

It's Not Easy To Be Me

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A story told in first person by the one and only Yami Atemu! I got the idea from the song i named it after. It's not very long, but different for a change. Enjoy!

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1 - Heros Have the Right to Bleed

A Superhero...that must be what they think I am. Everytime I get the chance to relax and have a normal life, something happens and then all the faces turn towards me. Why can't the bad guys just give it a rest? The weight of the world isn't exactly easy to carry. I used to think it was just my destiny calling me. But now it's just getting old. Why is it that everyone's fate must rest in my hands?

"Atemu? You don't look so good. Are you feeling alright?" Tea asked.

"Um," I replied.

"You haven't seemed the same lately," she said. "I'm really worried."

"I just don't see the reason for my life anymore," I told her. "It's always Pegasus this, Dartz that, and don't even get me started on Kaiba."

"I guess I never knew it was getting to ya," she replied. "Now that I think about it, that'd be driving me crazy too."

I didn't want to talk about it. Tea's the last person I want to be fighting with right now. I still can't believe she would ever forgive me for what happened to Yugi in the incident with the Orichalcos. I could never forgive myself for that. All my friends, they just don't see me as the monster I became.

"Bakura's graduation is today," Tea mentioned. "I'm sure he'd like it if you came."

"Yugi cango. I'll just stay out of the way in my puzzle," I said.

"Tea! Atemu! Stop flirting and get dressed! We gotta be there in an hour!" Miho yelled from the third floor balcony.

"Ok!" Tea answered her.

Tea looked at me with a disappointing expression on her face and then proceeded to walk away in silence. I don't meant to disappoint her like this, but it's just how I feel. When else am I allowed to respect my own emotions? Certainly not standing up to my enemies.

We've all been living in this apartment building on campus while attending Tokyo University. I don't know how Bakura did it, but he's graduating two years early because he's been taking so many credit hours. No doubt he'll start on a master's next. Yugi struggles most of the time. I wish he wouldn't resort to studying with Joey for math because Joey struggles in math enough as it is. But then again, that means that he comes to me for help. But I'm worthless. My mind is always drifting elsewhere so we just end up arguing.

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"There!" Molly said. "You're ready for graduation."

"Well thank you for your help," Bakura said. "I just wish you could be graduating today too."

"Oh me?" Molly replied. "Nah, I'm much slower when it comes to this college thing. Plus my classes are so much longer."

"That's ok," Bakura said. "Just take your time and I'll be there to help you." **smile**

"Oh! You're ready!" Miho said practically busting down the door. "Let me get a picture!"

"Uh..." Bakura started.

"Oh come on!" Miho said excitedly. "You too Molly, into the picture you go. Smile!"

* * *

Miho has so much energy. I don't know where she draws her power to be so happy all the time. I'd love to know if she'd feel the same way standing up against Marik in a duel of life or death. It must be nice to live a carefree life knowing Atemu's always got your back. As long as he's there to fight on the frontline, no one will have to suffer.

2 - Complex Feelings

Molly, Tea and Miho all sat in a row with tissues in their hands with tears in their eyes watching the commencement exercises. I don't understand why women cry for happy occasions. Losing someone forever because of a hateful, greedy person is worthy of tears. I'm more with Joey and Tristin on rolling the eyes in the matter.

"Yugi, you can take over for me," I said. "I'm tired and wish to reside in the puzzle for the rest of the evening."

"If you say so Atemu," Yugi said with all his innocence.

"Oh, Yugi, what's up?" Tea asked.

"Not much," Yugi answered. "Does Atemu seem different to you Tea?"

"Actually, yeah," Tea said. "Like he's somehow lost his personality or something. He told me all the stress of his enemies was really getting to him. It kinda worries me."

"Yeah, he doesn't seem interested in talking to me about it," Yugi explained. "I wish there was something I could do to help, but nothing ever seems to work. We just end up fighting or something."

I don't really consider it pleasant being able to hear when people are talking about me when I'm not around. I wish they'd drop it and stop worrying. I think I've caused enough troubles in their life for them to be fretting over my problems now. Often I think about my days as Pharaoh and wish that my afterlife had not brought me here. I'll admit that at first it was all right, but after all the mistakes I continue to make, I wish it would just end.

"Bakura Ryou," the announcer said.

"Yay!" Tea, Miho and Molly said together. Everyone was clapping. Bakura works so hard, and despite his Yami, doesn't fail to live a good life of making the right choices and caring for those around him. Afterwards everyone went to stand outside and waited for the graduate to come back.

"Atemu?" Yugi said. "I think Bakura would like to say hello to you."

"Oh, alright," I replied. So I came out of the puzzle as Yugi went back in. Bakura was standing there in the group huddle staring at me. "Um, congratulations Bakura."

"Thank you Atemu. I'm so glad you were able to be here," Bakura responded cheerfully.

"Hey look! It's Yugi Muto from Battle city!" some kids were screaming as they came running my way.

Oh crap, I thought. I'm in no mood for fans right now.

"Yugi, will you sign my card?!" one of the kids asked.

sigh "Ok, if I must," I said with no interest.

"Oh thanks!" the kid said.

"Sign ours too!" said the others.

"You know there's plenty of Joey to go around too," Joey mentioned.

I looked over at Joey. He had a big smile on his face and his posture standing tall. I can't believe he's asking for this kind of stuff. I for one hate the thought that these kids look up to me after all the pain I've caused my own friends. They call me their hero, but I'm no hero. I'm just a man who makes terrible mistakes.

When they finally left, the gang walked back to the apartment building together. The girls were all still as happy as could be and the guys had resorted to talking about how they were ever going to get the girls back to normal. Tea was the only one whose attention was not completely focused on the evening. She kept glancing back at me with a worried look on her face.

"You guys go on ahead, I want to talk to Atemu for a moment," Tea said.

"Oooh! Flirting again?" Miho poked.

"No Miho, now mind your own business," Tea said seriously.

"Ok come on, I was only playing around," Miho said.

The others went on ahead into the building and Tea pulled me over to the garden behind it. I didn't feel like talking, but I didn't want to upset Tea anymore than I probably already had.

"What's really been going on in that mind of yours anymore?" Tea asked. "Yugi and I are really worried, and we just want to help you."

"Please. I would prefer you don't trouble yourselves over me," I responded.

"I have a hard time being happy knowing you're not feeling ok," Tea said.

"It's nothing you could fix Tea," I said.

"Just tell me. I promise I'll keep it a secret. Yugi will too I'm sure," Tea said.

"It's just that I'm getting tired of everyone thinking I'm so great. I know I was a Pharaoh at one time, but that doesn't matter now," I explained. "I think I've hurt more people than I've helped, and for some reason you guys stand by me. I allowed an evil power to control me to the point where Yugi's soul was taken because of my greed. How could any of you ever trust me after that?"

"We're all together in this Atemu," Tea replied. "We look out for each other. Besides, no one's perfect and we all make mistakes."

"Then why does it feel like it's always me who's fighting the fight? I know you're all there, but it's me who's face to face with deadly monsters," I said.

"You're a better duelist than most of us," Tea said. "Joey stood up to Marik too and nearly died. That took courage. If I could fight them for you I would Atemu. I care about you and there are lots of things I wish I could do to make your life easier."

It looked as though tears were forming in her eyes. I don't recall saying anything *that* negative to her. I feel bad that she's sad because of me, but I don't think there's anything I can do. Tea walked away without another word. I just followed close behind her in silence. I told Yugi to take over for the night and maybe he would have more power to cheer her up than I did.

3 - A Better Day

"Good morning Tea," Yugi said slowly waking.

"Oh, good morning Yugi," Tea said rubbing her eyes.

"Sleep well?" Yugi asked.

"Yeah, I guess," Tea said. "It's good not to have to worry about having school today, or for a while for that matter."

"I know what you mean," Yugi said cheerfully. "No homework for three weeks!"

Now there's the best news I've heard in a while. No homework means no helping on it. Maybe this break will be a good time to stop and relax. No doubt the others will want to have fun and I'll get the chance to keep to myself. Spring semester has ended and the stress of exams is officially over.

"I think Tristin said he was gonna make some pancakes," Tea mentioned. "Let's go on p and get some."

"Ok," Yugi said. "I'm pretty hungry now that you mention it."

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"Hey Tristin, Miho, Bakura," Tea said. "Still got any pancakes left?"

"Yeah, actually," Tristin said. "You're lucky. If Joey wasn't still taking a shower, you'd have missed out."

"I guess we got here on time then," Yugi laughed. "I think we all know that Joey would have finished them off."

"Where's Molly?" Tea asked.

"Sleeping," Bakura said with a smile.

"Still?" Tea asked. "It's almost noon."

"I wouldn't be surprised if she was in there for another hour," Bakura laughed. "Not really a morning person."

"Wow," Yugi said, hardly able to believe someone could sleep that long.

"She wanted to go to the beach this afternoon," Bakura mentioned. "You guys wanna come along?"

"Ok, sounds like fun," Tea said.

"Atemu, you interested in a trip to the beach?" Yugi asked.

"Not really," I replied. "Just go yourself and have fun."

"Ok, if you say so," Yugi said sounding worried again.

So after Molly finally got out of bed at 1:24pm, the gang jumped into their bathingsuits and headed for the beach. Sadly Molly also slept halfway there as well. Maybe I should try it sometime. No one bothers her when she's asleep, so if I pick up the habit, I'll have more time to myself. Upon arrival to the beach, everyone dashed for the water as I sat inside my puzzle to collect my thoughts.

"Yee haa!" Joey screamed as he caught a wave.

"Let's see who will last the longest!" Tristin challenged.

"Hey guys, let's play beach volleyball!" Molly suggested.

"Ok," Tea said. "I'll be on your team."

"Let's play guys verses girls," Miho suggested.

"That's not fair," Bakura said. "Two to three?"

"Oh come on," Tea said. "With Joey and Tristin it would still be unfair. Plus you're guys and you're stronger than us."

"I don't see myself being the star spiker of this team," Yugi said pointing out his shortness. "Hey, Atemu, play in my place. You've got an extra foot of height."

"What?! No Yugi, I-" I pleaded without purpose as I came face to face with everyone. "Um... hello everyone." **sweatdrop** Bakura looked frightened. He must have known I didn't really want to play and having me on his team would be uncomfortable. Tea gave me the same kind of look; well aware this wasn't my choice.

Smile "Let's begin!" Molly said anxiously to start. And so we played volleyball which I suppose wasn't as bad as I had anticipated. Bakura and Tea seemed to lose their tensions as time passed. Joey and Tristan even joined later which really uneven the score.

Later, some of the gang went back for a dip in the water. I chose to sit on the sand and just let the breeze go through my hair as I just relaxed. Watching the sunset was something I hadn't done in centuries. About thirty to be precise. As I sat letting my worries drain out of me, I caught sight of Molly sitting a few feet away with her sketchbook in hand.

"Oh, sorry, didn't mean to disturb you," Molly said surprised. "You just looked so sketchable sitting over there so silent."

"It's ok, you may continue," I said. That was the first thing that hadn't bothered me in ages. Perhaps today's events were able to release the tensions in my mind. Thank you everyone for helping me, though I still can't understand why you would go out of your way to give me such kindness.

4 - A Familiar Face

The break seemed to pass quickly as I was actually enjoying the time off. Kaiba seemed to pop up every now and then, but never causing any havoc, just to be his ornery self. Everyone was choosing their classes and complaining if they couldn't get any good ones. Bakura was the only one who seemed to have gotten what he wanted because he would be starting graduate school. It seemed that today's choice of entertainment would be videogames. Everyone hooked up their controllers and battled each other in Halo all night long; so long that they all slept as late as Molly the next morning.

"Oh man, my eyes are burning," Joey said. "I can't even remember who won."

"Who stayed up the longest?" Tea said.

"Hold on a sec," Tristin said rubbing his eyes. "You've all got 'loser' written on your forehead."

"Don't be talking Tristin, you've got one too," Joey stated.

"Wait a minute," Bakura said. "Where's Molly?" Bakura turned around to see the bedroom door closed and locked. "I think I get it now. Molly won and put herself out of harm's way by locking herself in the room."

"How'd you do it?" Joey asked.

"By sleeping so late everyday," Bakura explained. "She built up enough energy to stay up later than the rest of us."

"Tricky, tricky," Tristin said.

I must say I admire Molly's strategy; pure genius without her opponents even aware. And ensuring her safety in a locked room is just a finished touch. It took a while for everyone to get 'loser' off of their heads, but luckily Molly only used a Crayola, washable marker. Tea wanted to head out for a club that evening, so everyone dressed for clubbing and headed out.

I had been to the place they chose before with Tea. It was somewhat of an arcade as well as a hang out for teens. Tea was challenging people left and right at Dance Dance Revolution until she needed a break from dancing so long. There were a few duelists sitting around at the tables challenging one another. I was still enjoying my time off from Duel Monsters, but listening to them, I rated their strategies, able to figure out who would win and who would lose. Yugi had asked if I would like to duel, probably distracted by my narration, but I chose to pass on the opportunity.

After a long night, everyone was worn out and decided to head home. It was the dead of night and everyone wobbled from fatigue as if in a daze. Yugi kindly asked if I would take over for the walk home just because I wasn't in the same state of mind. So seeing no harm in it, we switched places. Once I could see the extremely dazed expressions on everyone's face, I thought it best to keep a close eye on all of them. Mihog had already fallen asleep and hitched a ride on Tristin's back.

"Oh man, I'm pooped," Tea said.

"Me too," Bakura said. "But I'm not about to ask my Yami to see me home in one piece."

"Good thinking," Molly said. It didn't sound like something she would normally say, but fatigue can do things to the mind. It may have been my imagination, but the sound of footsteps was coming from behind me. Taking a head count I realized no one could be behind me from our group, so I turned my head to look, but no one was there. But the sound returned again, so I used the Millennium Puzzle as a mirror to glance behind. Sure enough the shadowy figure of a person was there. I spun around and ran at lightening speed to catch the stalker off guard.

"Atemu? Who's back there?" Joey asked watching me attack.

"Ahh! Don't hurt me," a familiar voice said.

"Marik?" I asked in shock. Dragging him outwards a streetlight, Marik's cowering face came into view as I finally realized who had been following us.

"Marik?!" Joey asked. "I thought you said you were on our side now!" What's the big deal sneaking up on us?"

"I really wasn't trying to scare you," Marik explained. "I need help."

"Sneaking around in the shadows, following us, I'd say you do." Tea said.

"No, it's not like that," Marik said. "Ishizu's been kidnapped! The guy had a gun and I didn't know what to do. Then I saw you guys passing by and I ran for help. I'm afraid he'll hurt her."

"No Yami, please don't!" Bakura started to beg. But it was too late. Yami Bakura appeared and had taken over Bakura.

"Let's go kick some butt Atemu," Yami Bakura said.

"Since when are we some kind of team?" I asked, confused.

"No questions, we've got work to do," he continued.

"This way," Marik said as all of us began to follow. Everyone's sleepiness had worn away as we headed off to face trouble together.

5 - Change of Heart

"Why do you even care if someone's in danger?" I asked Yami Bakura as we ran side by side. "Normally it's pleasing to you isn't it?"

"I'm well aware of your current view in life," Yami Bakura explained. "It shines like the darkness of the Shadow Realm. I'd like to know what's really going on inside you that forces me to have to point it out."

"Why do you care?!" I asked.

"Answer my question first," he requested.

"I don't know," I said trying to think about it. "I guess I've just been hurting more people that I've been helping, so I just don't want to be the false hero anymore."

"That's a stupid excuse," Yami Bakura said. "You've forgotten that they've helped you out too and no doubt have made mistakes as well. No one's perfect, so get that planted in your mind."

"Why are you telling me this? You don't even like me," I said. "Answer my question now."

"Just a little advice from an old friend," Yami Bakura said.

"What?! I objected. "We are not friends!" Yami Bakura stopped running as everyone halted together.

"I'll explain it to you later. For now we have work to do," he said, pointing to a group of men. The group had one man with a gun who also stood in front of Ishizu who was tied up on the ground. Thoughts started running through my mind as I was face to face with a new enemy. But standing beside me were people I had failed and betrayed, backing me up willingly. Marik and Yami Bakura, once my enemies, now fighting on my side. For the first time I didn't feel alone in battle. Even people I once could not trust now putting their faith in me. Together we charged into a major fistfight that ended in rescuing Ishizu and teaching those thugs a lesson they'd never forget.

After the situation had been handled and Ishizu was safe again, it really was time for everyone to get some sleep and head home. I turned out the Ishtar's were just visiting from Egypt and they had a hotel to return to down the road. Yami Bakura remained in charge of Bakura's body, for I had a few questions.

"So why is your attitude towards me isn't as sour anymore?" I asked, eager to know.

"I guess you should know that I've been dormant inside your puzzle for some time," Yami Bakura said.

"What?!" I exclaimed. "How did you get into my puzzle?"

"Back when Yugi nearly lost his life in that fire trying to save you," Yami Bakura said. "But that's not the point."

"Well then, explain yourself," I demanded.

"Somewhere in your complex puzzle I discovered that we were once very good friends," he explained. "I didn't believe it at first, but when you open the right door to a memory, it just all comes flooding back and you know it's true."

"I'll have to give that door a visit," I said just thinking about the memories that would come back. Yami Bakura and I friends? I find that hard to believe, but I suppose it could be true even if I don't remember. It would have been nice if he had known back when we dueled at the Battle City Final. I wondered even then if he wasn't as evil as he appeared to be because at the last second, he stepped in to save Bakura's life.

* * *

“Yes!” Joey exclaimed. “We are the champions!” he said giving Tristin a high five.

Everyone was back to their normal routines of balancing fun time with schoolwork as classes started again. Everyone finished their homework since everyone worked together to help out and finish in record time. Even I decided to chip in and help out to give my part investing in their education. But I must admit the video games, though not at all educational, are more entertaining. Spending time with friends is something I guess I've been missing out on. I never realized how precious friends are even through time of pain or sadness.

“I wouldn't be so confident Joey,” I proclaimed. “Tea and I are gonna take you down!” Tea wrapped her arms around me with a smile. Something tells me she's been missing my more competitive side. And so everyone gave it their all challenging one another on cyber tag teams.

Alas the victors once more were Molly and Bakura as we all awoke to find 'loser' inscribed on our foreheads.