layla’s did. Layla at least had her mom at her high school graduation and to whistle when Layla walked across the stage to shake the dean’s hand at her college graduation. You did not have that.

Also, a neurotic emotionally scarred individual such as yourself was not the best influence.

“No,” Layla replied slowly. Roscoe was now finished with the water, so she untied her leash, picked up her coffee, and near-empty plastic cup and stood up. “I need to take him back home sometime today.”

“That sucks,” you replied, unsure of what else to say. Layla loved that dog, her posting about him on Facebook made it obvious.

“Yeah,” Layla agreed.

Roscoe looked like he was ready to go based upon how much he kept looking up at Layla and whining.

“Fine!” Layla sighed, turning in the direction you and Bakura had been heading. “Looks like I have to get going. If you’re in town for a while, text me. We can hang out.”

“Definitely,” you replied, knowing full well that was never going to actually happen. “My friend and I are heading this way as well. Maybe we can walk for a bit?”

Layla looked over at Bakura for the first time. For a moment, they both stood rigid and quiet while they sized each other up. In that moment, they each had such an intensity to their gaze that reminded you of how Bakura looked at you on the train. Even if their gazes were not directed at you, it was still unnerving.

“I don’t think we met,” Layla said politely, switching the leash to her left and extended her right hand. “I’m Layla, this bitch’s—’ a nod at you “—old roommate.”
Bakura stood tall. His expression then melted into a look of amusement and intrigue while a grin played about his face. “Oh my. I have heard stories about you.”

Finally, he shook the extended hand. “Call me Ryou,” he insisted. “I can already tell that you are going to be fun.”
Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

After this chapter, Layla won’t be appearing much more. I am really not sure how folks like Layla, but I figured she is probably annoying since she's a random character only hinted at before showing up and hogging two chapters. (Sorry). She is going to appear next chapter for only a little bit since it's mainly a Reader and Bakura shenanigans chapter.

In case anyone wants a visual to know just how cute Roscoe is, this is probably a good visual: http://imgur.com/CVo79MS

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Bakura calling anyone interesting would be enough to make you concerned for the poor soul. Him insinuating someone would be fun sent an involuntary shiver up your spine.

“I hope that I live up to my reputation,” Layla said through a forced smile.

“Come on, slowpokes!” you called out over your shoulder. You had hoped that hoped they would notice how you were several yards in front of them by now. They did not.

“I am sure your reputation precedes you,” Bakura confidently replied as the two of them began to follow after you.

There had two different conversations going on, you observed. One of them was the exchange of pleasantries while the second conversation was hidden behind their carefully chosen words. You had a feeling that neither would indulge you if you asked, so you were not going to bother.

“What brings you two to Milwaukee?” Layla asked once the conversation (that would make Inception look shallow) concluded.

You already had your cover story prepared. “It’s a bit weird, actually,” you began.


“Bak--Excuse me, there was something in my throat.” You had been about to say Bakura instead of Ryou. Giving out a fake name was stupid. “Ryou also attends University of Chicago. We’re just doing some research…”

You trailed off because up ahead, you spotted yet another arch. This one was looking more familiar than the first one. Intrigued, you broke into a half-jog to see if this was the location of where you had your vision.

Behind you, Layla took a long sip from her coffee while eyeballing Bakura. “So you’re a student?” she inquired. “What are you studying?”

Bakura’s sharp gaze fell on your retreating form for putting him on the spot. “History.”

You did not hear the remainder of the conversation since you were already on the bridge. The
amplified sound the cars were making whenever they crossed, the gatehouse…

Once you got to the other side of the bridge, you finally turned around and felt your chest begin to tighten. This was it. There was even that frozen yogurt shop. You just stood, frozen in place and transfixed on the sight before you. It was like seeing a historical sight with your own eyes instead of in photos, but...different.

It was fucking weird.

“Are you okay?” Layla asked when she caught up to you. Roscoe was cowering from the noise in the streets, so she scooped the Pomeranian up without spilling a drop of coffee.

“I just...thought I would take a selfie,” you stammered. “You saw the duel yesterday. Do you know how many Instagram followers I got overnight?”

“Yeah? Well. I have a dog, so there’s that,” Layla countered, giving Roscoe a kiss on the forehead.

“So I thought a group selfie would be fun, but Roscoe doesn’t seem to like it here,” you finished.

“Plus it’s touristy as fuck,” Layla added. “You know better than to do that.”

You just chuckled nervously while inching a little further away from Bakura. “So I guess Ryou filled you in on what we’re going to be up to today.”

“Busting out the tinfoil for hats, I would assume?” Layla replied.

“What gave you that impression?” Bakura not-so innocently inquired.

“Really? You’re researching the Ancient Egypt and how they’re connected to Duel Monsters and the occult. From the way you phrased things, it certainly sounds like you believe that there are secret societies worshiping a card game.”

“How did you get that from what I told you? I said I am interested in ancient religions and modern applications.”

“Like a lot of other conspiracy theorists,” Layla retorted imperiously.

You needed to diffuse this situation before Layla and Bakura pushed each other off of the bridge. The conversation her and Bakura had left you feeling uneasy about your long-time friend, but you had known her for years. There was no way she was part of this craziness. So while you were pretty confident that Layla was not dangerous, it was beginning to become more obvious that she at least knew something.

This was not Chicago, but still looked like a chic part of the city. Not only that, but you were a Millennial and it was the late morning and a weekend. You knew just the way to create a temporary armistice and get Layla to talk.

“How about brunch?” you suggested.

“We’re going to have to sit outdoors since I don’t want to leave Roscoe alone at my place with the cat.”

Several minutes later, you arrived at the destination Layla suggested. You went in and asked the hostess to be seated outside. Layla had already came around the building by the time you and Bakura were led to the patio that had a nice view of the river. All three of you had been seated under some
heated lamps and immediately, you started looking through the menu in silence.

Layla would more than likely order a single mimosa. You knew damm well that one cocktail was never enough to take her down, so you had to come up with a plan...

“Let’s get the bottomless mimosas!” you squealed. Bakura was right, you really were not doing any favors to your generation, even if you were putting on an act. Kind of putting on an act.

“I don’t know,” Layla began to protest, looking extremely conflicted.

“Oh come onnn! Live a little!” you insisted. Roscoe pawed at her leg, so she lifted him up and much to your horror, let him sit on her lap.

“I think Roscoe wants you to get the mimosas. Plus, Ryou is going to get the bottomless mimosas, too. Right?”

You hoped your expression said ‘Just go with me on this one.’ Bakura looked at the menu for a moment before he shrugged. “Fine.”

“See? I will even pay for it.”

“Well…” Layla began before she made a decision “Eh, fuck it. Let’s do it.”

*Hook, line, and sink* you thought triumphantly. Your eyes landed on the brunch special and you wished you looked at the prices before suggesting anything. The bottomless mimosas were part of a $25 brunch special that included a brunch item. It really was not that bad of a price, but since you were paying for Layla (and probably Bakura since he was a leech), plus the taxes and tip...

This was going to hurt your bank account…

While stressing out over the menu, the waitress seemingly materialized from nowhere. She fretted over how impossibly pretty Roscoe was before asking if she could get everyone started with something.

“We’re all having the brunch special,” you announced before looking over at the group. Bakura had his menu down but Layla looked like she was doing Eeny, meeny, miny, moe as a way to decide what she wanted.

“I think we’re going to need a few minutes. Could we get a round of mimosas first?”

“Sure!” the waitress chirped. “Could I just see your IDs?”

“Oh yeah,” you said, reaching for your purse. “Sure.”

Layla’s Wisconsin Driver’s license was barely glanced at before it was handed back to her. Your own Illinois license was given a little more scrutiny.

“How Ill-annoying,” Layla commented with a mischievous glint that made you know that she thought she was being clever. *Illinois, ill-annoying*, ha. So funny….

“Go to hell,” you retorted.

“Bitch, I will see you there.”
You gave Layla a one-fingered peace sign before you noted that the waitress was studying Bakura’s passport. Seto had an Illinois driver’s license, so you never really thought about non-citizens needing a passport for their ID.

“Sorry,” the waitress apologized, handing Bakura his passport back. “I just never seen one before. Though honestly, I thought you two were sisters or something at first.”

"We get that a lot," you replied.

Before she left, the waitress pet Roscoe one more time. “Would it be okay if I bring him some bacon with your food?” she asked Layla.

“He would love that,” Layla replied. She waited until the waitress departed before turning to you. “So. I hear you had an interesting month.”

“You can say that,” you said gravely. In your mind’s eye, you could hear the blaring sound of fire alarms as your hearing gradually returned, feel the cloud of dust and smoke that you could feel lingering on your skin, in your airways…

The bodies…

You tried not looking at the bodies since you know that their faces would return in your nightmares. Yet, you could not stop yourself from reading about all those who died for seeing an exhibit on a stormy Sunday afternoon.

“I don’t like talking about it.”

Layla swore to herself when she realized what she inadvertently brought up. “I was referring to you dating a hotshot CEO. Tell me about him! Is he always a boss? How many shades of grey are we talking about here?”

Miraculously, your mimosas arrived at that time. You gratefully took yours and saw that Layla’s beseeching stare did not let up. You took a long swing from your drink and Layla only folded her hands and leaned forward intently. “I signed an NDA,” you said as if to explain your reluctance to dish about the bae.

“So that’s a big No for writing a book about how you got your groove back?” Layla inquired before letting the waitress know that yes, she would like another mimosa right away in a tone that suggested she was trying to stave off scurvy.

“Oh don’t give me that look,” Layla said. You were not exactly sure what facial expression you were making. “When you write that book about living it up and getting fancy things like your badass colored contacts, you can forward five percent for giving you the idea.”

“Only five percent?” Bakura looked over at Layla like she was an idiot. “You’re a terrible negotiator.”

“Which is why I should learn about Kaiba. Maybe get into his psyche and see how negotiating is really done.”

“No,” you replied.

“Okay,” Layla conceded. Fingers steeped in front of her face while she studied you. Roscoe just licked Layla’s hand, ruining the dramatics she was obviously going for.
“Can we enter the circle of trust for a minute?” Layla asked.

“We may not,” you replied.

“Are we there yet?”

“Drink your mimosa,” you could not help but snap back at her. A certain emotion crossed Layla’s features but were quickly replaced by her usual easygoing expression.

“I thought we were all friends here,” Layla pointed out. “What happened to that?”

“I am not giving you a play-by-play of my sex life,” you said politely yet firmly. “Besides, the only thing that cements our friendship is the amount of time we prevented each other from puking.”

“Are you going to let me live vicariously through you or not?” Layla prompted.

“I signed an NDA,” you reminded her. Now you were beginning to feel annoyed “So no.”

Layla only chuckled like you had told some kind of joke. "I'm just messing around. Lighten up a little."

Layla thanked the waitress when she brought back her second mimosa as well as some more water for the table. After setting the second drink on the table, she seemingly remembered that Bakura even existed. “Can you tell me anything about Seto Kaiba?”

“Plenty,” Bakura answered, grinning into his drink. “We went to high school together.”

“Go on…”

“I don’t feel like it,” Bakura said. “You weren’t very nice to me.”

Layla shrugged and took a long sip from her mimosa as a way to hide her embarrassment for being called out.

“Speaking of which,” you said now that you were confident Layla was in a chatty mood. “What’s your beef with each other?’

To explain who had the problem with one another, you looked from Layla over to Bakura. Layla just shrugged and continued with her mimosa while Bakura did not even acknowledge the fact you had even asked a question.

Oh whatever, you decided. Bakura would probably tell you later anyway. You felt a cold hollowness in the pit of your stomach at the thought that Layla was somehow involved in this.

Before you could ask any other questions, you noted that Layla was putting Roscoe back on the ground. A moment later, you saw why: the food arrived. Immediately, Layla started picking up rashers trying to get Roscoe to do a trick.

“He used to do tricks so sweetly,” Layla complained after a third attempt to get the Pomeranian to shake without jumping up. You had been absentmindedly picking at your own food and paused to watch the spectacle. Honestly, your heart went out to the pup. Layla was being a hardass by making Roscoe sit, shake, and lay down before feeding him one rasher.

Bakura unceremoniously tossed a bit of sausage at Roscoe, who caught it in his mouth.

“That was actually impressive,” Layla said into her mimosa before giving the dog some more bacon.
“Good boy, Rosc!”

You watched and waited, biding your time until you encouraged Layla to get a third mimosa. Finally you leaned back in your chair and regarded her with a lazy smile. “What you were saying about conspiracies?” you asked.

Layla blinked, she had been in the middle of cutting some of her french toast. “Huh?” she asked before she seemingly remembered. “Oh yeah. Right. That. Eh, forget about it.”

“I am curious as well,” Bakura chimed in. “Why don’t you share with the class?”

“I’m feeling a little ganged up on right now, so can we drop it?” Layla asked. To prove how much she wanted the topic dropped, she took a large bite from her berry stuffed French toast. Washing it down with a mimosa, she tossed Roscoe some bacon without making him do a trick.

Inwardly, you steeled yourself and pressed on. “You know that I wouldn’t do that,” you said in defense of yourself. “Ryou? Maybe, but just ignore him. I usually do.”

An ice cube landed squarely in the middle of your forehead. Bakura still had his hand in his water glass. He fished an ice cube out of the glass and crunched down on it. “Just ignore me,” he said while continuing to munch on his ice cube.

“See? This is why I am not saying anything. I fear retaliation,” Layla explained. “No offense, but you seem like the type of track me down in a dark alleyway or something.

“You’re not going to track her down in a dark alleyway or retaliate, right?” you pointedly asked Bakura.

“Scout’s honor.” Bakura even held up three fingers for effect.

Layla frowned, not quite buying it. “Scout’s honor that you will or won’t?”

“Just tell her what you know, woman,” Bakura growled.

Layla set her fork down with a loud clang and leaned back in her chair. Her eyes narrowed at Bakura momentarily and you had a feeling she was about to start some shit with Bakura. Fortunately, Layla looked over at you and cleared her throat. “People are fucking weird,” she began.

When she saw that neither you nor Bakura were going to protest or contribute, she continued. “Okay, so you know how doctors are douches to nurses? Double that for Nurse Practitioners. I did not go back to school to have doctors pass all the pregnant women and drug seekers on to me.”

You were not too sure what else to do, but nodded empathetically. Layla worked in the ER and you were familiar with her bitching about this on Facebook.

“I hate children, especially babies. Everyone at work knows this, yet I get all that shit. Anyway, a couple of weeks ago, I actually got a sexy case. Head trauma, surprisingly. He walked in and said he was in a motorcycle wreck and walked away from it. I order an X-Ray and roll my chair over to him, slap on my gloves and have a looksee at him to assess for a concussion or any type of abrasion. That is when I notice he sustained an epicranial laceration.”

Now it was Layla’s turn to look at Bakura like he was an idiot, “That means he cut his head,” she said in a tone reserved for children. She then resumed telling her story. “He had dark hair and the second I parted his hair, it was like Moses and the Red Sea, but reversed.”
“Thank goodness we are not squeamish,” you commented. “Especially since we’re y’know, eating.”

“My mom was a nurse. I am a nurse. Blood and guts was perfectly acceptable table conversation. Anyway, I need to get a suture kit, get an irrigation set up and call in a CNA to keep pressure on the new bleed. Anyway, I leave to get everything. As I am passing the nurses station, I hear that there was a bombing in Chicago.”

You had been wondering where Layla was going with this and now she had your full attention.

“Was this September thirteenth?”

“September thirteenth,” Layla confirmed. “I got back to the room, irrigate the wounds and inject him with lidocaine to numb the scalp like its fuckin’ Botox. Glass and debris were in his wounds and considering the bombing happened a few hours ago, I would say that his injuries were really suspicious. I have seen a few injuries following a meth lab explosion. Two and two usually make four, so…”

“Did he say anything?” you questioned. You had been right about Layla becoming excessively chatty. However, you forgot that sometimes it took forever for her to get to the point of her stories.

“Kind of. This guy is not looking too great and the second I start suturing him, he starts babbling about pain. There was no reason not to and since it is pretty much protocol anyway, I ordered some narcotics.”

“You said you were a nurse. How is it that you can order pain medication?” Bakura demanded, calling shenanigans. You decided to stay out of this one.

“First of all, I am a board-certified emergency Nurse Practitioner. Both NPs and Physician Assistants can write a prescription in the state of Wisconsin as long as a physician…” Layla began while you tuned her out.

Roscoe was laying down on the ground, his big brown doggy eyes staring up at you and your food. No one was paying attention, so you tossed him a few scraps.

Part of you kind of hated Layla for being able to complete a more rigorous course of study than you. Back in college, you both had taken the same Anatomy and Physiology class. You had observed that during exams, Layla would often tilt her head and look like she was listening while God himself (if you even believe in that) gave away the answers.

“As I was saying, I order some narcotics and in a few minutes, he is higher than a kite and rambling.” Layla continued. Before anyone asked, she held up her hand. “No, he did not implicate himself in any type of bombing. I did not realize that hey, this guy could be connected to the bombing a few hours ago. Once I did, I followed proper steps to alert my supervisor. In any case, he starts talking about auctions, notes from occultists like Jack Parsons, and Ancient Egypt, artifacts, and some of the one-percent families in Milwaukee interested in them. Like the Balistreri and Lynch Families. When I say Family, I mean family with a capital F.”

As an introvert who was not used to speaking for an extended period of time, Layla took a long drink from her water. You mentally noted both names.

It still did not make sense. “That’s all well and good, but how goes that lead one down the rabbit hole into conspiracy theories? All it says is that there’s eccentric millionaires who like Ancient Egypt.”
Layla just shrugged. “People have been fascinated with Ancient Egypt and making up insane stuff about it for centuries. Every few decades, a new wild and crazy story emerges. For fuck’s sake, they used to grind mummies up or just eat them in the Renaissance!”

Layla looked over at Bakura. “You’re getting a Masters in history,” she said. “School her.”

“Consider yourself schooled,” Bakura deadpanned.

“Good. I mean, apparently there’s a huge market for collecting this stuff. Or so he claims. There was also the mention of Lovecraft and other writers who were into that during the occult craze of the early 1900s.”

“I can buy the Egyptian stuff, but Lovecraft? I admit, that sounds like a lot of fucking crazy. Yet it sounds like a weird interest, not some Illuminati conspiracy.”

You were interrupted by the waitress asking if you needed anything else. You asked for the check and made sure your credit card was out to just pass to her when she came back.

“Exactly. This guy rambled like this was all real and things like Duel Monsters was real and connected to Ancient Egypt. Consider Occam’s razor. Industrial Illusions came right out and said they were inspired by Ancient Egypt. It’s as simple as that, yet there’s way too many people who read into stuff that isn’t there.”

“Are there people like that?” you questioned skeptically.

“I know you weren’t the same kind of latchkey kid I was where the TV raised you, but I know you have watched the History Channel at least once,” Layla replied. “There’s all sorts of crazy programs linking the Nazis to the occult, theories linking Hitler to searching for the Nameless Pharaoh in Egypt. Then there’s that freaking Zeitgeist movie—“

“I get the point,” you cut in. “What’s your take on all of this?”

“More than likely Duel Monster was invented by a bunch of Egyptians, looking for something to do. When they were not making pyramids or running away from hippos, they got bored. So they came up with a card game. Since religion is—was—I’m an atheist dude, I don’t fucking know. But for the Egyptians, religion was life. Because of that, the card game somehow became significant to their religion and culture.

“Apparently, the game was so much fun that a couple of pharaohs became fanboys and it carved into their tombs. Ancient nerds do not translate into anything other than fandom goes way the hell back.” No one really thinks much of it until the 1920’s when there was that whole Egypt craze. King Tut’s tomb is found just as the occult is lit or whatever.”

“Not to be a jerk or anything,” you interrupted. “But that’s not how lit is used in a sentence.”

“I don’t care,” Layla fired back, tossing an orange slice at you for extra emphasis. “Wait, I lose my train of thought. Where was I?”

“Shit that was lit back in the early 1900s for 500, Trebek,” you said helpfully. Layla definitely was drunk and might need an adult to walk Roscoe back to her condo.

...Condo.

Layla owned her own home and made way more money than you and you ended up paying? You were a fool who just got bamboozled. Part of you wished you were with Seto for a little longer so
you could hit him up for cash without feeling like a gold digger.

“Oh yeaaaah. Anyway, occults, secret societies were all the rage. Every one of them claimed to have some hidden knowledge of the ancients. Howard Carter ate that shit up so well he went off to Egypt to explore. So when Tut’s tomb was found and holy crap, ancient card games! People read into it more than they should and writers like Lovecraft used these inane theories to create his eldritch abominations of unspeakable horror.

“Shit, Nyarlathotep was inspired from a dream after a late-night research extravaganza on ancient Egypt. This was during prohibition, so who knows what he had in his system when he dreamed of that? Essentially, the Black Pharaoh is nothing more than a fanfiction. Then Allister Crowley mixes in his own unique batch of crazy and it’s like ‘heere we go!’ Jack Parsons apparently died while trying to summon an ancient horror since he fed into Crowley like whoa.”

“Western esotericism,” Bakura cut in. “You’re talking about Western esotericism.”

“Cool. Whatever. Occultism was like a pyramid scheme”

You snickered. “Well played.”

You were laughing at Layla’s terrible puns. Maybe you were a little more than tipsy.

“I wasn’t even trying that time. Okay. So like, a bunch of people try to get rich from the mystical bullshit d’jour. For the people who did get rich while engaging in occult practices probably never realized their story is nothing more than confirmation bias. So the bullshit is perpetuated. This continues and eventually, the founder of Industrial Illusions was born in the 70’s and his parents are the epitome of counterculture because his first name is...Crap, I don’t remember.”

“Pegasus,” Bakura offered. “Pegasus J. Crawford.”

“Yeah, him. Super hippy name. Anyway, his grandma is Joan Crawford, so you know the family is already loaded. Crawford falls into a funk, goes to Egypt and since someone forgot to copyright their game, he modernized it. He pulls inspiration from various mythos and everyone thinks it’s just adorable until that freakin’ Zeitgeist movie I mentioned earlier. Fast-forward a year or so later when 4chan uses their weaponized aut—ehh, never mind. 4chan pretty much starts making connections that isn’t there. A few years later, it spills over onto Tumblr and Reddit, and it was interesting for like a day. People forgot about it and moved on to something more entertaining. Until well….Yeah. The Field Museum.”

Awkward silence.

“Sorry to bring that up again,” ‘Layla mumbled, looking a little abashed after her quasi drunken ramble. “Are you doing okay?”

“It’s fine. I don’t really remember much,” you lied.

“But yeah, according to my patient the Lynch family is crazy into this sort of thing. They apparently got super pissed when they could not buy a few items in that exhibit you went to. I doubt there is anything from that other than an interest though. The Lynches do a lot for the community. The wife of the head honcho—Aisha, I think—is a senior lecturer at UWM and donated so much to the university to expand the history and classics department. So I think they are crazy as shit, but not evil.”

Layla looked over at you, her brows furrowed. “I didn’t say anything dumb, did I?”
“No,’ you replied, taking in the information while giving Bakura a meaningful look. In fact, this along with the information overload was the first real lead.

Chapter End Notes

When I first started this, I thought it would be funny to bump into a literal self-insert while Bakura and Reader are in Milwaukee. What started out as only having one or two lines of dialogue turned into me developing…ugh…me (?) into an actual character. (If you're still reading, here's a bonus scene: http://imgur.com/a/4o6ze ) Once the plot bunnies went wild, I ended up coming up with a different background and changing the name to something similar sounding. I did keep my appearance, love for a sweet little Pomeranian named Roscoe, and a few personality quirks the same though.
After brunch, Layla slurred her explanation of how to get to your final destination on your newly revised itinerary. Of course, Bakura had other plans and dragged you around several different parts of the city until you finally were heading east towards the college Aisha Lynch taught at. There was just one delay and it boiled down to a singular decision. You had to make that decision. Quickly too.

“For the third damn time,” Bakura growled, narrowing his eyes at you. “Where do you want to eat?”

You never could recall an instance where Bakura swore at you, so you knew he was losing his seemingly limitless patience with you. Swallowing hard, you tried to make up your mind, but couldn’t.

Ugh.

Why did you have to be the one to choose? This entire trip was Bakura’s idea, so it was only fair that he decided.

“Give me the choices again!”

Bakura held up his palm right in front of your face with four fingers raised. “We have four choices. Four. You can even see the restaurants from here. There’s Qdoba, Noodles and Company, Jimmy John’s, and Domino’s.” With each place he named, he lowered a finger. “Pick one.”

“Domino’s gave me a stomach ache last time I had it,” you began to think out loud. Never mind the fact that you had been kind of drunk and really wanted feta on your pizza. Your friends argued, but whoever ordered told them to put so much feta on the pizza that you would never want to see it again.

“I’m trying to eat less bread. Plus Jimmy John’s only has one thing on the menu that I can even eat and it’s gross. I had Noodles for lunch last Tuesday…” you rambled.

Could Bakura just appreciate for one minute that you had to make a lot of choices in your life? Maybe, for just one minute, you would appreciate not having the burden of making a choice Bakura would hate. That is why you hated being the Decider. Not only did you not want the additional stress, none of these options were that appealing.

“Qdoba then,” Bakura concluded. He began to turn around to march in the direction of Qdoba, but noticed your expression. “What?!”

“I’m just not really in a Qdoba mood…”

Bakura threw his hands up to symbolize that he was done with you. “Starve for all I care!” he called before stalking off.

“’Kay,” you replied quietly.

Qdoba had a lot more queso options last time you went. So maybe it would not be so bad. Finally deciding on Qdoba after all, you began to make your way towards the restaurant when you heard the Imperial March begin to play.

You immediately stopped in your tracks and looked around for somewhere private to talk. Nowhere, really. You took a deep breath before answering the call since you already knew who it was.
“I cannot believe you would be so stupid,” Seto said in greeting.

Well hello to you too. How was the flight? Wisely, you did not actually say that to him.

“I really did not feel as if I had much of a choice than to go,” you began. Speaking of choices, where do you think I should go for dinner? Noodles or Qdoba?

“So you could not have contacted any one of the security personnel that were literally ordered to ensure your safety?”

“Not without feeling as if I would endanger them,” you replied. Honestly the thought never crossed your mind until now.

Now that it had, you knew exactly what to say.

“Or Mokuba,” you added.

There. That was super manipulative, but you doubted that Seto would argue with you about that.

“Look at it this way, there’s a really big lead we’re going to check out.”

“None of that will matter if the spirit decides you’re no longer of any value,” Seto’s words surprised you. There was a sigh on the other end before he started typing. “I’m on the other side of the globe and have to deal with your lack of self-perseverance...Turn on your phone’s GPS.”

“Now?” you questioned.

“Now,” Seto confirmed.

You did so and there was a few moments of silence while you guessed Seto was pinging your phone’s location. “What are you doing near...the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee?”

“I was about to get dinner,” you began. “Maybe ask if I could get a tour.”

“Not funny.”

You looked around and saw that there were a few people standing at a bus stop, so you began walking further down the block. Seto probably could see the bus stop and you moving on the GPS, so he did not comment until you figured you were out of earshot. “Here’s the lowdown. I ran into my college roommate--”

“Is this the college roommate that I am thinking of?” Seto questioned.

“Layla? Yeah...that’s the one.”

There was a baffled silence on the other end, so you continued. “I went to the exact spot where I had my vision. I guess backing up a little, Layla and I ran into each other and I ended up walking with her for a bit. When I saw the bridge, I ran ahead. I guess her and Bakura were shit talking each other. All of us ended up going to brunch…”

You glanced over your shoulder to make sure there was no one around to eavesdrop before you relayed what you had learned over brunch.

Once more, you could hear the sounds of typing before Seto said something. “Sorry to break it to you, but all buildings with the exception of...the Union, Golda Meir library, and Klotsche Center are closed on weekends.”
“Yeah,” you agreed, “I know…”

It did not take Seto very long to figure out what you meant by that. There was a hiss of profanity followed by your name.

“This is exactly why I did not want you alone,” Seto growled into the receiver of his phone. The iciness of his voice was like a January wind right off of Lake Michigan. “You’re reckless. On top of your blind trust and inability to see how dangerous that thing possessing Bakura Ryou’s body…I just have to ask: when I’m called to identify your body in the morgue, who is the first next-of-kin I should notify?”

Seto knew you did not have much family left. That was not only a low blow, but cruel. Teeth bit into your lower lip as you bristled at that remark. Still, you did your best to swallow your pride and bite back your retort.

“I will be careful,” was all you could say. Really, you wanted to call him a complete fucker and throw your phone in the middle of traffic. Right now, you needed to be the adult in the room. Adults let shitty remarks go, you lectured to yourself.

You could hear a snort from Seto followed by a series of mouse clicks. “You’ll be needing access to Lynch’s computer, I would assume. Check your email when we get off the phone; I emailed you a UWM logon that should work. Call me at this number the moment you get on that computer and we’ll go from there.”

“Do you still want me to keep the GPS on?” you asked hoping that you did not have to since it was going to drain your battery.

“Yes,” came Seto’s reply.

Great, now you were going to have to find an outlet before breaking into Aisha Lynch’s office. You were so lost in thought that you barely heard what Seto said next. “Come again?”

“I asked what you were wearing.”

You felt your heart practically leap in your chest. Indignation immediately faded and you could not help but grin a little at how naughty Seto could be.

You liked when he was a dirty old man…

“While I am completely game when it comes to phone sex, is now really a good time? I’m in public…”

There was an exasperated noise on the other end of the line and you could only imagine the face Seto was making at the moment. It was probably the opposite of your own since now you felt immense disappointment.

“This is serious,” he growled. “Are you wearing anything easily identifiable?”

“Dark grey hoodie, jeans, and those nasty gym shoes you insist I need to throw away. Pretty basic,” you replied. Pretty unsexy you mentally added. Now that you had the idea in your head, it was going to be hard to let it go.

But do you want to know what I am wearing underneath that, Kaiba-saichou?

“Keep your hood up while on campus,” Seto instructed. There was a brief pause before he
continued. “I have to go. If I don’t answer your call right away, keep calling until I answer.”

Heh, that would probably be the first and last time a boyfriend ever instructed you to blow up his phone. You needed to savor this moment.

You exchanged some quick good-byes before he hung up. A few minutes later, you were in Qdoba and pretended not to notice Bakura’s smirk when he saw you enter. You placed your order, paid, and slide into the booth across from him.

“Did you seriously just get all meat?” you asked, feeling mildly nauseated at whatever concoction he was eating.

“Your lack of protein really explains a lot,” Bakura snapped back.

“I…” you began but lost the momentum for banter. “Screw you.”

“While I am flattered, I would prefer not to deal with Kaiba’s dirty seconds. Besides, I have standards.”

Seeing as how you lost this round, you just ate in silence.

Bakra told you to meet him at the by the fountain at eleven o’clock. According to the campus map, it was located right outside of the library. With nothing else to do, you wandered around the neighborhood and finally decided to just stay in the library, futz around on the computer (using a guest login) and charge your phone.

Finally at 10:54pm, you packed up your stuff and pretended to look like a student while you passed by the front desk security. Once outside, you put your hood up just like Seto instructed. You heard the fountain and followed the noise until you were sitting next to it.

Eventually, you checked your phone and sighed before tossing a twig at the water jets and missing horribly. Bakura was two minutes late.

When you were getting ready to toss another stick, he practically materialize from the night right underneath a lamp post. Before you could ask, he closed the distance between the two of you and yanked at your arm to pull you to your feet.

“Stay close,” he instructed. Considering he had a vice grip on your wrist, you were pretty confident that was not going to be a problem.

Without another word, you two walked several yards ahead until you two were standing outside another Soviet-era concrete monolith called Curtin Hall. As you walked, you had noticed something about Bakura. To test your theory, you purposely stepped on a few crunchy looking leaves and as expected, they did not make a sound.

Interesting.

This anomaly might explain why Bakura saw no need for a hood. Rather, the self-proclaimed King of Thieves strode right up to the glass doors of the building and got to work on the lock. You tried to watch to see what he was doing, but the glass door swung open within seconds. “After you,” he said mockingly.

“Such a gentleman,” you cooed. “I knew you had it in you.”
The first set of doors were locked, but the second set of glass doors were not. Bakura was in a rather good mood, you reflected. He didn’t slam the second set of doors in your face after that comment.

Looking around the lobby, you spotted elevators to your left and stairs to your right. Bakura was already making his way towards the stairs.

Already, you knew that you had to take the stairs to the eighth floor. “You’re so lucky that I find cardio to be important,” you complained around the fifth flight of steps. Bakura just grunted in reply.

At the seventh flight of steps, you raced ahead of Bakura and touched the door to the eighth floor. “I win!” you proclaimed triumphantly just as Bakura threw his hand over your mouth.

“Keep your voice down, you fool girl,” he hissed before removing his hand from your mouth.

Okay, so maybe he was not in a good mood, after all.

Feeling chided, you followed Bakura to room 879 and once more, tried to see what he was doing to pick the lock. Of course, you could not learn anything from just watching. The door swung open and Bakura stepped right on in.

The office itself was large, but hard to move around in. There were bookshelves that lined the room from wall-to-wall. There were some titles that immediately caught your eye; *The Ancient Gods Speak: a Guide to Egyptian Religion; Paganism in the Ancient World; the Curse of Nephren-Ka;* some works by August Derleth; and interestingly enough, right next to it was *the Haunter in the Dark* by H.P. Lovecraft.

Bakura was looking at something posted on the door. It was a flyer to advertise an upcoming gala. You only took a moment to study it before you reached for your phone and took a picture of the flyer. Once the device was back in your purse, your fingers brushed against the Millennium Necklace and quickly pulled away from it as if it was an electric shock. You turned on the computer and waited for it to boot up.

Bakura was flipping through a notebook when he caught sight of you turning on the computer. Without preamble, he tossed the notebook over his shoulder and perched on the desk to watch what you were doing. At the login screen, you pulled out your phone and carefully entered the username and password Seto had emailed you.

Once in, the settings began to load, you reached for your phone to call Seto.

“If I had known all it would take was for Kaiba to get laid on a regular basis to turn him into a team player--” Bakura began.

You made some gestures with your free hand to indicate Bakura to kindly shut the hell up. Thankfully, he seemed more interested in your conversation than taunting your boyfriend. Seto answered on the first ring and Bakura tilted his head towards you as if he were a dog.

“Hey, I’m in the office and just logged on the computer,” you said.

Seto wasted no time giving you instructions on downloading a program. You knew enough about computers to know what a Tor browser was and never, ever under any circumstances, try to mess with the BIOS during startup. So you could at least see that Seto was having you install and run a remote access program.

You blindly clicked through the permissions and while waiting for the program to download, Bakura got bored and continued rummaging through the office. He was tossing a few items into his
messenger bag, so you just left him to it since the computer was probably the goldmine.

Resting your hand on you elbow, you just stared at the download bar, Seto asked how much longer it would be.

“It’s at…sixty-nine percent,” you said.

“Can you try saying that without your hand over your mouth?”

“It’s at seventy percent,” you corrected.

You suddenly stiffened when you caught the unmistakable sound of footsteps coming down the hallway. The door was closed, but you were sure that they would be able to see the light from underneath the door.

Shit.

Looking up at Bakura, you saw his expression darken before he grinned like the devil.

“Playtime…”

You moved the phone away from your mouth. “What?” you questioned in a voice barely above a whisper before what he said sunk in. “Don’t.”

Quickly, you moved to talk into the phone since Seto was talking. “Someone’s coming,” you explained, keeping your voice low.

“Don’t go out there,” you hissed at Bakura who was already turning the doorknob.

“And?” Seto prompted.

“I think he’s going to get us arrested. Hold on a second,” you set the phone down and switched to speakerphone. While grabbing some Kleenex, you used your elbow to dispense some hand sanitizer on it before wiping down every surface you touched.

“I’m going to start wiping down the place,” you explained, letting Seto know what you were doing. There was noise from the hallway that you tried to ignore. Seto, however, must have heard it as well.

“How much longer on the download?” Seto asked.

A quick glance at the monitor. “Fifteen seconds.”

“When it finishes downloading, open the program and get the hell out of there. I’m hanging up now so you can concentrate.”

With that, the call ended. You quickly tossed your phone in your purse along with the Kleenexes. When the download completed, you used yet another Kleenex to drape it over the mouse. Hoping your fingerprints were not anywhere (not that it would matter since you were not a felon. Yet, anyway), you used the mouse to open the program. Once you saw the cursor move on its own, you decided that the program was running and turned to the door.

And came face-to-face with an officer from the University Police Department.

Oh.

Shit!
There were voices chattering on the radio that fell on deaf ears because all you could do was look into the officer’s eyes and think about the handcuffs and gun on his holster. You inhaled deeply and took a step backwards as if you could disappear into the office.

The officer reached for his radio when his hand suddenly froze in place. You only blinked and looked down at your hand to make sure that you were unaffected.

Bakura’s sharp voice cut through your confusion like a knife. “Stop daydreaming!” he snapped just as you saw a flash of white hair heading down the hallway. You spared one look at the scene before heading for the stairs. You took each step two or three at a time until you reached the first floor.

You pulled your hood up and followed Bakura out the double glass doors. “Split up!” he called before heading east. It only took a moment for you to realize why Bakura suggested you separate: you could see the lights of police cars pulling up to the building. Immediately, you pivoted on your foot and broke out in a sprint, heading north.

As you ran, you could see a sign for underground parking. Running down the stairs into a parking garage seemed like a good way to earn a pair of silver bracelets around your wrists. However, it was either try to give them the slip or try your luck on outrunning cops.

You were in shape, but outrunning grown men was not something that could happen.

Making sure your hood was in place, you bolted down the stairs and thrust the door open to the parking garage. It was a weekend, so the garage was somewhat empty. You briefly considered hiding underneath a car only to realize how stupid that was.

Your eyes scanned the area and you immediately spotted an exit. Taking a deep breath, you continued running and even when you emerged outside of the student union where several students were waiting for busses. Crossing streets with reckless abandon, you kept randomly choosing what direction to run each time you came to an intersection. Yet, as a testament to the fact your cardio was on-point, you did not stop running. The sound of your shoes on the sidewalk, your pulse in your ears, and labored breathing was all you could hear or pay attention to.

The entire area that surrounded the campus was residential. It was a Saturday night in one of—if not the drunkest state in America. That meant dodging several drunk students whose commentary you just ignored.

You did not want to risk stopping until you could feel your stomach churn in protest as your lungs and legs burned. Ducking into someone’s yard, you crouched behind some shrubbery to catch your breath.

You tried to keep your breathing under control by inhaling through your nose and exhaling out your mouth. Sweat clung to you and while you felt like your body was on fire, you knew that as soon as the adrenaline wore off, you would be freezing from the perspiration. Chances are, any security camera caught your hoodie. In spite of it being nondescript, it would be a lot more recognizable than if you went without it.

For the moment, taking off the hoodie felt like a relief. You carefully turned it inside out and before you wrapped it around your purse, you took out your cellphone. Immediately, a cop car drove by and you stiffened, prepared to dive into the shrubbery. The cruiser continued down the road as if you were of no concern.

That had been close. You needed to get the hell out of dodge.
You went through your contacts until you found Layla’s number and pressed the call button. Honestly, you knew that you might be better off calling for an Uber, but you did not want to risk leaving a further paper trail in the area.

Each time the phone rang, you began to feel increasingly nervous. Finally, Layla picked up. “What’s up, pudding cup?” she greeted.

“I have a really big favor,” you began. Layla said nothing and you had to check to make sure the call did not drop. It hadn’t. “Could you pick me up?” you finished weakly.

“That depends. Where are you?”

“Um…Hold on. Let me check.” Cautiously, you made your way towards the first intersection you found and relayed the information. The first street sign was easy to spot underneath a light. “Murray and…Park,” you said before leaning against a building while a car passed by. “It’s right near a pet store and…liquor place?” you looked up from your perch to look at the sign.

“Yeah, I used to live a few blocks from there. You’re on the East Side…Damn it.”

“Yeah,” you agreed, not fully understanding if that was a good thing or not. It sounded like a bad thing?

“You’re going to have to give me a half hour or so,” Layla sighed. “You’re not like, in any trouble are you?”

“I…” You began but were not sure what to say. “I don’t know.”

You once again heard Layla swear followed by background noises of her looking for her car keys. “I’ll be there as soon as I can,” Layla reassured, changing her tone suddenly. From the background, you could hear her asking the (presumably dog) if he wanted to go for a car ride. The barking confirmed that Layla was not talking to her cat.

“I still have the same car, so keep an eye out,” she said.

Once the call ended you did your best to blend in with the building’s shadows. To save your battery and do your best impression of a ninja, you turned down your screens brightness and pulled up the number for the burner phone Bakura was using. You sent him a text and when he did not reply within a few minutes, you called him. No answer and no voicemail was set up.

While you waited, you fidgeted with your phone until a vibration alerted you to a new text message. Unlocking the screen, you saw it was an email notification. Seto had purchased a train ticket back to Chicago and let you know that your ride would be waiting for you at Union Station. The train would be leaving in the next forty-five minutes and Seto said that you missed the train, you were on your own. Of course, the email was a bit harsher than that, but it was the gist of the message.

By the time you finished reading the email, you had another text message. This time, it was from Bakura.

See you on the 31st. Try and make a conscious effort not to die before then.

“All’s well that ends well, I guess,” you muttered to yourself, unsure if you said that quote correctly. Not that you cared anyway since no one was around to correct you.

Finally, you noticed a familiar car slowing down before turning on its flashers. After looking left then right to make sure the coast was clear, you headed towards the car. Layla rolled down the
passenger’s window and you could see Roscoe laying on a blanket in the front seat. He looked up at you like the defiant little shit he was.

…At least he was kind of cute. He was lucky he was cute.

“You’re going to have to sit in the back, or he’s going to throw a fit,” Layla explained.

You climbed into the backseat and immediately felt thankful: Layla had haphazardly thrown a sweater and hoodie in the backseat. The hoodie was mint and if you played it cool, you could do a little switcheroo…

“No Ryou?” Layla asked when she saw that you were the only passenger.

“I guess he’s going to hang out in Milwaukee for a while,” you answered. “Thanks for the ride, by the way.”

“Yeah,” came Layla’s reply. “Do you have anywhere to go? Or do you need a place to crash for the night?”

“If you are willing, could you drop me off at the downtown intermodal station?”

“The what?”

Unsure if you were giving the right location, you checked your phone. “It’s on Saint Paul…”

And looked like the same place you arrived at.

“Ohhh, the Greyhound station,” Layla nodded to herself and held Roscoe in place with one arm while she accelerated through a yellow light only to come to an abrupt stop when she could not make another light. She hit the brakes hard enough to send you jerking forward. Roscoe seemed like he was used to Layla driving like an absolute psycho.

Even after all these years, her driving still sucked.

Layla always chuckled at the rules of the road and called the speed limit “only a suggestion.” Despite that, you were not sure who was worse since Seto treated the congested streets of Chicago like his own personal racing track. Then again, you reflected, Seto could at least apply the brakes slowly.

“Do you…want to talk about anything?” Layla asked awkwardly once the light changed back to green. She resumed weaving in and out of traffic like it was no big deal. “You seem kind of spooked.”

“It’s a…long story,” you said. “I really don’t want to talk about it. I don’t mean to be a shit friend, it’s just…There’s a lot going on.”

“That’s understandable,” Layla said after studying you from the rear-view mirror for a moment. “Do you need a cute dog to pet? I could send Roscoe back there by you if you need some pretty Pomeranian cuddles.”

You just shook your head. “Nah, he seems happier up by you.”

By the time Layla pulled up to the Greyhound station, you had switched out hoodies. Still, you were not going to chance putting it on in front of Layla. You gave Roscoe a pet good-bye before saying your farewells to Layla and once again, thanking her for picking you up.

Unsure of where to go, you eventually walked up to one of the desks and awkwardly stated your
boyfriend purchased you a ticket back to Chicago. In spite of this place being colloquially referred to as a Greyhound station, it apparently also serviced Megabuses and of course, Amtrak.

Paranoid that you had several Wanted posters with your face on it by now, you reluctantly showed your ID when asked. Several agonizingly long moments later, your ID was handed back to you. With nothing to do but wait, you watched through the glass windows, almost certain that the Milwaukee Police were going to swarm the station any moment.

You did not feel comforted until you were on the train and it began to move. Since Seto probably knew where you were heading, you turned off your GPS and settled into your seat. Even after you were sure that you were now back in Illinois, your mind did not settle down; you kept going over everything that could happen and how you could easily be arrested.

You wished that Bakura did not run off. Knowing what he had done in the hallway and whether or not there was a way the Millennium Ring was OP enough to do anything like, disable security cameras or hide you in the shadows would be helpful right about now.

How soon would any news articles about this appear? Would there be any articles about it?

By the time the train pulled into Union Station, you felt both physically and emotionally drained. You scanned the area, expecting to see Isono or another KaibaCorp employee. Instead, you spotted a familiar face leaning against a wall with his arms folded across his chest.

For a moment, you paused to make sure that was Mokuba and not his older sexier brother. No, you decided, feeling a little disappointed, it was definitely Mokuba.

The younger (and definitely less attractive) Kaiba looked up well before you approached and uncrossed his arms. Stormy colored irises flicked over your appearance before he rolled his eyes dramatically. “I never knew what it was like to be a parent who has to constantly bail their teenager out of jail. Until now, anyway.”
Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

You’ve all been very patient with my shenanigans; I’ve sent Seto to Japan, Yami Bakura is your Jedi Master in the ways of Shadow Magic, you even had to deal with an OC. So there’s a bit of a surprise this chapter.

There are also some big ole WARNINGS for this chapter and these are:

- There is blatant marijuana usage. I initially tried to make it so it could easily be interpreted as smoking a hookah or something, but failed. There is a reason behind it, so hopefully y’allz are okay with it.

- If you had yet to see season 5 of Game of Thrones, there’s minor spoilers for the end of the season. I don’t say what happens up front, but thought I should warn anyone. I started writing this in the fall of 2015, so I figure that this entire plot takes place then.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

You were resting your head against the window while Mokuba drove.

“So am I getting arrested if I ever set foot back in Milwaukee?” you questioned.

“Do you want to be?” Mokuba asked.

“No.”

“Okay then.”

With the tone of voice and clipped reply, Mokuba sounded so much like Seto. Since you were not looking at Mokuba, it was almost like you could pretend to be talking to Seto instead.

You knew that was just plain fucked up of you, but you could not deny how much you missed that douche. Which was stupid, you told yourself since Seto would be back in the States within the next couple of weeks.

Alas, the heart wanted what the heart wanted, rationale be damned!

There was a pause in conversation and you needed to come up with something before it got awkward.

“I mean...Seto is always welcome to show up on my front doorstep in police uniform and take me into protective custody…” you trailed off trying to lighten the mood a little.

Totally nailed it! No awkwardness there.

Moving your hair out of your peripheral, you shifted your eyes to see what Mokuba’s expression was. He just calmly called your name.

“Yes?” you answered.
“I am not above driving this car into Lake Michigan and killing us both,” Mokuba said seriously before he lost his poker face. “Though I would need to be going in the opposite direction for that. Next time.”

As terrible as that apparent joke was, it was all about delivery and you could not help but laugh. It felt good to laugh, it relieved some of your anxiety and heavy heart. Even better, you were almost home. Right now, you just wanted to collapse in your bed and hibernate for the next twelve hours.

“I’m in the clear then?” you had to ask since Mokuba was about to pull in your driveway. “On the up-and-up?”

To your surprise, Mokuba turned the engine off. “About that,” he began. “You lost your ‘doing our own thing’ privilege. I just brought you here so you can pack for the next week?”

Kaiba money may have kept you out of legal trouble, but the idea of being told you could not be alone…

It was infantilizing.

“That’s bullshit,” you spat. “So what? The little woman acted out of turn, so she needs to be under male guardianship now?”

“Seriously?! That’s the conclusion you’re drawing; that we’re being misogynistic pricks?” Mokuba fired back. “Your hotel room was ransacked and your house would have been too if Seto had not had someone watching it. You then run off to Wisconsin with the Spirit of the Millennium Ring, who—I’m not even going there right now. You then committed a crime by breaking and entering before your bestie used the Millennium Ring to assault several police officers. You then fled from police. If Seto hadn’t contacted you earlier that day, you would probably be in jail right now or dead. So yeah, we’re a little concerned.”

You got along with Mokuba. You liked Mokuba. However, his insistence that you kept the Millennium Necklace and try to use it to locate Yugi is what got you in this mess in the first place!

You exhaled deeply because you did not want to attack Mokuba and say something you would regret. “So what then? Am I going to be confined to your place until you decide I am no longer acting irrational?”

As a youngest child yourself, you saw what Mokuba was doing. And goddamn it, he got you because you knew how much Seto worked, supernatural occurrences aside.

Once again, you sighed. Seto really was your weakness. “Look I’m sorry. I am really not trying to be a bitch, I just…”
“It’s been a long day,” Mokuba finished for you. “It’s almost two o’clock in the morning. Let’s just get you packed and you can sleep in and have a lazy Sunday.”

“Alright, but you’re carrying my bags.”

“You’re packing for a week, not a month. I think I can handle it.”

Challenge accepted.

For a playboy, Mokuba did not understand women. After all, you wanted to make sure you would be comfortable.

Most of your stuff was still packed from the failed weekend in New York City. But you had only packed for a weekend. Who knows what would happen between now and the next time you were home?

You needed more shoes and began throwing the essentials into a gym bag; heels (just in case), flats, a few pairs of sandals. Then came your skin care routine. Lately, you have totally been all about the K skin care regime, so of course you made sure you had your weekday essentials. Plus your hair straightener and your mini backup hair straightener (because who knew if it would be humid or rain?)

Speaking of rain, you stuffed an umbrella in one of your suitcases. You also needed your electronics, and more clothes. Plus toiletries, hair care products, and school supplies. By the time you were done, you decided to be generous for Mokuba. “I’ll take the lighter one,” you said. “That way, you don’t have to carry all three.”

“This is what I get,” Mokuba said to himself as he hoisted up a gym bag and grabbed the handle of your rolling suitcase while you had the second one. “I deserve this.”

You locked up the house and nodded at the KaibaCorp employees who were set to watch the place. It was the only real thing reassuring you that it would be okay to leave for the next week or so.

Mokuba swore when he picked up the larger suitcase and put it in the trunk. Instead of helping him, you just rolled the last suitcase up to him and nodded before you got into the passenger’s seat.

Honestly, you were rather surprised that Mokuba just did not make his employees do the heavy lifting for him.

You know what though? Good for him.

“I’m not mad,” Mokuba said once he got back into the car and started the engine. “Just disappointed.”

“Wow, you really do sound like a parent,” you commented.

Mokuba had a hearty chuckle at that before he grew a little serious. This was further evidenced by him turning the music down a little. “You never really talk about your parents,” he observed. “What are they like?”

“I dunno, not much to talk about. They’re dead.”

Seto knew about it, but it was apparent that he did not share the information with Mokuba. Honestly, it was not a secret or anything, so you did not care who Seto told. Yet, you could not help but appreciate the gesture. Sometimes, Seto could be oddly sweet.
“Fuck,” Mokuba swore. “I should have known…”

“It’s fine. Not a lot of people our age have a dead parent much less dead parents,” you replied with a shrug. “I don’t mind talking about it. I just hate having to smile politely when people talk much less bitch about their parents. Or feign excitement when my friends talk about what their parents got them for Christmas and their birthdays.”

Especially because no one really remembered children of dead parents on those days. Every Mother’s Day, you would pretend Facebook never existed. Then a month later, do it again for Father’s Day...

“Trust me, I get it,” Mokuba said with his own sigh while running a hand through his hair. “Do you want to talk about it?”

“Not really,” you replied. You spent a moment coming up with the right words before you continued. “It’s life.”

“Relatives...sometimes suck anyway,” Mokuba commented. You knew what he was talking about and tactfully kept quiet about it.

“They do,” you agreed.

You had not thought about where you would sleep until Mokuba let you know you could put your stuff in Seto’s room. It was a little before 3AM and you had been awake close to twenty hours at this point. Once you stepped through the threshold and into the bedroom, you unceremoniously dumped the suitcases on the floor. You would go through them in the morning (or rather, you would go through them in the afternoon. Preferably the late afternoon). For now, you just grabbed various toiletries so you could get ready for bed.

Your hand was on the zipper of the suitcase you threw your pajamas in when you paused. You looked meaningfully towards the closet before nodding to yourself. You had a plan. After grabbing some boyshorts, you opened the sliding door of Seto’s walk in closet and flicked on the light. Being in here felt like an invasion of privacy. However, you reasoned that you would not snoop (even though you reaaaaaaalllly wanted to). Rather, you, would just grab a t-shirt and leave. There was nothing on the hangers, so you resigned yourself to look through the dresser drawers. Honestly, you were half expecting to find a dragon-shaped dildo or something. However, each time you quietly opened a drawer (because you did not want Mokuba thinking you were being a bitchy girlfriend who snooped), you quietly braced yourself. However, everything was normal and boring.

Well, except for what you innocuously came across.

Maybe you should not have started with the top drawer, but the most scandalous thing you found was lube and a box of condoms. Upon inspection, the lube had been used and you felt a wave of jealousy wash over you before you held it up to the light to see the expiration date.

Okay, you were definitely feeling better now. You only had a vague idea about Seto’s previous romantic *and sexual relationships, and that was fine. You had your own history. However, like with Naomi, having that shoved in your face or even thinking about it just pissed you off.

Putting the lube back where you found it, you eyeballed the box of condoms. This was probably a little crazy, but you could not help yourself and dumped out the contents of the box before counting the remaining ones. He used five.
Wait a minute...

If Seto had condoms in his room, why did he not grab one before he learned you had an IUD…? Or knew you were STD-free?

Once again, you looked at the expiration date. While you would probably be doing him a favor by throwing these out, you decided to just put the condoms back where you found them.

The other drawers had socks, undershirts, and finally, you found his t-shirts. You decided to be creepy and sniffed a few of them before choosing one that smelled most like Seto. With that accomplished, you padded over to the bathroom where you changed.

Before you washed your face, yet another idea occurred to you. Retrieving your cellphone, you played around with a few lighting settings and angles before you decided on the perfect one. You lifted the hem of the shirt enough to expose just a little bit of your panties. After the fifth photo, you decided on a picture you liked and finished your nightly routine before crawling into bed with the phone.

You attached the picture to a text message and wrote a quick caption. It’s going to be lonely sleeping in your bed without you.

Once you hit Send, you snuggled underneath the covers and let the smell of Seto lull you to sleep. You were dreaming of walking through the hallways of your high school to the sound of the Imperial March when you woke up to that exact sound.

Huh...your brain was weird about incorporating real life stimuli into your dreams. By the time you realized that it was your phone ringing, you practically leaped out of bed to answer it.

“Good evening,” you greeted blearily after looking at the digital clock on his bedstand. It was 4:20AM, which meant that it was 6:20PM his time…

You inner middle schooler did not fail to appreciate the time. Your second thought was wondering what Seto was doing calling you so early. You had told him that your optimal sleep schedule was between 3AM and noon…

If he had found something on that computer he could email you or talk about it during a more convenient time.

Unless it was an emergency?

Oh gawd--you hoped that this was not because you were in trouble!

“I got your picture…” Seto’s voice was low and sultry. It was his bedroom voice.

So that was why he was calling.

“I take it that you liked it?” you asked, laying back down and settling against the pillows.

“Very much.”

“Are you sending me your personal thanks then?”

“I also thought I should make sure you were not too lonely without me.”

Six thousand miles away, Seto imagined how you looked. While you were not a morning person, he found your dazed and mildly grumpy expression each morning to be endearing. Your voice was
always low and quiet wherever you were tired. He liked that.

You often braided your hair before bed and Seto could imagine strands of your hair sticking out of the braid and clinging to your neck and face...

He leaned back into his office chair and spared a glance at the triple computer monitors. His system was still running analytics on the emails he retrieved from Lynch’s computer. There was nothing he needed to pay attention to at the immediate moment.

Seto’s hand rubbed his length as he imagined your groggy and surprised squirm while he kissed your neck, making his way towards your earlobes. The noises you made whenever he nipped on your neck and ears...

It was a Sunday night and none of his staff would be around, but Seto still spared the door to his home office a glance before he turned on speakerphone and set the device on the desk.

“What kind of panties are you wearing?” He could only see a flash of color in the picture.

“Boyshorts. They’re plain and black, but the material...I personally would love to hear the sound the fabric makes as you rip them off of me.”

Seto felt his breath hitch and immediately, he stood up to undo his belt and pants.

“Mmm...The sound of your belt coming undone though. That is definitely one of my favorite sounds,” you purred into the phone.

Fuck....

This girl...

While not the type Seto would ever think he wanted, you were exactly what he needed. You were a trainwreck but at the same time, a breath of fresh air that made Seto realize how long he had been suffocating

When Seto returned home, he surprised himself with how easily he could envision you in his life. You would probably forget about closing the cabinets all the way or never clear the microwave and while Seto would find it maddening, it was so easy to picture you as part of his world.

If---no--when you came to Domino, the first thing Seto would do would be fucking you on this very desk.

“Take your panties off and touch yourself. Let me hear you moan,” Seto instructed.

He could see you tracing your hands across your thighs, stroking your soft flesh. He wished he could be the one to part your legs and have his fingers pressed into your clit. Your body always tensed up under those first few touches before relaxing and giving in.

Hearing your breathing pick up, Seto could imagine your head buried into his pillow. He wished you would be panting into his shoulder, shuddering each time he touched you.

“It’s so much better when I imagine that you’re the one doing this to me.”

Seto thumbed the head of his cock and looked around his desk. Only hand sanitizer, no lotion. He hesitated for a moment before he quietly spit on his hand for better lubrication. It would suffice.

Never one to like feeling vulnerable, Seto had been reluctant to let you give him a blow job. But the
second you wrapped your lips around his cock…

Where had you learned to be *that* good? Seto had to keep the flares of jealousy at bay at any idea of you ever doing that to another.

But the memory of feeling his cock in your mouth…

Damn. You had set a new standard.

Seto gripped himself harder as he pumped himself. Hearing you pleasured sounds in tandem with him pleasuring himself was very nice. Yet it was no replacement to being buried deep inside of you.

“Mmm…Seto…” came your breathy moan and Seto had to slow his pace down to avoid cumming.

He thumbed the head of his cock while he listened to you, music to his ears. “I want you to come for me,” he instructed.

“Only if you do the same for me,” came your reply.

“Most people would never think of telling me what to do. I’ll allow it just this once.” Seto’s hand readjusted the grip he had on himself. He stroked at a slower pace and concentrated on the sound of your voice while imagining the way your tits and ass jiggled while he fucked you at different angles...

Throwing his head back, Seto’s eyes fluttered closed as he thrust into his hand, building up to his release. He was close.

From the other side of the globe, you, fully clothed, used the light from the phone to study your nails. You were on your period and you would be down to fuck Seto’s brains out, but the idea of getting yourself off during the week of the Red Death just was not appealing right now. Especially since you would need to change out your tampon. Your fingers would be all bloody and it just was not worth it.

Should you repaint your nails or just take the polish off…?

“Mmm…Ahh…I am so close! You make me so hot, Seto,” you moaned into the phone at the appropriate time. If this whole graduate school thing did not work out, you might have a decent career as a phone sex operator.

There was a CVS nearby and a navy blue would be pretty with your eyes…

Some silver sparkles would be pretty with a navy blue.

Remembering that you were supposed to be having an orgasm, you moaned and whimpered like you did whenever you actually climaxed. Any more and Seto might guess that you were faking.

Yeah. You were definitely going to go with a navy blue.

“You’re really something else,” Seto breathed into the phone.

“I only hope we could be of service to each other,” you replied, returning your attention back to the conversation.

“Mmmhm. Get some sleep.”

“You too…In like, six more hours?” you said, remembering the time difference.
“I’ll try.”

“Okay, but I am going to be really disappointed if I find out that you didn’t take my humble request into consideration.”

There was a soft chuckle at that. Seto was always so pleasant after an orgasm.

“Sleep sweetly,” Seto said in a tone that practically made your ovaries explode into candy.

Fuck...You adored this man.

Once you hung up the phone, you hugged your pillow, imagining it was your adorkable boyfriend. Sleep did not come easy. After a few hours of fitfully waking up and going back to sleep, you eventually decided to just get out of bed and find a place for your stuff. Most of your clothes were carefully layered over the dresser or put on the few spare hanger you could find.

You lined the closet with your shoes and haphazardly scattered your makeup and other beauty products over Seto’s en suite bathroom since you were getting sick of this organizing bullshit.

You threw on a pair of yoga pants before wandering out of the room. If Mokuba was awake, he was either gone or in his room. Eventually you made your way to the kitchen and opened the fridge only to be assaulted by the smell of cold meat that made your stomach churn.

Gross.

Using Seto’s shirt as a form of a nosegay, you examined the contents of the fridge. Cooking was literally the worst and everything else sucked, so you just helped yourself to a beer. Since you should probably at least eat something, you grabbed a slice of cheese before going to check out the video game situation.

Everything had a previous save file and you did not feel like getting invested in a new game. However, you did find yourself fucking around on someone’s Skyrim save.

It had to have been Seto’s save file since he was never initiated into the Thieves Guild, never stole anything, or was a member of the Dark Brotherhood. Only Seto would be that boring and lawful good in an open world game. The other save file was a bit more fun, but since they were in the middle of a Dawnguard quest, you left it alone.

Feeling bored, you went to go shower and change before returning to the living room. Still no sign of Mokuba, so you decided to check out the Kaiba brothers’ streaming services.

Holy…

They had HBO On Demand!

You could watch whatever you wanted without having to delete the history afterwards.

Do you watch the Wire or Veep?

Shit, you could even watch Sex in the City (Buzzfeed was soo right, you were so a Samantha!)

Choices…

When Mokuba decided to grace you with his presence, he found you practically glued to the TV. He noticed the beer right away. “How many have you had?”
“Three,” you lied. You were still on your first.

“You might have a problem, you realize that, right?”

“Not all of us can be as pure as the freshly fallen snow, Mokuba.”

Contrary to popular opinion, you did not have a drinking problem. Since you got more than a little tipsy at brunch yesterday, you were more than happy to only have one beer.

Mokuba helped himself to a beer and sat down to watch an episode of whatever you were watching. That somehow turned into binge watching the last half of Season 5 of Game of Thrones when Mokuba announced he had yet to watch it. Because yeah, literally the rest of the world knew how the season ended. You needed to look out for the interests of bae’s brother.

It was the episode before the season finale when Mokuba paused it and stood up to look out the window.

“I know,” you said empathically. “Maybe that was not even Stannis. For all we know, he was a shadow clone--like an upgrade of the shadow baby we saw in like, season two. Drogon could have kidnapped the real Stannis and dropped him off in the Free Cities just as Gendry is rowing up. Together, they have lots of sitcom worthy misadventures”

Mokuba just nodded weakly at that. “Maybe. If we're going to be pretending that happened, I need to smoke first. Do you smoke?” he asked.

“I haven’t checked,” you snarked. Considering they literally never saw you with a cigarette and none of your clothes smelled like cigarette smoke, you thought that it would be obvious at this point.

“Let me try it this way: when you think of four-twenty, you think…”

“Four-twenty blaze it!” you replied. Because duh--you knew your memes! Then it occurred to you what Mokuba had actually been asking. “Ohhh. I gotcha. I mean, not really but I don't give a fuck if people do. I mean, medical marijuana is legal in the state of Illinois, so who cares?”

2.5 ounces within a fourteen day period, to be precise. You were not sure why you knew that, but you did. So here you were.

Mokuba disappeared into his room. When he came back, he was carrying a baggie (even the one-percent bought baggies, you thought with amusement) and a chrome apparatus that reminded you of an Erlenmeyer flask.

You could not help but stare because what the fuck was it?

In any case, you definitely would not be making a bong out of a Gatorade bottle, that was for sure. While Mokuba was getting the chamber ready, you examined the machine curiously.

Was that…a temperature reader? Wow. What a time to be alive!

Then out came plastic bags. You knew this from watching Weeds! This was a vapor bag. You watched in fascination as the bag filled with vapor and Mokuba took it off the machine and inhaled deeply into the mouth piece. Upon exhaling, he looked over at you. “Want a hit?”

“I was honestly afraid you weren’t going to ask,” you replied. Who would pass up a chance to use this contraption?
The bag was still inflated, so Mokuba passed it over to you and you inhaled deeply. Instead of coughing like a newb, you were surprised at how smooth it was. Although, there still was a little bit of coughing when you exhaled.

You passed the bag back to Mokuba who took another hit. “Not to be a stereotype right now, but we should probably get something to eat.”

You ate a slice of cheese. Combined with the calories from the beer, you were pretty sure you were good for another few hours. However, you were not sure what kind of strain the weed was. It was good to be prepared before you got the munchies and had no snacks.

“Not Qdoba,” you said firmly. It was your only request. Of course you would veto Jimmy John’s, Domino’s and Corner Bakery Cafe.

“I don’t even think Qdoba delivers.”

“Lou Malnati’s delivers,” you pointed out. “I’m totally okay with being a stereotype now because they are ah-maaahzing when high.”

“BRB,” Mokuba said before going into his room to grab his laptop. It took you a moment for you to realize that he said the acronym out loud. Did these two brothers have a genetic predisposition for being adorkable?

Mokuba brought up the website and began to look at the drop down menu. “Okay, good. There’s a South Loop location.”

You were low-key pissed that the dessert menu had a picture of tiramisu but only offered Italian ice. Such bullshit. You were sure if you asked, Mokuba would make sure you were brought the most beautiful tasty tiramisu in the city, but that was not the point!

You two gave each other shit over the one who liked having pineapple on their pizza and eventually placed the order.

Just like his brother, you caught Mokuba looking at his emails and replied to a few of them with an impish grin over the fact that he was doing work while baked. In a way, you should feel a bit bothered by it since you were pretty sure any other KaibaCorp employee would be fired for being high on the job.

At the same time, it was pretty hilarious.

“Does Seto ever smoke weed?” you asked. That was something you needed to see. Seto probably would just get all quiet and not talk. But still, you wanted to witness that!

Mokuba let out a half chuckle, half snort at the suggestion. “If nii-sama ever got stoned, it was never around me,” he replied while typing.

After a few more minutes, he finally closed his laptop and stretched. “Let’s have another round and then see if they made up for what they just did by having the Cleganebowl.”

You reached out and patted Mokuba’s arm as reassuringly as possible. “We don’t need to speculate if the Cleganebowl is going to happen because it’s always been one hundred percent confirmed.”

Mokuba suddenly pulled away from you and used the height difference to stare you down before he spoke slowly and deliberately. “No, the Cleganebowl has now been one hundred percent confirmed; it’s always been one hundred percent FUCKING CONFIRMED!”
“Oh shit, son. GET HYPE!

Laughing like jackasses, you two exchanged a high-five. Of course, neither of you were watching
the elbow, so you had to redo the high-five two more times before getting it right.

Mokuba looked pensive while he began setting up the vaporizer for another round. “I should have
ordered chicken with the food...”

“Next season, you can eat every fuckin’ chicken,” you promised.

After you both took a few more hits, you finally began to play the episode.

“Mannis Hype Train,” Mokuba announced, pressing Play. “Next stop: Winterfell!”

Maybe it was because you already knew what was going to happen. Or it could have been the
combination of lack of sleep from the previous night and the mildly sedating effects from the weed,
but you were no longer able to keep your eyes open. Without realizing it, you had fallen asleep and
were dreaming.

You find yourself standing outside of a door. The door itself is nothing special, yet looking at it
brought back the feelings of childhood innocence. Just looking at it filled you with a sense of
homesickness for a home you could never return to. You had to see what was beyond that door.
Without another thought, you reached for the doorknob and stepped inside the room.

And into a nightclub, complete with your taste in decor and even a bar. The entire interior looks like
the ideal place to dance, drink, and live dangerously. Except, was is no one besides you in the room.
Cautiously, you closed the door behind you and began to cross the room. The further you got into
this place, the image of the nightclub began to fade like it was an illusion.

As this image began to fade, you found objects obscuring your path that you either had to move
around or step over. First, you moved skillfully around the Christmas tree you had from childhood.
You kicked aside an M4 rifle before you nearly tripped over your favorite stuffed animal from
childhood.

Seeing your old friend gave you pause. Reaching down, you picked the stuffed animal up and smiled
down at it.

By the time you looked up from your old companion, the illusion of the nightclub was no more. In its
place was the real room. The light was silver and never-changing. Overall, you were reminded of the
description of Limbo when you read Dante’s Inferno; the atmosphere was peaceful, yet held a certain
sadness.

You took a step forward and looked down only suddenly to realize you were standing in water. In
spite of the fact that the water went halfway to your knees, you were not wet and neither were the
many items you recognized (and held significance to you) that you found floating.

The water itself shone like the surface of a mirror and combined with the silver light from an
unidentified source, it created a certain ambience to the room that appealed to you somehow. In spite
of being able to see nearly everything in the room, thanks to the strange water’s reflective properties,
you just could feel that you were not alone in this room. However, no matter how hard you looked,
you could not spot any other inhabitant.

As you looked around, you could not help but use a hand as a shield while you squinted. The light
burned your eyes in the same way snow would on a sunny day. Moreover, there seemed to be no
end to the room; the boundaries extended beyond what you could see and faded into an ominous
Yet, you could spot an ornate door in the distance. Slowly, you made your way towards it and reluctantly pushed aside remnants from your past. The closer you got, the more detailed the door became. Hieroglyphs adorned the frame and reminded you of the False Doors you had described to Bakura the day prior. Unlike the False Doors, this door had an opening.

Upon closer inspection, the silvery light seeped into the other room, illuminating it enough for you to inside without going in yourself. It took a moment for your eyes to adjust to the sudden change in light, but when they did, you could not help but furrow your brows in confusion. The room itself was like glimpsing into the past. You could imagine that that this was what Howard Carter witnessed when he first entered King Tut’s tomb.

Torches lined the wall of this tomb (and honestly, you could not think of another way to describe the room other than tomb) and down a corridor to yet another room. In spite of the unnatural lighting, you could not make out what lay beyond the tomb.

Yet, there was a familiar presence in that distant room. Although you two had not been together for very long, you could instantly recognize who you were sensing.

“Seto?” you called out.

There was no reply, yet you knew Seto was there.

Taking a step forward, you listened and heard nothing asides from the sound of your own footsteps. Once again, you called out Seto’s name and you distantly heard a cry that reminded you of one of the dragons from Game of Thrones.

Okay, your boyfriend had a bit of a dragon fetish. Whatever. It was probably just a hologram anyway. Undeterred, you took another step forwards and then another. You only stopped when you heard the loud fluttering of wings.

Looking up, you made eye contact with the strangest bird you ever seen. It perched directly above the entrance to the second room. From where it sat on its perch, it had a clear view of the entire tomb.

The bird—a falcon if you were to guess—regarded you with a predatory glint to its eyes. While bird had an appearance of a falcon, it was larger than any falcon should be. Blue and gold feathers shone in the dim light of the chamber and when it spread its wings, you took a cautionary step backwards before it swooped down to attack you.

“I’m not here to hurt anyone,” you said, raising your hands to show your innocent intentions. “I’m just looking for my boyfriend…”

The bird dipped its head like it was about to launch at you with its beak. Not willing to get pecked to death, you took several more steps backwards before glaring up at the creature. It was obvious that it did not want you there.

“Okay, I’m leaving!” you called out. “Nevermore to you too, you feathery fuck.”

Once again, you entered the first room with the strange fog and even more mysterious water. In spite of how much the light burned your eyes, you continued to look for a way out. Your eyes scanned the mirrored surface before they landed on the very center of the room. You were not sure how you missed the island before but there was a small island in what seemed to be the very center of the room. There was a lone tree growing. At least you thought it was a tree.
More than anything...it was inexplicable and not quite like a tree or anything you seen before. If you had to put words to it, you would describe the growth as a tree branch growing from the ground with five different branches. Or was it six? Maybe seven. Each time you looked at it, the more disorienting this tree became.

The visage was disturbing enough for you to almost look past the figure approaching you from the side. Feeling the ripples on your legs alerted you to another presence.

The figure was a humanoid and while she (as far as you could tell, it was female) looked very human, you just knew that this being was no human. Your attention turned to the spear in her grasp. She was not holding it aggressively or in a manner that suggested that she would attack, but you still found yourself wanting to retreat for it was no ordinary spear. Rather than a sharp tip, the end of the spear was ablaze from otherworldly fire.

You forced yourself to look back to the creature. Opening your mouth, you wanted to explain yourself and insist that you never meant to trespass. Yet no words came out.

The woman, or whatever this being was, blinked. Staring into her eyes was like looking into a mirror. Yet if you looked beyond them, you could see the stars.

Extending your right hand, you moved to touch the being to see if she was real when you felt your body jerk awake.

“Thank fuck,” Mokuba breathed when he saw your eyes open. You had fallen asleep on one of the couches and could hear the episode of Game of Thrones playing in the background. From the delicious smell, you could tell the food had arrived.

“Was I snoring or something?” you asked, rubbing your eyes and sitting up.

“You just didn’t look right,” Mokuba replied. “You were really pale.”

You could not help but burst into laughter at that. Looking over at Mokuba’s perplexed stare just made you laugh harder.

“Someone’s feeling paranoid,” you teased in a sing-song voice.

That food smelled so delicious. You might not be fully awake, but your stomach was. “Now it’s your turn to make fun of me…I have the munchies like whoa.”

Chapter End Notes

I don’t like being in the business of blurting out meanings, but I am afraid it won’t be obvious. The room Reader was in was her Soul Room. I figured the nightclub scene fit her personality, but is really just a mirage and represents the front the Reader puts on. The more you look into the Reader’s personality, you can see the mirage fading and can see her true personality.

Horus is usually depicted with a blue falcon head and is said to be the incarnation/human form of the pharaoh or at least Horus was a patron of the Pharaoh. (Or is it vice versa?) But since Seto was a pharaoh in a past life, I figured it would make
sense for his Soul Room to be guarded by a Horus looking thing.
Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

Happy Game of Thrones premier night, everyone!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Seto spent the better part of Sunday night going through every security camera within the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee area and deleting footage of you and Bakura. Monday was a work day and he had been on edge, never quite trusting his employees.

Stress was beginning to manifest itself in the form of bringing a glass of whiskey to bed with him in order to unwind enough to sleep. He was getting moody and agitated. Moreso than usual. Seto knew that he needed to find more information on Kenneth Graham and the others that had the audacity to break into his hotel room. And soon. Seto could feel the fragile control of himself beginning to snap.

The Lynchs, the break-in, the bombing, Yugi’s disappearance. It was all connected, Kaiba was sure of that. He just needed to find the missing link to connect the pieces of the ever-growing puzzle. Yet, each time he latched on to a new piece, believing that it was the final piece before he could put it all together. Yet, it always came undone before his eyes. By Tuesday afternoon, his felt his frustration nearly boil over.

Mokuba sensed his brother’s thinning patience and demanded to be included in the investigation process. Sometimes, Seto forgot that Mokuba was an adult and even now, the sheer authority his little brother displayed made him almost miss the halcyon days when it had been Seto always coming to Mokuba’s rescue.

On Wednesday, Seto left work on time. However, he left his office long enough to have a cigarette, make some coffee, and return to his desk. In spite of the stimulants, Seto found his concentration wavering. He keyed in a series of commands at his work station. As the encrypted information was pulled up, he found himself repeatedly re-reading the same line. He scowled at his own inability to focus. The action only made his tired eyes strain further.

He reached for the drawer where he kept wooden ruler. Without looking away from the screen, he brought it down on his wrist and the quick sting was enough to make him refocus. The years of harsh discipline under Gozaburo’s tutelage conditioned Seto to feel focused after receiving a switch to the hand or forearm.

With renewed concentration, he began to read the content of Lynch’s emails. There had been several firewalls in place and it was a good level of security. Unfortunately for them, he was Kaiba Seto.

The sun had set by the time Seto sat back in his chair to absorb the information he just read. His eyes were burning from staring at the screen for an extended period of time. Once more, Seto reached into his desk and pulled out a spare case for his contact lenses along with some solution. He would wear his glasses until it was time to go home. This would allow his eyes a brief respite.

He was alerted to the sound of a video call and glanced down at the time--22:39. Mokuba said he would call when he got into the office. Truthfully, Seto had not been expecting the call for at least
another hour.

Seto stretched out his back on the chair and turned his neck until he heard a series of satisfying cracks. Correcting his posture, Seto once again sat up straight before he answered the call. An image of his little brother nursing a coffee appeared on his monitor. Seto was never a morning person, but Mokuba was even worse about getting out of bed on time.

“Early start?” he asked.

“I was woken up,” Mokuba replied groggily. He looked right into the camera, his eyes narrowed and gaze accusatory. “Let it be known that your girlfriend will keep hitting snooze for an hour before finally deciding to get out of bed.”

Seto knew this already. It was no worse than Mokuba, who had been known to need three alarm clocks at one point in his life. That had been a long and frustrating two years.

“I am sure she was trying to be quiet, I really am. However, she knocked over everything she touched this morning. She even dropped the frying pan.”

Now that surprised Seto. “She cooked?” he questioned skeptically.

“She at least thought about it. When I came out of my room, she was staring at the frying pan like the eggs would make themselves. Eventually, she sighed loudly before announcing that cooking required too much effort.”

“Is she in a better mood this morning?”

Over the last few weeks, Seto had become more adept at distinguishing your emotions from his own. Now, with the distance, it was becoming increasingly difficult.

When Seto spoke to Mokuba on Monday, he had said you were in a mood. After his conversation with his sibling, Seto had called you and spoke to you for only a little while. From what he gathered, you had been chewed out by an advisor during your weekly meeting for being behind on your research hours and turning in subpar work. Apparently it was suggested you go on a leave of absence for the rest of the semester. Being called out must have triggered a bit of a switch. Now you were leaving early each morning. When you returned from class, Mokuba reported that you dutifully began to work on your schoolwork.

“I dunno. Probably?” Mokuba answered with a shrug.

“She’s probably just repentant after getting in trouble,” Seto mused. He felt his eyes growing heavy and decided to get to business. “Have you found anything new from your end?”

Mokuba exhaled and leaned back in his chair. From the way he was sitting, Seto guessed he had his feet partially on the desk. “Holy shit,” he breathed, running a hand through his still damp hair. “Asides from the fact that I am going to be sending you a list of individuals who I will never be alone in a room with again?”

Seto raised his eyebrows at that. Mokuba continued. “I mean, I am open-minded and all, but according to this cult--and that’s exactly what they are--pretty much everything they're doing traces back to one thing.”

“Let me guess,” Seto deadpanned. “Egypt? Or more specifically, the Pharaoh.”

The look Mokuba had on his face was the all confirmation Seto needed. Both brothers let out a
collective sigh.

“Do you know they have bets on who currently has the missing Millennium Items? Apparently the Ring, Rod, and Necklace went missing at the same time. Some guys tracking the Ishtars wound up dead. Overall, pretty cavalier over the possibility one of the Ishtars--and when I say one, I am really just talking about Malik--killed their own. So they have been taking bets on it. There are an entire group of people who know about the Pharaoh, Shadow Magic, and have been speculating about Duelist Kingdom--”

Seto decided to cut Mokuba off there by holding up his hand. “Did you find proof of this?” he asked.

“Fuck yes I did!” Mokuba replied and sent over several saved emails.

Seto got to reading. You had done a good job keeping the Millennium Necklace a secret since no one suspected you of anything besides being described using several derogatory terms.

“It’s pretty creepy how close they got to the truth, isn’t it?” Mokuba asked while Seto was still reading. They were off on several details, but overall, they knew too much.

There was a name that stood out to Seto: Rafael Mellon.

“From your expression, I take it you figured it out?”

“Did you find any emails from him?”

“No, but he was talked about enough. I did some digging online and asides from the cruise ship that wiped out his family, the lawsuit against his relatives, and mentions of him during his tenure in the dueling circuit, he’s pretty much a ghost.”

Mokuba knew how Seto felt about people who had no online presence: they were not to be trusted. Seto could not help but clench his jaws tightly together; Rafael had been the one to do this to him! It had been Rafael who stole the Millennium Eye.

And then what he said about you...

The last time anyone described someone he cared about as having a monstrous power…

No.

That was something Seto no longer thought about; the bond he had with his servant the Blue-Eyes White Dragon was different than how a dead priest felt about. Besides, Seto reasoned, there was no way that was true. During the bombing, you had been in danger and Seto had witnessed it himself: there was no evidence you possessed a ka monster, let alone one that would ever be described as dangerous.

There was also your deployment. The White Dragon had unleashed destruction when in mortal peril, you only had your rifle as your weapon. There had been nothing to suggest anything supernatural had saved your life.

You were not responsible for this bond. You were just as much of a victim of these forced circumstances as he was.

At first, Seto had been convinced that these emotions had been forced. He was content to let the fling play out until he figured out how to reverse it. Now that he was this far away from you, Seto was no longer so confident in his initial assessment.
His eyes burned in self-righteous fury. You were special to him. In fact, Seto knew that he--

He…

Seto’s throat tightened. He knew how he felt. Putting words to feelings was not only sappy, it was stupid. Seto did not need words to describe what he had with you.

So to drag your (somewhat) good name through the mud like that…

It infuriated him.

Rafael had been wrong. Period. End of story. When Seto saw Rafael again, and he would hunt him down like the dog he was, Seto would make him explain himself.

Seto was also very much interested in learning what Rafael meant when he allegedly said that he had been “lying through his ass to Kaiba.”

He was pulled from his thoughts by the sound of Mokuba calling his name. The older sibling had the decency to clear his throat as a way to appear apologetic. “Is there anything else?” Seto asked.

There were a few more files Mokuba sent over, but none of them were as surprising as learning that Rafael never learned his lesson following the ordeal with the Orichalcos. The files, however, did give him some idea on the identity of individuals under his employ and engaging in industrial espionage. While extremely strange, the emails contained nothing nefarious.

Unless…

Seto quietly continued clicking through and reading the files Mokuba provided when he noticed an interesting pattern. “Have you noticed the overabundance of spam not finding its way to the trash folder?”

Intrigued, Mokuba began to look over the contents of the inbox once more. “Bad spam filters,” he guessed.

“And how many people actually bother opening spam email messages?” Seto prompted.

Mokuba did not reply, but Seto noted the crease between his brows while he swore under his breath for missing something so obvious. “Coded spam,” Mokuba mumbled, speaking more to himself than to Seto.

“It would be rather simplistic to set up some code where Nigerian princes or other get rich quick scams could be code words. I will have to run these emails through analytics to see if there is any type of pattern.”

Seto sighed inwardly. That meant another late night of working on this instead of running his company. He and Mokuba exchanged some small talk before ending the call.

Leaning back in his chair, Seto rubbed his tired eyes while he let the information sink in. Hopefully he could begin to run the analytics by remotely accessing the workstation at home. If he was lucky most of the work would be completed by the time he entered the house.

When Mokuba arrived home from work, he was greeted to the most unexpected sight: you standing in the kitchen and whisking eggs. More than that, you had your laptop set up in the kitchen that displayed a recipe from Pinterest. Next to the laptop was freshly chopped vegetables, mirin, and soy
“Oh hey,” you greeted absent-mindedly. Not looking up, you looked over the recipe for a moment before looking back up at Mokuba. “I thought I would practice making tamagoyaki since Seto likes so much. If I promise to eat some in front of you to show it’s not poisoned, could I get your opinion when I’m done?”

Mokuba was just about to take a photo of this to send it to Seto when his phone’s screen light up. As if he were sensing a disturbance in the universe, Seto was calling.

“Are you alone?” the brisk tone from his brother’s voice was gone and he sounded drained. It sounded as if he had not slept at all.

“Is that Seto?” you called from the kitchen just as Mokuba started down the hallway to his room. You must have taken his silence for confirmation because Mokuba pretended not to hear your demands not to tell Seto a goddamn thing.

Snitches get stitches, Mokuba did not even have to listen to you to know what you were going to say.

Once the door shut behind him, Mokuba began to talk. “I’m alone now.”

There was a slight silence on the other end and Mokuba assumed his sibling was either taking a long swig of coffee or a drag from a cigarette. Quite possibly both. Seto sounded only slightly more awake, but not by much. “They will be moving Yugi this coming weekend,” Seto announced.

Mokuba opened his laptop and quickly typed in the password. While Seto talked, he pulled up a map so he could get a decent visual of the city. “They have been moving him around for the past month, slowly making their way from Chicago to Milwaukee. The Lynch’s sham of a nonprofit is helping sponsor a Gala this weekend.”

Mokuba had already saved the address when he was doing his own research. “The one at the Hyatt?” he asked to be sure. “That is awesome--I mean, it is incredible that you were able to decode that, nii-sama. I just don’t see what this has to do with Yugi?”

“In addition to the Gala, the Lynch Foundation is also generously a co-sponsor of an event at the Milwaukee Public Museum on the thirty-first.”

Mokuba quickly typed that information into Google. “Night of the Living Dead Party,” he commented dryly. “Subtle.”

“At least they did not go with a Curse of the Pharaoh theme,” Seto added morbidly before Mokuba heard typing. “Anyway, the proximity between these two locations is not coincidence. It won’t be suspicious to have staff, storage containers, and many people going in and out of those two locations for the next week and a half.”

“So you think that they’re going to move or even bring Yugi to the museum at that time?” Mokuba questioned. That seemed insane, even by these people’s standards!

“I don’t know,” Seto answered. “That is why I am flying back to the States tomorrow afternoon.”

“You sound half-dead,” Mokuba’s tone became lower, harsher. “I take it you are at the office after looking into this all night?”

“...I am telecommuting today,” Seto answered almost defensively.
“Via email, I hope,” Mokuba said dryly. “You have always taken care of me whenever anything supernatural happened. No one is out to kidnap me anymore. You saw the files, they’re not interested in me.”

“So what are you planning?” Seto’s voice cut in.

“Simple reconnaissance,” Mokuba replied smoothly.

“Such as?” the older sibling inquired, clearly not thrilled with whatever Mokuba was planning.

“Nothing beyond having one of our people rent out a car, drive up to Wisconsin, tip a few cows, and just drive around downtown Milwaukee, just observing.”

“I would prefer if you were not anywhere near there.”

“Unfortunately, nii-sama, there is not much you can do to stop me. So just accept it and let me help.”

There was a long resigned sigh on the other line before Seto relented. “Suit yourself.”

Once Mokuba hung up the phone, he made his way back into the kitchen where he found you trying to fold the omelette before adding more egg yolk in the pan. Unfortunately, it ended up in a mess of egg spattered over the kitchen. He watched while you attempted to salvage the omelette only to throw it on a plate where it was burnt in parts and clearly undercooked in others.

Mokuba wanted to hand you a gold star that said You Tried just for making an effort.

You finally noticed Mokuba when you took the pan off of the stove and took it to the sink. “Oh hey!” you greeted. “Work stuff?”

“Yeah,” Mokuba said while you began to put dish soap on the pan to wash it. “He sends his regards though.”

That was a lie, but sometimes Mokuba lied. This lie was a one of the nicer lies.

You muttered something, but Mokuba could not make it out since you had already turned the water on and were scrubbing at the pan. Mokuba spared a glance at your sad looking omelette. With the way it was folded, the center reminded him of an eye…

...Like one of those Egyptian eyes. Mokuba had its proper name on the tip of his tongue, but right now, he could not be bothered to think about it. However, it reminded him of the fact that you had an item that could see the future.

If Seto’s duel against Isis was any indication, then the Millennium Necklace had potential you just needed to tap into.

“Hey,” Mokuba began once you turned the faucet off, “are you free next weekend?”

“Of course I am free next weekend,” you replied almost haughtily. “This is America.”

“Haha,” Mokuba replied without any inflection in his voice. “Let’s go on a bit of a road trip.”

Chapter End Notes
I am so sorry for such a late chapter, this summer has been pretty crazy. I also found myself running out of steam halfway through the chapter. So it is a lot shorter than I intended, but damn it! I am determined to finish this before the end of August!

I could not find a canon surname for Rafael, so figured eff it--I looked up the richest families in the world and chose a last name I liked. =p~
Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

So...I got a roommate. It's a temporary thing, but that means that my usual method of proofreading is no longer an option since I feel weird reading the chapter out loud to myself. Sorry in advance for the typos.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The rental car trundled through Chicago rush hour traffic, much to Mokuba’s chagrin. All you could do was murmur another apology before trying to make yourself as small as possible. You just decided to keep quiet and play on your phone.

You knew that you were not responsible for the fact that Mokuba was stuck in traffic; the moment Mokuba suggested you bring the Millennium Necklace on this little road trip, you had decided to try to get out of it by any means necessary.

Ever since toking up with Mokuba, every time you even thought of the Millennium Necklace, there was a feeling–almost like an itch–you felt beneath your skin. Why couldn’t Mokuba accept the fact that playing around with dark powers–dark powers that came from blood magic as a result of sacrificing one hundred people–skeevied you out a little? Seto certainly did.

After some time of playing on your phone, you looked up at the screen to see traffic had cleared up. Now that you were out of Chicagoland, there was nothing but the landscape of 1=94 for as far as the eye could see. Which were basically road signs, rolling plains, and the occasional farmland. Mainly plains though.

You went back to your phone.

Over two hours into the trip, you looked up from your game to see a brown road sign in the shape of Wisconsin. You could not catch sight of the sign in its entirety, but you could clearly read the yellow letters that said ‘Wisconsin Welcomes You.’

Immediately, the quality of the road degraded. You were definitely in Wisconsin.

“You better welcome Wisconsin back,” Mokuba said, startling you out of your rumination. “Otherwise, it might not be so welcoming next time.”

You glanced over at your boyfriend’s brother to see if he was kidding. He was unreadable. “Pull over then. We must pour one out as a tribute to the gods of beer and cheese.”

“Maybe in a bit,” Mokuka replied.

Yugi’s current room was located in a basement apartment. At present, there were two people–stationed as guards–one was reading a book while the other was on his phone. Even without the Millennium Eye to read their thoughts, their boredom was palatable. Not that Rafael could blame them.

The one on the phone looked up and quickly stiffened. Their discomfort was immediately obvious
and in spite of trying to hide their thoughts, Rafael could hear it as well as if they were shouting. No one would try to stop him, so Rafael just brushed past the duo and entered the room.

Once inside the dimly lit bedroom, Rafael heard the door lock behind him. His one-eyed gaze immediately fell on the Millennium Puzzle that was hanging over the bedpost as a decoration. Yugi had regarded the Puzzle as mere decoration. The Pharaoh was now long dead and without his spirit inhabiting the Puzzle, Yugi viewed it as nothing more than a trinket.

Yet there was more way to gain the powers and knowledge of the darkness. The Items were created when the Pharaoh was but a babe; their magic could be tapped into without the dead god-king. The Pharaoh had sealed the powers of the Millennium Items with his name, but now that he unlocked his memories, that seal came undone.

With the Millennium Items, the Shadows were theirs to command.

Yugi had been sitting at the small corner desk and while his back was to Rafael, the older man already knew those violet eyes would be pure vitriol if Yugi turned around.

“Yes?” Yugi said coolly without turning around. With his height, he could easily see over Yugi’s head and that the younger man was shuffling a deck of cards.

“You’re going to be moved again,” Rafael said without moving further into the room. He spoke as gently as possible, but he knew that Yugi would not be soothed by any tone Rafael used.

“I see,” was all Yugi said in reply, his shoulders stiffening in obvious irritation in spite of his cold resignation to the situation.

“You always think you’re alone,” Rafael said before he raised his fist to knock on the door and be let out. “Someone like you always has friends in unexpected places. You have never been the type to lose hope.”

The hopeless laugh that escaped between Yugi’s lips was drowned out by the sound of Rafael knocking on the door and telling the sentries to open the door.

Aisha Lynch smiled as she sipped from her champagne flute while her husband spoke to two men in business suits. She played the perfect little wifey for this, seemingly allowing the conversation to go over her head. Oh–she had heard their names–but had not been pressed to remember it.

Of course, there were the appropriate nods and sounds of affirmation to go along with the ‘Really?’ and open-ended questions ad nauseum. It allowed her to slip through the conversation with minimal fuss.

The elite from the greater Milwaukee area—as much as anyone could be called “elite”—were in attendance for the rouse of a gala. Two weeks, she told herself through the plastered on smile, in just two weeks, she would no longer have to keep up the facade.

Power and glory would soon be hers.

New Age bullshit was all the rage these days and even the wealthiest, most educated could be persuaded to try a cleanse or tea to balance the chakras. From there, it was a matter of finding the right approach to take the leap from being a New Agey hippie goop (Just like Gwyneth!) to relieving themselves of their wealth and revealing connections.
“Darling, if you will excuse me, I believe that the senator just arrived. He was kind enough to come all the way here for us and I would not be a proper host if I did not chat with him.”

Adam patted her shoulder and nodded at her. Aisha exchanged a warm smile with her husband before she made her way across the ballroom; smiling and nodding as she passed her guests. What she was not expecting was the sight of Kiara inside the ballroom.

One of the four selected to hold a Millennium Item along with herself, her husband, and the Pharaoh’s vessel of course. Aisha’s least favorite, to be honest. Too mousey. Not to mention, Kiara was petite whereas Aisha was tall and willowy. Whereas Aisha had dark features, Kiara was pale with white hair and bright blue eyes. Aisha never missed the way Adam looked at her and it fueled Aisha’s disdain for the girl.

It was a disappointment the Millennium Items had not struck any of the five down the moment they touched them. Perhaps the manuscripts were just ways to scare off anyone from attempting to obtain their power. Or maybe their magic faded with time.

None the matter, really. It did not change what would happen in two weeks. And it did not change her dislike of Kiara. Which is exactly why Aisha had ensured that Kiara was not near her and Adam tonight.

Aisha attempted to casually maneuver around Kiara, but the younger woman lightly touched her arm and blocked her path. “I’m sorry to interrupt—” she began in that annoyingly timid manner of hers.

Aisha just raised her glass to her lips, taking a long sip from her glass while giving Kiara a hard stare. When the girl turned red, looking even more flustered, Aisha just sighed inwardly before raising an eyebrow, imploring Kiara to just talk.

Kiara wiped her sweaty palms on her dress before looking at her feet. As if looking away steeled her, she continued. “There’s a car going between here and the museum,” Kiara spoke quickly and quickly lowered her voice into a lower, conspiratorial tone. “There were calls made and—”

“It’s Mokuba Kaiba. And…Well…Um…Her.”

Of course Aisha knew exactly who she was. An annoying bad-tempered child who broke into her office. None of what the others said about her mattered and should have been no concern of Aisha’s. Yet this girl teamed up with Seto Kaiba and the spirit of the Millennium Ring, poking her nose where it did not belong. The girl was getting dangerous. Too dangerous to keep around.

“I will call you with instructions,” Aisha replied. “Do you have eyes on them?”

Kiara nodded.

“Good. You’ll hear from me soon.”

This was such a waste of time. Aside from agreeing that the radio stations here kind of sucked, you and Mokuba accomplished absolutely nothing. After hours of sitting in a car, you both agreed that it would be prudent to stretch your legs and get some air before you killed each other.

Mokuba had found a parking spot near a Starbucks (that he dragged you away from) and you two wandered around the downtown area until you found a park with a trail that ran along the river.

The night was warmer than it should be in mid-October, but still cold enough to warrant a light jacket. Being outside like this instead of driving around in literal circles was improving your mood.
significantly.

“This was a waste of time,” Mokuba muttered for the third time that hour alone. He absently began to kick at a particularly crispy looking leaf before the temptation grew too much and he stomped on it with his Doc Martens.

“You would have felt guilty if we didn’t do anything,” you said, surprising yourself with your own diplomatic and rather emphatic answer.

Mokuba gave a slight shrug and leaned against a railing overlooking the river. You joined him and took in the downtown skyline. You were used to the light pollution and not being able to see the stars was just something you were used to.

“Want to get a drink?” you asked, suddenly overcome with the desire to have a cocktail.

Mokuba titled his head slightly as if he were debating with himself. Before he just shrugged. “Eh fuck it.” He then reached out his arm towards you before extending his pinky finger.

“This is the most sacred of promises,” Mokuba said gravely. “We can get a drink if you pinky promise not to shout ‘Fuck the Packers’ like you have been threatening to do all night.”

You hesitated for a moment. You were from Chicago, so it was only natural to want to do it…

“Wisconsin welcomed you so nicely,” Mokuba continued, waggling his pinky a little.

Oh yeah, that sign when you first crossed the state line.

“Okay. Fine. Only because that sign was so nice,” you decided, pinky swearing.

In the end, you and Mokuba decided on a nearby gimmicky spy themed bar. One of the bathrooms had a picture of Burt Reynolds. Apparently if you touched the heart covering his junk, an alarm would ring in the bar. You discovered that after the third time hearing that stupid alarm.

Once the third alarm rang out, you decided you had enough with listening to people cheer as soon as the woman walked out of the bathroom. You never been to a spy themed bar before, so you got up.

“I’m going to explore,” you said to Mokuba, who was looking down at his phone. With how he was swiping left or right, you had a general idea of what he was doing.

“Do you want another drink?” Mokuba offered.

“Ehhh…” You looked at the menu for a second before shrugging. “Surprise me.”

After looking at some of the more gimmicky items (a piece of the Berlin Wall and a phone booth with a freakin pay phone--what was this, the 90’s?), you got bored and headed to a bathroom. You fully intended to avoid the Burt Reynolds one. Seriously, this place needed some updating.

The second bathroom was a single stall and only slightly less gimmicky. Locking the door, you noticed the mirror was slightly off. Curious, you touched it to see it opened like a medicine cabinet. With the mirror open, you were looking through a fake TV screen that allowed you to spy on the bar.

From where you stood washing your hands, you could see a white haired women sitting in your spot talking to Mokuba It looked like she was drinking whatever Mokuba bought you.
Intending on calling Mokuba out, you pulled out your phone to read a text Mokuba sent you. Frowning, you read it twice and double-checked the time to see how long you had been exploring.

In under a half hour, Mokuba met a women, decided to rent two hotel rooms at the InterContinental—which was just around the corner apparently—so he could possibly get a chance with the rando drinking your drink.

That was the kind of week you were having.

You could plop down next to Mokuba and be a cock block or you could head to this hotel, get drunk on Mokuba’s dime, order room service, and pass out. After New York, you were skeptical about hotel rooms, but the idea sounded infinitely more appealing than glowering at Mokuba until he drove you back to Chicago.

You were a real bro like that.

You owe me for this, playa, you text back.

You stepped outside into the alleyway and swung your purse in what you thought was a jaunty fashion when you noticed a black SUV. Not unusual since there were a few other cars in the alley. From what you could see, the only real unusual thing about this car was the fact that the back doors opened when you approached. Two people stepped out, a man and woman.

The woman was barely taller than you with long dark brown hair and severe dark blue eyes. She was dressed casually, but not overly with a hunter green military style jacket over a black shirt and dark skinny jeans. Your eyes fell on a pair of pistols with quick-release holsters. Their position allowed the jacket to conceal them.

The man on the other hand, was tall. Possibly taller than Seto, even and while the two did not look related, you somehow quickly noted he had similar coloring to his female companion. Not that you paid much attention to that—especially given the fact that your attention was not focused on those two pistols.

A quick glance at the car told you that it did not have a visible license plate either.

Yeah....

Time to peace out.

“Hey Where do you think you’re going?” You felt the hair raise in your neck at the feeling you were being followed down the alley. There were bouncers out here when you first came down the alleyway to the bar, but now the entire alley was ominously empty, save for these two.

It was a weekend night at a popular tourist bar. You were dumb, but not stupid. Something was up.

While speaking, you pulled out your phone, turned on your GPS and quickly text the letters ‘SOS’ to Mokuba and Bakura. “I had a really long day. I’m just hoping to go take a bath and lay down. Maybe get drunk and play games on my phone. Hey, did you know there’s this one cat collecting game ca—”

Your hand was grabbed with your arm twisted painfully bending you, causing your phone to smash on the ground with a crack that did not sound too good for your screen.

With your arm painfully pinned behind you, all you could do was grit your teeth and hiss in pain.
The assailant--the man--just shook his head down at you while the woman continued speaking.


“I would rather not,” you replied feebly. From behind you, you could hear the unmistakable sound of the women drawing one of her pistols. Your ears strained to hear if she turned off the safety feature. Either she did not have the safety on, or it still was. That was good.

You just had to take stock of the situation and think quickly.

There was a person much stronger than you and an armed woman who meant business. For some reason, you did not think Mokuba was going to be getting your text message any time soon. With the convenient timing, you were convinced that Mokuba’s newest lady friend had to be a plant to separate you two.

Now, if you were a betting woman (which you were not but still), you would assume they were after the Millennium Necklace. Ironic, really, since it was the one thing that could give you the upper hand.

Fear was the only thing driving you and like a caged animal you struggled against the hold on your arm only to groan as you were met with pain.

“As you can see, this is not a request,” the woman replied as you exhaled through your teeth.

Thinking quickly, you spun into the lock the man had on you. You used your free arm to slap the inside of your locked arm. The force caused a bend in both elbows, allowing you to free yourself and quickly reach for your purse.

Driven by a survival instinct, you did not even have a moment to think about the fear and reluctance to use the Item. The moment your fingers wrapped around the Necklace, you caught yourself staring down the barrel of one of the pistols. From beyond the woman with the gun, the car door opened to a third member of this merry band of cultists.

Unlike the others, seeing him caused your grip around the Millennium Necklace to tighten. This was the man with the Millennium Eye. He held up his hand indicating for the woman to lower her weapon.

Rafael frowned with his one remaining eye. Unlike before when her mind had been easy to access, he was met with a colossal fortification. Even the Millennium Eye could not find a foothold to get beyond the barrier.

Not that Rafael wanted to. Through it, he could feel that same terrible power waiting to be unleashed upon him. The girl’s ka. It was getting more powerful.

With a sudden start, Rafael felt the same surge of dark magic when he dueled the Pharaoh. This time, it came from everywhere at once and crawled up Rafael’s spine like tendril. Rafael and his conspirators looked around before taking several steps backwards.

You were not sure what was happening, but the moment the gun was lowered, you seized the opportunity to grab the Millennium Necklace and in spite of the dread that caused your stomach to churn, you forced your shaking hands to fasten the clasp around your neck.

Immediately, you knew who you were about to see before he stepped out of the shadows.
“Thanks for being a real bro”, you said in greeting to Bakura. His attention, however, was not on you. Rather, his eyes narrowed at the wielder of the Millennium Eye.

Dark power surging through your veins, you turned to face your earlier assailants. Once again, the weapon was raised and pointed at you.

“Still planning on taking me at gunpoint?” you asked conversationally. “Because that’s kidnapping. I don’t know where you’re from, but this is America and in America, we have laws.”

Male and female exchanged glances and from the questioning look the guy, you suspected that he did not speak English very well. The woman just rolled her eyes without lowering the pistol.

“Um...What?” she questioned.

“Hey...Mana. Wait. No. Mina, right?” you asked suddenly feeling like the Long Island Medium or something. Upon her eyes widening, in surprise you continued. “That looks like you’re packing some Glock twenty-twos. That’s the type of pistol law enforcement usually carries. You definitely seem like the dirty cop type.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Mina sneered. “I’m not a goddamn cop. I’m Israeli.”

“Israeli Defense Force. Border Guard. That is like a cop,” you confirmed, the information was practically being fed to you through the Millennium Necklace. From weeks of disuse, it was almost like a sensory overload.

“Yet here you are, in America, doing black bag work for the local mob…cult…hybrid…thing.” you continued somewhat awkwardly now that you did not have information being rapidly filtered to you.

“Wow...Okay then, bitch. I’ve been trying to keep it polite, but you are really getting on my nerves right now.” Mina spat out.

“So the laws of the United States are getting on your nerves?” you counted. “Because right now, I seriously doubt you have a conceal and carry permit. On top of making threats to kidnap me, that’s a serious felony. I mean, you can’t really shoot me without me knowing about it soon enough to rip your soul from your body. So we’re kind of at an impasse…”

“Are you seriously fucking going there right now? Oh my God….”

“You should be embarrassed…”

“Holy shit, you are being serious right now.”

“I am. Furthermore...You...um...You have no authority to order me to do jack shit!” you countered, slowly building up the argument. Seizing the opportunity, you shoved past the duo towards the end of the alley in the direction where you presumed the InterContinental hotel was.

As if having enough, the male grabbed you by the shoulders with both hands and spun you around. A dark pulse was felt before you looked up at him and used the shadow magic the Millennium Necklace gifted you to throw him towards the brick wall of the alleyway.

“Do not fucking touch me!” you hissed, letting the fear of the gun and actually wearing the Millennium Necklace be replaced by unadulterated rage—how dare these people stalk you and terrorize you for weeks!

How.
Dare.

They!

Mina could not see where Rafael or that abomination went. Compared to the spirit, the girl in front of her was like a child playing with matches.

Or a handgun.

Fuck black magic! That necklace could not do shit against a firearm.

The shot rang out and while his aim was perfect, it missed with the bullet going wide before it ricocheted off of the brick wall. Immediately, Mina could hear screams and shouts—the first one satisfyingly coming from you.

Mahal—her partner, fled down the alley the moment he heard the gunshot. Mina hissed and aimed once more. The second shot also went wide as she was knocked out of her hand by an unseen force before she too, hit the ground hard.

“You SHOT me!” you practically screeched into Mina’s ear.

Mina could feel hot liquid on the back of her neck as you grabbed hold of her shoulder and with the force from the Millennium Necklace accompanying you twisting her body like a doll, Mina cried out in pain as her shoulder bones seemed to grind together in its socket.

“You fucks are responsible for the death of over fifty people,” you hissed in Mina’s ear as the sudden pain turned into a dull ache. Slowly, Mina began to realize that the liquid she felt on her neck was blood. “If I was standing a few feet away, I would have died.”

“Too bad,” Mina grunted.

Surprisingly, you did not retaliate at that. Instead, you just continued admonishing her as if you had not heard anything. “Then you’ve been stalking me and ruined a perfectly nice weekend with my boyfriend—who now is not even in the country thanks to you. Then you tried to kill me again when I stood up to you goddamn fucking freaks!”

Mina became very aware of onlookers and the presence of the spirit of the Millennium Ring. No Rafael. That concerned her. That concerned her almost as much as hearing the spectators shout that the cops were on their way.

That is when she felt the abomination pat her down. The feel of that thing’s hands on her repulsed Mina to her core. Within seconds, she felt the spirit step away from her and Mina could think once more.

“You’re not going to take the other gun?” she heard you question.

“Leave it,” Bakura answered. The spirit leaned forward and for a second, she thought that the creature was either kissing you or tending to your wound. Instead, she caught sight of gold. He had unclasped the Millennium Necklace from your neck.

“Don’t give me that look,” Bakura scolded. “Tch, such a child acting like I’m taking away your toy. You’ll get it back. We just can’t let you be seen with this.”

Mina could only see the spirit approach the crowd of people and say a few words to one of the
bystanders before seemingly joining the crowd of onlookers, waiting for emergency services.

Without the aid of the Millennium Necklace, Mina tested the hold you had on her. Either that spirit was doing something, or she was more injured than she thought. No amount of struggle relieved the hold you had on her.

“You little culty connections might get the cops to release you, but like hell I’m letting your bitch ass get away with this.”

“And you’re going to be a dead woman,” Mina promised.

“I’ll be sure to tell the cops to you threatened my life like this,” you stated matter-of-factly. “It’s been awhile since I watched Law and Order, but I am pretty sure that the cops might be more interested in your boss, who ordered the kidnapping of the CEO of KaibaCorp’s sweet innocent girlfriend.”

You used a hand that was holding her down to pat her slightly—and extremely condescendingly—on the arm. Even without the Millennium Item, Mina felt a pulse of power come from you and it made her twitch, causing her bones to practically groan in protest to your touch.

With the auction over, Aisha clinked her martini glass against her husband’s brandy old fashioned.

“To us,” he said before taking a drink.

“To us,” Aisha mimed, following suit.

No sooner did the alcohol touch her lips did Aisha feel her phone vibrate in her purse. She also saw Adam pulling his phone out of his pocket. Adam allowed her to unlock her phone to read the encrypted message from Mahal.

“I know what you’re thinking,” Aisha said before Adam could voice his thoughts. “None of that is my fault.”

“Well, it was your plan...”

“And those were your people,” Aisha haughtily countered.

“Of course it’s never your fault,” Adam mumbled barely loud enough for Aisha to hear. He shoved the phone back in his pocket before turning his attention back to Aisha. “This is great. Just fucking great.”

“I will call Sheriff Clarke. He’ll get Friedman out of this,” Aisha said referring to Mina by her surname.

“Aisha,” Adam warned. “This needs to stop.”

“It’s cute when you tell me what to do,” Aisha said as she began typing up a new text message. “We sacrificed too much to stop now.”

“There really is three people in this marriage; you, me, and your fucking ego.” Adam said, turning away once he spotted another attendee approaching them.

“What is with him?” Aisha heard someone ask.

“You know how men are when they get a bug up their ass,” Aisha replied while still typing.
If Adam thought she would just give up and decide to sip martinis at her tennis club….

Well, he could be dealt with if he became too much of a threat. Aisha ensured that long ago. After all, she had the remaining Millennium Items.

She was so close. The wheels were in motion and could not be stopped. Not now.

From this day on, Mina did not care what your name was--you were going to be forever known as ‘That Fucking Bitch’ or the Bitch for short. She could only stew as the officer read her the Miranda Rights while the EMTs wrapped her shoulder in a sling.

Mina already had been disarmed and she insisted she carried a conceal and carry permit. It was only because Sheriff Clarke showing up on the scene that she had not been hauled off--even if the Milwaukee Police Department seemed miffed at the sheriff’s presence. CSI had swabbed her hands, the barrel of both firearms, and Mina already knew that the rest of her clothes would be dusted as soon as she was booked in the county jail.

Mina looked up from the EMTs dabbing alcohol swabs on the minor cuts along her hands. The presence of that thing was the only reason she resisted the urge to flinch when the alcohol touched her torn flesh. She met the gaze of the abomination before shuddering and continuing to scan the crowd. No sign of Kiara or her honeypot.

Mina wished she had been the honeypot like was planned. Of course, Kiara’s delicate sensibilities would not allow her to ever hold a firearm, much less threaten someone with it.

“Did you Miranda her?” one of the Milwaukee police officers asked the man who read her the Miranda Rights.

“You betcha,” the original officer replied.

“Miss Friedman?” the second officer asked. “Do you understand the rights that were just read to you?”

Clarke was talking to some people and his presence emboldened her. Once she was booked, she would be on Clarke’s turf. That meant getting out of this with some dignity intact.

“I understand me my rights,” Mina answered. “Are you gunna be the one who cuffs me, or is it going to be your less attractive partner?”

“Let’s just get her through booking before we haul the other one in.”

Seto had paused his work to take a quick nap on the couch of his office. The sound of his phone vibrating on the table caused him to turn over in his sleep to try to ignore it. However, whoever was calling seemed determined to disturb his Saturday afternoon.

Slowly, Seto reached for his phone and answered it. Upon hearing what was said, he jolted up and into awareness. Once the call ended, he dialed your phone. When it went straight to voicemail, Seto immediately ended the call.

Next he called Mokuba.

“Get outside now,” Seto growled out.
It felt like you had been punched with white hot metal.

The Millennium Necklace had warned you enough to move out of the way, but it did not prevent the ricocheted bullet from grazing your forehead. When the police and EMT had arrived, the blood was running down your forehead, blinding you.

Logically, you knew that head wounds bled like a mo’fo. Once the adrenaline from the fight wore off, you had repeatedly asked the paramedic using your hair as sutures--it was called the hair apposition technique--if you were going to die. You would never admit to it, but you may have cried more than a little bit, begging emergency responders to get ahold of your boyfriend before you died of blood loss.

Luckily for you, Bakura had not heard your theatrics.

“It’s okay,” one of the paramedic said before taking your hand and squeezing it in affirmation.

“I know her,” you heard a familiar voice insist as he ducked underneath the police tape. “Here’s my ID if you have any questions.”

“Mokuba! Where were you?” you cried out when the other Kaiba brother approached the ambulance.

He brought his phone back to his ear and grimaced slightly at whoever was on the receiving end. “Yeah, she’s right in front of me. No, she doesn’t look like she was shot.”

Mokuba gave you a look, begging you to go along with it. “I was shot,” you countered dramatically while making gimme motions towards the phone. “I want to talk to Seto.”

Next Mokuba shot you a glare that suggested that you were not being a complete bro about this situation. “It looks like the bullet grazed her...No she doesn’t need stitches. Look, do you want to talk to her?”

“We need to swab her right hand, so use your left if you are going to use the phone.”

“Do you want to talk to her or are you going to call for the attorney?” Mokuba asked impatiently.

“Attorney?” you questioned. “I was the one attacked! Why would I need--Hey! Wait! Don’t let Seto hang up. I want to talk to him.”

Mokuba looked up at you apologetically before pocketing his phone. “He already hung up,” he explained. “Sorry.”

One of the officers standing in front of the ambulance and securing the scene was told something by what looked like a supervisor. He was wearing several pins you were not sure were law enforcement sanctioned.

“Is everything alright?” you found yourself asking.

There was a tense silence while the paramedics finished working on you while Mokuba initially started speaking to an officer before suddenly walking away and up to you.

It all happened suddenly. Just as you were instructed to stand up and turn around, you felt your hands being placed behind your back.
Chapter End Notes

*evil cackle*
Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

I am really sorry for such a long time between updates. In addition to several things happening at once, I had some really bad writer's block.

I also want to thank RaeValentine (username on A03) for doing a phenomenal job of not only proof-reading, but putting up with my shenanigans/writer's block!

Mokuba had overheard snippets of the conversation between both the Sheriff and Police Department. While he was not sure the difference between those two divisions of law enforcement, Mokuba suspected what was about to happen. Even so, it did not prepare him for seeing the look of abject horror the moment the handcuffs snapped around your wrists. Then there was a cacophony of sound.

“Why is she getting arrested?”

“Pussy pass: denied!”

“Shame!”

“Let her go!”

Mokuba did not pay attention to the shouts from the onlookers. Rather, he knew he needed to get ahold of a few attorneys. Preferably in the privacy of a hotel room with several KaibaCorp security posted outside the door. Well over a decade had passed since he was last targeted as a way to manipulate Seto. Watching you get cuffed and escorted to a sheriff’s squad car brought back memories and with with it, the distinct feeling of vulnerability coupled with hypervigilance.

He needed to get out of here and find somewhere safe.


“Before you go, fuku-shachou.”

Vice-President.

Mokuba never had much interaction with the Spirit of the Millennium Ring. At most, he remembered seeing the glow from the Millennium Items seconds before being knocked out. That had coerced Seto into a duel on top of KaibaCorp.

Mokuba could only narrow his eyes at Bakura. Mokuba’s own guarded stance only amused the spirit further. “Oh, quit clutching your pearls. It’s been years since I wanted your soulless body.”

Brown eyes looked up and down Mokuba’s figure appreciatively. “Though I would not deny wanting your body in other more… recreational ways.”

The Spirit of the Millennium Ring was objectifying him! This was officially one of the weirdest experiences of Mokuba’s life.
“Hard pass,” Mokuba growled out. He folded his arms across his chest as a way to obscure his body and prevent Bakura from checking him out further.

“Shame,” Bakura replied. He paused a beat before continuing. “None the matter, I still got you a present anyway.” A CVS bag was thrust in Mokuba’s direction before the Spirit of the Millennium Ring stalked off. Reluctantly, Mokuba looked into the bag, expecting a severed hand or some finger bones.

Instead, he found your phone, the Millennium Necklace, and strangely enough, the Millennium Eye.

Your head still felt like it was on fire and you badly needed to wash blood out of your hair. Combined with the discomfort of being in handcuffs and sitting on a hard wooden bench, thinking was becoming increasingly difficult. Luckily for you, this was not the first time you came up with a complete bullshit excuse.

“I was at the Field Museum when it was attacked,” you answered. In all honesty, you should have updated your license when you had to get a new one. Alas, here you were. “Some head trauma. The neuroptomistrist said that it should change back… eventually.”

The sergeant just hummed as he typed some information on the computer. “Shit luck,” he commented.

“Yeah,” you agreed. “Pretty much.”

There was a brief moment of silence while you attempted to shift your weight into a more comfortable position. Failing that, you just rested the back of your head against the wall and closed your eyes. “Out of curiosity… what am I being arrested for?”

“Right now, you are facing charges of Unlawful Restraint, a Class H Felony and Battery, a Class A misdemeanor,” the officer replied. “We’re going to be taking you in to get a mugshot and fingerprinted. We can probably get you in front of the intake court commissioner on Sunday or Monday at the latest. That’ll be your initial appearance and your attorney or a public defender will be there to represent you.”

Considering it was a Friday night, that was a problem. A huge problem.

Holy shit…

This was seriously happening.

While the sergeant continued typing on the computer, you kept thinking that someone would come in and announce that a mistake was made and you could go free. After all, you were regularly fucking billionaire and CEO Seto Kaiba! That had to count for something!

Besides, Seto and Mokuba had to be working to keep you out of jail.

Up until you were led to a small room for your fingerprints, you kept your eyes trained on all the exits, thinking that an attorney (or even Mokuba) would come sweeping in any moment. Even with your fingers coated with ink and holding up your booking number, there was no sign of a rescue.

What happened next was something right out of Orange is the New Black: a female guard eyed your feet. “What size shirt, pants, and shoe do you wear?”

Your hope of a rescue diminished as you mumbled your answer.
“Two issues of an overshirt. Two issues of pants. Two issues of an undershirt,” after each item was rattled off, you were practically thrown each item. You were given two sets of navy pants and a smock. The undershirt was a green men’s t-shirt.

Aside from the difference in attire, this felt like processing when you first got to Basic Training after enlistment.

The military was like jail, you mused. Huh.

“You are to wear the undershirt underneath the navy blue shirt at all times. You are to wear the panties with your pants. You must always wear these socks with the shoes.” With the uniform, you were provided a pair of light green panties and matching socks. The shoes were less like actual shoes and more like shower shoes you wore when you lived in the dorms while in college.

A buzzing sound alerted you to the fact that another door was being opened.

“Strip,” the female guard instructed, tossing you a plastic bag.

You looked around the sterile room. “Right here?” you questioned, feeling mildly horrified. You lived through another female watching you urinate when you enlisted. That female at least averted her eyes somewhat.

This was a new type of humiliating.

“Right here,” the guard confirmed, paying more attention to putting on some latex gloves than your discomfort. “Clothes in the bag.”

You pretended that disrobing was hurting your head, but the guard was unimpressed with your theatrics. “Arms up,” she instructed once she saw that you finally placed your underwear in the plastic bag.

Your eyes were brimming with tears from the humiliation. Immediately, you closed them and did as instructed. You could not help the sob that escaped from your lips when you had to pull them apart to show that you had no contraband.

The guard remained stoically professional throughout the entire ordeal, but it did not stop you from openly crying once it was all over, and you were instructed to put on the uniform. You then had shackles placed on you before being led down the maze-like hallway that smelled so strongly of ammonia that you felt your nostrils become irritated.

There was some indistinct radio chatter from the radio before another guard approached the one leading you. While you could not make out what was being said, you caught snippets of the conversation. “Lawyer...habeas corpus...Kaiba...about to get Senator...or even Governor...on the phone. Skip health exam...Screening, too...Sheriff wants her in holding cell.”

Lawyer!

You could only imagine Seto or even Mokuba contacting the state senators or even the governor to demand your release. It gave you hope and you felt your spirits lifted. If they were skipping some parts of the booking process, then that meant you would be released soon.

Then maybe you could keep your mugshot and one day, could laugh about the entire ordeal.

Immediately, you were brought to a single cell with only a bench (no pillow or blanket you noted), and most disgustingly, an aluminium toilet encrusted with either vomit or feces. You did not want to
think too much about it. On top of the toilet was a small spout you slowly realized served as not only a sink, but your only source of drinking water.

“You look sweet,” one of the guards said as the doors to the cell slid closed. It then locked with a loud and ominous click. “You’ll be getting out on a PR bond in the morning. Judges like girls like you.”

Somehow, that did not reassure you. Still, you decided to use your spare clothing as a pillow and just try to get some sleep. You hoped that you would be shaken awake and led out of this place by a highly paid and extremely exhausted attorney.

Careful to avoid laying on your wound, you curled up for warmth and closed your eyes. You would be let out soon, you had to be.

Bakari was not much of a smoker, but when his business phone rang a little after eleven o’clock on a Friday night, he felt the need to pick up the habit again. He had expected it to be Aisha, suddenly needing legal advice. Instead, it was Mina calling from the Milwaukee County Jail.

“I’m not that type of attorney,” Bakari cut in before the woman could finish her profanity-laden rant. Looking for a distraction, lavender eyes fell on his car keys sitting on the coffee table. Even after living a new life, the memories of picking locks and dodging traps resurfaced...

He quickly pushed those thoughts aside since Mina was about to start screaming at him. “Yes, I’m well aware of what pro hac vice is, Friedman. The problem is that I am not a member of the Wisconsin Bar, which means that I cannot practice law in the state of Wisconsin...No. There’s no exception to that. And yes, that means I can’t represent you.... Well... if I do, I can lose my license. Look, I’m hanging up now. Don’t bullshit me with that one call shit, you can call the entire continental United States from jail until you get ahold of an attorney.”

With that, Bakari ended the call and leaned back against his couch. Turning the ringer of his phone off, Bakari set it next to his car keys. The reflection of the lamp off of a few of his keys reminded him of the treasure he had once coveted...

Quickly, he shook off that thought. That was no longer him. In a twist of fate, he made his living defending criminals. He was no longer one. He was not the sole survivor of Kul Elna. Rather, his father was a Canadian banker who met his mother prior to her becoming a state senator. He had two sisters who were very much alive. His parents were divorced, not slaughtered.

Bakari did not know what to make of the others who were arbitrarily chosen to wield the Millennium, Items. While Bakari had his own theories, he never inquired. After all, their reasoning was their own for joining this absurd organization.

For Bakari, it started when he was a child. He heard stories of children having nightmares about their supposed past lives. As far as Bakari knew, the only nightmares he had were after watching scary movies. Up until his parents dragged him and his sisters on a trip to Egypt, Bakari would never have known he lived before.

His parents had warned their three children to stay with them. Something about terrorist attacks in the pyramids a few years prior. Truthfully, Bakari did not remember because there was only one part of that trip etched in his memory.

Bakari and his older sister Sarah had never been one to really listen to parents about the dangers of the world. Not when they wanted to explore the tombs by themselves! When a stranger told him and
Sarah about other children in one of the tombs, the siblings immediately thought of a Goonies style adventure and followed him.

The moment Bakari set his eyes on the shrine of the underworld -- the tablet that was created to store all seven Millennium Items -- he knew he had messed up. There were other children, as promised, but looking at that stone tablet sent a wave of dread through Bakari’s very being.

The man had caught on to his discomfort and produced the Millennium Ring. Bakari immediately turned to flee, but not before a large bumbling idiot of a man demanded to purchase that very object. The moment that man put on the Ring, Bakari remembered grabbing his sister’s hand and running.

Bakari did not remember anything besides running. No matter how many times he tripped and fell or how his stomach heaved, he kept running until black spots danced across his vision and collapsed. He remembered waking up in the hospital next to his sister with both his parents fighting. Not wanting to hear it, Bakari pretended to be asleep until he actually fell asleep.

When he woke up next, it was nighttime and Bakari woke up to a child sitting on his bed. Bakari now knew that it had been no ordinary kid who found his way into the hospital room. Rather, it had been the Spirit of the Millennium Ring. The moment their eyes met, the spirit cackled and touched him on the forehead, causing the memories of a past life to flood his mind.

Bakari had screamed, but when the hospital staff entered the room, the spirit was gone. After both he and Sarah were discharged, his sister had confided that she saw the boy in the room as well. The two made a silent promise never to speak of their misadventure ever again.

In spite of all of that, it did not stop the Spirit of the Millennium Ring haunting his dreams like Pennywise the Clown had once done. Bakari could not be sure how he could exist while part of his soul was unwhole with most of it becoming twisted into an inhuman monstrosity while sealed within the Millennium Ring.

Whatever he had once been, the spirit was no longer any part of Bakari. The only thing he wanted was freedom from his past and latched on the first opportunity that promised it to him.

You woke up shivering and immediately felt a wetness from your forehead. With the perpetual lights, you reached forward and touched your temple -- where the bullet had grazed you -- and immediately felt warm viscous fluid. Butterfly stitches would have been a better bet.

Moving into a sitting position, you brought your knees to your chin for warmth, but knew you would have to take care of the bleeding, and a more pressing matter: your increasing thirst. At present, your lips were beginning to feel dry. Even the thought of approaching the disgusting toilet could not get rid of your body’s demand for water.

Getting to your feet, you felt an immediate head rush and waited a few moments until your vision returned to normal. Taking a few steps forward, you still felt a little woozy and sore, but the pain was manageable.

Once you reached the toilet, you reached out and twisted the knob. A few droplets of water came out of the faucet. Frowning, you began to turn the knob in each direction only to no avail.

“Fuck!” you swore loudly and immediately expected to be reprimanded for making too much noise. That is when you became aware of how silent everything was. Prior to falling asleep, there had been guards and other inmates in holding cells. Now, everything was eerily silent.

You exhaled slowly in order to try to slow your growing panic.
“Hello?” you called out. Immediately, you strained to hear any type of sound.

Nothing.

“I want my phone call!” you continued and paused a moment to strain your ears in hopes of hearing any type of movement. “Hello? I want my phone call!”

Once again, no response. You started banging on the cell door just as the floodgates that held back your tears opened. “You can’t just leave me in here like this!” you cried. “The Constitution protects me against cruel and unusual punishment!”

Now you were kicking on the door, hoping that would draw someone’s attention. You were out of breath and now had sweat coating your forehead with nothing to show for it.

You moved back to the cot and stared at the door hoping for any type of response from the jail staff. It was like an entire wing was emptied when you were asleep.

More than likely, that was exactly what happened.

“Fuck,” you swore again, running your hands through your hair in frustration. When your fingers touched your wound, you cried out in pain.

“FUCK!” you screamed with a fresh set of tears running down your face. You knew you needed to stop crying before you became too dehydrated. Yet the hopelessness of the situation was too overwhelming.

Aisha drank and raged as Adam threw his phone across the room, making a satisfying crack as it hit the wall.

They lost Rafael and with him, the Millennium Eye. For reasons unknown to Aisha, the Spirit of the Millennium Ring was protecting you. And because of that -- because of Mina’s impulsivity -- they lost Rafael.

There was no body or sign of a struggle, but Aisha knew what happened when someone lost a Dark Game.

At last her phone rang. The attorney she kept on retainer finally bothered to check his messages. Feeling too drunk to really speak, she just handed the phone off to Adam.

In all honesty, she should leave Friedman to rot in the jail cell. However, Adam convinced her to agree to having their attorney represent Mina.

Patience, Aisha reminded herself. She just needed to hold on and be patient for a while longer.

You wanted to sleep, but the cold and pain from where the bullet grazed your skin kept you awake. As the minutes (or hours since you had no real way to keep track of time) passed, you tried to play mental games with yourself to pass time.

At first, you tried to name every 151 Pokémon in somewhat alphabetical order. No matter what, you could not seem to focus long enough and always lost count of what number you were on or whether or not you named a Pokémon. Naming the States and Presidents in order also proved too difficult for you to focus on.
Instead, you decided to just start talking out loud and play another alphabet game. “My name is Chad and my spouse is… Chadwick. We live in Chad and sell… Chandeliers.”

Slowly your eyes began to grow heavier and your game was barely coherent even to you.

“Name’s Kayla…n…Kaleb…Kewaskum…kittens.”

Seto placed his mug under the Keurig and pressed the Start button. Green tea and a cigarette would have helped calm his nerves, but he remembered he still had some Starbucks K-cups that he had since…

He did not even remember. Still, Starbucks reminded him of you. So he was drinking Starbucks coffee. You might like that.

Although he knew perfectly well what time it was, Seto found himself glancing at the time anyway. 12:36 am on Monday, October 19. Morning was fast approaching and Seto knew he needed to be seated in his office in less than eight hours. He had barely slept since he received the call about your arrest and knew he would barely sleep until you were out on bail. Or as the lawyer had hastily assured him when Seto called him (he was paying the retainer fee, after all) a personal recognizance bond.

Seto had no need to learn about the various nuances of the American criminal justice system. What he knew about the Japanese criminal justice system was enough to make him want to reach for the cabinet where he kept his Xanax and pour some brandy in his coffee.

Each time Seto attempted to focus on work, he found his concentration wavering. Reluctantly, he looked back on the text he had deciphered from Lynch’s computer.

*Men shall wield the power of the shadows that the Pharaoh himself possessed. All those who lack the ancient lore will be burnt on the funeral pyre that will follow when their hubris deems them worthy to sing to the stars. Blood calls blood. Sevenfold, they shall rise and sevenfold they shall fall. They shall be dreams made flesh or flesh made dream. They shall stop the music of the blind idiot god or join the dance.*

That read like a manifesto or an edgy teenager attempting to write a prophecy. A poorly written one at that.

You found yourself sitting on a barstool in a nightclub. Shifting your eyes to the left and then to the right, you were quick to note that in spite of the fact this place looked like the ideal establishment to let loose in, you were alone.

In all out honesty, you gave more thought to this than you ever would in an actual dream. Which made you wonder if you even were dreaming. Or maybe you were tripping because you were dying.

Unsure of how to handle these existential questions, you just sat at the bar and began to look at the drink selection. As you pondered whether or not you could just grab what you wanted, the bartender approached.

Except the bartender was you.

Through the bartender’s mirrored irises, you could see your own reflection. More specifically, you could see the reflection of your own eyes. They were your natural color once more.
Feeling overwhelmed by a sense of panic, you slowly stood and proceeded to take several steps away from the doppelganger. 

Your doppelganger just eyed you with an expression you have only seen in photos of you. It was your ‘Are you done?’ look. 

In spite of yourself, you took a few deep breaths. You willed yourself to sit back down and breathe at a slower, more even pace. You were not sure how long you sat there, just focusing on breathing techniques. Yet, you were surprised that this other you just stood there, still as a statue while you composed yourself. 

“Am I dead?” you finally asked.

“Death…” Your doppelgänger mused. Its voice unnerved you. Not in the way that hearing your own voice unnerves you, but it was something that disturbed you on a more visceral level 

“What if you were dead?”

You did not see your mom or favorite pet anywhere. So if this was the afterlife, you were going to be pissed. Especially since you only had yourself for company.

“Then I would demand free shots,” you replied. “Of Patrón.”

The expression of the other you never changed. For a moment, you thought you caught a glimpse of amusement that was replaced with your usual resting bitch face. If it were not for your experience catching Seto’s fleeting moments of emotion, you would have missed it entirely.

You looked at the counter, expecting a shot to appear in front of you. When nothing did, you looked up expectantly at your doppelgänger bartender.

“So, I am not dead?” you asked. After eyeing your doppelgänger for a moment, you continued. “Are we supposed to fight to the death…?”

“Listen,” the other you spoke. “Listen, prepare, and be ready.”

“Wait… what?”

When the other you did not reply, you felt your frustration boil over in a way it never had in any dream you experienced before.

Reaching out, you attempted to grab your doppelgänger, but your hands went through your double as if it were made out of fog.

“What are you?!”

Instead of answering, your other remained calm and impassive before announcing that it was time for you to wake up.

You snapped awake, jolting up in your bed. In spite of your dehydration, your undershirt was soaked with your arms shaking. Your arms felt sore and strained, while your eyes burned against the sharp white light of the room you were in. You attempted to use your arms to shield yourself from the light, but were met with resistance.

Blindly feeling around where you could, your hands came in contact with cool metal that reminded you of a hospital bed. But weren’t you currently in custody…?
Then you felt the restraint that kept you chained to the bed.

Your eyes were adjusted enough to see that you were shackled in a hospital bed. The sharp pain you had felt from your left arm was caused by the IV in the vein closest to your elbow. The cephalic vein.

Without thinking about it, you immediately fought against your restraints in hopes of it freeing you. Immediately, you realized your efforts were futile and let out a loud grunt from your efforts before your eyes followed the IV tubing that led from your arm to the bag that contained a clear liquid.

You hoped that was saline.

You really hoped that was a saline solution.

_Huh_, you thought before falling back into a dreamless sleep.

The next thing you became aware of was your hands in front of you while the IV was still in your arm. Slowly, you became cognizant enough to catch the tail end of a heated discussion.

You kept your eyes closed while your breathing remained slow and steady. Hopefully this would convince whoever was in your room that you were still asleep.

Luckily for you, the pair were too engrossed in their conversation to notice you. At present, you were too physically and mentally exhausted to pay attention to what was being said. Still, you were able to catch bits and pieces of the conversation.

“..Can’t really deny her access to an attorney.”

“....Going to be pissed.”

The mention of an attorney being here was enough for you to rally. Reluctantly, you pushed yourself into consciousness and opened your eyes. Immediately, the bright fluorescent lights caused a sharp pain that resonated behind your eyes. Shutting them once more, you could see the remnants of light in the form of colorful spots that danced behind your closed eyelids.

Taking several deep breaths, you were able to get more information from the conversation. Apparently you had been taken to the psych ward for combative behavior, to the point where Correctional Officers feared you would harm yourself.

_Bullshit_…

When you finally were in a sitting position, your head throbbed so violently, you were convinced your brain was attempting to liberate itself from your skull. It made being given a bottle of water and being watched while you drank before being lead to the showers seem almost dreamlike.

By the time you were staring at the showers, you were feeling a bit more lucid. The pain had settled into a dull ache. There was no one else around, but honestly, you were not thinking about that. After all, you survived in the military and you did not have the luxury of your own private shower then.

Rather, the floors were absolutely disgusting. Deciding you were going to keep your shoes on until you chose a shower head as far away from the doorway as possible. Once there, you put your towel on the ground before stepping on the towel, kicking off your shoes, and turning on the shower.

You were not expecting amazing water pressure and the initial blast of cold water was not surprising. Still, you survived the military and in all honesty, it was still better than how awful the showers had
been during your deployment in Afghanistan.

When you were finished with the shower, you had no towel to dry yourself with. That meant when you finally went to meet with your attorney, your jail uniform clung to you and your hair was still wet.

The attorney took one look at you, did something with his mouth, then quickly wrote down a few notes on the legal pad in front of him.

“Are you a Public Defender or did my boyfriend hire you?”

“Mr. Kaiba is paying my bill,” he answered before setting down his pen and holding out his hand to introduce himself.

After you sang like a goddamn canary over what happened during your time in jail, the attorney (Ben Van-Something) patiently continued to take notes. Once you were finished, he explained that right now, he was more concerned about getting you out of jail.

With that said, the attorney slid two capsules in a small sandwich bag over to you before producing another bottle of water.

“For the pain,” he explained. “I also brought some makeup so you can look presentable at your initial appearance.”

Any type of civil rights hearing would just have to wait, apparently. Right now, you supposed you had to go make yourself look like a human being instead of a spooky bog witch.
Chapter 34

Mentally, you were going over the mantra of rules your attorney gave you prior to what he had told you to expect from your initial appearance, and what to do in court. You were suddenly pulled from your thoughts when the bailiff tugged on your shackles and lead you into the courtroom and into the chair next to your attorney. You already forgot his name. It was Ben Van-Something-or-Other..

From your limited glimpse of the entire room, you saw that a glass wall separated you from the public gallery. Not many people were there and more than likely, they were waiting to post bail for someone else. Unfortunately, you were not given enough time to see if Mokuba was in the crowd before you were seated.

When the court commissioner prompted you to state your name for the record, you cleared your throat like you remembered. Leaning into the microphone, you stated your name. Then when asked, you gave your address. Before leaning back in the chair, you made sure to sit up straight while looking like you were in physical agony from the strain.

You could never muster the fine art of a poker face, but you hoped that you were at least a better actor than when you auditioned for *that* one play in high school…

The court commissioner continued, unimpressed by you. “You are being charged with one count of Unlawful Restraint, a Class H felony in the State of Wisconsin; one count of Resisting Arrest, a Class A misdemeanor; one count of Disorderly Conduct, a Class B misdemeanor. Who is representing the State, and who is representing the defense in this case?”

The charges were different than what you were told the night before.

You swallowed hard at that. Prior to this, you were not told what you were being charged with. A felony?! Sure, there were plenty of people who lived extremely professional lives after a felony conviction -- like the real Piper from Orange is the New Black.

There was also Michael Vick, who was still doing well for himself these days. Even Lindsay Lohan had been charged with a felony!

Wait.

Those were terrible examples!

You were sure that there were extremely successful felons. You just could not think of anything else besides how screwed you were. Right now, you just had to remind yourself that your attorney was just trying to prove what an upstanding citizen you were. Your preliminary hearing or arraignment was where he was going to argue how absurd the charges were.
You missed whatever the Assistant District Attorney said, but caught the tailwind of your attorney, Ben Van-Something introducing himself. Then they launched into what they thought your bond should be.

“Miss…” When you heard your attorney state your name, you realized that you needed to listen.

“…A lifelong resident of Chicago, Illinois, a Veteran that served honorably in the United States…”

Back straight, you reminded yourself. Shoulders back. Chin up.

“…Who is currently a graduate student at the University of Chicago, studying…”

You felt a bead of sweat slowly slide down your face. The shackles and the image of innocent and adorable you were so desperate to project prevented you from wiping at it.

“There is no history of criminal charges in either the state of Wisconsin or Illinois. The only charge against the defendant is a speeding ticket when the defendant was…”

Yes, you tried to repeat what Ben Van-Something said with your facial expression. Just a speeding ticket. Not even a loitering ticket or an underage drinking ticket. Graduate student. Veteran. Innocent and adorable.

“These factors make me believe that the defendant is not a flight risk. This is her first offense and would not need any more than a signature bond.”

“The State wants to point out that while the defendant is almost financially destitute and would qualify for a Public Defender--”

Oh gee, thanks.

“I want to point out that the defendant is romantically involved with the CEO of Kaiba Corp and has plenty of financial resources to flee the country--”

“This is where I would like to object to this,” Ben Van-Something interrupted. “Japan would not allow the defendant in the country while facing felony charges.”

“The Court wants to know whether or not the defendant is in possession of a passport,” the court commissioner interjected.

Oh

That was you.

You glanced at your attorney, who gave a nod of assent. Leaning forward, you spoke into the microphone. “No, your honor. I do not have a passport.”

If this was a commissioner, were you supposed to address them as ‘your honor,’ you wondered. Regardless, the hearing continued while you were left to ponder this.

“In spite of the defenses’ financial resources, I see no reason in the State’s argument on why the defense would abscond from any court proceedings. Therefore, the Court sees no reason to deny the defense a signature bond. The next court date will be on…”

With that, you were rushed through the jail, signed an affidavit, basically saying you will return for any and all court dates, before told to change into your street clothes, and were now struggling to open a door that would release you to the outside world, free at last.
When you finally got the door open, you were not sure what you expected. A dimly lit lobby with benches someone stole from the local Catholic Church and shoddy TVs playing reruns of Dr. Phil was definitely not one of it.

Your first glimpse of freedom was debating if you wanted a Mountain Dew and Snickers from shoddy vending machines that have not been serviced since the 90s. Other than to raise prices.

And of course, there was the curious stares from onlookers waiting to post bail for...well...whoever they were here to post bail for. After what you went through, you reckoned yourself as someone who knew what it was like in county. Therefore, you were not here to judge.

Instead, you wanted your wallet. Because damnit, that Mountain Dew and Snickers sounded absolutely ah-maaaaaa-ziiing right about now.

Following the sign, you made your way to a window that was inconveniently located around a corner.

“Um...Hi,” you said giving the bored looking clerk a slight wave of your hand. “This is kind of awkward, but when I was arrested, they took my ID. I only have this.”

You slid the bracelet with your mugshot underneath the small hole beneath the bullet-proof glass.

Several minutes passed before you were given back that bracelet like it was some kind of ID or memento. “We don’t have anything for you.”

“Pardon?” you questioned in the politest tone you could muster. “When I was arrested, I had my purse--”

“Right here!” A familiar voice finished.

Oh, thank fuck!

Turning around, you saw Mokuba holding your purse up. Without really thinking, you threw your arms around him and buried your head in his chest. For a brief, fleeting moment, you could pretend that he was Seto. Yet, the feel of his chest, type of clothing, and his scent was different.

Mokuba awkwardly rubbed your back before you decided it was good and proper to pull away.

“Hey there, jailbird,” Mokuba greeted. “I got a copy of your mugshot. I think that’s going to be Seto’s new wallpaper.”

Not finding the joke funny, you just kept quiet and followed the signs to the elevator.

“How do you get out?” he asked an officer who had stepped on the elevator with you both. After glancing at the badges, you relaxed slightly since it was only a cop, and not someone from the sheriff department.

“L for Leave,” the officer replied.

“Makes sense,” Mokuba replied while pressing the corresponding button. Just as the elevator started moving, Mokuba glanced over at you.

“Seto likes ‘em dangerous. So stop looking like someone stabbed your puppy.” Mokuba continued, much to your chagrin.

When he got no reply, he added, “Unless the puppy-stabbing is some American jailhouse initiation
that I have yet to see on the Wire?”

“I need a cigarette.” you replied flatly.

“You do not smoke,” Mokuba pointed out.

“I need a cigarette,” you stated, more firmly this time.

When the elevator doors opened, Mokuba was the first one out. You were momentarily lost in thought until you heard him say your name.

“Huh?”

“I said ‘I know you picked up some nasty habits on the inside, but I’m seriously all out of cigarettes’,” Mokuba repeated.

He was a goddamn liar and you both knew it. However, you were too tired, sore, emotionally and physically exhausted to argue.

In true Kaiba fashion, Mokuba had a blatant disregard for traffic laws and parking regulations. The first thing you saw when stepping outside in the cloudy October afternoon was Mokuba’s red Prius with the hazard lights on.

You did not care to think about how Mokuba had to have gone back to Chicago to retrieve his car. The fact was that seeing it and how much he could say ‘Screw the rules, my brother is Seto Kaiba’ brought a tear to your eye because of how normal it was.

In fact, you found yourself trying not to cry. You quickly looked out the window before Mokuba could notice.

“Since it’s a bit too late to drive back to Chicago, I got a hotel for the night. Separate rooms,” Mokuba said.

“Okay.”

“Are you alright?”

“Just tired.” you replied.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes!” you snapped.

The rest of the drive was spent in silence. Thankfully, Mokuba made a left-hand turn and drove down a street that you recognized was the same street you had been circling on Friday. You let out a sigh of relief when he passed by the Hyatt and pulled into the parking structure of the Intercontinental instead.

Mokuba was not the same height as Seto, but if you caught him from the very corner of your eye, you could almost pretend that the younger Kaiba was his brother.

You knew that it was really messed up, but for a brief moment, you could almost pretend that you were back at the Waldorf Astoria with Seto. That had been less than a month ago, but it still seemed like it was exactly a year and seven months ago. Approximately, anyway.

When you got to your room, you were faced with the reality that you were alone.
In spite of the fact you showered, you felt too dirty to sit on the white duvet. That made you opt to sit down in one of the chairs and just marvel at how clean the room was.

Your eyes fell on your suitcase Mokuba must have had someone pack for you. Once again, you thought back to the Waldorf Astoria and having sex with Seto after manipulating your end of your bond at the restaurant.

Then you thought of how his entire face lit up when he was being playful with you right before you took that bath together… then immediately fucked.

That had been the weekend before he took you to New York City.

You did not want to remember the fight or how your room had gotten broken into. Rather, you were content to relive how magnificent he was one the dancefloor and everything that had transpired that night…

Seto Kaiba was more addictive than heroin.

You were pulled from your reverie by a knock at the door. Slowly, you crept to the door and looked out the peephole.

Mokuba.

You were becoming far too paranoid.

Maybe you did have PTSD.

Like any uncomfortable thought, you quickly dismissed it, and opened the door for Mokuba to enter.

“Oh good, you got your suitcase,” he said upon seeing the familiar looking suitcase, considering all the times he had to arrange for the thing to be transported.

“Anyway, you weren’t replying to your texts, so I thought I would check on you.”

“Oh,” you said, suddenly remembering you even had a phone. “I forgot to charge it.”

“Start acting like a Millennial,” Mokuba jokingly chided. “Anyway, we’re going to meet with your attorney for dinner and discuss your case further. We’re going to meet at the hotel restaurant at seven o’clock. So you can like, freshen up or whatever.”

You looked and probably smelled terrible, you could take the hint.

When Mokuba left, you decided to first take a good and proper shower. The body wash, shampoo, and conditioner the hotel provided was not the best, but it would do. Once you were clean, you decided to do the Japanese thing and immediately took a bath to relax your tired muscles.

As much as you wanted to collapse on the bed and sleep through winter, you made yourself look as presentable as possible. When you went to finally plug your phone in to charge, you paused at the mini fridge.

“Fuck it,” you muttered before looking at the selections.

At this point, you were no longer concerned with feeling guilty about money as you made yourself a hotel room cocktail. You did not have much to work with, so you had to mix the Jack Daniels shooter with the Crown Royal shooter.
The results were… acceptable.

You were feeling tipsy by the time your alarm went off, signaling that you needed to leave to not be late—as you usually were. More than likely, you were still hella dehydrated and needed to sober up just a little bit.

Once again, you opened the mini fridge, grabbed the Fiji water, a packet of peanut M&Ms, then grabbed your hotel key and cell phone. You finished chugging the water on the elevator, but were not able to finish the M&Ms, so they went into your purse for later.

Mokuba led you to the table the attorney Ben-Something was at. The moment you were handed menus, you wanted to throw it; of course there was nothing vegetarian-friendly! Well, assuming you did not want a salad.

Which you did not. You just got out of jail, for goodness sake!

“I just want liquor and dessert,” you announced to the waitress.

Unlike when you tried that with Seto, there was actually no argument. Instead, your attorney cautioned you about being sober for the hearing.

After ordering, there was a few glorious moments of silence where you were able to drink in the quiet. Unfortunately, all good things had to come to an end, and when you were asked to hold back your hair, you immediately felt your blood pressure rise several points.

“Is that where you were shot?” Ben-Something inquired.

“Where the bullet grazed me?” you corrected without thinking. “Yeah.”

“It looks like an old wound…”

“I heal fast…?” you offered with a shrug while continuing to drink heavily.

The attorney looked pensive for a moment. “Put some gauze over it in the morning.”

A few minutes of polite conversation and suggestion on proper attire were had before Ben-Something finally began discussing your defense. There was a discussion on the district attorney possibly attempting to take a deal on lesser charges in exchange for a guilty plea.

“But that is bullshit,” your attorney concluded. “There is no case. Witnesses, cell phone footage, and hell, grainy security cameras speak to that.”

“Cell phone footage?” Mokuba questioned.

Ben-Something took a long swig from his beer before answering. “There were a few videos posted on some Instagram and Snapchat stories last night.”

Another drink. “Youtube too,” he added. “Everything has since been deleted, but I managed to snag a copy and had transcripts made.”

Mokuba visibly relaxed at that and took a long drink. You, however, were still chewing your dessert and just took another spoonful.

Fuck it.

Other than being provided with further instructions, there was not much else to discuss. When you
got back to your room, two bodyguards did a quick walkthrough inspection of the room before leaving you alone. You spent the rest of your night drinking, drunkenly raiding the mini fridge for snacks, and watching stupid videos on your phone.

You only had a mild sense of dizziness the next morning but would not call it a hangover. Rather, you attributed any malaise to your nerves. According to your phone, a Starbucks was within walking distance, but you were not even in the mood for that.

Also according to your phone, the forecast temperature of the day was a high of 73 degrees Fahrenheit and a low of 45 degrees. With your professional as fuuuuck outfit, you really wished the temperature was more autumnal, but what were you really going to do about it?

By the time you had gotten through security and took a seat on the courtroom bench, you were regretting your decision not to get coffee. It had to be at least 10:00am.

You looked at your phone and saw it was only 8:25am.

Gawd, this courtroom was depressing. The last time you were in court (excluding yesterday), you did not have bulletproof glass separating the gallery. Then again, you thought you were being charged with a felony. That had to be different than traffic court.

And it was not even 9:00am. If you were going to be charged with a felony, you at least wanted caffeine.

Too early for anything.

You leaned towards Mokuba. “If I give you my debit card, could you get me…”

“I am not getting you Starbucks,” Mokuba said flatly.

“…Caffeine?” you finished, desperately.

“All rise!” a bailiff announced.

Really?

Goddamnit.

Slowly, you stood.

It was too early for this.

You looked over to the bench to see a woman with short brown hair take a seat.

“Branch Seventeen of the Milwaukee County Court System is now in session with the Honorable Judge Caroline Stark presiding. Please be seated,” the bailiff finished.

“Good morning, ladies and gentleman,” the judge greeted before leaning forward to listen to what the clerk (or court reporter -- you watched plenty of Law and Order, but none of the day-to-day bureaucratic bullshit was television-worthy). So ultimately, you had no idea who that individual was.

Your attorney was buzzed into the court itself and spoke briefly to the judge before catching your eye and taking a seat in what you assumed was the defense table. Next to you, Mokuba muttered a few choice words in Japanese before he pulled out his phone. From the corner of your eye, you could see Seto’s name on the screen.
Desperately, you wanted to reach for the phone and cry to Seto, but before he could even answer the phone, you heard your name being called.

“...versus the State of Wisconsin in case 2015CF001336.”

Okay.

First of all, you low-key wanted to find out whoever 2015CF001337 was and choke a bitch because you were so close to having a cool case number.

Second of all, you did not appreciate how awkward it was to be buzzed in and take a seat next to your attorney. Knowing that Seto could hear everything just made it worse. You hated how most eyes turned towards you the moment you stood up to make your way to the door that separated the gallery from the courtroom itself.

The bailiff glanced over at you and then hit a button that buzzed you in. Quickly, you opened the door and sat down next to your attorney. Judge Stark wasted no time in swearing you in before proceeding.

“I note that you are being represented by Mr. Ben Van Severin, Miss--”

Van Severen! So that was his name!

“--and Christina Abbott is here on behalf of the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office. For the record, this is in regards to cases 2015CF001336 for one count of Unlawful Restraint, a Class H felony, and one count of Resisting Arrest, a Class A misdemeanor, and for case 2015CM008907 for one count of Disorderly Conduct, a Class B misdemeanor.”

You were thankful that you were sitting because right now, you were about to be charged with two felonies and a misdemeanor. At the moment, you were not too confident in your ability to remain standing.

“First, we would like to thank you for hearing us right away this morning. We appreciate Your Honor’s courtesy,” your attorney began.

Shit! Once again, you had missed a lot of what was being said because you were zoning out.

“I would like to start by requesting to file a motion for dismissal. While the arresting sheriffs are not here to testify on their behalf, there were several videos recorded of the incident my client was involved in. One of my aides sent the video files to both the State and the Court this morning after receiving verification that the evidence presented to the Court is--”

From the corner of your eye, you could see the District Attorney going on the laptop she had set up. She leaned forward and propped her hand on her chin as if she were watching a video.

Because that was probably exactly what she was doing.

“The State would like to issue an objection against the video footage. The individuals who obtained the footage cannot be cross-examined, rendering the footage hearsay.”

“An objection on the count of hearsay,” the judge said. “Does the defense have any arguments supporting issuing the video footage into evidence?”

While you knew that you should be paying very close attention to all of this, you could not help but feel extremely bored at the exchange. This was nothing like Law & Order!
Could it be… you were lied to?

You mentally gasped and pictured yourself clutching pearls you were not even wearing. Why, that was almost as absurd as someone going on the Internet and telling lies, you thought flippantly in a Southern Belle accent.

Before you could laugh at your own thought, you quickly covered up your smirk by biting your cheeks. You moved your hand to your mouth and pretended to dainty clear your throat while berating yourself for not taking this more seriously.

What could you say? Inappropriate humor was your coping mechanism.

“--Of course discretion is up to the Court. However, I would like to emphasize that admission of the videos into evidence would save the Court substantial time while simplifying a matter without the need for witnesses. In addition, it will save my client further undue hardship and mental anguish,” you attorney argued.

Were they still on the topic of the video evidence? Honestly, you had no idea why you were having such a difficult time paying attention. But maybe if Mokuba got you some coffee like you asked this would not be a problem.

Besides, you thought petulantly to yourself. If he was not so desperate to get his dick wet, you would never have been in that alley alone in the first place! So really, the least he could do was get you some coffee

After paying all your legal fees, of course. You did have a bullet graze you, after all. Which, if you used enough mental gymnastics, was basically the same thing as getting shot.

You noticed that your attorney stopped speaking and experienced a moment of panic. When no one seemed to be paying attention to what you were doing, you relaxed a little. At least you did not miss a question.

“In this case, the Court will overrule the objection and allow the video footage into evidence,” the judge stated. She leaned forward to speak to the court reporter. From what the microphone could pick up, you assumed that the judge was asking for her to make transcripts of the footage.

Meanwhile, the District Attorney was engrossed in whatever she was doing on the laptop. Based upon her posture and the fact that her eyes moved only slightly, you guessed she was rewatching the aforementioned video footage.

“If I may your honor,” Ben Van-Something (you seriously forgot again) continued. “With the admission of the video footage into Court record, I would like to file a motion for dismissal on the grounds of insufficient evidence to support the charges before the defendant.”

“After reviewing the evidence and gaining an understanding of the defendant’s background and military service, the State is in agreement with dismissing both felony counts. However, it is apparent that the defendant was behaving in a manner that would warrant the Disorderly Conduct charge to remain.”

Your brain was slowly trying to process the information. So the felonies were being dismissed, but the misdemeanor was going to stick…?

The District Attorney continued. “As previously mentioned, I am aware of the defendant’s military service and any reaction on the defendant’s behalf may have been triggered by what she experienced during her tenure in the military. The State is willing to defer prosecution in exchange for the
defendant going through veteran’s treatment court.”

While Judge Stark deliberated, your attorney quickly put everything into layman’s terms for you. Basically, the state of Wisconsin was not going to press any felony charges. In exchange for not being charged with a misdemeanor, you would have to abide by the terms and conditions of the court designed specifically for veterans.

Your attorney stopped explaining the nuances of veteran’s court when the judge called your name. “You’re still very young and have not only served your country honorably, but have received your Bachelors degree and went on to graduate school. You have no violations on your record and no reason for me to believe your adverse reaction would be repeated.”

Did that mean no veterans court? you wondered, daring to feel hopeful.

“You served this country willingly, dutifully, and honorably. I have seen one veteran after another broken and downtrodden. Some go on to offend again, others do not. It would be remiss of me to see a young lady with a bright future ahead of her to be haunted by not only criminal charges, but the effects combat has had on her. I believe that in order for justice to be served, you need to take care of yourself. Therefore, I will allow prosecution to be deferred so long as you complete the program assigned to you by veteran’s court.”

Well, this was bullshit.

You were not foolish enough to say you were perfectly functional and your military service was nontraumatic. At the same time, your parents were dead. Being a twenty-something motherless daughter also fucked with you. Were you going to go to orphan’s court too? Join the Dead Mom’s Club? Get a subscription for Daddy Issues? Or maybe there was a special court just for people with a more successful sibling than them.

Seriously, this was bullshit.

Before accepting the deal, you conferred with your attorney who affirmed that this was the best offer since it meant not having any charges formally filed.

Ben-Something and the judge were working out a calendar when you began to wonder if Seto put the court up to this. You were tempted to turn around and give a death-glare to Mokuba just for that, but reminded yourself to behave.

Once your next court date was determined, you were given a pink slip of paper with the day on it. Sometime in January. You would deal with it later, you decided as you stood up and placed the paper in your wallet.

Four men in suits were already standing near Mokuba when you were buzzed out of the courtroom and into the gallery. Bodyguards, you thought. Cute.

With Mokuba and your attorney talking amongst themselves while you made your way through the courthouse, you thought you noticed a flash of white across your peripheral. Turning your head to see if it was in fact Bakura, you could only see a marble pillar that stood next to a staircase.

On the way back to Mokuba’s car, you were tempted to ask about Seto, but (barely) managed to restrain yourself until you shut the door to his car.

“Did Seto say anything?” you asked.

Mokuba had been reaching to put the key into the ignition and upon hearing your questions, he
immediately pursed his lips together. He looked almost repentent you thought.

Instead of replying, Mokuba reached for the binder that he threw in the backseat that morning. After producing a manila envelope, he wordlessly handed it to you.

“What is this?” you asked, just staring down at the envelope like it was poison.

“Just open it,” Mokuba answered.

You wanted to snap back that he should just tell you. Instead of arguing, you looked at the contents. It was obvious that the Millennium Necklace was in the envelope and you unceremoniously dropped it in your purse without so much as glancing at it.

Next came a booklet you had seen many times and recognized it as a United States Passport book.

“Is this real?!” you demanded the moment you opened it and saw it had your name, date of birth, and much to your chagrin, the same photo from your Driver’s License.

“The consulate could not get a new picture, so they just used the one from the Department of Transportation,” Mokuba explained.

The date issued was for the current date. Which meant that someone hand delivered a fresh passport to you that morning. You supposed that was fortunate since you would have otherwise inadvertently perjured yourself when you stated you did not have a passport. Since you had never left the country (asides from your deployment), you had no need for a passport. Unless…

You pulled out the last item from the envelope. Airline tickets with your name on it. The first flight was dated for today. In fact, it would be departing from Milwaukee General International Airport in four hours. According to the ticket, you would be in the air for about one hour and twenty minutes before arriving in Detroit.

You looked at the next ticket. From there, you would be flying to Los Angeles, and then-- you nearly dropped the ticket. To make sure you read correctly, you blinked before re-reading.

From Los Angeles, you would be flying to Narita Airport.
“NRT is the code for the airport in Tokyo, right?” you asked, just to be sure.

“It’s the closest airport to Domino...Which is kind of a ward of Tokyo,” Mokuba explained.

“Oh,” was all you could say. Without another word, you handed the passport and tickets back to Mokuba.

“I have class,” you explained. “I can’t just drop out in the middle of the semester. Not with midterms coming up. Plus, I can’t go gallivanting to Japan. Not with Halloween a little over a week away.”

It was the most responsible thing you have uttered in a long while and hated yourself for it. Still, you just could not take any more time from your school work without penalty. There was also your Research Assistant position to consider.

“You don’t want to see Seto for his birthday?” Mokuba asked, dodging what you just said. He had that wide-eyed innocent expression to his face as he placed both passport and tickets back in your lap before starting up the engine.

“Obviously I do!” you said “There’s no return ticket though and like I said, I have class...”

As a younger sibling, you recognized Mokuba’s expression: it was the one you made when you felt guilty, but were about to act adorable to get out of trouble while you’re older and thus less adorable sibling got in trouble.

“Not anymore!” Mokuba announced without taking his eyes from the road. You tried to form adequate words to express your emotions.

Seizing the moment of shocked silence, Mokuba held up a hand to signal you to keep quiet. “Before you get angry: I want to remind you that I am driving. You wouldn’t want me to crash the car, would you? Besides, you need to be a model citizen until you finish veteran’s court, so that eliminates any potential violence you might be contemplating right now.”

You promptly closed your mouth and took several deep breaths before reaching for your phone. “Am I expelled...?” you asked while impatiently waiting for your inbox to load as soon as you logged into your school email.

“No. But Seto and I thought you should take a leave of absence. Just for a semester while you focus on everything that’s going on right now.”

You set your phone on your lap and told yourself to take a few additional deep, slow, and most of
all, calming breaths. You were ready court ordered to go to therapy sessions after being arrested once this week. There was no need for Mokuba to turn the car around and drop you back off at jail.

You were not going back there.

Finally, when you felt a little calmer, you spoke.

“So, you were talking about what to do with me behind my back?”

“No.” Mokuba must have picked up on your tone because he sounded defensive. “Seto confided in me that he was worried about you. I care about my brother, and if my brother cares about you, I’m going to try to help Seto any way I can. So, I paid a lot of money to get your school to allow you to take what grade you have now for your classes instead of an incomplete. You should find more information in your email in the next few days. You can return next semester like normal.”

Seeing this side of Mokuba unnerved you enough to avert your eyes from his steely gaze that was pointedly fixed on the road. They should not have gone behind your back and did that without consulting you first, you reasoned. You were in jail for a few days and more than likely, this decision was made during your confinement in the Milwaukee County Jail. Still, they should have asked or told you instead of springing this on you.

It felt like your life was being dictated by everyone except for you. Your naturally rebellious nature resented that immensely, but you had to consider the intent behind their actions. What they did was rude and presumptuous, but it was done out of kindness.

Yet, you could not deny that you were burnt out. Taking some time to get your head back on straight would be welcome.

In spite of the good intention, you still felt completely powerless. In a way, the Kaiba brothers were trying to keep you on a leash, which was akin to another type of jailhouse. Righteous indignation burned at the pit in your belly, but you just could not bring yourself to fight back.

Fuck it.

Well you came up with something to say, you looked out the window and watched the cityscape as Mokuba drove. Finally, you managed to murmur a quick apology before thanking Mokuba.

“You’re welcome,” Mokuba replied. He was silent for several moments before tone became warmer and friendlier. You preferred this Mokuba.

“Anyway, according to your itinerary, you should be arriving in Japan the evening of the twenty-second. Since this is technically my birthday present to him, make sure you keep it on the down-low. No Wonder Twin Power or Jedi Force Bond voodoo until you jump out of a cake or whatever… Just don’t tell me about it okay?”

You had an older brother, you knew where Mokuba was coming from in terms of not wanting to hear about his brother's sex life.

“Jedi Force Bond?” you repeated, eager to change the topic in hopes that putting Mokuba in a better mood would in turn, improve your own. “I didn’t know you knew about the Star Wars extended universe~!”

The next few minutes were spent discussing the nuances of the Star Wars universe and various theories regarding the upcoming movie. Mokuba pulled into a valet parking and turned his flashers on. A black sedan pulled behind Mokuba’s. You recognized one
of the suits got out of the driver’s seat.

“Alright, I’m leaving you in Isono’s capable hands. He’ll be accompanying you back to Japan. Your luggage is already in the car,” Mokuba said before rolling down the window. Figuring the conversation was not meant for you to hear, you got out of the car and quickly remembered something rather important.

With a pivot, you hurried back to Mokuba’s car.

“Am I still getting my stipend?” you asked. Based upon Mokuba’s expression, he clearly thought you had a fairy godmother or a hidden money tree you were keeping secret.

“I work as a Research Assistant,” you explained. “I get a stipend and it’s how I pay silly things like bills and buy groceries…”

“Oh. Ugh…Just a second,” Mokuba said after a moment of consideration. Once he had a checkbook and pen in hand, he gave the pen a dramatic twirl before writing.

Finished, Mokuba tore the check out from the checkbook, he handed it over you. The cool and arrogant way he said, “This should be more than enough” was oddly reminiscent of Seto’s mannerisms. That did not suit Mokuba well at all. Also you are now expecting a fairly large check from the benevolent of billionaire brothers.

It was five-thousand dollars. You were expecting a little bit more. You reread the check just to be sure.

Good enough, you thought. It was tax-free money and might be able to last you until the end of January when the spring semester would begin. If it came down to it, you might just hit up Craigslist find a job as a server in a restaurant for a couple of months.

You saluted Mokuba with the check and turned towards the black sedan. From there, you waited awkwardly next to it until Isono fixed you with a quizzical stare.

At least you assumed it to be quizzical; you could not exactly see the man’s expression through his sunglasses.

“I…” you began, searching for something to say. “Was not sure if we were taking this car.”

“I make it a point to leave cars I have no intention of driving idling,” Isono replied tersely.

Wow, talk about rude.

“It’s also locked,” you added.

“Hrn.”

Upon hearing the doors unlock, you climbed into the car. Honestly, you had no idea if Isono locked the car or not. You seemingly rolled a Natural 20 on your IRL bluff check because Isono did not question you. Just as you were buckling your seatbelt, a thought occurred to you.

“We have a few hours before the flight is scheduled to leave, so I was hoping that we could make a few stops…”

Isono was adamant that you had to be to the airport well over an hour prior to boarding the flight to Detroit. You, an intellectual, were skeptical about why he was so worried. After all, how crowded
could the airport--in Milwaukee of all places--be?

Honestly, you had been prepared to eat your own words. When you arrived at the check-in counter and saw only two people ahead of you in line, you glanced triumphantly over your shoulder with a shit-eating grin. You had even insisted on taking apart all your luggage as soon as the car was parked. While kneeling on the concrete in the airport parking garage, getting a carry-on bag together. Throughout that, Isono had given you nothing but grief and attempted to rush you. And for what? You were now stuck being bored in an unpopulated airport.

Overall, it took less than thirty minutes from the time you reached the check-in counter to the moment you were putting your shoes back on when you got through TSA security. That included having your passport checked!

“After flying privately, going through the TSA makes me feel like a pleb,” you complained while you waited for you electronics to finish scanning. You weren't really sure why you were complaining, it just felt right. Complaining while in line waiting to go through TSA or the DMV went hand-in-hand--just like peanut butter and jelly, really

“That means commoner,” you added just to be condescending. It was petty, but after Isono practically freaking out on you, pettiness seemed appropriate.

“For whatever reason, Kaiba-sama would be upset if the plane were intercepted en route to our destination. Flying commercial lowers this possibility,” Isono replied in Japanese. “Besides, this should feel normal to you seeing as you only flew privately en route to New York.”

“I know that you’re mad about needing to take off your sunglasses to get through security, but you really should not take out your anger on me,” you fired back.

Honestly, you had no idea where Isono began to dislike you. Maybe it was the door incident. Or maybe he just did not like the way you looked. He also might not like almost-felons you thought sardonically. You glanced over at an analog clock that was hanging by a sign that said Recombobulation Area.

You wrinkled your nose at the sign. Was that supposed to be funny? While you would not admit to it, you would have found the sign endearing yet adorable (for Wisconsin anyway) a few days ago. Had circumstances been different you almost certainly would have posted a photo of it on Instagram or took a Snap of it. Now, it was all the more reason to get out of this hellhole state.

Your carry-on items were finally sent down the conveyer belt and you hastily put the items back in your bag. Once you had your phone, you double-checked to make sure that the analog clock was correct.

“We still have over thirty minutes before we start boarding,” you said to Isono. You pointed to the gift shop, a Starbucks, and some place that looked like a bar. “If you need me, I will be in either one of those places. Let’s be real with ourselves though; I’m going to go to Starbucks, get a coffee, then go to the bar and order a few shots to spike my latte Then I am going to drunkenly waste my money on buying your boss a bunch of overpriced souvenirs.”

The idea of spiking your coffee before the flight sounded absolutely delightful. You were glad you thought of it; not only were you a visionary, but a goddamn genius.

“Do you even know where the gate is?”

“Yeah,” you replied. You checked your ticket. “D44. We’re in concourse D and since the only thing
behind us is security, I assume I should just keep walking until I find gate forty-four.”

Isono was not amused. In spite of you insisting no one would bother screwing with you when it meant getting involved with the TSA, he insisted on following you to Starbucks. As an optimist, you had a feeling that your flight would be delayed to the point where straight-up driving to Detroit would be better than flying. So, you really had no idea why Isono was being so neurotic about hurrying up just to wait.

“The flight is going to be delayed, just watch.” you said once you were handed your Pumpkin Spiced Latte.

“I really don’t understand why you keep insisting such.”

“Because it’s United,” you answered without looking back at your bodyguard. With your latte in hand, you were on your way to the bar. You had an experiment to conduct and coffee to spike! After telling a bemused bartender your idea, you finally glanced over your shoulder at Isono

“Do you want a shot?”

“No.”

“Can I order you to do a shot?” you tried again.

“No.”

“He is no fun,” you told the bartender in a stage whisper.

“Is that a bodyguard? Are you some kind of celebrity?” the bartender asked.

“You could say that…I am kind of a big deal...In Iceland.” You lied since you knew you were never going to set foot in Wisconsin ever again...Once Halloween (and veteran’s court) were over with, of course. You decided that it might be best to lie about your destination just to err on the side of caution.

“Let me hear you speak Icelandic...Or whatever. I think that is what it is called.”

“I hate the entire state of Wisconsin and I hope Aaron Rodgers breaks his shoulder---” You began in Japanese since it was the only other language you really could speak confidently on the fly. You saw something from the corner of your eye and stopped. “Wait...is that pumpkin spice vodka?”

“That’s for the basic bitches--”

“Two shots of the pumpkin spice vodka and one shot of the Rumchata!” you interrupted, pointedly ignoring the fact that the bartender just called you basic. You were willing to let that slide for a delicious alcoholic beverage. Because you were a bad bitch and only basic bitches got mad at being called basic.

Once your now spiked coffee was in hand, Isono told you in no uncertain terms, you would be going to the gate. You realized that you might have pushed your luck a little too far and decided to just listen to the man. By the time you got to the gate, you noticed the line forming already. Since you only had a carry-on you were planning to stow under your seat, you honestly saw no point in waiting in line to board the plane only to wait in another line while people tried to get their luggage in the overhead compartment, then wait again to get to your seat.

No thanks, you decided as you pivoted on your heel. You were going to pass on that one and hang
out in the gift shop for a little bit.

Once inside, the shirts caught your attention. In spite of his height, Seto was still rather lithe, so you guessed he wore a Medium. You examined a few shirts and were debating between the two prices when you caught sight of Isono from your peripheral.

“It’s for your boss’ birthday,” you explained. You quickly decided on one of the shirts and took it off the display case before heading to the cash register. On the way, you impulsively grabbed a few shot glasses. Novelty shot glasses were always useful.

While waiting for your transaction to process, you took a look at your ticket to double-check the takeoff time and blinked down at it before pocketing it. It was still strange seeing the words First-Class written next to Seat Type.

Just as you were handed your receipt, you overheard a last call for your flight. Isono practically dragged you to the gate despite your complaints about him making you spill more of your coffee than you were really comfortable with. That was extremely expensive—even for airport standards!

“We’re First-Class, Isono!” you insisted. “They won’t leave without us.”

Despite your cries of protest, he ignored you.

The gate was still very much open by the time you were showing the agent your boarding pass. You were offered help with your carry-on, but just waved it off since you were planning on digging through it to find activities to do. You were going to ignore the shit out of the safety brief anyway.

You did just that too. During the safety briefing, you were reading about the various amenities offered by first-class passengers for United airlines. You frowned down at seeing you still had to pay for Wi-Fi. You knew United sucked, but you did not know the extent of it until that moment. Chances were good that your bags were now en route to Brussels instead of Tokyo. Or maybe they will get lost at one of your layover flights.

Speaking of your next flight...

You looked at your other tickets According to your itinerary, you had a forty-eight minute layover in Detroit before your flight departed for Los Angeles.

From there, you had well over four hours to navigate LAX and (thankfully) change airlines. From there, you would be in the air for eleven hours and forty-five minutes before landing in Japan. You estimated it would take about an hour to get through customs. Then, assuming Seto would be at the airport, you would be with him again.

If you were doing the math correctly, you had about seventeen more hours to go until you were in Seto’s arms once more. Assuming you did not miss a flight due to delays, but seventeen hours seemed like a manageable timeframe. You looked at the digital clock on your seat’s display screen. It had only been three minutes since the last time you checked.

This was going to be a very long seventeen hours, you decided. To remain positive, you decided to change that seventeen hours to only sixteen hours and fifty-seven more minutes.

Since this flight was only an hour and fifteen minutes, you decided that you were just going to drink. To justify this, you told yourself that you could just sleep it off on the way to LAX and thus, help pass the time. With a mock salute at Isono, you began to enjoy your (three shots of alcohol, three shots of espresso, extra flavor of pumpkin) Pumpkin Spice Latte.
To your utter delight, you also discovered that first-class passenger also received free alcohol. If things went your way, the next sixteen hours and fifty-five hours for going to be relatively easy.

Unfortunately, the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. Your easy layover in Detroit turned into an hour delay. This was United, you told yourself. As soon as you and Isono found out about the delay, you glanced at him and nodded sagely.

“I predicted this.”

Unfortunately, the layover meant you were now drunk and unable to sleep in the United Airlines’ first-class lounge. The delay made you worried about how you were supposed to navigate LAX and make it to your connecting flight.

As you waited for your phone to download the map of LAX, your hand went towards your temple where the bullet grazed you. You should be thankful for how fast you were healing, but the scab not only hurt, but itched like crazy. It was now like you had to consciously tell yourself not to pick at it.

The map loading was a welcome distraction. Apparently, you had to go from terminal 4 to the International Terminal and you frowned as you attempted to concentrate. According to the map, there was a shuttle that went from 1, 2, and 3, the international terminal to 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

That...that made no sense to you! It also meant you had to ride the shuttle the entire way until you got to the International Terminal.

Shiiiiiiit….

“What if we miss our flight?” you slurred to Isono, who had been attempting to give you water and food since you landed in Detroit. Sure, you tripped while walking up the jet bridge, but that was only because you were trying to look out the window. You wanted to see what Detroit looked like! Isono could not honestly be holding that against you….

As a reply, Isono handed you a Snickers bar.

“Is this because we’re not going anywhere for awhile?” you questioned.

Isono ignored you and instead, pretended to take a call. At least you were pretty sure he was pretending to take a call. You had badgered him about wanting to see the light tunnel the airport was famous for since arriving at the lounge. Honestly, you would have just gone yourself, but at the moment, you doubted your ability to navigate back to the right lounge. So you decided to stay put and eat your Snickers bar.

Maybe if you pulled up a video of the light tunnel, it would be like being there. After all, you were already in Detroit. So essentially, you were viewing the light tunnel while in Detroit. Which was the same thing, anyway. You nodded to yourself since it made sense to you.

Somehow, while eating this Snickers, you ended up with a second one and a beer on top of that. Funny how that worked.

Free booze and snacks always made disappointment easier to handle. And you were going to feel disappointed about the light tunnel until Los Angeles because you had that right! This was America, after all.

“How did you manage…?” you heard Isono before he promptly took the beer from your grasp.
“It's like a superpower,” you explained, once again feeling sagely and wise. “The liquor just appears more often than not. I never ask for it. It’s as if the beer chose me. Like the wand chooses the wizard at Ollivander's. That’s the wand shop in Harry Potter....”

Isono completely ignored whatever you were babbling about and took a long swig from the beer for himself.

“Accio: beer--Oh heeeey! That’s the spirit!” you cheered once you saw Isono drinking. Your true superpower was getting the most professional and stoic of men to drink. You had to be honest with yourself: you had no idea whether you should be extremely proud or ashamed of yourself.

Still nursing his stolen beer, Isono instructed you to stay right there before he wandered off once again. When he came back, he handed you some tea and a pill packet. “It’s green tea and good for sobering up,” he explained to you. “I noticed your head was bothering you, so I got something for that.”

“I shouldn’t take medication when drunk,” you said just to pay lip service to actually following that guideline. You took the two pills from the small package and washed it down with the tea that Isono offered.

You took another sip from the tea before you stared down at the liquid suspiciously. You were not a tea expert, but you had a general suspicion that green tea should not taste so floury and herbal. This tea tasted suspiciously herbal. Still, you did not think Isono would lie to you and give you sleepytime tea, so you continued to drink it until your flight to LAX was called.

The plane was not even at cruising altitude before you were sound asleep. Isono just heaved a sigh of relief that you fell for the rouse. He had given you chamomile tea. He had noticed your head was bothering you, but only bought Advil PM to help with that.

You were not mad about being extremely drowsy, really you weren’t. After all, you knew that you would not want to deal with yourself--especially when drunk. However, you were irritated the moment you woke up and within five minutes of landing, your nerves were akr6 fried. It was all thanks to Los Angeles International Airport.

Your flight attendant had assured both you and Isono that the gate at your connecting flight was given a head’s up. You worked in retail once (and only once) and very much doubted that the flight attendant even spoke to anyone at the gate for your connecting flight. Isono shared the same skepticism because it did not stop either of you from practically sprinting across the airport.

At the gate, you fished out your Driver’s License, Passport, and boarding pass. The gate attended just chuckled before handing you back your identification cards. You were mildly offended; you did not know what to expect when boarding an international flight!

As you boarded the plane, you took note of a few things. One, the first class cabin seemed brighter, happier, and certainly more spacious then any Coach flight you have been on. The walls (or whatever they were called) were more pristine and overall, the lighting was more flattering to your skin. Or maybe you were getting a little carried away with that one. Still, the seat was a seat, a flatbed, home movie theater, and dining table. Plus, you were in your very own space and allowed complete privacy. Overall, it was slightly like flying in your boyfriend’s private jet, but not quite. Just as you were seated, you were asked what you wanted to drink.

After sparing a quick glance to your left, right, then over your shoulder, you decided to throw caution to the wind. “A mojito, you said. Regardless of whether or not you had it before, you figured
it sounded complicated and were curious if you were able to get one. To your surprise, a drink that resembled a mojito was presented to you, mint and all. It also kept reappearing throughout the flight with no questions asked. Part of you wondered if it was because you ordered in perfect Japanese or if it was just what the rich and beautiful could expect when flying first-class. They even had the mint leaf every time!

When it came time for your meal, it was severed on china with a linen napkin, and on tablecloth. Curiously enough, the meal was described a vegetarian-Hindu. You were not sure what that meant, but after scrutinizing the ingredients, you decided it contained nothing you were against eating.

After sparing a few glances at what other passengers were getting, you were content with your meal...even if you picked around a few vegetables you did not like. When you were asked if you wanted dessert, you logically knew you should not get dessert because carbs were evil. However, you freakin’ LOVED dessert and happily agreed to it. You would work on your impulse-control another day, but today was not that day.

You eventually decided to turn your seat into the flatbed and were stopped by a flight attendant who did the work for you. While the bed was being made up, you decided to head to the restrooms. You had expected the bathrooms in the first class cabin to be luxurious and maybe to have Sephora products or something. Much to your disappointment, the bathroom was not too much different from any economy bathroom.

While washing your hands, you pulled back your hair slightly and examined the scab. While in your drug-induced sleep, you had been fucking with it on the flight to Los Angeles. Crusted blood and angry red lines surrounding the wound was evidence of that. Carefully, you dabbed the area with some soap and water. Hopefully the infection would clear up before Seto saw it, but knowing your luck, you were just going to pick at it some more.

With a sigh, you fixed your hair a little, splashed some water on your face, and decided to head back to your seat. By the time you returned, there was a bed set up complete with a duvet and extra pillow. The past few days had been a complete whirlwind that left you emotionally and physically exhausted. Your attempt to remain awake while watching a movie proved futile. When you awoke, it was to the announcement stating that duty-free services would be discontinuing and the final meal service would be coming around.

Groggily, you reached for the menu and opted for a latte and beignet before staring out the window in a daze. The latte came with a cinnamon stick for stirring, which you found somewhat charming. However, the lack of flavor to your latte was certainly not charming. Instead of looking like an uncultured American by asking for creamer, you decided to just order a black coffee, some milk and mix the two beverages together.

By the time you were finished with your half-assed latte-au-lait, you had to use the restroom once more. When you got back, your bed was gone and sitting on the table was a customs form along with a pen. Your name, nationality, date of birth, passport number, and number of family members were easy enough. For now, you left the address blank and went to the Yes/No questions.

No, you did not have any prohibited items. Millennium Items hopefully wouldn't count. You were not sure on the free allowance, but checked No anyway. (Like hell you were going to pay extra taxes on items you bought in the airports). Then you moved on to the Quarantine Form. That was easy enough.

Once you were content with your forms, you stood up and handed them to Isono, requesting he fill in the address information. Once he was finished, he gave the paper back to you.
For the remainder of the flight, you concentrated on not letting your excitement slip through the bond lest you ruin the surprise for Seto. Still, you could not help but countdown every second prior to the aircraft making its final ascent to Tokyo.

You demonstrated restraint you didn't know you possessed while disembarking from the plane. When you were finally able to look for Seto, you were disappointed to see no sign of him. Either Isono saw you scanning the crowd of people or sensed your disappointment. “Kaiba-sama will be at work until later today,” he explained.

“How late does he work?” you asked.

“The earliest Kaiba-sama will arrive home will be around seven o’clock.”

“Oh…”

Currently, it was a little after noon local time. Which meant that you had a long day ahead of you.

“Would it be possible to see him for lunch break?”

“Doubtful.”

So much for only waiting seventeen hours, you thought bitterly.

You followed Isono to drop off your quarantine form and were quickly ushered through. However, Isono left your side when you had to stand in the line designated for immigration. There, you showed your passport and dismemberment form. Much to your chagrin, your picture was taken (you looked terrible) and you had to have both index fingers scanned before you were allowed to proceed to customs.

From the look of other travelers, they were expecting their bags. With as little time as you were allotted between flights, you were doubtful your bag would even be arriving. However, the moment you saw what appeared to be one of your suitcases, you grabbed it. Then the second one, and finally, the third bag.

After trial and error, you were able to stack your bags so you could easily pull them behind you before proceeding to customs.

Your form said you had nothing to declare, so you followed the appropriate line and hoped your obsession for cute outfits would not mean you had to pay extra taxes. You only had your debit card, still had Mokuba’s check, and were doubtful on your actual bank account balance since checking it made you nervous. So you avoided checking it to avoid unnecessary anxiety. Self-care was important.

A customs officer looked at your passport then up at you. “Where are you from?”

“America,” you replied.

“How long are you staying?”

Honestly, you had no idea. However, you did know that you were allowed to be in the country for ninety days on a normal visa. So to be on the safe side, you just said two months.

“Why is your eye color different from your passport?”

You were able to lie to the cops about a head injury, but were not certain it would work under the
scrutinizing gaze of the Customs Agent. Not without some medical form.

“I’m wearing colored lenses,” you lied. “Do you want me to take them out…?” Touching your eye, you imitated taking out your contact, but were just waved through by the suddenly squeamish customs agent. You heaved a sigh of relief that actually worked.

Then you had to wait to get your fingerprints and photo taken to be stored in a database...

After well over an hour, you received a stamp on your passport (you insisted) and officially set foot on Japanese soil. Figuratively of course. Isono was leaning against a pillar looking on his smartphone. Taking a closer look at the pillar, you noticed that it was a painting of Mount Fuji with ‘Welcome to Japan’ written in English, katakana, and what you assumed to be Hangul. To your delight, another KaibaCorp employee was standing next to a cart for your luggage!

When Isono noticed your approach, he said something to the employee before nodding at you to indicate that you should follow him. You were thankful either an intern or a first year employee (you were not too familiar with Japanese labor customs, and therefore, could not speculate) was responsible for your luggage because dragging it across Narita would have sucked. You had been struggling to get this far with the luggage you did have.

It had been a great arm workout, but was a complete pain, nonetheless.

After what seemed like at least three-fourths of a mile--though since you were now on the metric system that was a little under one and a fourth kilometers if you were doing your math correctly. (You weren’t too confident about that). Anyway, after a long walk, you were finally placed in one of the VIP style cars you only saw in various anime.

You expected Seto to live in a condo similar to the one in Chicago, or at least in a cave far away from humanity. However, as the urban setting became more apparent, you were curious on whether or not you were actually going to KaibaCorp.

Eventually, the car got off the freeway and it was still obvious you were in a very urban, albeit residential area. The car pulled up to a gate and once you looked out the window, you felt your jaw become unhinged.

“You have got to be shitting me,” you muttered while staring up at the two-story white mansion that loomed before you. Instead of being secluded, it was as if the city had been built around this massive estate. For some reason, it reminded you of the time you watched a guided tour of the White House on Youtube.

Tokyo did not have a lot of space, so you wondered how Seto could afford to live in a house so massive. You pondered this as you bags were taken and you were shown into the double doors. As soon as you walked inside, you couldn’t help but feel uneasy upon setting gaze upon the grand staircase and cross hall.

Everything was beautiful, ornate, polished, yet sterile. Overall, it was a stark contrast from what you're used to from both Seto and Mokuba. Their condo was cleaned far more often than you would ever consider cleaning l--well anything. It was obvious that this beautiful mansion was a far-cry from a home.

You were interrupted from your thoughts by the sight of a grotesque man approaching you. He introduced himself as Daimon and as he spoke, you could not help but feel your nose twitch at his obvious gingivitis and how peculiarly the fleshy mass of his face moved as he spoke.
“While you wait for your room to be prepared, it would by my honor to give you a tour of the property,” he said in unaccented English. Well he spoke courteously, you did not have much of a choice in the matter.

Daimon led you from the foyer down the corridor. While doing so, he began to speak about when the estate was built and the circumstances that led to the construction. Apparently, the manor was first constructed in the early 1910s by Soichiro Kaiba. KaibaCorp rose to prominence shortly before World War I, when Japan had allied itself with Great Britain.

Like everywhere else in the world, Japan experienced an economic depression somewhere between the 1920s and the 1930s. During that time, looters attempted to burn the home down. Soichiro Kaiba was caught in the library when the blaze started and died shortly afterwards. The burned sections of the home were able to be repaired due to the military prowess of Japan during that time.

“Since every military needs a supplier, you could say business was booming,” Daimon explained.

Immediately following the death of Soichiro Kaiba, his son Ichirou took over the company and was furious when his son, Keiichirou defected to America, where he helped aid the Manhattan Project.

“Of course, Ichirou Kaiba was not angry for very long since he died in Nagasaki. He fled Tokyo in the beginning of August 1945 and I suppose he thought Nagasaki was far safer. Ironic, really, especially when you consider that his son helped construct the bomb that led to his death. Ichiro’s second son, Jirou attempted to take over KaibaCorp, but after Japan surrendered on August 14, 1945, Keiichirou was able to return home. With help from the occupying Americans, he established control of the company. Which was quite fortunate, as fostering friendship with the Americans allowed KaibaCorp to run relatively unrestricted when the post-war sanctions imposed. That is why the headquarters are located in Chicago. Another story for another time, I suppose. Being as you are a resident, you might already be familiar with the role the city played during the war…”

You really weren’t, but hummed appropriately in response to it while attempting to look knowledgeable. The tour continued and you made a mental note to look at Wikipedia later.

With how reverently Daimon spoke about the famous people who stayed or dined at the manor throughout the years (along with each intimate detail of the estate), it was obvious that Damion was committed to his job. You decided that his attention to detail was sign that he had been bored and giving you a tour gave him something to do. This was just a nice elderly man, you told yourself, feeling a pang of guilt for judging his rather unsightly appearance. Your mother had taught you to behave better than that….

Your attention refocused on what Daimon was saying when he mentioned Gozoboru. Seto never spoke about his (adopted) father, but you were curious about him nonetheless. There was a brief scandal when he assumed power over the company. Damian relayed how Gozoboru had been fascinated with combining technology with the latest weapons. With the post-war economic miracle, Gozaburo was responsible for various technological breakthroughs. As this was being explained to you, Daimon tilted his head to indicate a secure set of doors.

“Kaiba-sama, however, was the one responsible for creating his own personal lab when he renovated the manor and updated the decor in the mid-2000s.”

You nodded appropriately to that. The decor was somewhat modern, but still accommodated the empire style architecture. More than anything, you were surprised at how many people and events that the manor hosted. After all, Seto was the type to sequester himself away from the world of the living to focus on his work, latest project, or obsession. However, KaibaCorp may not be so successful if Seto was a hermit. With that said, Damion continued and explained the various behind-
the-scene staff that were responsible for running the estate.

Initially you had thought: Literally two people live here. How much work could it be to employ some part-time staff? You were quickly schooled on how much work it took to keep up the entire estate. You were still somewhat surprised since you assumed there would be live-in staff, but you were informed that no one lived on the premise with the exception of Seto, and, of course, Mokuba.

Once the tour was concluded, you were shown a door. Upon opening it, you saw it was a guest room.

“Um….” you began.

“My apologies,” Daimon said in the most unapologetic (yet still polite) tone imaginable. “However, there is no room in Kaiba-sama’s closet for your belongings. I also would be remiss to make assumption on where Kaiba-sama would like you to stay.”

Was Daimon judging you for how much you packed? While you might still pack the same amount, the fact remained that you had not packed your suitcases. Therefore, you were not responsible for all the stuff you had.

Seto had been fine with you occupying his space in Chicago. So you seriously doubted that he would care if you had your (extremely over packed) stuff in his room here. Besides, if he had a problem with it, he could just deal with it because none of this had been your idea in the first place. At the moment, you decided to channel the wisdom of Sun Tzu and pick your battles.

Instead, you retreated to the room you hoped would only be temporary (or at serve as an oversized closet). The room itself was not too different from what you would expect in a typical hotel room; minimum decorations, a television, small desk, a Western table for meals, and a Western style queen-sized bed. Instead of mints or a bottle of wine waiting you, there was a note sitting in the middle of the bed.

One of the housekeepers wrote in English. Although the handwriting was in print as opposed to cursive, the author’s English was pretty good. The note just welcomed you and apologized for not having everything in order for your arrival. Then it went on to explain that some of your clothing was wrinkled from the long flight and was in the process of being ironed. You put the note down and ran a hand through your hair, taking note not to touch your scab.

Ever since landing in Tokyo, you had to devote some concentration to keeping a mental wall in place to ensure your bond to Seto would not give away the fact you were in Japan. To you, it was like concentrating on pretending to be sober when you were clearly not. You were slightly ashamed at how good you had gotten at that over the years, so you’re current until exercise was not that difficult.

With nothing but time on your hands, you decided to look over the room. First, you opened a few cabinets and drawers to see most of your stuff was already hung up or put away. After taking some time to get acquainted with the location of your belongings, you looked at the clock on a bedside table and felt more than a little peeved to see that it was only 16:19.

Then again….

“One minute before Four Twenty,” you, the shining example of what it meant to be a mature adult, said in a sing-song voice. Of course, the clock was in the 24-hour format instead of the 12-hour format, but it lifted your spirits nonetheless.

Either way, it meant that you had to wait nearly three hours before Seto got home. That was
assuming he would be getting home relatively early too. With little preamble, you flopped on the bed in a comically morose fashion while your brain processed recent events.

It was currently the afternoon of Wednesday, October 21st and a little over 72 hours ago, you were severely dehydrated and injured in the Milwaukee County Jail. Without thinking, your hand strayed to your hairline where you still had the scab to show that you had been injured. Ever since the attack, your body’s ability to heal both astonished and frightened you. Any normal person would be experiencing a great deal of discomfort from the injury, but the scab only itched like a sonuvabitch.

You counted how many days it had been since the attack. Forty-four. A month and a half ago, you went to the Field Museum since you drunkenly agreed to see an exhibit with a friend that ended up bailing. Pure coincidence had changed your life forever. Events or happening so quickly that you were sure that once this was all over, you were going to be an emotional wreck.

In a way, you were thankful that you were being court-ordered to attend counseling. While you were confident that you could not unleash all of the emotional baggage from these events on the therapist without looking crazy, it would help when the trauma of the past forty-four days caught up with you.

A knock on the door caused you to jump, but you quickly answered it after you chided yourself for your startle response. It was only the housekeeper with the rest of your clothes. She busied herself with putting your stuff away while you pretended to look over your electronics.

You had almost plugged in your laptop into the outlet before immediately pulling the cord away and examining it. There was a hole for three pins just like at home. Instead of causing your laptop to fry with carelessness, you plugged in your phone charger since your phone was off. To your surprise, your phone began to charge. The outlets worked here. Which meant one problem was solved. The next was currency and the fact you were not able to use your cell phone.

Currently, you only had your American credit cards, debit card, the check Mokuba gave you (that you really should have cashed prior to going to the airport, but you forgot), and a few stray bills and coins. Even if you found a place that accepted plastic, you forgot to put a travel notice on your bank account. That made it so you could not purchase the pocket Wifi you saw in the airport. (Technically, you could, but your bank account would be immediately frozen). There was also no way you were going to pay for data when you had no international plan. So for now, you would have to go without your phone.

In spite of the fact you were a Millennial and really wanted to document your trip to Japan on every social media platform, you figured it would be far more prudent to not announce to the world where you were. It was difficult, but you felt like a goddamn champion for this decision.

Once the housekeeper left, you felt your body relax a little bit. After wearing the same clothes for nearly a day, you decided it was about time to change and check out the bathroom. Most of the mansion was very Western, but to your utter delight, this bathrooms was not. The toilet and washing area were in the same room, but there was a door that separated the two areas.

There was also a Japanese toilet. You were in Japan, which meant that any toilet was technically a Japanese toilet. However, you were looking at a Japanese toilet! The one with all the features!

“I always wanted to see one of these,” you said reverently to the porcelain throne while inspecting the various buttons.

For now, you turned the seat warmers on and cranked the temperature up as far as it would go. Initially, you were annoyed that none of the bidet or washing settings were working until you noticed the sensor and supposed that you needed to sit for it to work. Upon actually sitting on the toilet, you
quickly stood up since the warmth was reminiscent of the times you used the bathroom right after someone else.

Next, you decided that you would run a bath. There was a glass door leading to the spacious shower with a tub in the same area. It allowed one to rinse off before soaking in the tub. Eager for a chance to get clean, you began to prepare a bath. Once you were nice and clean, you planned to take an extremely long time for hair, makeup, and thinking up a clever line to say to Seto once got home.

Seto was annoyed

He had not been able to talk to you prior to the events in Milwaukee. Initially, he had called when you got out of jail and while he was disappointed to find out your phone was off, Seto understood. After all, you had just been released from custody and had to prepare for a court appearance the next day. He had only spoke to Mokuba the day of your court appearance and just hearing your voice over the microphone provided to you in the courtroom was enough to put his mind at ease.

You had sounded utterly drained, but that was to be expected. What mattered to Seto was that you were still alive and relatively unharmed.

He had then attempted contacting you several times throughout the day on Tuesday. You had not even replied to an email. Seto hated using social media for personal purposes, but he eventually resigned himself to sending you a message on Facebook via his official page. That message had yet to be read. You were the type to leave someone on read, but we're not the type to completely ignore an unread message. This was what began to worry him.

While Seto knew you would be furious with the invasion of privacy, he decided it was to your benefit to find out as much as he could. Your Internet activity and recent cell phone pings were nearly non-existent. More concerning was the fact that your cell phone had pinged a tower in Detroit, Los Angeles, Chicago, Juneau, and Dayton.

Seto expressed his concerns to Mokuba, who, remained unconcerned. According to him, you were either sleeping, in the bathroom, or being moody. There was no way that Mokuba would cover for you in order to lie to him, so Seto took his brother at his word. That was especially disconcerting since it meant you were sleeping far more often than normal or were just not around.

“When was the last time you physically saw her?” Seto questioned. He had turned a routine phone call into a full-on interrogation

“I picked her up from jail and brought her to court the next morning. I even brought her to Isono following her hearing Monday morning.” Mokuba replied smoothly. “Isono said last saw her a couple of hours ago.”

“So you did not see her with your own eyes?”

“I am busy. That's why we have Isono.”

“Then what is her excuse for perpetually keeping her phone off?” Seto asked. He felt an icy sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach when he heard Mokuba sigh in exasperation

“Do you trust me, Seto?”

Seto furrowed his brows. Mokuba already knew the answer to that question.

When Mokuba did not get an immediate answer, he continued. “Long story short: your birthday is
coming up and since I can’t be there, I wanted to prepare a--”

“I don’t see how that is relevant to the discussion at hand,” Seto interrupted.

“It’s all for the greater good,” Mokuba replied cryptically. “Look. It’s nearly six o’clock your time. I promise you that if you get off of work and go home, you can talk to your girlfriend.”

Seto felt himself losing his patience at his little brother. At the moment, Seto was not sure if he was furious at Mokuba for being so cryptic or you for being reclusive when Seto made several attempts check on your well-being in an attempt of being a good boyfriend to you.

“Since it is nearly 4 o’clock in the morning there, you can just wake her up and put her on the phone,” Seto countered.

There was a slight silence before Mokuba spoke again.

“Oh...I might’ve dozed off there. Listen, I am going to go back to bed. I’ll call you when I get to the office. Why don’t you just head home? I’m sure you can unwind and you can talk to your girlfriend.”

With an over exaggerated yawn, Mokuba hung up the phone and more than likely turned the device off for good measure.

Seto sat stewing for several minutes before he called for his driver to take him home. There was no way he would get any meaningful work done.

When a housekeeper came to tell you that Seto was on his way home, you went into full-on panic mode. You thought you had well over an hour to get ready and wanted to try contouring! Instead, you decided to go with your more basic makeup routine.

Although he had not known what he had been expecting, Seto felt his ire grow and be observe that there was nothing unusual about the manor. With each step up the walkway, Seto felt his irritation grow further to the point he was sure he would take his anger out on an unsuspecting member of his staff. Slamming the door behind him rattled the chandelier, but did nothing to calm Seto the storm he felt brewing in his head.

Luckily for his staff, there was no one in sight.

Yet, he felt a curious mix of excitement, nervous, and amusement. The emotions came to him so suddenly that it was as if you had suddenly teleported from Chicago to his home. Seto did not have long to ponder this. Like a phantom, you appeared at the top of the staircase and were casually making your way down the steps.

“Welcome home, Seto,” you greeted mischievously. Seto was already at the bottom of the steps by the time you reached the last few, making it so that you were at the same height at him.

“Would you like dinner?” You began to undo the buttons of his blazer. There was no one around, so Seto did nothing to stop you.

“A bath…?”

He watched as you finished with the buttons of his blazer and went on to loosening his tie.

“Or perhaps me first…?”
Seto gripped his hands around your waist and pulled you towards him before he lowered his head, lips meeting yours in a heated kiss. Your arms wrapped around his neck, hands making their way through his hair before moving down to rest at his sides. You clung to him while his hands traced over your back as he pressed his mouth more firmly against yours to deepen the kiss. Seto felt a spike of pure desire shoot through him and he had to admit to himself that this was truly what it felt like to come home.

Suddenly, Seto pulled back and met your confused stare impassively.

“Dinner, he answered, planting a chase kiss on your forehead.
Chapter 36

The shower, sustenance, sex reference was perhaps a little bit too obscure for Seto, you decided. You opened your mouth to try to let Seto know that was not exactly what you meant. However, you figured that he had a long day and if he really needed something for dinner…

Your thoughts were cut off when Seto grabbed your waist and hoisted you in the air before you were bridal style in his arms. The way he gazed at you with such intensity thrilled you enough to make the trip from Milwaukee to Tokyo entirely worth your while.

Unconcerned with your weight, Seto carried you up the grand staircase and down the hallway you came from. Each time Seto shifted you into a more comfortable position, he ran a hand across your curves as if to confirm that you were real.

You had not tried to enter Seto’s room and were surprised to see that he opened the door without a key. If you had known the room would be unlocked, you would have at least peeked inside.

Unlike his home in Chicago, Seto’s room had an air of sterility to that went with the rest of the manor. In Chicago, the Kaiba brothers did not employ a full staff (rather, they used a service), so it was expected that any living space would be nothing short of immaculate here.

Navy drapes perfectly matched the blankets on the massive bed. Everything else seemed to be color coordinated from the bedspread. While the design was aesthetically pleasing, it made you feel like you were peeking into a Better Home and Gardens magazine. Except in real life and with the random dragon decoration. Except in real life and with the random dragon decoration. Also, for the first time in your life, you understood cats; you too, had an overwhelming need to knock something over for the sheer and utter hell of it. The only thing out of place were a few pieces of paper and headphones near an impressive computer setup in the corner.

You blinked at the computer for just one moment. You knew he had a laptop he used for work stuff around the home as well as his home office. So was this...a personal computer, perhaps?

You did not have long to contemplate this as Seto chose to throw you unceremoniously down on the bed. Seto took this moment to relish the sight of you in his bed, slowly undressing you with his eyes.

When Seto was on you again, you could feel his hardness pressing into you. With a slight whimper, you rocked your hips undulating into his and elicited a delicious groan from him. Seto quickly moved off of you to toss his undone tie aside before practically tearing open the buckle of his belt.

You were all too happy to sit back up in order to help Seto with the task of ridding himself of that stuffy suit. However, the moment, he was just in his boxers, Seto took your shoulders and gently pushed you back onto the mattress

“Not yet,” Seto chided quietly. “Patience.”

Was Seto Kaiba, of all people, lecturing you on patience?

Before you could try to come up with a retort, Seto leaned over the bed and press his lips against yours. Propping himself up on one hand. Seto used his other to gently glide his fingers over your cheeks and move downwards to trace right under your collarbone. Just as Seto grinded into you, he moved his tongue into your mouth and over yours. This was the kind of kiss you could get lost in and the disappointment was palpable when Seto finally pulled away from you.

Instead of removing his boxers, Seto reached up underneath the skirt of your dress. Without his eyes
leaving yours, he hooked his thumbs underneath the waistband of your panties and slowly pulled them down. Getting the hint, you hiked up your dress just a little higher so he could easily part your legs.

Your breath hitched the moment Seto’s tongue was against your clit. Unsure of where to put your hands, you gripped the expensive duvet you were laying on. Your core muscles began to grow tense with each fondle. Seto’s tongue, alternating between slow and quick, each producing a new and unique sensation. While he experimented with your body’s reactions to him, Seto lazily reached underneath your bra and flicked your one nipple before lightly pinching it.

Oh fuuuck....

He then took one of your hands in his and urged your hands upwards to squeeze and knead your own breasts. His mouth then returned to your clit with a renewed effort. The moment he began to use those long slender fingers of his, your mind almost went blank.

With sensation from both your breasts and all the amazing things Seto was doing with his tongue, it was hard to remember that you should be doing something for his pleasure. Looking over at him, your gaze immediately met his. Everything about his expression spoke plainly, saying that he was absolutely loving the effect he had on you while he watched as you fondled yourself.

However, you knew your body enough to know when you needed something else to fully get off. Either your body stopped reacting how he wanted, you made a weird facial expression, or Seto could read your mind because within seconds, he was instructing you to take off the rest of your dress. By the time your dress was pooled around you on the floor, Seto was working on your bra straps and practically tossed your bra aside before walking you back to the bed and caressing a breast.

You were thankful that Seto did not immediately try to kiss you. Tasting yourself was just something that seemed a little on the gross side. Instead, your hand went to Seto’s boxers and were very happy to see that he was still hard. His own ministrations stopped when your hand began to stroke his cock, spreading any precum with your thumb around the tip of his head. He let out a slow deep breath while you continued with your slow, unhurried movements.

Finally, he had enough and moved your hand off him before standing up and removing his boxers. Impatiently, he grabbed your waist to align your hips. By now, you were feeling similarly impatient, moving your hips to guide him to the right position. At last, Seto thrust up and drove himself deep inside of you. Immediately, you grabbed on to Seto’s back as a breathy sound of pleasure escaped from your lips. It did not take long before you felt your own climax building until all at once, your muscles clenched and your body tingled as you thrust your own hips into his to increase your own pleasure.

Seto paused for just a moment for your body to relax. With a nod from you, his hips once more pistoned forward and you arched your own to match the rhythm he set. All that mattered in this moment was becoming acquainted with the smell, taste, and touch of one another. Moments like this-or rather, just fucking each other always felt so right. Once more, you made eye contact with him and wondered if he was thinking the same thing. You hoped he was.

Unexpectedly, Seto grabbed your leg and threw it over his shoulder. The new angle allowed him to hit deeper so you were on the border between pleasure and pain. Seto’s orgasm was marked by a throaty groan, his eyes closed and facial muscles contracting as you felt his release inside you.

Immediately concerned for the expensive comforter, you located his bathroom to clean yourself up. When you got back, Seto was still naked and resting comfortably against his pillows. Upon seeing you, he motioned for you to join him.
Not one to deny post-cotial cuddles with your boyfriend, you quickly obliged. Nuzzling against his bare chest, you looked up to see his eyes had lowered to a half-mast shape while he regarded you.

Several moments passed while Seto seemed to be thinking before the grumble of his stomach disrupted his thought process. Gazing up at the ceiling, Seto ran a hand through his hair before he let it fall to his side. “Dinner?”

“You’re hungry?” You questioned, feigning hurt. “I thought you already had enough to eat.”

It took him a moment to get what you meant. There was a silence and immediately, you cringed at yourself. Worried that you just made things a little awkward, you glanced up at Seto, only to see him appear amused by your lewd comment.

Kissing the top of your head, Seto answered before getting out of bed to locate his hastily discarded clothing. “You’re better than what I would normally eat on a weekday night.”

“I’m more of a weekend special,” you concluded, first grabbing your panties followed by your bra.

“I’m going to have dinner made for the both of us. Over dinner, I would like you to tell me what happened since I left Chicago.”

“That sounds fair,” you agreed while you slipped into your dress for the second time in a little over an hour. Meanwhile, Seto on his phone, speaking to the kitchen staff downstairs.

Just as you were zipping up your dress, Seto caught your eye. “Do you have any preferences for food?”

“No meat, no mushrooms, no fish, nothing with mayonnaise…” you said, rattling off your extremely specific food preferences. Eventually, Seto grew impatient with relaying the message and just handed you the phone.

“I am starting to believe you subside on Starbucks, alcohol, and spite,” Seto said once he relinquished control of his phone.

Yeah...that was an accurate assessment. Still on the phone, you followed Seto out of his room and down the long hallway that led to the dining room.

Thinking about Seto’s comment on your diet, you concluded that if you could subside off of anything, it would be white rum just as long as you got the black magic fuckery out of your life. White rum, but no black magic, you thought. That sounded about right. IT was fairly catchy too, like it could be a title for something.

Somewhere between the kitchen and dining room, Seto stopped in front of a liquor cabinet. This was different than the wet bar you saw during the grand tour of the estate. You surmised that this was Seto’s personal dry bar.

You watched Seto add a few ice cubes to a glass before staring at the selection of alcohol in front of him. You figured this is what you must look like whenever you open the refrigerator before just staring blankly in it. Finally, he selected a whiskey and poured some into the glass.

After he took a long sip. You did not miss the way he swirled the liquid in his mouth like it was Listerine.

“I thought you said I was better than what you normally eat on a Wednesday night,” you chided with feigned offense.
“If I recall, you did the same thing after giving me a blowjob,” Seto replied.

“Only because I was going to kiss you,” you countered.

As if to prove a point, Seto bent down and kissed you. The potent taste of whiskey and tobacco mixed with the feeling of settled lips on you was strong and it left you feeling dazed. When Seto handed you his glass, you just blinked in confusion.

“Try some,” he instructed. “This is Japanese whiskey. American rye and bourbon is sweeter as a result from the distilling process, Japanese whiskey, however, is less peated and thus, less smokey than their Irish counterparts.”

“Sure doesn’t smell that way,” you replied since smelling it again seemed like the high-class thing to do. You took a gulp and hide your grimace as you felt the burn from the whiskey.

“It’s interesting,” you concluded in your attempt just to say something. In all honesty, if Seto said you were drinking Jameson, you would have believed from. It tasted way too much like Jameson.

“You definitely can’t handle straight alcohol,” Seto said. The way he picked up his glass and drank from it without breaking eye contact seemed like a direct challenge to your self-proclaimed party girl status.

“I drink cocktails,” you countered. “Because I am a goddamn lady.”

“Of course,” was Seto’s reply. That did not soothe your pride any.

You looked at the ingredients and felt a little dismayed there were so little mixers. What the fuck was St. Germain anyway? Although slightly intimidated by Seto’s bemused stare, you were determined to try to make something that didn’t scream ‘I like fruity cocktails because I can’t shoot whiskey,’ so you settled on trying to make an Old-Fashioned. After all, it just an orange, a cherry, some sugar, whiskey, and muddling it all together...right?

You took a sip and immediately added some soda to it. The second taste was more familiar to you.

“Just like on Mad Men,” you said, swirling your drink around to look like you knew what you were doing. You pretended that some alcohol did not end up splashing on your hand. Either Seto did not notice or he was pretending not to. “See? Classy.”

“I have never heard of Mad Men, but I suppose I will just have to take your word for it,” Seto said.

With the bond, you now spoke Japanese as fluently as Seto spoke English. However that did not mean he was completely up-to-date on American culture. After all, he still used memes that were from a few years ago, and had no idea what you were talking about when you mentioned what color you thought ‘the dress’ was. In turn, you had several cultural norms and references go completely over your head. In spite of the strangeness of how it began, the learning curve of a new relationship was oddly familiar.

Now that your urge to fuck each other senselessly was out of your system, you were now falling back into normalcy. Your attention soon fell back to Seto, who was paying particular attention to your hairline. Before you could protest, he moved some of your hair aside and traced the outline of your wound.

“It’s not as bad as I initially thought it would be,” he said quietly as if he were talking to himself instead of you.
Of course you were wearing color correcting concealer as well as your heaviest concealer to try to cover it. However, you were not about to let Seto know your makeup hacks.

“We only spent, three days in the hospital after being injured in a bomb ‘explosion,” you said. “This crazy bond we have going on gives us like, Wolverine healing powers.”

“Your makeup is a little bit smudged. It’s around there,” Seto said helpfully, pointing to your injury. Well, goddamn! You pushed a few sections of hair over the area, hoping that would fix the problem.

“So…” you began, trying to think of a different topic of conversation. “...How was work?”

“It was work,” Seto replied. His gaze went to the liquid he was currently swirling in his glass. “It’s about making progress within the company.”

“Oh,’ you replied with your best ‘I am genuinely interested in your corporate greed’ voice. “Progress is always awesome. Much better than stagnation.”

Neither of you enjoyed small talk, so you let what is Lee decided to let the conversation drop. Instead, you just took a long gulp of your drink.

Seto’s phone vibrated twice before he looked down at the device and let you know that dinner was ready. The private dining room was very Western, but you were surprised by the traditional Japanese table set up. Seto was obviously seated at the head of the table. Even without the meat dishes, you knew Seto would be psychotically insistent that he was the one who sat at the head of the table. You sat to his immediate right. There may be some significance of that, but you were not well-versed enough in table etiquette to venture a guess.

Just as you took your seat, the chef appeared, bowed politely and apologized for the lack of variety. After a nervous glance at whatever Seto was about to eat, you replied that everything you had looked delicious. Granted, this were more vegetables than you were used to eating. After all you figured you did not need to have peanut butter and beer for dinner every night.

You decided to do your best to ignore the pungent fishy smell (seriously--vom) and instead focus on the fact you never saw Seto use chopstick before. Ever the showman, Seto gave the chopsticks a theatrical twirl before digging into his food.

Meanwhile, the struggle was real. Eating rice with chopsticks was difficult when you spent your entire life using Western cutlery. Rather than commenting on it, Seto seemingly decided your inability to use chopsticks with the same mastery as him was that night’s entertainment. Your frustration must have been apparent through the bond because Seto eventually put his own chopsticks down before addressing you.

“Instead of making things harder on yourself, use a fork.”

“I’m fine,” you replied at the same time you dropped some of the rice you had finally managed to grab. Seto just watched you struggle for a moment longer before he decided that it was not worth the argument; if you wanted to be stubborn, that was on you.

“What happened after I left Chicago?” Seto asked once you seemed a little more accustomed to using chopsticks. Seto had finished his whiskey and was content to sip at a cup of green tea while you talked.

“I don’t even know where to start... “
“Leaving out the fluff may be a good idea,” Seto said.

“Then I got into the car and Mokuba handed me a plane ticket,” you concluded. You decided to leave out the dreams with the strange bar out of the summary, dismissing it as fluff. You were stoned for the first one, injured, incarcerated, and extremely dehydrated for the second one. So freakishly vivid dreams you actually remembered was not that unusual, in your honest opinion.

“So that is when you turned your phone off,” Seto said.

“Yeah,” you answered. “I didn’t think it would be smart to keep it on just in case someone was able to track it.”

You caught the look on Seto’s face and quickly amended, “Someone who didn’t have my best interest in mind, that is.”

You understood his need to tap into your phone when you were in Milwaukee with Bakura, but if he was still doing it…

“I was trying to get ahold of you for well over twenty-four hours.”

“Sorry,” you mumbled. Seeing how Seto knitted his brows together, it was obvious he had been worried about you. “I would have turned my phone back on when I got to Tokyo, but I don’t have an international data plan...and really can’t afford one.”

“I can get you a pocket Wi-Fi and will give you the passwords to the Wi-Fi here,” Seto said. He glanced down at his cup of teacup and added more water before slowly looking back up at you. “I’m not thrilled with the fact you and Mokuba decided to surprise me like this, but...I am still glad that you’re here.”

Seto’s face softened for just a moment, his lips curled into the slightest hint of a smile. Knowing that you could--even for the briefest moment--make Seto happy always gave you the warm-and-fuzzies, sending a pleasant wave throughout your core.

In spite of the short amount of time you had been apart, you kept forgetting that you could project your emotions to Seto. It created a positive feedback loop; he fed you feelings of adoration and you served them right back at him. It created good vibes all around. And now, you were doing just that.

All you both could do was laugh. Seto’s laugh was a thick rumbling that made your toes curl and wish you could hear it more often.

“It is going to be strange getting acclimated to that again,” Seto said.

“Yeah...Sorry.” It took more mental concentration that it did during the flight here, but you were able to build that mental wall allowing you to feel freely without alerting Seto to your emotional state.

Seto, raised his brows in surprise at the sudden shift in his own emotions. “I did not think you would be able to control it so well.”

“To be honest, I’m not too sure how I do it,” you confessed. “It’s more intent combined with mental imagery...”

That started with trying to make you adore me, you mentally added.

“Interesting…” Seto’s gaze shifted to the left and steepled his fingers if he were in deep thought.
“If that makes sense?” you asked. “I can try to expand on the mental imagery, I guess.”

“It is something I would be interested in testing out,” he replied.

Testing out…?

As in an experiment? As in an experiment for...science?! You were giddy at the mere thought. *Science rules*, you thought to yourself.

“...For now, there’s some logistics to take care of.”

Which was keyword for ‘boring conversation.’ You already wanted to mentally check out and just talk about cool things, like experimental designs.

“I was planning on heading back to the United States on Monday and I will arrange for you coming with me when I leave, of course. However, I will still have to go to work for the remainder of this week,” Seto said. You nodded appropriately since you did not expect him to take off of work. Not when he was...well, Seto freakin’ Kaiba.

“You are welcome to stay here while I am at work, but I don’t think that would be particularly enjoyable for you,” Seto said. He knew you well. Staying in a mansion was pretty dope, but you were suddenly fluent in Japanese and had a capitol city to explore!

“I can arrange for you to receive a tour of KaibaCorp tomorrow morning,” Seto continued. He glanced up at you and studied your facial expression. “Is there a problem?”

“Mornings,” you replied. “Mornings are always a problem.”

Mornings were your eternal rival and your greatest weakness.

“You’ll manage,” Seto said in a tone of voice that suggested he was not entirely sure that he believed himself. “KaibaCorp should keep you entertained for a day or so. Do you happen to have a Visa or MasterCard?”

Wasn’t that standard? At least for Americans, anyway.

“Yeah,” you replied.

“You should be able to access some of your money from an ATM or make purchases at some major retail outlets. If you’re with a bodyguard, I do not think it will be a problem to move about the city while I am at work.”

After listening to Seto, several preconceived notions about Japan were shattered. For one, what kind of major metropolitan city had their rail system shut down at midnight? The earliest the L shut down was 1 o’clock in the morning, with most trains running nonstop.

Seto made no comment about giving you any kind of money, so you assumed that you would have to figure out where to exchange currency if the ATM gave USD instead of yen. You *really* hoped the ATMs gave yen instead of USD.

You had a sinking suspicion that your time in Japan would be the calm before the storm that was waiting for you back home. So you were determined to make the most of this brief peace.
Mornings were rough, but you found yourself wide awake as soon as Seto’s alarm went off. A few moments later, the alarm was silenced and you heard a soft sigh from Seto’s side of the bed.

Jet lag has turned me into a morning person, you thought while Seto snuggled back under the covers. You did the mental math and figured that it was about 3 o’clock in the afternoon at home.

You and Seto ended up having sex one more time last night. However, it had resulted in both of you going to your respective sides of the bed to avoid sleeping on the wet spot. Now, you moved over to Seto, who reached out to put his arm around your middle. He pulled you closer to him, pressing his lips against your cheek, his breath warming your skin.

“You’re so full of shit,” you said into the crook of his neck.

“Mmm….?”

“I said you’re a liar,” you clarified.

“How am I a liar?” Seto’s voice was low and rough from sleep. You liked the way his neck vibrated against you as he spoke.

As a reply, you moved off of your boyfriend, lifted our arms up and clasped your fingers together, stretching. After a series of cracks, sighed in satisfaction. “You lectured me about getting up on time last night. Twice, if I recall correctly.” Which you did.

“... Fifteen more minutes,” Seto said. To show that he would not tolerate any argument from you, he moved his arm away from you before he turned his back to you. Several moments passed and you heard slow, deep breathing from him. Either he had fallen back asleep or was pretending to be asleep to avoid further conversation.

In spite of being awake, you knew that if you stayed in bed, you were going to fall back asleep. To avoid it, you eased out of bed and quietly moved towards the door.

“I’ll be back,” you said to the sleeping figure. When you got no response you added, “Don’t go anywhere.”

You were careful to close the door quietly behind you as you exited Seto’s room. To make life easier for everyone, it was decided to just keep your belongings in the guest room. Part of you suspected that Seto did not want you infringing too much on his personal space. As someone who had been miffed over the fact that Bakura screwed up your Netflix suggestions on your account, you could see why Seto would feel that way.

Stumbling into the bathroom, you went about getting the shower started. You grabbed some towels and once the water was ideal temperature, stepped into the shower.

Just as you put some conditioner in your hair, you heard the door open. Feeling vulnerable (and remembering how Bakura had once walked in on you in the bath), you froze in place; on alert.

Thankfully, Seto’s silhouette was unmistakable through the glass doors. Immediately, you felt yourself relax a little. Seto set a mug of coffee down on the bathroom counter before looking at his own reflection. He touched his jawline and upper lip, which made you think he was debating on whether or not he needed to shave.
“Are you going to be ready to go in about thirty minutes?” he asked.

“Thirty minutes?” you repeated. Some conditioner was about to slide into your eye, so you wiped it away. “Um...no.”

“We’re leaving in thirty-five minutes,” Seto said.

In response, you cupped your hands together and held them underneath the faucet. Once you were holding enough water, you threw your hand over the shower, hoping to get Seto wet.

“I need at least a forty-five minute warning!” you protested. “You know this!”

“Hmmm...” Seto began, touching the spot where his hair was now damp. “Now that I had a shower, I think I’ll go shave.”

“So, we’re leaving in like forty-five minutes?”

“It’s more like thirty-four minutes, Seto replied.

In spite of being wide awake, mornings were still the worst.

Even without Seto’s long strides outpacing you, there was still a need to rush after him. Unlike him, you could not wake up and look as handsome as when you fell asleep. In spiteful of what past partners said, you somehow deteriorated throughout the night and perked back up around noon.

So really, it was not your fault you needed time to get ready in the mornings.

A driver was waiting next to the Nissan VIP style car. The waxing was impeccable, with the rays of early morning sunshine reflecting off the car to once more, remind you that mornings were terrible. Seeing the car left you somewhat disappointed; you wanted to see Seto and Mokuba’s personal collection of badass cars. You knew Seto preferred not driving in Japan (and with his tendency to drive like a typical taxi driver in Chicago, you were sure his countrymen were thankful), but you knew he had to own at least one car. Hopefully you would remember to ask him about it when you got back to the manor that night.

Inside the vehicle, you were surprised to see that it looked like the interior of a limo with roomy leather seats. Underneath the privacy screen, was a flat-screen monitor that looked like it could sync with a phone or laptop. Seto had his phone out and glanced up long enough to watch you buckle your seatbelt. You noted that he was not wearing his.

“Princess Diana died that way,” you said.

“What way?” Seto tiredly asked without looking up from his phone.

You made a display of unbuckling your seatbelt and rebuckling it. “Not wearing a seatbelt,” you replied in case he was a little bit slow on the uptake.

“I don’t allow my employees to drink on the job,” Seto replied offhandedly. He reached forward and took a coffee from the cup holder before taking a long gulp. To your other delight, you noticed a second one next to the coffee that Seto reached for and assumed that was yours. The driver must have purchased them.

Just as you were taking a sip of your own coffee, Seto spoke up. “When my father died, he was wearing a seatbelt.”
That didn’t make sense….Gozaburo had committed suicide-- *Oh!*

Immediately, you swallowed and coughed as the coffee went down the wrong tube. Thankfully, you did not burn your tongue and your clothes escaped getting coffee over them. You began to pound on your upper chest as a way to buy yourself a few moments and think. Seto never spoke about his biological parents. While Seto knew your own parents were deceased, you two had never discussed how each set of parents died.

Although you had no way of knowing about topics that were never discussed, you could not help but feel utterly tactless. To make matters worse, there was now an uncomfortable silence since you had no idea what to say. That made you feel even worse and to add to it, you were now making the death of Seto’s’ father about how embarrassed you felt for inadvertently bringing it up.

“Hey,” Seto said, pulling you out of your self-deprecating thoughts.

Tilting your head to look up at him, Seto leaned forward. His lips met yours in a heated kiss before he pulled away and murmured into your ear. “You’re being quite the brat this morning.”

He must have sensed your emotions through the bond and do the one thing to put you in a better mood, you reasoned. It worked, too. Clever boy.

“If being a brat gets me a kiss like that, I don’t’ think I want to stop.”

“Am I turning you on?” Seto asked with a tone of mock innocence. The asshole was even raising his eyebrows and widening his eyes to go along with the charade.

“Maybe,” you answered.

“Too bad for you,” Seto replied. He reached for his coffee and took a drink while watching your exasperated expression with his lips upturned in a self-satisfied smirk.

Two could play at that game, you decided. The morning traffic was more congested than you expected. You guessed you would not be getting to KaibaCorp anytime soon. With the privacy screen up and Seto almost egging you on, you did not think he would mind fooling around.

You placed your hand on Seto’s thigh. He gave you a knowing look and took no steps to discourage you. This was not the first time he did something like this, you decided. It was best not to think about that.

“I’m sorry for being a brat,” you cooed, trying to sound as sincere as possible. You traced your thumb around his leg. Slowly you began to move your hand up his leg as you projected your intentions though the bond.

Seto watched your hand near the crotch of his pants. The moment he began to feel the effect you were having on him, his brow lowered and you observed how his lips thinned.

Instead of allowing the indulgence, he moved your hand away from him. He remained silent for a few moments before he cleared his throat. “Last night, you mentioned that you were able to block the effects of the bond: How?”

His rejection and sudden words stung. The bond was intrusive and you had figured out a way to quiet your end of it. It was hypocritical to feel hurt over the fact that Seto wanted that as well. Also, you were cognizant of the fact at any time that you manipulated your end of the bond, you were robbing him of free will. You knew all of this, but the hurt over thinking Seto wanted to be away from you was real.
You uncrossed your arms, unaware of the fact you had even crossed them in the first place. To redirect your thoughts, you tried to articulate what you did.

“Okay, so in therapy, a lot of therapists practice Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy,” you began. You think that was what it was called anyway. It was something you had to do following your deployment and prior to your discharge from the military. With your arrest, you would probably have to do it again. “You have to do a lot of work such as journaling to recognize your thoughts and how you think. That’s putting it simply, but it’s kind of like that. I can recognize how I am feeling and put a mental barrier between that emotion and whatever is making you experience the same emotions as me. It was similar to how I was supposed to redirect maladaptive thoughts into more adaptive ones, I guess.”

Of course, that was leaving out your ability to influence Seto’s emotions. While you knew that was unfair, nothing good would come from admitting that to him. You knew it was selfish, but it was difficult to grasp the magnitude of what you were doing. More importantly, you did not know how to stop.

Despite keeping your ability a secret, Seto’s brows knit together. While he chose his words carefully, it did not soften the blow. “The way I feel for you is constructed through this bond. If we were going to be drawn to each other, wanting the other no matter what, I feel it’s important to remember that emotions are chemical reactions, whether real or produced through the bond.”

Seto looked at you, observing your reactions with those intense, perceptive eyes of his before continuing. “I rationalized it, I suppose. After thinking about who I have been with previously and how I felt about them, I began to wonder what love or even infatuation was. Although artificially made, what I feel for you is not much different than those who I have been involved with long-term.”

Now it was your turn to frown. Where exactly was Seto going with this?

“I can accept these motions and will not begrudge you for them. However, being able to sense your presence and experience the same emotions you do feels like a violation.”

You clenched your jaws together while you reflected on what Seto said. Did he really think you were violating him by not controlling every aspect of the bond? What you could control required serious mental effort.

“You feel violated?” You tried to keep your voice steady, but you could not help but feel a mix of hurt and anger beginning to build up in your stomach. You tried to swallow the insult because deep down, you knew the truth. Yet you could not accept the fact that you were the problem since you had intentionally manipulated his emotions on more than one occasion.

“It’s not like I am able to control this either!” you snapped in frustration. “No matter what I do, you’re going to be in my head, knowing what and where I am at all times makes me feel like I can’t have any privacy. It’s not like I asked to have my most private thoughts and emotions on display at all times.”

“How long have you been waiting to say that one?” Seto asked once it was clear you were finished.

“Since you basically accused me of mind-raping you!” you fired back, both hating the fact that you were reacting like this, but unable to stop. “I wanted to let you know that this isn’t a one-way street.”

For a moment, Seto looked almost guilty. However, his face returned to a scowl. “You’ll have to forgive me if that does not give me much comfort,” he said sharply.
“So where does that leave us?” you demanded.

“Trapped.”

“If you really feel that way, I can go home at any time. Then you won’t feel like I’m trapping or violating you.”

“It still will not change things. Even if you are on the other side of the planet, the bond still affects me.”

“Not as severely,” you replied.

“A leash is still a leash, no matter how long.”

“You’re acting like I’m some evil mastermind who came up with all of this while stroking my beard.”

You could see Seto’s reflection in the window. He was staring out the window, his expression so icy, you were surprised whatever he stared at did not immediately freeze over. “If you had bothered to listen, you would have heard me say that I do not hold you responsible.”

“I listened perfectly well,” you fired back. “You said that I am violating you, yet you don’t hold me responsible. Which makes no fucking sense whatsoever.”

“I never said that--”

“But you feel like this bond is some kind of leash--a prison.”

“Don’t you?” Seto challenged.

“Well if I didn’t before, I certainly do now,” you growled before glaring out your own window to avoid looking at Seto. “It must be absolutely terrible to be stuck with me.”

"I'm only Miserable as you. Remember, you're holding the leash for my emotions. I can only imagine it feels like you just won the lottery to make someone like me be forced to desire you, buy you clothes, hire you an attorney, bail you out of jail…”

You barely heard the end of his sentence. Today had started off so well, and now your heart pinched painfully in your chest as you wondered how long Seto' harbored those thoughts about you.I Inspite of closing your eyes to stop yourself from crying, the tears still streamed down your face. You desperately wanted to throw open the car door and get as far away from Seto as possible.

But you were in a foreign country where you did not know anyone, and stuck in traffic. Even if you did hop out of the car, there was nowhere you could go; you left all your belongings at the Kaiba manor. Even if you could go to the consulate to get a new passport issued, it did not change the fact you were being targeted.

You lost any semblance of self-control and began to sob bitterly, crying over your parents dying, your brother’s indifference to you, the absence of friends or anyone you could turn to for help. You cried over enlisting in the military to pay for college and the trauma you experienced during your enlistment. You cried over everything that happened these past few months; all the people who died in the attack, being stuck with a cursed Egyptian artifact and now being a target over that fact. You cried over how helpless you felt over all of it. You cried over the fact that Seto saw you as a gold-digger.
You were not sure how much time passed when you finally calmed yourself down. When you wiped the tears from your eyes, Seto had been watching you from his peripheral. He quickly drew his gaze out the window once more.

“I’m a no one. I’m aware of that, thank you for reminding me of how much lesser I am than you,” your voice was shaky and cracked as you spoke. “I can’t go home because I was targeted and shot over this bullshit. I was then thrown in jail when I literally did nothing wrong but go on a road trip to try to help your kidnapped friend. Then you and Mokuba took away one of the few things I have going for me by taking me out of school.

With how Seto was sitting, you were unable to see his facial expression. You had no doubt he would be wearing a mask of cool stoicism. Still, you continued.

“I’m involved with you because you sought me out. I accepted the fact that there was no way someone like you would ever want to be involved with me! I had no involvement with black magic, Dark Games, or anything Egyptian before this. All I did wrong was be in the wrong place at the wrong time because now I’m being accused of being some mind-rapis—”

“Stop calling yourself that,” Seto hissed. He ran a hand through his hair before sighing loudly. Unbuckling his seatbelt, he moved closer to you.

“I should have chosen my words more carefully. Obviously you had nothing to do with this situation between us. I have told you this before, but you seemingly forgot, so I will tell you again: I was attracted to you on the steps of the Field Museum. I am not the type of man to approach alone woman in public. I doubt that anything would have happened between us without circumstances being as they are. This does not lessen my initial attraction to you.”

As if testing the waters, Seto carefully put an arm around your shoulders. He quickly looked down at you, expecting an adverse reaction. When none came, he reached into the pocket of his suit and produced a handkerchief. You were expecting him to dab at your eyes and quiet literally dry your tears. Feeling a little stunned at the gesture, you realized that with how careful he was being, this was his way of apologizing.

“I’m sorry,” you said since you felt you had no other alternative than to vocalize your own apology. “The stress of everything just caught up to me. It’s been...overwhelming.”

“I know,” Seto replied gently.

Not knowing what else to say, you just squeezed Seto’s leg one more time.

Following the argument, Seto remained sitting close to you for several more minutes. When you finally looked at your reflection to see how bad your makeup looked, Seto moved back to his initial seat. While you redid your makeup, Seto occupied himself with his phone. Both of you seemingly content with the silence.

Without even thinking about it, your hand grazed the wound on your forehead. Seto quickly moved it away and chided you not to pick at the scab.

Sparing a glance at Seto, you noted that he was frowning into his phone while his eyes moved side to side as if he were reading. He clenched the phone tightly in his hand before turning his head to acknowledge that you were staring.

“Yes?”
“Just looking at the scenery,” you quickly replied. To make the lie believable, your gaze momentarily shifted past him to look out his window.

Seto’s attention returned to his screen before he hastily began to type a reply. Each time his fingers landed on his phone screen, you only imagined that Seto was pretending he was stabbing whoever he was responding to.

At least his anger was not directed at you this time, you thought. Of course, you hoped that the events of this commute would not cause Seto to take his frustrations with you out on some poor soul. You chose to believe that Seto was far more professional than that.

Finally, you caught sight of the Kaiba Corp building. When the car was a few blocks away, Seto put away his phone, pinched the bridge of his nose, and exhaled loudly.

“Is everything okay…?” You were cautious to ask.

“I am fine. Just mentally preparing for the day ahead,” Seto replied. There was no more harsh edge to his voice. Just like everyone else in the world, Seto Kaiba just did not like dragging himself to work.

Then again, you were more than a little responsible for his foul mood.

“Again, Seto...I’m sorry. Is there anything I can do to make your day better?”

“I just want you to relax and enjoy the day,” Seto replied.

You decided that was really sweet of Seto until you remembered that your mood impacted his mood. You attempted not to think about what he had said, choosing instead to believe there was no ulterior motive.

Your attention was then back on what Seto was doing. He pulled out a wallet from his pants pocket. It was white leather emblazoned with the KaibaCorp logo. Two black leather straps held the wallet closed, you noted. After seeing Seto’s wallet numerous times, you recognized that he used a different wallet here than he did in the States.

Unaware of the fact you were analyzing his wallet, Seto counted out a few notes before handing you what looked like a stack of 5,000 yen notes.

“Seto…” you began, the feeling of unwarranted and unnecessary guilt began to settle in your chest. You wanted to take the money. What Seto said to you still stung, making it feel like a hollow hole was carved into your heart. Hurt, guilt, and pride ate at you like a corrosive acid, preventing you from just reaching out and taking the offered money.

Seto let out an impatient sigh before his gaze moved from your face to your chest. Since you knew you were going to be accompanying Seto to work, you had dressed conservatively, but with his height, Seto could easily see down your shirt. Before you could realize what he was about to do, Seto had shoved the money down your shirt. By the time you fished the stray bills from your bra, Seto was already laughing to himself and exiting the car that was now parked in front of the building.

Momentarily stunned, you did not move from your spot. It was obvious that Seto was the type to prefer to pretend that fights never happened. As an expert in escapism and ignoring your problems, never discussing what was brought up in the car seemed like a good idea. If Seto really thought you were a gold digger, you reasoned, he would not have handed you a stack of money... right?

For now, you took a moment to take a few deep breaths, gather your thoughts, and count out the
money. Seto had given you ¥100,000. While not an expert on converting US dollars to yen, you figured that was roughly $1,000. The idea of walking around with that much money back home was insane.

With Seto waiting, you got out of the car as well. For now, you put the money in your purse.

“Are you sure…?” you asked once you caught up to him.

“It’s spending money for while you’re here,” Seto said. Seemingly unsure of himself, he added. “That should be more than enough, I trust?”

“It’s like a thousand dollars,” you replied.

With the way Seto was staring at you, a realization began to dawn on you: neither Seto nor Mokuba had any concept of money.

“That is way too much money,” you clarified. “I can’t--”

“You’re making a scene,” Seto pointed out. By now, employees were beginning to notice their company president speaking to a foreigner and taking an interest. “Come on.”

Not wanting to make a further spectacle, you followed Seto inside of KaibaCorp. He swept behind a security desk, knocked on the door once before opening it and going inside. You gave the two security personnel a slight smile. One just nodded their head at you before the two employees leaned closer to one another and began to speculate on who you were and what their boss was doing.

“I know what you’re saying,” you said in Japanese just as the door reopened. Seto motioned for you to come behind the desk.

“I will have someone give you a tour. In the meantime, you’re going to be getting a visitor’s badge. You will have access to the top floor where my office is located. I am sure I do not have to tell you not to just barge in because you’re bored.”

Well *duh*, you thought. You would not want Seto just strutting into your workspace unannounced.

Seto took your silence as acceptance and understanding. “Keep your phone on you, I’ll try to make some time for us to have lunch together,” he said. Not one for public displays of affection, the most you got for a goodbye kiss was him lightly touching the side of your face before he headed to the elevator. Considering that you were now in a more socially conservative country and Seto was now in ‘corporate douchebag’ mode, surrounded by his employees, the gesture was a welcome surprise.

Speaking of corporate douchebags, you noted that some employees were trying to get Seto’s attention.

“...I just watched the video on your keynote speech from the investor’s meeting--I really enjoyed it.”

“Thanks for watching. I’m glad you liked it,” Seto replied in the exact tone you would expect from a company CEO.

“Absolutely!” the employee gushed. “I have a question on a topic you briefly touched on during the presentation…”

*Notice me, Seto-senpai,* you thought dryly while watching Seto’s retreating back.

Seto may be above taking frustrations out on random employees, but such pettiness kept you warm
in the cold Chicago winters. You turned back to the security personnel with a state that suggested you were about to make them your bitch.

“So. About that visitor's badge...”
Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

As you might be able to tell from the dialogue towards the end of the chapter, I kind of wanted to have this out before Christmas. I finished writing most of it on Christmas Eve and had my boyfriend look it over. I still was not happy with everything and finally decided to stay up until 5am to rewrite and proofread. I am freaking determined to finish this fic before the end of winter!

...Remember when I used to whip out a chapter in like, a week? Pepridge Farms remembers and so do I =(  

Seto had refused to take the money back. That meant you had the opportunity to explore Domino and the Tokyo metropolitan without worrying about spending your own money. However, you were not left entirely to your own devices; Seto ensured that you had a security detail. Not bodyguards, you reminded yourself; security detail. They trailed your movements across the city like they were your shadow, staying just far enough away to give you privacy but never let you out of their line of sight, even on a crowded train.

For the first day of your time in Japan, you were energetic during the day and fell asleep that night with relative ease. The next morning, your body seemed to remember that mornings were the worst. Either that, or your super powers develop from jet-lag the previous day wore off. In spite of the rough start, you found yourself following Seto into KaibaCorp and on the elevator. Employees had gotten out of the car to let the company president on, allowing for you and Seto to have the elevator to yourselves.

“I would have thought you would have wanted to explore some more,” Seto commented, putting his keycard against the sensor before he pressed the button for the top floor.

You just grunted an incoherent reply before pressing the button for the 12th floor. You remembered this very well from your tour the previous day.

From behind you, Seto snorted into his coffee. “Figured,” he muttered. After taking a long swallow of his beverage, he continued. “I should fire whoever showed you that room...”

“Probably,” you agreed, too tired to decide whether or not he was kidding. “Though I was told that room’s existence was a sign of diligence, Seto”

“You have to actually be working for that statement to reply.”

“I had a hard few weeks,” you said just as the elevator opened to your floor. Stepping out, you turned to him and before the doors could close you sagely added, “I’m on break.”

Out of all the latest technology being developed at KaibaCorp, your mind was completely blown when you were shown the employee nap room. You imagined nap rooms to exist on the west coast, or just Silicon Valley. Hell, you knew a few people who got to play ping pong, Rock Band, had the ability to drink a beer, or bring their dog to work back home. (It sometimes made you wonder why you were wasting time in grad school when you could be petting dogs and drinking beer at work),
But a nap room? In Japan--a country known to have some longest work hours in the world?

Your boyfriend truly was a kind and generous god. Or so you initially thought. Your newfound admiration had been quickly dashed when you learned the concept of *inemuri*. Of course it meant more than slacking off or catching up on sleep from the night before. However, you latched on to the idea of employees getting to nap like a life preserver. After all the work it took getting out of bed and somewhere on time, taking about an hour nap before getting actual work done seemed like your ideal office environment.

The nap pod was not the most comfortable and you wished that the room was a little warmer. Or they provided pillows or blankets. You knew Seto pretty much hemorrhaged money, he could afford providing this and taking the used pillowcases and blankets to a cleaner. You thought about how feasible this would be, mentally going over how you would pitch the idea to him as you drifted off to sleep without setting the alarm on your phone.

Unaware of how much time had actually passed, you start at the sound of your name. Slowly you became aware of how cold you were along with the fact that some drool had accumulated at the corner of your mouth. Without thinking you wiped the saliva way and but your hand against your leg.

“*I do enjoy you showing off your classier side,*” Seto remarked, putting away the handkerchief he was prepared to hand to you.

“I'm on break,” you answered. You must have slept with your mouth open because your lips were feeling quite chapped. Grabbing your purse you began to route around looking for your chapstick.

“What time is it?” you asked since you were busy putting on chapstick instead of looking at your phone to check the time for yourself.

“Around eleven thirty,” Seto replied without looking at his wristwatch. “I was hoping that we would be able to get some lunch before your reign of terror on Domino began.”

“I can’t be expected to cause enough chaos to tear down the very fabric of the city on an empty stomach, now can I?” you replied.

You were expecting to go up to Seto’s office and order something or even go somewhere for lunch. You were not expecting him to lead you to the cafe you were briefly told about on your tour of the facilities the previous day.

The cafe itself looked cozy with wooden tables that matched the privacy partitions between each table while the seats were a neutral beige. To finish off the look, with a beamed ceiling. The aesthetic made you homesick, reminding you of Lacroix and your home Wicker Park.

The moment Seto’s presence was noticed, you observed one of the employees picking up a tablet to change the TV channel. To your surprise, the channel was changed from the news (which you would have assumed Seto preferred) to what looked like a replay of a soccer game. Japan against Australia, from the looks of it.

Instead of there being a host and, you two sat yourselves. Then again, you figured that even if there was a host, the company president sat wherever he pleased. While you looked over the menu, Seto contented himself with watching the soccer match.

“*Burst-Stream of Destruction is Blue-Mountain coffee and three-thousand yen,*” you said, reading the menu out loud.
“Blue-Mountain coffee is expensive,” Seto pointed out without any inflection in his voice or taking his eyes off the television.

“It’s also coincidentally the attack of the Blue-Eyes White Dragon,” you continued.

“So I have been told.”

You continued reading.

... Hungry Burger Special...Dark Contract with the Berry, Soup Kitchen of the Resistance. And making a combo was to Synchro Summon your favorite menu items.

“Please tell me you did not have creative direction over the menu names.”

“I hire people for that,” Seto replied. He momentarily took his attention from the TV to look at you. “There’s always a creative team as well as a research analysis evaluating time, cost, feasibility, and any adverse reaction prior to the public ever seeing it. Even if I had the time or desire to micromanage something as mundane as menu names, I would never propose having a Kuriboh-shaped anything...Or oden.”

You nodded, a little bit relieved that Seto may not be responsible for any of the tackier things you have witnessed the previous day. The last sentence definitely caught your attention. Seto hated oden? You were going to remember that.

“Do you usually come here for lunch?” you asked once your order was taken.

There was probably an important play because Seto reluctantly turned his attention from the soccer match to address you. “Sometimes,” he said. “Today, I was hoping to take my mind off of the October Effect.”

While Seto wanted to take his mind off of things, you could not help but ask. “What, pray tell, is the October Effect?”

Luckily for you, there was a commercial break, so Seto was not dividing his attention between you and the game. In spite of his position and standoffish personality, it was almost refreshing to see that behind it all, Seto was still a guy.

While you thanked the server who brought out your drinks, Seto hardly glanced his way. Instead, he took a sip of his Blue-Mountain coffee before he answered you.

“Historically, October is a common time for the Dow to crash. There were a number of incidents where the stock market crashed during the month of October,” Seto began. Thanks, as if expecting you to have some knowledge of a bit of trivia.

That was a bit unfair, you thought. You had next to no knowledge of Japanese economics. Hell, the only time in recent history where the American Dow crashed significantly was...

Ohhh.

“Such as two-thousand eight and nineteen...twenty-nine?” you asked, doing your best to remember your American history. Was that when the Great Depression began?

Seto give you a slight nod in approval. “So there’s a prevailing theory that the American stock market has a tendency to decline every October.”
“Why October though? Is there a reason behind that? Like something with quarterlies, or people trying to save money before the holidays?”

“Your guess is as good as mine, Seto said. “In spite of there being no rational direction or statistics supporting the markets declining, it does not stop American investors from getting spooked every October.”

“So more than likely, it’s just a psychological expectation that in turn, leads to an economic downturn every October?” you asked.

In reply, Seto just offered a slight shrug of his shoulders. Seto had said he wanted a distraction from this current October Effect and so far, you were not helping. Unsure of what else to talk about, you finally decided on a relevant topic.

“What was the mortgage meltdown like from a non-American perspective?” KaibaCorp was in the technology business, so the housing bubble busting seemed like a safe topic of conversation. Did Seto take over KaibaCorp before or after the dot-com bubble burst…? You could not remember.

“I was in Hong Kong when the Lehman Brothers failed. I remember watching CNN from the hotel room bar and remember making several phone calls while having several stiff drinks. I would imagine that it may have been similar to your sense of incredulity during 9/11. Given my profession, I am very pro-capitalist and pro-free market, so I was in similar disbelief.”

The comparison was a little extreme (or inflated, you mentally amended while giving yourself a mental high-five for that pun). Nonetheless, you understood what Seto meant. For someone in his position, he must have experienced that sense of uncertainty and vulnerability that most of Americans experienced that day.

Still, it emphasized what you began to realize the previous day: the Kaiba brothers were severely out of touch with the average worker. Without counting the lives lost during the attacks and subsequent invasions based on false intelligence, Seto would not have been affected by the Great Recession as countless Americans were. The initial moment of panic may have been unsettling. Seto may have even lost quite a bit of money, but he remained a billionaire while an entire cohort group was disenfranchised.

Seto’s attention was diverted back to the TV once the commercial break was over. It left you to your thoughts, so decided to let him watch the match in peace. You’re old enough to know that an impassioned speech would do nothing to enlighten anyone or change their mind. Besides, after the fight from yesterday, bringing up the obvious socioeconomic gap between you would just cause further problems.

During commercial breaks, you did your best to make light conversation without engaging in small talk. When you asked what was so important about the soccer match, you noticed the fine lines around Seto’s eyes seemingly disappear. Just like a duel, he came alive when talking about soccer. Even if you had no interest in the sport, you decided to ask questions and listen to Seto’s rants.

You wanted to be selfish and play on your phone or school Seto on devastating events he brings up so flippantly actually had a huge impact on you. However, after seeing Seto become so lively, you cannot bring yourself to do it. Being in Tokyo was your break, you reasoned. Which meant you should let Seto have his own break.

Following lunch, you were on your own (with the exception of ever-present bodyguards). There were a few things you learned about Domino and the rest of Tokyo. First, you stood out like a sore thumb and despite the fact you communicated influential Japanese, the fact that you were Western was
extremely obvious. Secondly, you learned to avoid the trains at all costs during rush hour. Prior to your first-hand experience you had heard of commuter hell and assumed it was no different from any other major metropolitan city. You had been wrong--so very wrong.

Lastly, you knew what urban isolation was from living in Chicago. Major metropolitan cities seemingly abandoned a sense of warmth and community in their forward march of capital. Although you took photos and selfies of places you always wanted to visit while being surrounded by millions of people, you felt the pang of loneliness. Everyone was doing their own thing while you were obviously alone in every photo you took.

Your brief conversations with other Americans was just that: brief. Your security details’ tension was palpable if any type of conversation lasted longer than a brief exchange of pleasantries. While anyone assigned to your security detail was plain-clothed and pleasant towards you, interacting was difficult because they knew that they were being paid to be nice to you.

Even if you knew anyone living in the greater Tokyo area, hanging out with them would be too problematic. For starters, you would have to explain why you are suddenly in Japan. Next, would be the uncomfortable topic of conversation: you dating Seto Kaiba and the fact that you were involved in a pretty serious domestic terrorist attack a little over a month ago. Then there would be the topic of why you are not in school and why you had bodyguards. If every uncomfortable topic of conversation was pointedly ignored, there was still one problem: this was the middle of the day during the work week. Anyone you knew would be at work.

Since your argument, you had been making a more conscious effort to make sure your emotions would not affect Seto. Each night, you were hopeful that Seto would want to do something, but more often than not, if he did not work late, he had to wake up in the middle of the night to be part of a teleconference in North America, or he was just too tired to do anything besides zone out in front of a video game before crawling into bed.

You were briefly reminded of a sociologist--Durkheim--and how he coined the term *anomie*, rootlessness. In essence, it was the phenomena of being a cog in the urban machine during the European industrial boom. These feelings were exemplified by how much you stood out.

You briefly wondered how Durkheim or any of his contemporaries would describe your sense of seclusion. You were in a first world industrialized country with your billionaire boyfriend. There was no expectation for you to work or do anything productive besides let the aforementioned billionaire boyfriend work. More than likely, they would be miffed that you were equating theories that were derived from stratification within the labor force. Overall, there would not be much sympathy for you. This left with you feeling sorry for yourself while being angry at yourself for not appreciating this opportunity you were given.

Seto's personality could be described as a bit rough around the edges, but he was not socially inept. By Friday late afternoon, he easily picked up on your growing despondence. When you entered his office that evening, you barely had time to shrug off your coat before he addressed you.

“Let’s get some dinner and a few drinks,” he said.

You felt almost giddy at the prospect of going out and doing something with him. You agreed and Seto let you know that he just needed a few more minutes to finish up what he was working on.

That left you standing in his office, trying to be quiet and feeling extremely awkward. Being in this office made you feel voyeuristic and each day you came here, you got the overwhelming sense of trespassing.
You were more comfortable in his Chicago condo and while it took some adjustment, you are getting used to the manor. So your comfort at being in his office was strange to you especially considering the fact that you two had nearly fucked in his Chicago office.

After some thought, you had reasoned that Domino was practically Seto’s kingdom. This office was a symbol of everything Seto worked to achieve. The manor was simply a boon. Throwing papers on the floor and having Seto fuck you on the desk was practically sacrilege. You got to see the private side of Seto. In this office, he had become the ruthless tactician that turned a military industrial complex into a successful gaming company. You preferred interacting with Seto the man instead of Seto, the cunning businessman.

Several agonizing minutes passed, where you pretended to be mildly fascinated with the array of plants Seto kept in his office. Once you were bored with that, you contented yourself with looking out the window as the sun set and the city of Tokyo came alive in a neon inferno. At last, Seto packed up his stuff and you followed him down to the waiting car.

One of the last places you expected him to take you was Shibuya. Upon seeing your incredulous expression, Seto regarded you with a mischievous glint in his eyes. It was unexpected and not willing to spoil what you hope to be a good time, you kept quiet while he led you to a narrow entrance that had a red paper lantern out front. The massive commercial storefronts made the entrance nearly indistinguishable.

Seto had suddenly stopped, causing you to nearly smack into him. He quickly looked over the various storefronts before you two had to double back towards the entrance. To you, this was a telltale indication that this was his first visit to this particular establishment.

A tall billionaire and his foreign girlfriend walk into an izakaya. There was no doubt in your mind that was the beginning of a joke somewhere, but right now, you and Seto Kaiba were inside an izakaya full of salarymen with the occasional few females wearing smart business attire sprinkled in. If you were to venture a guess, you would say Seto asked someone for recommendations on where to take you and your current location was suggested.

Any man Seto’s height along with the fact that you were a foreigner made it so your entrance did not go unnoticed by the patrons. Other than a curious look or some quick whispers of patrons wondering if they were witnessing the Kaiba Seto in an izakaya, most decided that it was a good look alike instead of the man, the myth, the legend himself. If you decided that you did not look American enough to be Kaiba's American girlfriend and decided you were from basically any other country in the world besides America and Japan. Speculation quickly died down and everyone quickly are drawn back and whatever they were doing prior to your arrival.

With Seto’s height advantage, he scouted out two empty seats at the end of a long wooden counter. The barstools sat lower on the ground than you were used to back home. You were able to sit down relatively comfortably, but the slight frown Seto gave as he took his own seat alerted you to the fact that this style of seating did not accommodate his long legs very well.

Normally, you would suggest something logical--like going somewhere else. However, Seto liked to pretend he transcended normal mortals and was beyond petty things like joint pain, so once again, you kept your mouth shut. At this point in time, you knew Seto well enough to know that his sense of pride and stubbornness would never allow him to find somewhere more accommodating to his height.

Giving time to let Seto get as comfortable as you would be able to, you glanced up at the food menu began to debate on what to order. Seto flagged a staff member down and instead of looking at you for your order, server looked over at Seto, waiting for him to tell the server your order. Initially, you
felt slighted only to remember that instead of being a misogynistic prick, the server might just have assumed you did not speak Japanese very well.

Once Seto placed his order, he gestured to you and you initially debated stumbling over your Japanese and looking like an idiot. Instead of trolling, you just quickly related what you wanted and got it over with.

After the server departed, you began to look over at the various patrons and take in the atmosphere of the izakaya.

“Since this is your first time in Japan, you should get a cultural experience,” Seto said.

“I figured that cultural exchanges happened on a regular basis, you replied. “You know, international...relations.”

Seto snorted at the retort. While you spied a little tug at the corner of his lips, Seto’s gaze still shifted to make sure the other patrons did not overhear you being so stereotypically American and uncouth. If you are quickly dismissed as not being an American, your accent would quickly give you away.

Not much time passed when an order of edamame was put between the two of you along with a bottle of sake. Before you could pour a cup for yourself, Seto took the bottle and poured sake into your cup. He set it on the table, leaving his cup unfilled. The expectant look he sent your direction indicated you were to pour him a cup. You obliged.

“Now what?” you asked.

Seto raised his cup. “Kanpai,” he said.

“Kanpai,” you echoed, touching Seto’s cup to yours before downing the sake. This triggered a memory of one of the first conversations you and Seto had. Your sudden chuckle need you cough, resulting in you nearly spitting your sake out.

Before Seto could ask, you explained. “‘Kanpai: it means drink up.’ That was one of the first things you said to me.”

Seto’s chin raised slightly as a look of understanding crossed his face. His gaze shifted slightly to the right as if trying to recollect the specific conversation.

“Funny,” Seto commented after a moment, helping himself to some edamame. “One of the first thing you said to me was, ‘Drink, motherfucker.’”

“I did not call you that!” you insisted, although you were dubious on whether or not you actually said that. The details are a bit fuzzy since you had been slightly intoxicated on top of being nervous and more than a little bit shell-shocked from recent events. That was a perfect combination for saying something dumb. In spite of that, you distinctly remembered chugging the rest of your beer for liquid courage. Recycling the bottle was just an excuse to eat near the kitchen in order to try to speak to Seto.

You had paused right by the kitchen entrance, going over what you would say to him. You realize that you did not have much time to mull it over before you looked like a creeper by lingering. “If you recall, I asked you what kind of sandwich you were making as a way to get you to talk to me.”

“It was also a not-so-subtle way to either get me to join your game of Kings Cup or get me to drink.”

“I prefer calling the game Circle of Death,” you quipped. You paused before guiltily saying, “I have
a confession.”

Seto drained his cup. “Go on…”

“I was not the Question Master. I just wanted to talk to you.”

At that point, Seto looked like the cat who had just got the catnip-laced cream. “Oh really?” he asked, choosing to speak slowly and deliberately.

“...Yeaaaah. Sorry.”

“So you came into my home--”

“I was invited,” you pointed out. Seto held up a hand, indicating that he was not finished yet.

“You came into my home, invited yourself into my kitchen, and forced me to take a shot under false pretenses?”

You gave a slight nod. “It worked?” you said in defense of yourself.

“So your excuse for lying to me is that your deception paid off?” Seto asked. By now, you were no longer sure if Seto was joking around.

You are especially concerned when Seto got the bartender’s attention, believing that he was going to settle the bill. Him leaning over and addressing the bartender to quietly for you to hear made you more convinced of that fact.

To your utter astonishment, a cocktail glass filled with dark liquid was place before you. You glanced over at the bartender who nodded at Seto.

“In order to earn my forgiveness, you have to drain that class before our dinner arrives,” Seto said.

You stared down at your beverage and nervously picked it up, watching the liquid swirl in the glass. “What is this?” you asked because you were afraid to sniff it and find out


You felt your gag reflex kick in before the liquor even hit your tongue. You struggled to down the glass in one gulp, but it tasted like smoke, regret, and a murder most foul combined into one concoction.

Seto said nothing as you swallowed, did your best to keep the liquor down, and lowered your glass to see how much more you had to drink. He did not have to say, you already knew that he was enjoying the moment.

To help with keeping your morale up for the rest the drink, you took several pieces of edamame. Briefly, you wondered if soy sauce would help make the drink go down easier. Probably not.

“Even if I did call you a motherfucker, I feel beyond justified at this point.”

“Funny,” Seto said without missing a beat, “your deception has me feeling only betrayed.”

Grimacing, you picked up the glass and took one last swig of it. Whoever brewed this must have been like, ‘this does not taste smoky enough. We should add pile of ash to it.’ then there's probably a round of applause all around and that was the inception of whatever the fuck you were drinking.
“Good job,” Seto commented when you set your now empty glass down on the bar.

You immediately poured some sake and drink just to have some type of chaser.

“What was that?” you asked.

“You did not care too much for Japanese whiskey, so I thought you would appreciate something American.”

You scan the bar, looking for any type of American bourbon. Either you drank Johnny Walker Red Label or Knob Creek. Seto was an asshole.

“I only tried what I did because you being a standoffish jerk,” you said, beginning to feel the effects of the alcohol hitting you. Great. Now you were going to get drunk.

Seto considered what you said while putting an edamame pod into the designated bowl. “I was too busy staring at your legs in those shorts to be perfectly honest,” he replied with a shrug.

“You remember what I was wearing?” you asked, trying to recall the specific outfit.

Seto looked at you from the corner of his eye, the impish gleam returning. “Who said I was paying attention to your outfit? I was commenting on your legs.”

“I work out,” you replied slowly while helping yourself to edamame while Seto poured himself a second cup of sake. You needed to get the awful taste from your mouth somehow.

“So I have noticed.”

Your banter continued for a few more minutes until a bowl of soba was placed before you. After breaking apart the wooden chopsticks, you turned to Seto and saw he was already digging into his meal. “Itadakimasu to you too…?”

Seto just replied with a slight shrug of his shoulders.

You two ate and in a comfortable silence before a thought occurred to you. With very little filter now that you were quite intoxicated, you just said what you were thinking without much thought. “With Halloween coming up, I am kind of disappointed there are so few decorations marking the occasion.”

“Such a fine display of American ethnocentrism.”

You made a face while taking a gulp from your broth. “That’s not fair, adults dressing up and drinking large quantities of alcohol should not be a Western-only tradition. Besides, you guys do the Christmas thing.”

Seto’s eyebrows raised questioningly at the words ‘Christmas thing,’ so you decided to elaborate. “‘The Christmas thing’ is when people of all nationalities, races and religious creeds come together to celebrate the miracle that is the birth of Santa,” you replied. Since you just noticed that your cup of sake mysteriously filled up, you decided to drink it.

“Duh,” you added as the alcohol caused you to cringe slightly while simultaneously filling you with the warm and fuzzies.

“It’s a little different here. I have heard people refer to it as Kentucky Fried Christmas,” Seto said with emphasis, as if that would exonerate him from knowing that factoid.
“Go on…”

“Basically, you find a date, go look at the lights, marvel at commercialism at its finest before going to get a bucket of chicken from KFC. Then you go home with the date to fuck.”

“Lights, capitalism, KFC, and fucking,” you summarized. “And you know this from experience?”

Seto’s expression never changed as he made eye contact with you. “I have always said, ‘Screw the yules,’” he said before downing another cup of sake.

You did your best to decide or that much he hated Christmas or did a lot of hooking up on Christmas. If it was the latter, you preferred not really thinking about that.

“But KFC is really a thing?” you decided that this was the safer topic.

“Yes. It’s similar to how chopping an evergreen tree is a thing in America,” Seto replied.

“Ew. Gross. No. First of all, real trees shed pines everywhere and is a nightmare if you have pets. Fake trees are far classier and less of a hassle.” That was assuming you bothered setting the damn thing up.

“This seems like a topic you’re very passionate about,” Seto commented.

“Because I have impeccable taste,” you replied.

Seto did not argue, which may be a good thing; the last thing your relationship needed was to get into a debate over real vs fake trees. That usually led to the real war on Christmas: white lights versus colored lights. Your heart was not ready for Seto’s opinion.

“I am right about the tree thing,” you insisted. “After all, it’s American ethnocentrism.”

After a few moments of hesitation, it was decided that you should cheer to American ethnocentrism.

“How about this?” you decided towards the end of your meal. “For Christmas, we will celebrate it Japanese-style and for New Year’s, we can do the American thing.”

“You’re choosing options where you party the most,” Seto pointed out. During Christmas in America every liquor store was closed within 95% of Chicago while New Year’s in Japan was a family holiday similar to American Christmas. You saw nothing wrong with your idea.

“Duh,” you snorted derisively.

“Duh,” Seto replied come up mimicking you. You decided to take that as acceptance and understanding.

When you two arrived back at the manor, you’re both feeling too drunk to fuck. Instead you both practically passed during the car ride.

On Saturday, Seto had to work for a few hours. Although he would be having a late start due to drinking the night before, you (reluctantly) agreed to accompany him to work, especially since you were eager to go to Akihabara to purchase some booster packs to strengthen your deck.

You returned to his office at the agreed time, only to find Seto still working. With nothing better to do, you just pulled out your phone in order to quietly entertain yourself. You would give him fifteen minutes before you would go somewhere else to get out of his office.
Seto was on the phone when you heard a ringing tone near his desk. The conversation drowned out the first part of the message, but your ears perked up when you heard “...is coming. 10 seconds.”

Your brain slowly began to comprehend what *jishin* meant when you felt the first tremor. In spite of a few papers falling off of Seto’s desk, he remained calm and only said, “We can continue this conversation Monday morning,” before hanging up the phone. He fixed you with a look of utter incredulity, wondering why, out of all the crazy events that occurred over the past month, *this* was the thing you would freak out over.

“*The building withstood the 2011 earthquake just fine. You can stop overreacting,*” Seto said when he saw you sitting fetal position on the floor. “*Also, get up. Sitting on floor is disgusting.*”

This was your first earthquake and you would like to see how well Seto did in a blizzard or having to walk in negative 30 degree Fahrenheit weather. Or even being near Wrigleyville when a Chicago sports team won basically anything…

You knew what it was like and that meant that you were a survivor, goddamnit! The ground shaking was unnatural and a premonition to how the rest of the day would go.
This chapter does jump around quite a bit. While I dislike multiple jump scenes in a chapter where there is one POV character, I figured this was good enough since I wanted to get to what I actually had planned instead of lame filler.

I also wanted some nice, cute scenes because I have a feeling you are all going to HATE me soon. This is only part one of the story and things are not going to end on a feel-good, happy note... especially for Valentine's Day! (Even if this is posted too late for Valentine's Day in pretty much every time zone).

You had been wrong. In spite of the sudden earthquake, the afternoon drifted into the evening without incident. During the car ride back to the manor, you decided to grab your unopened booster packets. Opening them gave you something to do.

“I'm not going to leave the garbage in the car,” you told Seto upon seeing the side-eye look he gave you.

With the first packet and hand you made a gesture with your right hand as if to bless the contents in hopes they would not all suck. “Come on, Rescue Rabbit,” you prayed out loud while shuffling through the cards to see what you got.

Stargasso DD Battlefield, the All-Seeing White Tiger, United Resistance, Black Brachios, Lightning Chidori.

The last card reminded you of Naruto and while it was amusing, it was not a cute little bunny rabbit wearing a construction helmet, safety glasses, complete with a cute little mini walkie-talkie around its neck. Which made it practically useless. Still feeling hopeful, you tried the second pack.

Immediately upon seeing the first card, you had to resist the urge to roll down the window and hurl it outside.

It was freakin’ Watapon! You had to mentally brace yourself before you looked at the next few cards: Dark Contract with the Abyss, Super Soldier Field, and then…

“Niiiiooce!”

Before Seto could ask, you showed him your hand, making sure to push Watapon and the other cards to the side. It gave Seto an unobstructed view of the card you had been admiring: Dragon Capture Jar.

Seto considered. "ThatThat c be problematic."

You were careful to put your newly acquired Trap Card on top of your pile of new cards. You began to ship through yet another pack that was also not that interesting.

“Maybe for you because--” you were about to say that dragons were cheap. You stopped yourself for two reasons: it would be a low-blow to Seto and it would be a little hypocritical. Your two boss Monsters, Evilswarm Ophion and Evilswarm Bahamut were dragon-types, after all. “---I have a
work-around Dragon Capture Jar.”

Which you did. Dragon Capture Jar put all dragon-type monsters into defense mode, the card would also target your monsters. However, Evilswarm Ophion special ability was to be able to detach one XYZ material from itself. You could then add one Infestation Pandemic—a card that made it so no Iswarm monsters would be affected by other traps or magic cards that turn—to your hand. You could then switch Ophion or Bahamut into attack mode. Or just go for a nuclear option and summon Evilswarm Ouroboros.

The point was that you had a workaround. Seto, however, had nothing but dragons in his deck. Thus, this card would completely cripple his deck.

“I would have been even happier with this card if Evilswarm Exciton Knight was not a banned card,” you added.

“Once again, I do not make the rulings,” Seto reminded you.

“I know,” you said, patting his knee to show that you were not mad at him for lame rules. “I just think that it’s bullshit that Exciton Knight is banned, but other cards that do the same thing, such as Thunder-End Dragon are a-okay. Plus Thunder-End Dragon can attack that turn.”

This time, you had your knee patted your because Seto knew damn well that had used that card against you. “To be fair, Thunder-End Dragon also destroys cards on my side of the field.”

“An effect you can easily counter if you played Return of the Dragon Lords,” you replied.

“Your Evilswarm Thanatos can negate card effects,” Seto pointed out.

“True, but it only applies to itself and would get destroyed by your dragon anyway since it only has an attack of 2350.”

Technically, Evilswarm Nightmare could ensure any special summoned monsters would go into face-down defense position the turn it was summoned. However, summoning it against a duelist like Seto was too risky when you needed Bahamut or Ophion on the field as soon as possible.

Seeing you deep in thought, Seto just kissed your cheek before he murmured into your ear, “Perhaps you should, as they say, git gud.”

“And now I’m one step closer to getting good with my new favorite card,” you replied.

Swro had a point. Compared to so many new decks, yours had a lot of limitations. Maybe it was time to look into a different archetype. Fur Hire decks seemed like they could be fun...

When you had arrived back to the manor, both you and Seto decided to do your own thing. Just as you were changing into more comfortable clothing, you caught sight of such an approaching you with two Duel Monsters cards in hand.

“I propose a trade.”

You looked over at the cards and considered them: Rescue Rabbit and Number 41: Bagooska, the Terribly Tired Tapir. You had wanted Rescue Rabbit to begin with. Since you only had one copy of the little bunny, a second one would make summoning from your Extra deck so much easier. The second card had a weakness, but if you could end the duel quickly enough, it would not be that big of a problem.
“If I knew you liked Watapon so much, I would have just given it to you.”

“Ha,” Seto reply dryly, He took the cards back and folded his arms, waiting for your decision.

They were good cards and would improve your deck. At the same time, Dragon Capture Jar card crippled Seto’s deck. Not only that, but dragons were extremely broken—even more than fiends had been when you and your brother first started playing Duel Monsters. This card could effectively shut down an opponent's deck.

It was completely obvious that Seto only wanted to trade in order to prevent you from using the card against him. Which made you want to say no, especially since Seto more than likely owned 36 copies Dragon Capture Jar already. You could not pinpoint why you felt obligated to agree to the trade. Perhaps it was a societal expectation to always be a people-pleaser.

Seto's face was a blank plane, but his eyes did not betray the dark intensity of Seto's emotions. The blue contacts he wore to didgudis the unnatural argent color hide some of the icy inferno of emotion, but not enough to make you look away from his gaze without feeling singed.

When Seto Kaiba proposed a deal, it was best to take what was offered. Duel Monsters was business for him and in spite of your relationship, Seto did not mix business and pleasure. Until you handed that card over, you were his opponent.

Thankfully, you were able to recover from that exchange. For the next few hours, you two were occupied doing your own activities. Eventually, you felt a rumble in your stomach and decided you could either ask the kitchen staff when dinner was. Or you could make things difficult for yourself, wander around the manor, looking for Seto in order to ask him.

It felt so strange to talk to the household staff, so you opted to make things harder on yourself. Much to your surprise, you found Seto in his room. He was leaning forward in his chair and you did not even need to see the screen to know that he was in the middle of a PVP game; the headset and how his fingers were moving across the keyboard was enough indication for you.

Unsure whether or not the match required his full concentration, you sat down awkwardly on the bed. Examining a nail, you began to pick at it out of lack of anything better to do with your hands. It was better than screwing with the itchy wound where the bullet grazed, you reasoned.

Crap, you now thought about the injury. Now that you were actively thinking about it, the area surrounding the scab itched all the more.

Before you could give the area a good scratching, Seto spoke up. He must have seen you out of his periphery. “Dinner should be in about fifteen minutes.”

“Oh okay,” you answered, moving your hands away from your hairline before Seto could see what you were doing.

With no reason to stay and possibly distract Seto by watching him play, you left the room and continued to pick at the nail while you walked down the hallway. There was not much you could think of doing with the fifteenth minutes.

Allowing your feet to guide you along, you mentally rolled your eyes when you realized you had walked right to the liquor cabinet. After a few moments consideration, you pulled out your phone and began to look over cocktail recipes on Pinterest.

Seto preferred darker spirits like whiskey. You mentally blanched at the thought, just thinking about
dark liquor made you remember the large drink that Seto made you consume the night before. The memory of it made you taste ash in your mouth, as if you had just made out with someone smoking a cigar.

It was enough to make you look for recipes containing white spirits. Eventually, you opted make something that contained white rum for yourself. Seto would not appreciate how feminine curly the drink tasted, so you had to make something separate for him.

You’re barely holding on to the cocktail shaker when Seto found you.

“These get cold really quickly,” you said in your defense while straining the liquor into an appropriate glass. “For you.”

Seto looked down at the drink then over at the liquors you were putting away. “Did you use that Roku?” he asked, referring to the bottle of gin you were holding.

“...Is that bad?” you questioned.

Seto wafted his cocktail before taking an experimental sip. He gave you a quick nod to show that he did not hate the taste. “I am not a gin person, so it’s a fairly old bottle.”

How the hell were you supposed to know that?

“Oops?”

“It's fine. What did you use in this?”

“I guess it's like a Gimlet. I found a recipe that called for a splash of liqueur, bitters, lime juice, and gin.” You weren't going to further elaborate since it was cranberry liqueur.

You waited until Seto was halfway through his drink before you finally summoned the courage to bring the topic up.

“So...Any plans for tomorrow?”

Seto lowered his chopsticks with a long suffering sigh. It was as if he had been waiting for you to mention it, but t was hoping you would not. “I prefer not to make a big deal for my birthday. In any case, tomorrow is the last night in Japan. So I figured we would just go out for dinner one last time.”

“Okay.”

Your answer came too quickly and far too easily. Seto was rightfully skeptical. “The look on your face says you had something else in mind.”

“I was not aware that I was making any particular facial expression,” you said. You needed to work on your poker face. Hopefully he would not be upset that you bought him some presents. They were last-minute, after all. It might be best to just had the box away and pretend you never did anything.

“How much money did you spend?” Seto asked, pulling you from your musings.

“Enough to properly convey my affection on your special day in spite of knowing that I was going to be spending it with you within a few hours of boarding the plane.”

Seto picked up his beverage and took a sip before he said, “A blowjob would have sufficed.”
You fixed Seto with a sly, foxy grin. “And who said that I was not already planning on that?”

Seto was getting ready for bed when you looked at your phone and wished you had set an alarm: it was 12:03. Careful to be unassuming, you entered the bathroom and pretend to inspect your skin as if you are noticing a pimple. Once Seto was finish brushing his teeth, you stood on tiptoes to kiss him on the cheek before softly saying, “Happy Birthday.”

With the exception of ‘birthday kisses,’ the day had started off without fanfare. Seto had been sitting on his tablet, sipping on his coffee when you realized now was probably the best time for your lame-ass presents.

Without saying a word, you withdrew from the room, hurriedly going to your room to grab the box containing the gifts.

“How about we celebrate your birthday properly?” you asked, trying to hide the present behind your back. You were not fooling anyone.

Seto briefly stared into his cup of coffee as if it held the meaning of life. You were unsure whether or not he received the answer he was looking for. He let out a sigh of resignation before lifting it to his lips once more.

“Let’s have it then,” he said.

Regardless of whether or not you were good at gift wrapping, you decided to just tape a bow on the box. You had a feeling Seto would call the whole gift wrapping process nothing more than ‘pointless pageantry.’ You distinctly recalled him saying something like that before.

Part of you wished you took the time to at least wrap the presents though. They were nothing exceptional. After landing in Detroit, you only had enough time to make a quick purchase before Isono practically dragged you to the sky club lounge. You did not have time to buy anything in LAX, so the first two items Seto saw were the shot glasses from Milwaukee and Detroit.

Seto picked both glasses up, and examined them before putting them aside. The t-shirt was next.

“Drink Wisconsinbly,” he read out loud once he unfolded the shirt.

“I thought it was kind of cute. It’s also really soft!” you explained. Seto gave you a look. Since you are not sure what it meant, you nervously continued. “Isono was rushing me!” It was either that or grabbing the Recombobulation Area shirt in a hurry.”

“The what?” This time, Seto truly looked puzzled, as if he just realized he learned a new word.

“It’s some Milwaukee thing,” you explained with a shrug of your shoulders... “It’s best to just ignore it. Wisconsin sucks anyway.”

“Unless you’re drinking Wisconsinbly,” Seto added, folding the t-shirt up once more. Either, he hated the shirt or you were far better at folding clothes than he was. You definitely did a better job at folding.

“Always,” you replied. Best to err on the side of him not folding his own clothes.

By now, Seto’s attention was on the box of tea. “I feel the need to explain this one. My sleep schedule is shit because I have terrible habits. I have noticed you going to bed around the same time as me in spite of the fact that you don't do stupid things like drink coffee at six in the evening.”
“So I figured I would buy you this tea since I know helps me fall asleep when I need to be up early the next morning.”

Seto was looking at the ingredients, and since you are now nothing more than a bundle of nervous energy, your rambling continued. “It has valerian root, which has been used as a sedative, antiseptic, and anticonvulsant.”

“I am not doubting you,” Seto told you patiently as he set the box down. “I was only curious.”

You are not normally this nervous about gift exchanges. And again, how often did you have to purchase a birthday present within a month of dating someone? Especially when that someone was a billionaire.

“Sorry if the gifts are kind of lame. I wanted to get you something better, but I did not think I could take some of the gifts I was debating about on a plane. Safely, anyway.”

Seto Rose from his seat and close the distance between you two. He gave you a soft kiss on the lips before wrapping his arms around you. “This was more than I expected. Although, I will reiterate that a blowjob would have more than sufficed.”

“There’s still plenty of daylight left,” you answered cryptically.

Throughout the day, the weather had been in the mid-60s. You had a brief moment of confusion when you looked at a digital clock that said the weather was 17 degrees. For measuring, the metric system was superior, you would admit this. However, when it came to comfort level, Fahrenheit was far superior to Celsius.

You would have loved to spend the day outdoors. However, it was Seto’s birthday. As much as you wished your birthday occurred when the weather was so mild, you would be a good girlfriend and respect the fact he wanted a quiet day at home.

When it came time for dinner, you had expected to stay in Domino for dinner or to go to Ginza. Getting out of the car and looking up at the recently constructed Tokyo Skytree was definitely not something you had in mind for what Seto wanted to be a quiet birthday.

The staff that greeted the both of you barely glanced at Seto’s face before realizing who it was. Immediately, the two of you were led to a window seat away from other diners. After you were given the menus, the wait staff quickly departed.

“What a month,” Seto commented as he studied the cityscape spread out below you.

Allowing Seto to have a quiet moment to himself, you decided to look at the menu. You frowned slightly upon realizing that none of it was ala carte. A quick glance over at Seto's menu made you realize that he had arranged for a five-course dinner. While he had what appear to be a regular menu, yours was vegetarian-friendly.

The first round arrived and Seto finally turned his attention from the window to the food. Yours was a cheese hors d'oeuvre while Seto had some kind of fish that was decorated with a basil flower.

As soon as the wait staff was out of earshot, Seto spoke up. “Before we leave, we need some plan on what we are going to do when we get back to the States.”

“What do you usually do in situations like this?” you asked.
Instead of answering you, Seto pulled out his deck and began to shuffle his cards. He drew one card from the top of the deck. Without even showing you what he drew, his expression was all you needed to know that he drew a Blue-Eyes White Dragon.

He put the cards away and looked out the window once more. Several moments passed by until he finally answered you. “In the past, it was always go in with for guns blazing. Figuratively, of course. Now that I am older, I can see the folly in that.”

So much could go wrong by direct approaches. That could be used as a diversion, allowing any type of back-end security to become more lax. Assuming that no one could see through the diversion. They just needed an effective diversion.

You looked out the window and were only able to see the wait staff arrived the second course because of the reflection in the window.

Sneaking up on you like a goddamn ninja…

That’s what you needed to do: think using stealth and subterfuge. Ninjas hid in plain sight. Recalled watching a documentary once where disguises were heavily utilized.

“Are you certain that you were not just watching an anime?” Seto asked, unable to resist poking fun at you.

You plucked an ice cube from your glass and tossed it at him. It hit his shoulder. “In all seriousness, I have an idea. I don't think you're going to like it and it is a bit of a stretch, but it might work.”

Seto did not have to think about it very long. “Tell me, he said firmly.

You had been wrong; Seto did not only dislike your idea, he despised the very premise of it.

“I refuse to put Mokuba in danger.” Seto did his best to convey a tone a finality, but there is still uncertainty in his voice. Mokuba would be in as much danger as he normally would in a large crowd.

“That's fine you,” said amicably. “We have time to brainstorm other ideas.”

Each time a wait staff came by with a new dish, the conversation died down or either of you switch to a mundane topic of conversation when you spotted someone approaching the table. In spite of your best efforts, neither you nor Seto could come up with an idea that did not contain a fatal flaw in its design.

“My initial idea is absolutely insane, I get that,” you began, reaching for the cool glass of your wine glass. You held it by your lips for a moment before drinking. “I think that the entire idea is so stupid, no one would suspect it. That increases the likelihood of it actually working.”

You two had already discussed this topic. Neither of you wanted to rehash the debate (borderline argument) that ensued when you brought up several really stupid ideas that made their creators very wealthy. Industrial Ilusions, Snapchat, rebranding KaibaCorp just to name a few.

There was a long moment of silence where you both held each other's gaze, neither of you willing to back down and admitting defeat. It was a server with another round of drinks that made you both lose the stare-down simultaneously.
“Your plan involves Mokuba’s participation. I will consider speaking to him about this ploy of yours under one condition.”

“What’s the condition?”

“There will be no second decoy. Just me.”

You shook your head. “No way! I am the one who has the Necklace—”

Seto silenced you with a raise of his palm. “This topic is not up for negotiation. If my terms are not acceptable to you, you staying in Japan is an option. More than once, you have stated that you were dragged unwittingly into the situation. I refuse to put your life greater danger than I already have by you associating with me.”

The gentleness of both Seto’s touch and gaze was enough for you to silence any protests. “You win, Seto. You really are a ruthless negotiator.” Your lips quirked to hide the fear behind your words. “If anything happens to you, expect necromancy to be utilized to bring you back.”

“If that happens, I will have no choice but to listen to you bitch about how you were right until the end of time.”

“You know me well.”

“When something interest me, I take care to learn all I can.”

You rested your hand on your chin while studying Seto. “Have I piqued your interest?”

With the low light of the restaurant juxtaposed with the cityscape next to him, the contours of Seto’s face was more pronounced. Combined with his intelligent, sharp gaze, he looked predatory as his eyes met yours. The way his lips curved sent a pleasant shiver down your spine.

“Very much so.”

Both you and Seto had been restless during the car ride back to the manor. Within moments of closing the doors behind you, Seto had you pinned to the wall, his lips hot against yours.

The moment his hands began to lift the hem of your shirt, you pulled it back down to stop him. You wanted this man to fuck you mercilessly against the wall, but it was his birthday and you had one last present.

Seto’s eyes were on you, his brow creased in confusion. Instead of assuring him that he did nothing wrong, you took one of his hands. With a small tug, you smirked up at him.

“Let’s have a quick change of venue. You still have one more present coming.”

To go along with your plan, Seto allowed himself to be led until it was obvious where you were going. “Why are leading me to the kitchen?” His voice was suspicious, but he made no effort to pull away from you.

You let go of his hand as soon as you both entered the kitchen proper. This was where the cook’s prep the food, so you had only been in here once. When you placed the item in the cabinets, you asked several members of the staff not to move it. Hopefully they hadn’t because otherwise, you were fresh out of birthday ideas.

“Here we are!” You grinned at seeing the item was still sitting where you had left it. Turn one of
your outings, you are racking your brain trying to think of something you could either get or do for Seto that did not include the lame presents you had purchased hastily before leaving America. While looking for something to satisfy your sweet tooth, your eyes fell on it and you knew that you had to buy it.

With a dramatic flourish, you showed Seto why you had insisted they go to the kitchen.

“Frosting?” His voice was flat and you could just imagine that any type of boner he had was now going away.

Seto had remarkable observation skills, but he could not see that it was not just any type of frosting; it was Pillsbury Funfetti Happy Birthday frosting in Aqua Blue Vanilla.

“Don't get your hopes up, the frosting isn't for you to eat.”

Seto was looking less than pleased with his present. You mentally face-palmed. For a man boasted to be one of the greatest minds alive, he his lack of creativity was disappointing.

“You can't eat the frosting,” you began as you opened the lid and tore the foil off. The smell of the sugary confection made your stomach rumble in spite of having had enough to eat.

“We both however, are free to lick it off.”

You watched as Seto's Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed hard upon realizing what you were planning.

Without taking his eyes from you, Seto swiped one finger along the top of the frosting. He gently placed his palm against your cheek. The digit with the frosting touched the corner of your bottom lip, coating it in frosting until he stopped right above your philtrum.

“Well?” he asked, eyeing you challengingly.

As a response your tongue lapped at his finger. “Good girl…” Seto purred. Mindful of the frosting on your lips, you sucked at his finger. Seto closed his eyes at the sensation of your tongue swirling around his finger.

“Delicious,” you crooned as soon as he withdrew his hand. Your tongue flicked over your bottom lip, lapping the frosting up.

“Is that so?” Seto questioned before his lips met yours in a searing kiss, tongue and lips hungrily demanding more in order to receive a taste for himself.

Pulling away, Seto licked his own lips, slowly, salaciously. “Not bad,” he commented, his voice low and the movement of his mouth could be felt against your lips.

Seto stepped back so he could shrug off the blazer he was still wearing before he loosened his tie. You took the moment to remove any jewelry and use the hair tie around your wrist to pull back your hair, safe from collateral damage.

You had been facing the counter so you did not see Seto until you felt his arms wrap around you, his warm breath tickling your ear.

“Undress. Fully,” his voice was a command that made your stomach coil in anticipation.

Turning around, you notice that Seto was still clothed from the waist down. While that was hardly
fair, you were not going to complain--this was *his* day, after all.

Eyes watched with eager anticipation as each article of clothing was removed. Before you had a chance to grab your clothes off the kitchen floor, Seto kicked them aside.

With a hand on your shoulder, Seto guided you downward until your back was again the cool marble counter top. Seto had grabbed a small rubber spatula that he used to scoop some frosting from the container before spreading along your abdomen.

The sudden contrast of the cold stone against your back and Seto's tongue in you made you arch your back so that you could focus on how amazing it felt to have Seto's tongue on your skin.

Next, the top of your breasts were coated in frosting. You could not help but groan at the sensation of your boyfriend's mouth against your nipples. The sounds of your pleasure only intensified when his teeth lightly grazed at the sensitive skin of your nipples before circling them with his tongue.

“You taste so sweet…” Seto murmured, his hips pressing against yours. The sensation made you roll your own hips, wanting more, needing his cock inside of you so badly.

*Not yet,* you schooled yourself. *Patience.* On your birthday, you could throw Seto in a chair and ride him so hard that whoever pulled him off would be the right-wise king of England.

“I think it's my turn,” you told Seto. It was best to switch places before he got any idea of putting frosting anywhere near a sensitive orifice. The last thing you needed was a yeast infection or UTI.

The older man took a languid lick from the spatula in his hand. It was obvious that Seto was enjoying himself. Whether it was the thrill of making you squirm underneath him or he genuinely enjoyed the frosting, you were not sure. What you were searching up though was that it did not look like he was quiet done with you. “Is that so?”

“I mean, I am enjoying myself, but I did promise you a birthday blowjob.”

Frosting landed on your shoulders. Seto was quick to lick it up while teasing your nerves at the same time. The sensation of his teeth against the crook of your neck made your breath quicken once more.

“I don't recall you ever promising that…” he said. You felt the softness of his mouth as he traced his way from your throat to your neck with butterfly kisses.

“I more than hinted at it if not directly implied that I was going to suck your cock each time you mentioned wanting a blowjob.”

The next sound you heard was beginning to become one of the most erotic for you: his belt buckle. The way your body quivered in anticipation was a better high than any needle could produce.

Seto carefully folded his clothes on the kitchen counter. Deciding of the best to let that one slide, you just focused on getting your first dollop of frosting.

Instead of getting on your knees right away, you took Seto's hand. As gently as you could, you rotated his forearm so that his inner wrist was facing you. You spread only a small amount of frosting over green veins and rich beige skin. Your tongue gently lapped at the frosting. Which time it cleared a spot, you gently kissed the sensitive skin for moving on. The sight of the powerful man's twitching cock was all the encouragement you needed to keep going.

Next, you moved on to his ear lobe. You're careful to leave as little saliva as possible as tongue curled around his fear lobe before you sucked off the frosting you left there. With the nape of the
neck, you gave him a quick nap before scooping the sweet sugary goodness up in one lick. Seto groaned in response and swore under his breath when you came back to get the remaining frosting.

When you came to his lower abdomen, you were beyond pleased to see you excited him so much without ever touching his cock.

Foreign substances could not enter a man's urethra as easily as a woman's. Still, you were very cognizant to avoid the foreskin and head as you spread the frosting over your boyfriend's length. Your tongue dragged along his cock, stopping right where you ended the frosting trail right below the head. You swirl your tongue on the second pass to lick up the remaining frosting.

With no signs of blue icing remaining, your hands wrapped around his cock, giving him several pumps while taking his head into your mouth. The sounds of grunting to break up the sounds of slurping as your head bobbed up and down was enough to make you want to try more.

With an attempt to suppress your gag reflex, you worked Seto's length into you. Unable to take anymore, you carefully swirled your tongue around his length while you eased him out of your mouth.

After another spoonful of frosting, your lips sealed around the head of his cock once more. You began to suck and felt his hips grind forward, him groaning your name in the process.

Keeping up with the motion of Seto Kaiba face-fucking you hollowed out your cheeks and moved up and down his length of his cock. Your fist pumping him more than made up for where your mouse could not reach without attempting to deep throat once more.

Seto took the sides of your face and gently pushed your head backwards to indicate that he wanted you to stop. The sound of his cock leaving your mouth was with a pop worthy of any porn.

Without saying a word, Seto leaned you against the counter. Unsure of how the height difference would work, you made an effort to stand on your tiptoes before leaning your upper body forward to allow Seto to have more room.

Your legs shook from trying to stand on tiptoes while simultaneously feeling the girth of Seto's cock entering you. His grip on your hips tightened before he ground into you once more.

“I don't think I ever fucked you like this before,” you heard Seto groaned bout before one hand moved from your hips to your ass. After squeezing one cheek he gave it an experimental slap.

You gasped as Seto grunted, “Goddamn,” slapping your ass once more. His hips thrust at a slower, almost torturous rhythm whole his hand moved from its place on your ass to your hip, and finally to your clit.

The sudden stimulation did not last long before Seto completely withdrew from you. He pushed you up so you were further on the counter.

After re-positioning himself, Seto's voice was both dark and commanding.

“There is no one else here. I want to hear you screaming my name.”

Without waiting for a reply, Seto drove back into you with enough force to cause your body to lunge forwards with a strangled moan. It was followed up with pant after pant while Seto thrust into you. The rhythm begin to build up and as you found yourself rocking your hips back and forth, you found that you could not close your mouth if you tried.
“Oh fuck--- Seto !”

You extended your elbows, allowing Seto to not only hit at a different angle, but to manhandle your body further while your breasts and ass jiggled back and forth to the pace he had set.

Once more, his hands gripped at your hips. He collapsed on top of you, gasping your name like a prayer and curse as you felt him climax.

Once he came down from his sexual high, Seto straightened himself up. Your legs were quivering but you managed to remain standing while Seto, red-faced and hair slicked back in sweat began to pull his boxers up. He stopped to see your hand in a fist.

“Good game,” you said breathlessly.

Seto hesitated for a moment before he fist bumped you.

“GG.”

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