

Numb

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Atem and Yugi are orphaned brothers, on the run from a madman. Tea has died and Atem has been moping for the past year. As he sinks further into depression, will he be able to help his brother defeat the madman?

(based on the book:"Eragon")

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1 - Chapter 1 - Intro

Hi, I'm Yugi. You probably know me as the Duel Monsters Champion. I'm fourteen years old and I live with my big brother. His name's Atem, but I call him Pharaoh. We don't have parents. They died in an accident. We live anywhere; we're on the run from Bret. We have swords. Atem has a bow and arrows as well. We have two horses, called Keanu and Xanaha.

Atem's seventeen. He's more like a father to me. He was left to raise me when our parents died when I was four. He hardly ever speaks to anyone, just finds us a place to stay and some food. He protects us with everything he has. He might look skinny, but he's really strong. The Pharaoh's been numb ever since his girlfriend died. You see, he was training to be a dragon rider, but quit when his dragon, Elfin, crashed into her.

Elfin's still here, she goes everywhere with us. Atem doesn't even speak to her anymore. He never smiles or laughs, just has an emotionless look on his face all the time. He's a really tough guy and can take care of himself, but I know his secret. He hardly ever sleeps, because he has nightmares and cries himself to sleep. He's got loads of scars, from encounters with Bret and suicide attempts, so that he could be with his girlfriend.

I love to make new friends everywhere we go, but he stays away. He always finds some way to be alone and mope for hours. Atem's really good at Karate and fighting with his sword and bow and arrows. He taught me how to fight. He lets me practice on him, but I can never beat him. Sometimes he'll let me ride Elfin.

2 - Chapter 2-A new friend

It was dark by the time Yugi had finished shopping at the market. Atem had strayed away from the village and was alone in the forest, quietly mourning his loss. Though it had been a year ago he still couldn't think of anything but Tea. He dried his eyes, not wanting anyone to see him in this state.

"Are you the young man that Yugi has told me about?"

Atem gasped and looked up. Standing before him was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen, except for Tea. She had red hair in an unusual style of bun, wore a flowing white dress, had pointed ears, glittering blossom coloured eyes and unusually pale pink skin with an intricate pattern around her brow.

"Well? Oh, right, Yugi told me you don't speak," she blushed and stared down at her feet. "You're . . . a lot more attractive than I thought you would be,"

Atem got to his feet.

"My name's Helena," the elf smiled. She held out a hand, then frowned. "What are you doing?"

Atem was glaring and swinging his sword. There was no one there, but the clanging of the silver could be heard. He gave a swift kick at the thing and a hooded figure was revealed. It hissed and drew its own sword. It had deep red skin and its left arm was a blade. The stench of death hovered over them as it lifted its hood. Its face was like something Dr. Frankenstein would have made. It was as tall as two men.

Helena shrieked. Atem grabbed the beast by the neck and rammed his knee into its gut. It roared and he was thrown off. He leapt onto its shoulders and pulled at its jaw. There was a terrible CRACK and the monster floundered. It now had a dislocated jaw and, to make matters worse, it was still alive! Atem shoved it to the ground and pierced its heart with his blade. He stepped backwards as it got back up. His eyes widened, and he yanked at the sword. It finally came free and he fell over. The half-dead monstrosity grabbed him and threw him about like a toddler with a toy.

Atem jumped to his feet. His sword was nowhere in sight. He snatched the beast's arms and kicked at its head. It choked and stiffened, then collapsed. Atem picked up his sword and wiped the blood off it before replacing it in its sheath. Yugi ran over. "Did you survive the Whisperer?"

"The what?" Helena said, peeking through the gaps between her fingers.

"That thing the Pharaoh just killed," he replied.

Atem nodded.

"Let's go before it comes back!" Helena squeaked.

Atem mounted Elfin, his huge golden dragon, that had a shine to her scales. He sat between the base of her neck and her wings. Helena loved every bit of him. She liked his voice, which was just about audible when he grunted with the force as he battled, she liked his hair, his eyes, even the way his Adam's apple stuck out. She stared at him. "I thought you would be all muscular and everything," she said. "You are skin and bones!"

"Lack of food," Yugi grunted. "It's like I told you, we can't afford it. The Pharaoh would get a job, but no one would accept him after what we've done. At the market, I spent what my brother stole from a baron,"

Atem dug his heels into Elfin's side. The dragon raised her huge golden wings and thrust them downwards. They shot into the air, leaving Helena and Yugi coughing in a cloud of dust. "His dragon..."

coughed Helena. "It is..."

The dust cleared and she looked up. "The Winged Dragon of Ra!"

She gazed on at the mighty beast in awe.

"Yep!" Yugi nodded. "Well, you can ride Xanaha. Lets get going! The Pharaoh'll lead the way,"

Helena nodded and hopped onto the other horse. They galloped after Elfin, who stayed as close to the tree tops as possible. They stopped for the night in an opening at the centre of a cluster of trees. Yugi made a fire and Helena tied up the horses and made dinner. After a fine meal, darkness fell and it was time to go to sleep. Yugi put the fire out and curled up under his buckskin cover. Atem folded his arms, sitting on the grass and leaning against Elfin's belly. Silence.

Helena watched as sleep consumed him and he struggled to stay awake, until, finally, he fell asleep.

The sun rose, lighting up the pale blue sky. Elfin's wing was curved over Atem to keep him warm. He snored loudly. Elfin woke up and stretched her wings. Atem was sprawled across the grass, on his side.

"I can't wake him up," Yugi said to Helena quietly. "He's never slept so well,"

Helena could see the dirt trapped in his nails and felt that they were more like tramps. Their hands were dirty, their clothes were dirty and a little ripped and they smelt dusty.

3 - Chapter 3-Flashbacks and Poison

Atem fell from Elfin and landed on a platform. He fought away the Whisperers and tried to find Tea. Elfin roared and tried to fold her wings to evade her rider's closest friend. She couldn't steer away. The arrow in her hind leg proved too painful. She crashed into Tea and slipped down to the platform below, exhausted. Tea's screams echoed down the dark canyon. It was as if time stood still. The final Whisperer perished and Atem was motionless. Suddenly, time began again. "Tea!" Atem exclaimed. He jumped down to the platform and found her body. She was bloodied and pale. She was dead. Atem dropped his sword and fell to his knees beside her. He held her in a tight, trembling embrace as tears formed rivers down his cheeks. He carefully lay her back down and sat back on his hocks. "BREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!!!!!" he screamed at the sky, before throwing himself over his loved one and weeping over her. Yugi hopped down beside him and furrowed his brows. He felt tears form in the corners of his eyes. He knew how Atem felt about Tea and he never had the chance to tell her. She was a good friend of his too.

Atem opened his eyes.

"Are you-" Helena began. BOOM!

"Whisperers and Dozers! Mount the horses! Lets get outta here!" Yugi yelled. Atem leapt onto Elfin. Yugi tossed him his quiver and he put it on his back. He clasped his bow and checked that his sword was safely attached to his belt in its sheath. Elfin thrust off the ground and the horses galloped at a great speed. Arrows and blades were thrown at the three and Atem balanced himself on his feet. He loaded his bow and fired arrow after arrow, not missing a single shot. A dagger was thrown at him. He jumped over it and landed on Elfin's tail. She swerved and he gripped her tail, slowly making his way back up to where he had been before. He ducked as an arrow flew overhead, but looked up too soon as they entered a cave. His back and the back of his neck scraped the rough rocks of the roof and left him bleeding. He noticed a protruding lump of sharp rock ahead and stayed low to his dragon's spine. He dug his heels into her sides and steered her to the left.

Elfin folded her wings and made a sharp turn around the rock. She folded her wings once more and made a swoop for the exit. She turned on her side and flattened her wings against her body. Atem stayed low, held in place by a harness that went around the dragon's belly and held his ankles to her sides. They burst out of the cave and Dozers had gathered outside. They were huge, burly beasts, with troll-like features. They swung huge axes. Elfin used her tail as whip and smashed three of them into the rock. Atem sent a rain of arrows at them. He caught a glimpse of a black dragon, ahead, rising above the clouds. He pulled Elfin away from the monsters below, by pulling a leather strap that went round her neck. He pulled them back hard and they pierced through the clouds. He tucked the straps back under the harness and looked up.

Atem spotted the black dragon. It was hovering several metres away. Its rider had a hood over his face, laughing madly.

He recognised that laugh. A glimpse of a man with scarred blue skin, scales around his eyes and hands, deep red, snake-like eyes and a long black cloak on flashed before his eyes and he gasped. It was Bret. Suddenly, a small dart came spiraling towards Atem. It slammed into his arm, spilling its contents into his blood. He pulled it out and Elfin made a quick landing in the nearest forest. "What happened?" Yugi

cried, hopping off Keanu and hurrying over.

"He has been poisoned!" Helena gasped.

That evening, by the fire, the poison had reacted quickly. Atem lay on the ground, shaking, gaping and foaming at the mouth. Blood mixed in as the deadly liquid burned his lungs. He began to choke and suffocate, eyes glazed. Helena was trying to cure him with a spell, but didn't know which one. Yugi was frantically passing her herbs and leaves for potions.

"Come on, stay awake," Helena said quietly. "I'm nearly there,"

Atem choked and more blood spilled from his mouth.

"Easy, easy," Yugi said putting a comforting hand on his shoulder.

4 - Chapter 4-flight of the phoenix

Helena quickly cast a spell. Nothing happened. Atem's vision blurred. Yugi shook him, yelling; "Stay awake!"

Helena noticed the roof of a building not too far away. "Elna," she muttered. "Elna city," She wrapped a sheet around Atem and sat him on Keanu's back and sat behind him, holding the reins. Yugi jumped onto Xanaha and told Elfin to fly ahead. Atem was barely breathing by the time they reached the Healer in the city. Her name was Yumi. She quickly carried him in her arms into her house and laid him on her bed. She left his sword and quiver on a table and took his shaking left hand and examined it. In the middle of his palm was a hieroglyphic that had been carved into his skin. It was a vulture, meaning 'A'. "Dragon Rider. Owner of the Winged Dragon of Ra," she whispered. "My brother is dying!" Yugi snapped.

"Yes." Yumi said, hastily turning to a bookshelf. She picked out a book, scanned a few pages and put it back. Atem was choking and spluttering. Yumi came back over to him. Only the whites of his eyes could be seen as his eyelids flickered. She whispered a spell in his ear. He fell still and silent. She closed his eyes and pulled the covers over him. "I have stopped the poison. I do not know how to heal such wounds as his, we will see how he copes until I can find the right potion or spell. For now, he must rest," she said, leaving the room and closing the door behind her. Helena and Yugi stayed by Atem all night. Helena wiped his mouth and the sweat from his brow.

As the sun rose, the following day, Atem, Yugi and Helena were told to leave the city. They could stay in a near by forest, but they couldn't come into the city.

The next night, Atem had been healed, and just needed plenty of rest. His covers were over him and Helena kept a close eye on him as Yugi went out in search of food with Elfin. Just waking up from yet another nightmare, Atem pulled the covers over his head and sobbed quietly. Helena could hear him and knew that he thought she couldn't, so said nothing. She watched him as he pulled the covers back down and rolled over, wiping away tears. She decided to speak to him about it. She got up and walked over then sat down beside him cross-legged. "Yugi has told me that you often have these nightmares and flashbacks. He told me you only tell people in Ancient Egyptian. I can understand that language. Do you want to talk about it? You might feel better,"

Atem looked up at her, then turned away. He took a deep breath and began to explain about Tea and the accident and that he wanted to escape Bret. Helena listened to the fluent baritone voice of the seventeen-year-old, taking in every word.

Atem opened his eyes the next morning. It was freezing cold and the ground was covered in snow. Elfin had her wing over him again. He stammered to his feet, clinging onto her. She turned her head and watched curiously, lifting her wing. He stumbled. Yugi instantly grabbed him and tried to steady him. Atem glowered and shoved him off. He grabbed onto the dragon's harness and pulled himself up. He was now lying across Elfin's back, struggling to get his whole body in the right position. Elfin grunted as he accidentally kicked her. She gave a low, coughing growl -a laugh- and used her muzzle to push him up. Yugi giggled. Atem got his legs over and fastened his ankles to the harness. He sat up and shot Yugi a glare.

"Do not go too high or fast. You are still recovering," Helena warned.

"Whisperers!" someone shouted from the city.

"Oh, great. More dead things!" Yugi groaned. Atem quietly steered Elfin a few metres away, so that no one would notice if they flew away.

"Pharaoh, stay close to us and-" Helena trailed off. Elfin had already taken off.

"It is his duty as a dragon rider to protect innocent people from evil," Yugi sighed. "He'll never learn. Look, he's going straight into the battle. He'll-"

"He know's what he's doing! A dragon rider possesses power far beyond anything we know, especially one so young," Helena butted in. Yugi paused and nodded.

They galloped back to Elna.

Atem had dismounted Elfin and was swinging his sword all over the place, throwing in the odd bit of self defence, never missing a single beast. He moved with such speed and ease, though his sword was heavy and, as Yugi discovered, uneasy to control if you were inexperienced. Atem had had enough, and Elfin was wounded. These would take too long to defeat. He raised his left hand, fingers spread out. "PHOENIX MODE!" The vulture lit up in a red glow and Elfin scooped him up. They flew high into the sky and he kept his hand up. Both he and the dragon screamed as a bolt of golden light was absorbed into his palm. He pressed his hand to a matching symbol on his dragon's neck. A blinding light burst from them and they reappeared in front of the sun. Elfin had transformed into a huge flame in the shape of a phoenix and Atem's sword was crimson, with blue rings that pulsed down the blade.

They dived down and swooped over the startled army of feinds, setting them on fire. Adrenalin surged through Atem and he leapt off Elfin and began slicing through the Whisperers. Once dead, they disappeared. Elfin and Atem returned to their normal forms.