

Unification

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Submitted: June 12, 2007

Updated: June 12, 2007

Pairing: Seto Kaiba and Yami no Bakura. No graphic stuff, only hints really.

WARNING: Spoilers for the end of YuGiOh within.

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1 - Unification

Darkness. All around him was nothing but darkness, hour after hour, day after day. He had no idea how long he had been floating in the void with nothing but his vengeful anger for company and he didn't really care. All he wanted was freedom; his entire being was focused on escaping and exacting revenge on the one who had trapped him so. He did not know that the pharaoh was already gone to a place he could never reach, that all his plotting and anger was utterly pointless. He did not know, so he fought the darkness around him, hurling his anger at it, battering it with his fury. Slowly but inevitably, his anger reached a level that even the empty nothingness of oblivion could not contain and a small crack opened, leading through to the material plane. It was open for no more than a nanosecond, but that was more than enough time for Bakura to escape his prison.

Once he was through, he immediately began searching for his host. He could possess anyone he desired, but Ryou, being his reincarnation, was the most compatible by far. Only in Ryou could he unleash his full power. So he was not at all pleased to find that his hikari was no longer living in the same apartment. Rising high above the city in his non-corporeal form, he reached out with his senses, as he should have done to begin with, he realised in annoyance, and waited for the small tug that would mean he had found his former host. It never came. Disgruntled and slightly alarmed, he widened his search to as far as his senses could possibly reach. Still nothing. The feeling of alarm quickly took root in his metaphorical stomach and began to grow. It was not fear for Ryou, it was fear for himself. Once on the material plane, he only had so long before his spirit began to dissipate, unless he found a host quickly, he would fade into nothing. It had been so much easier when he had resided in the Millennium Ring and only had to reach out with part of his being to take over Ryou's body, but now he was exposed with no magical casing to protect his spirit from the corrosive energies of the planet. He had to find a host now, but he didn't want to merge with just anybody. Once he bonded with someone, the only way to release himself was to kill the host, and that tended to damage the spirit within as well, something he would very much like to avoid. Drifting back down to street level, he studied the people close by, invisible to them as he used what little power he had in his current form to scrutinize their souls. He cursed his finicky nature as he travelled from soul to soul, finding more problems than he could count with each he analysed. After a while, he had to remind himself that time was running out. He had no choice but to pick the most suitable candidate from the specimens before him and hope for the best. Sighing as best a being without lungs could, he made for what he figured to be the best choice. He stopped dead in his tracks less than a metre from his target as another candidate entered his line of sight, turning the nearby corner at a brisk pace and walking as though there was no one else around. With a thrill of evil satisfaction, he made for the newcomer instead, passing through flesh until he collided with his victim's soul and then forcefully blending himself with the other's spirit, effectively entrenching himself in the new body.

Seto slowed to a halt as a strange, indescribable feeling overtook him. He felt...violated, but how, he could not explain. It was almost like he was suddenly being watched, that everything he did was under the close scrutiny of someone who had absolutely no regard for his privacy. He started walking again almost immediately, scolding himself for thinking such ridiculous thoughts. He would have noticed if he

was being followed and he was wearing the device he'd manufactured that used electromagnetic pulses to, for want of a better word, cloak him from any recording equipment. If anyone was taking footage of him, when they played it back, it would be as though he were not there. He was quite proud of this particular invention, but had decided not to share it with anyone. If it was marketed, then there was a very real possibility that someone would develop technology to counter it, and he wasn't at all keen on that idea, he valued his privacy very much. Approaching one of Kaibacorps smaller office buildings, he turned his mind back to the meeting he was about to attend. This particular branch had been having problems and he had no doubt he would be doing some firing today. He wanted to perfect a few sarcastic responses before the meeting got underway.

Bakura lurked quietly in the back of Seto's mind, listening to his thoughts and paying little attention to where they were headed. He'd always known that Kaiba had a mean streak, but he never would have expected him to take so much pleasure in the thought of dismissing employees. He was even having fantasies about making some of them cry! It all served to amuse the evil spirit, as many of Ryou's actions had done. All of his former host's thoughts had been pure though, worries about money, his education, romance. The thoughts of romance had amused Bakura the most, crushes on people he could ever hope to initiate a relationship with. But this new host, his thoughts were decidedly darker, more inclined towards negatively affecting other people, a very welcome change. His soul was full of bitterness, determination and anger, there was lots of anger. Not directed towards anything particular, just a burning rage that the ex tomb robber could sense was barely held in check most of the time. Yes, there was lots of potential here, he had lucked out in his choice of a new host. But before he could attempt any kind of communication or a take over, he needed to learn more about how Seto Kaiba functioned, what drove him, what he feared and most of all, what held the key to unlocking his latent abilities. Another reason for Bakura's snap decision to take Kaiba; he was the reincarnation of a powerful sorcerer, so he undoubtedly had strong magical abilities, even if he refused to accept it. Bakura was determined to awaken them and use them for himself.

For three weeks he sat, unnoticed, in the room in Seto's mind he had claimed as his own and watched his day to day actions, studying each thought behind them and trying to build a picture of his character. Finally, his already short patience could stand no more and he decided it was now or never. He couldn't just sit back any longer, it would take years to fully understand his new host, years that could be better spent terrorizing people and causing glorious chaos. Standing, he stretched and headed for the room that would take him directly into Seto's consciousness. Once he had wrested control from him, and he had no doubt that he would succeed, Seto would be thrown back to the subconscious that Bakura had inhabited for the past three weeks and would be unable to do anything but watch as Bakura used his body as his own. That was if he was strong enough to stay conscious, Ryou never had been, so consequently never had any memory of his yami's actions, but he was fairly sure Seto would manage it.

Reaching the large, heavily bolted door, he lashed out with his mind and pulled back all the bolts simultaneously. There wasn't really any need for his small display of power, he merely wanted to remind himself that he could do it if he wanted to; it had been so long since he'd had the opportunity. White light spilled out as he pulled the door open, letting it bang against the stone wall flanking it. Instead of shielding his eyes from the glare, he opened them wide, letting the impossibly bright light burn

his eyes for no other reason than he wanted to show no weakness, even when alone. Letting his face break into a gleeful grin, he stepped forward and pushed his way through the mental barriers, shoving them aside as though he were merely wading through treacle instead of invading someone's consciousness.

Seto only just had time to register that something was wrong before he was overwhelmed by the feeling of falling into nothing. The unpleasant feeling didn't last long, but the sight that met him when it ended was equally unwelcome. Somehow, he was no longer in his office, instead he was standing in what appeared to be a long, dark stone passageway with a few doors dotted along it. Clenching his jaw in anger, he turned a full circle, finding nothing but the same behind him, then slammed a fist into the wall. How was this possible?! He must have been drugged and transported somewhere while he was unconscious, but his desk faced the door and there had been no one in his office. And he'd come to on his feet! He couldn't explain it and he did not like not being able to explain things. Grinding his teeth, he closed his eyes and took a deep breath, almost choking on the air as he found that with his eyes closed, he could once again see his office. He opened and closed his eyes a few times to test the theory before placing his back flat against a wall and closing them tightly, all the while trying to figure out what the hell was going on.

Bakura rose slowly from the padded chair, lifting Seto's hands up to eye level and flexing the fingers. A slow smile spread across his face as he studied the body further, then focusing his attention on his surroundings. True to his nature, he rifled through all the draws he could find, almost letting out an uncharacteristic squeak of pleasure when he found a hand pistol in the lower right hand drawer of the desk. Sticking it in the back of Kaiba's belt so that it was hidden beneath his white trench coat, he strode towards the door and kicked it open, startling the secretary filing her nails in Kaiba's personal reception. Ignoring her stuttered offerings of assistance, he made straight for the nearest lift. He had been trapped inside Kaiba's subconscious for three weeks, and in an endless void for god knows how long before that, there were things he needed to do.

Letting out a contented purr, he licked the last traces of chocolate from the spoon and pushed the empty cake dish away from him. He had been delighted to find a cafeteria in the Kaibacorp building, he hadn't even realised there was one. Kaiba hadn't visited it once in the three weeks he'd been with him. He didn't understand why, the cakes were among the best he'd ever tasted, and he'd had a lot of cake. Ignoring the stares of the employees around him, who were being submitted to the double shock of actually seeing their grouchy, almost reclusive boss, and seeing said boss eat five slices of cake, he exited the cafeteria and headed out of the building to work on the next item on his want list.

Seto watched it all from his place in the dark corridor. His hands shook with rage as Bakura, in his opinion, desecrated his body. He hadn't touched cake in years! Not since that unfortunate puking incident, at which time he'd declared the stuff evil and sworn to never again let it pass his lips. It went from bad to worse as Bakura indulged in atrocities ranging from excessive alcohol consumption to lewd behaviour towards any attractive woman in the vicinity. Eventually, night began to fall and Seto

wondered for the thousandth time how long he was going to be held prisoner in his own body. At first he had refused to believe that this was the case, but as time wore on, he'd been forced to accept the truth. He worked with holographic imagery every day, and was confident he could tell the difference between a virtual world and the real one. This was no fake, it was real and he was scared. For the first time since his early childhood, he was actually frightened. Opening his eyes, he stared blankly at the opposite wall. What if he never got his body back and was forced to watch as some other being lived out his life using his body?

Just as he started to fall into true despair, he felt a sudden jerk then found himself standing in a dark alley, surrounded by angry looking thugs wielding crude weapons. Blinking, he silently cursed himself for not paying attention to what was going on around him during his moment of self pity. From the expressions on their faces, he had no doubt that his new roommate had said or done something highly offensive. Falling back into a defensive crouch, he waited for the inevitable attack.

Practically falling through his front door, he slammed it shut behind him and staggered towards the stairs, groaning slightly at the thought of the agonising climb ahead of him. Fifteen minutes later, he slumped back onto his bed and tried not to move. He was so battered it felt like his bruises had bruises, he couldn't remember ever feeling so much pain. He considered himself lucky to have escaped alive. Obviously the being in his mind didn't have much regard for his health.

While Bakura did not feel Seto's pain, he was aware of it. Smirking, he reached out and touched his hosts mind with his own. Now that he was physically exhausted and distracted by pain, he had a feeling he'd be a lot easier to talk to than he would have been had his body simply been returned as it was.

"Hello there, how are we feeling today?"

Seto's gradually closing eyes snapped open as he heard the voice in his mind. It felt strangely like his own thoughts, but someone entirely different at the same time. He couldn't help sneering as he registered what the being had actually said.

"Who the hell are you and what are you doing in my head?" He demanded angrily, trying and failing to sit up.

Me? Why, I'm you of course. I am now anyway.

"Don't be absurd! Of course you aren't me, if you were me, I'd be able to control you!"

Don't get all logical on me boy, it's annoying. Very well, I'm not you, but I will be.

"How do you figure that?"

I'm here to stay, we're going to be together for the rest of your life, we will eventually blend and become one. Unless you choose to black out when I'm in control, in which case you'll lead a half life that mostly involves you frequently waking up in places you don't recognise, covered in new and exciting things.

Seto ignored the chuckling that accompanied this last statement and snarled angrily. "You've invaded my mind, made me do things I would never do, and almost gotten me killed. If this is how one day with you ends, I don't think our time together is going to be very long!"

The laughter sounded again, echoing uncomfortably in his mind.

Forgive me, I've been locked away for a long time. And I had no choice but to incapacitate you a little, if you'd been at full strength, I imagine we'd be having a shouting match right about now.

Seto couldn't deny that he was right. If he had the energy, he'd be screaming himself hoarse in fury. As it was, most of his rage was left to bubble beneath the surface, making him shake and making his muscles twitch uncomfortably as they protested against the movement. Before he could open his mouth to reply, he found that the room was starting to spin and he was once again overcome by the feeling of falling. A bolt of fear shot through him as the world blacked out.

Bakura sighed in annoyance. Seto's loss of consciousness was not for the same reasons as before, as his host obviously feared. It seemed that he had perhaps pushed him a little too far physically. No matter, he would awaken. They could continue their conversation then.

Seto slept through the next day and did not open his eyes again until the moon was high in the sky. Mokuba was away at college and the servants were forbidden to enter his room, so there was no one to wake him. Gently pushing himself up into a sitting position, he rubbed his eyes and shook his head slightly. Raising his gaze, he scrambled backwards into the headboard and let out a choking sound. Perched on the edge of his bed was a savage looking young man with wild, spiked white hair falling down past his shoulders and cold, calculating eyes. It was a face he recognised, though the expression was very alien on it.

"R-Ryou?!"

"No. He was my previous host and my reincarnation, hence my resemblance to him. Or rather, his resemblance to me." The intruder replied. Seto continued to stare, noticing after a few moments what it was that was so odd about the way he looked. He could see the wall opposite through him! He was transparent like a ghost! Like a ghost...

Eyes widening in fear, Seto attempted to scramble back further, but found himself blocked by the solid wood of his headboard. Bakura rolled his eyes. He knew the source of this sudden fear. Whilst sifting through his hosts memories, he'd come across the reason he'd been unable to locate Ryou. Apparently he'd had an unfortunate run in with a bus that left him very hard indeed to locate. Not that he

would be much use now without a body of his own, even if he could be found.

“I’m not Ryou! I already said that. Ryou is dead and gone. I’m Bakura, I used to inhabit the Millennium Ring.” He snapped. Seto’s eyes narrowed at the mention of the Ring. That was one of those items that the geek squad were always rabbiting on about. He hadn’t seen them in years and anything that lead back to them was most unwelcome. Bakura heard all these thoughts and grinned.

“I’m in full agreement, don’t you worry.” And before Seto could protest against the invasion of his privacy, Bakura’s image faded away, presumably back to wherever he hid in Seto’s mind.

On my travels I’ve found some rather interesting things, Mr Kaiba He continued, startling Seto slightly, For instance, this door here...

In a heartbeat, Seto found himself inside the stone passageway again, this time with Bakura standing beside him. He allowed himself a moment to hope his body hadn’t fallen on the floor as it lost consciousness before he glared at Bakura. The grinning spirit just stood and stared back until Seto finally looked at the door he’d indicated. Smirking slightly in victory, Bakura folded his arms.

“I have been completely unable to open this door.” He stated. It was the only one he’d been unable to open, which led him to believe that Seto’s latent magical abilities lay beyond. If they were unleashed, the body he now resided in would become extremely more useful. “Open it.”

Seto eyed the large, solid looking padlocks placed at two foot intervals around the entire frame of the door and folded his own arms. “No.” He answered simply. He had no idea what this spirit or demon or whatever it was had in mind, but he was pretty certain it wasn’t good. Instead of frowning or losing his temper, as Seto expected, Bakura threw back his head and laughed. The laughter continued for almost a minute before abruptly stopping as Bakura lunged forward, pinning Seto to the wall and bruising the startled CEO’s ribs in the process. Seto thought for a moment that he was about to be strangled as Bakura reached for his captives neck. But, instead, he grasped the chain that Seto hadn’t even noticed was there and pulled it up over his head. Stepping back with his prize, he held it up for his host to see. It was a fairly long, silver chain with a small, delicate looking key hanging from it. Seto eyed the key then the padlocks.

“You have to be kidding? No way will that puny thing open those locks.” He had forgotten his reluctance to open the door as curiosity had finally won out. He couldn’t help but be intrigued, and, on further thought, he reasoned that it couldn’t be that dangerous, it was in his own mind after all. The thought of smashing Bakura’s head against the wall was ever there, but he’d grown used to ignoring these thoughts over the years.

Bakura laughed again and strode over to the locks, searching them until he found what he was looking for. Tiny, barely noticeable keyholes, located in different places on each individual lock. Grinning over at Seto, he quickly began releasing them. Seto gasped as the first lock fell away, and proceeded to react in a similar manner as each new one was released. As the door was quickly unbolted, it felt as though a large bubble was building within him, the pressure mounting as the door moved closer and closer to freedom.

“S-stop!” He cried, voice mixed with equal amounts of fear and anger. Bakura paused, the final lock in

his hands and the key poised just centimetres from it. When Seto did nothing but glare at him with eyes promising pain, he snorted and turned back to his work. He lived for violence, threats just filled him with sick pleasure. Besides, he wanted Seto angry. Ramming the key home, he gave it a twist and dropped the final lock to the floor. He didn't have to open the door this time, it burst open on its own, hurling the startled psychopath against the opposite wall and knocking the air from his lungs. He had not expected quite such a violent reaction.

Seto managed a short, strangled scream as the bubble inside him felt as though it had burst and was spilling liquid fire into his veins before he blacked out yet again.

When he awoke this time, he was back in his room and Bakura was sitting on the edge of his bed, tapping his foot impatiently against the floor. Bolting upright, he sprang off the bed and backed away.

“What did you do you lunatic?!”

“Calm down! It will only hurt you if you let it.”

“Answer the god damn question!!”

Bakura tilted his head to the side and grinned. “As you wish.” Without another word, he stepped forward and shoved Seto backwards with as much force as he could. Straight through a closed window. Gasping in shock, he curled into a protective ball and waited for the impact that would surely break every bone in his body...and waited, and waited. Eventually, he cracked one eye open and looked up into Bakura's laughing face. The malicious spirit was leaning out the window, his arms resting on the sill. Seto opened his other eye and frowned slightly. How could he not have felt the impact? Twisting his head to the side, he nearly had a heart attack when he saw that the ground was still a good ten feet below him. He was somehow floating in mid air! Snapping his gaze back to Bakura, the question was clear on his face.

Bakura chuckled and floated over the window sill, drifting down to join Seto. “That room contained your dormant magical abilities” he explained, “Now that the door is open, you should be able to do pretty much anything you can think of. Plus, there's the added benefit of your power kicking in automatically when your life is threatened. Very handy in my opinion.”

Seto stared dumbly for a moment then gulped. “How do I get down?”

“Down? Wouldn't you much rather go up? Come on, follow me.”

Seto's face twisted into a snarl as Bakura started to move upwards. He meant to yell at him that he just told him he didn't know how, but found that he was already moving upwards. He'd felt the desire to punch Bakura in the face, so now he was moving towards Bakura. Was it really that simple? Did he just have to want it?

A few moments later, he caught up with the ex tomb robber and clenched his fist. Bakura just raised an eyebrow and pointed downward. Seto followed his finger and instantly forgot about pummelling Bakura's face. Below him, Domino City was spread out like a sprawling sheet of multicoloured twinkling

lights, they were so high up, he couldn't even see any cars, let alone people. Blinking slowly, he drank in the view, unable to deny its splendour. How many people got to see the city like this, and feel the cool autumn breeze play through their hair at the same time? Bakura let him stare silently for a few minutes before clearing his throat to regain his attention.

"What is it you want?" Seto asked, utterly confused by everything that had occurred over the last two days.

"To live" Bakura shrugged, "To conquer. To destroy. Not all that much really."

Seto looked away, back down at the city below him. He could feel it now, it burned within him as furiously and relentlessly as his anger at the world. With power like this, he would be unstoppable. He could obliterate all those worthless idiots that pestered him day in and day out. He could reshape the world exactly as he wanted it to be.

Bakura heard all this and his eyes brightened with each passing word. It was more than he'd hoped for, the anger within his new host far stronger than even he'd suspected. Perhaps...perhaps they could work together. Perhaps this time, his conquest of the world would be successful. Perhaps, even, he had finally found someone he could truly bond with...Shaking his head, he disregarded the last thought and drifted a little closer to Seto.

"Well? Tempting, isn't it?"

Seto glanced over at him with eyes that clearly showed the battle raging within him. Bakura was right, it was tempting, he couldn't deny that he'd had this fantasy since childhood. And then there was Bakura himself. While the spirit was undeniably annoying, there was something almost alluring about him. He was exotic, unique and probably understood him better than anyone, even Mokuba, after all that time in his head. If he did refuse, what would he do instead with all this power? Becoming some sort of vigilante and using it to help people was out of the question, it was the last thing he wanted to spend his time doing. But, much as he hated people, did he really want to kill them?

Bakura waited until he was sure Seto wasn't going to answer before drifting right over to his side. If you aren't sure, listen and look. Open your senses and see what it's like down there. I assure you, wherever you look, you'll find deceit, greed, selfishness and scum. The world is rotten, beyond saving, why waste your time living with them when you have the power to get rid of them?"

Seto didn't look at his companion this time, just doing as he said instead. He opened his senses, saw everything below him at once and separately at the same time, and found that it was true. He could find nothing he considered worth the air it breathed. No matter who he studied, there was always something that stained them, some nasty, selfish act they'd committed at some point, or where going to, he realised, as it became apparent that he could see that too. Snapping back to himself, he looked down once again with regular vision at the city below him, his face displaying anger and disgust rather than awe this time.

"You're right" he said simply.

Bakura couldn't hide his glee, and didn't really try to. When he'd first suggested a partnership, it had

only been a ploy, but now it had become something much more. He had gained himself a powerful ally and was one giant step closer to his goal. Yami was long since forgotten, he knew now that he was gone and had for quite some time. Seto knew of what had transpired, even if he had refused to believe it. Yes, he had something much more interesting to occupy his thoughts now. And, he couldn't stop himself thinking, perhaps his body too. After all, they were as good as solid to each other inside Seto's head. Smirking, he followed Seto's gaze down to the city and relished in the hundreds of delicious tortures that flashed through his mind.

The inhabitants of this wretched world had no idea of the hell that was about to be unleashed.