

Miracles of Egypt

Von Atemue

Kapitel 3:

Title: Miracles of Egypt

Part: 3/3

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Warnings: slight angst, romance, lemon, SPOILERS for the end of the manga

Genre: Romance

Pairings: Atemu x Yuugi

Criticism: Constructive criticism welcomed

Disclaimer: Nothing is mine; I don't make money from fanfiction.

Description: Just before he is supposed to depart to the underworld, Atemu learns something surprising about his past and realizes a little secret Yuugi did not tell him. And if that is not enough, in the last hours before their separation Atemu, Yuugi and the gang meet someone new. Someone surprisingly familiar.

Thanks to my betareaders Deb and Elsalhir for the usual quick work. ^^ Also I would like to thank the people who offered some translations for the word "goodbye".

Egyptian Names and their meanings:

Djed-ra-iu-ef-anch (Ra says that he may live)

Imdewaw (Goodbye)

Last chapter:

The Egyptian bent down to kiss the Japanese's forehead before he reached for one of the blankets lying beside them. Carefully he covered both of their bodies with the warm material and put his arms around his lover's body.

"Yuugi, stay with me", he whispered into the teen's ear. "I want you to stay by my side forever."

Yuugi didn't answer. Slowly he moved himself up until he lay on the same level as the Egyptian. He gave the young man a small smile and a quick kiss on the lips before laying his head down onto the other's chest and closed his eyes.

Quietly he felt Atemu settling into a better position against his body, the arms around his hips never leaving. He listened the soft breathing evening out as sleep overtook the Egyptian. But he himself was not able to sleep at all. He lay there, eyes wide open now, quietly listening to the other's heartbeat and feeling the steady movements of the chest his head lay on.

Suddenly, tears started to gather in the teen's eyes as realization of what he'd just done hit him full force. He couldn't stay here. He didn't want to cry and risk waking the man beside him.

Slowly, carefully, Yuugi disentangled himself from the other's embrace and got up. He quickly slipped into his boxer shorts and his trousers. With one last look at the sleeping figure on the bed, he turned around and left the tent.

The night was quiet and quite cold, but Yuugi didn't seem to notice this as he hastened over the ground, away from the tents and away from the single fire which still burned.

He walked through the ruins until he could not see the camp anymore and the second he was sure that he was far enough away, his legs were no longer able to support his weight.

With a silent cry Yuugi sank to the ground and started to sob uncontrollably. Hot tears wet his cheeks and he didn't even try to wipe them away. He just sat there on the ground and sobbed and sobbed and sobbed.

He was so absorbed in his current misery, that he did not hear the noise of steps coming nearer. Thus he was terribly surprised when suddenly something warm was put around his bare shoulders and a body embraced him from behind.

"Aibou, you will catch a cold if you run around like this," he heard Atemu's soft, caring voice speak. Yuugi looked up and saw the spirit of the former pharaoh looking at him, concern all over his face. The sight caused the teen to give a hard sob before he turned fully around and buried his face into the former pharaoh's chest, crying for all he was worth.

Atemu embraced his aibou tightly, confusion and worry clouding his eyes as he listened the other crying his heart out.

"Mou hitori... Atemu!" Yuugi sobbed, his hands pressing desperately against the other's back. "I'm sorry, so sorry!"

It took the young Japanese a long time to calm down from his breakdown and even more time went by before he finally found enough strength to explain to the worried former pharaoh what was going on in his torn up soul.

The two young men sat down on a fallen over pillar. Atemu immediately embracing the other body again while Yuugi leant his head contentedly against the spirit's chest.

"Now let's take this slowly, aibou," the former pharaoh said softly. "Why are you crying?"

"I've been such an idiot," Yuugi murmured miserably. "You must hate me now."

"Aibou, why should I hate you?"

"Because..." Yuugi started to sob again. "Because I've acted like a cheap whore. I sank so low, I still can't believe I did this!"

"Aibou?" Atemu looked at the teen, deeply worried now.

"I've slept with him!" the teen nearly screamed. "How can you be so calm when I made love to a totally stranger? I didn't mean to do it. I don't know what happened. I can't understand it myself."

Another sob escaped his throat and he looked up at the former pharaoh of Egypt, voice now quiet and shaking when he said his next sentence.

"All I ever wanted was to give my first time to you!"

"Aibou," Atemu whispered, touched and saddened by Yuugi's anguish and the confession he'd made. "Don't take this so hard."

"But Atemu, I just allowed a total stranger to make love to me. I can't believe it myself."

"Are you sure that this man is a stranger to you?"

Yuugi stared at the former pharaoh for a moment before he slowly shook his head.

"I forgot myself," he admitted miserably. "Back there in the tent, when he looked at me, I thought it was you. All the time, every minute, every second my mind was only thinking of you. You two are so similar. He looks like you, his name is yours, his voice, the way he talks, and it all reminds me of you. And when he kissed me," his voice was shaking now and he had to swallow three times before he was able to continue.

"When he kissed me, my mind was telling me it was you. I... I couldn't help it... oh god, Atemu what have I done?"

Tears came up in his eyes again but Atemu quickly wiped them away and shook his head.

"Think about it, aibou, do you really think that this similarity is just coincidence? Do you really think the fact that he seems to match me in every aspect is just a plain accident, a prank of fate?"

The teen looked at the former pharaoh, not quite getting what the other was trying to tell him.

"What else could it be if not a cruel joke of fate?" he asked sadly. "It's not as if it could be you. You are a spirit after all, right here in front of my eyes."

But Atemu shook his head again a small smile now playing around his lips.

"And this is where I think you are wrong. I am even daring to say that he is most certainly me."

"But how?" Yuugi breathed, shock evident in his eyes. "He can't be you! You are here and he is more or less a stranger to me. I don't know him at all! That's what makes this even worse."

"How can he be a stranger, aibou?" Atemu softly objected. "You already learned a lot about him last night when you talked by the fire."

Yuugi wanted to say something but was silenced by a finger of the spirit placed against his lips.

"Do you remember what he said earlier that evening, aibou? That he always felt like he was missing something important and that he had been searching for this missing piece for a long time?"

Yuugi nodded silently.

"I think Atemu Djed-ra-iu-ef-anch IS me. At least, a part of me," the former pharaoh explained. "When I died, 3000 years ago, my soul was banished into the puzzle. But I think that is only half of the story."

"And what's the other half?" Yuugi wanted to know.

"That it was only half of my soul that was banished," Atemu answered with a smile. "Yesterday, by the fire, when Atemu told us about the feeling of missing something, I said that I understood that feeling quite well didn't I?"

The teen nodded quietly.

"That's because I've felt that way since you released me from my prison, aibou," the spirit continued. "In the beginning I thought the feeling was caused because of my missing memories. But now, after I've met Atemu, I realized that it must be the feeling of my missing soul."

Realization hit Yuugi with this explanation, but he still felt unsure if that could really be the truth.

"But how can you be this sure now?" he asked slowly. "Couldn't there be another reason for your feeling of missing something?"

"I would ask myself the same question if it weren't for the fact that I met Atemu,

aibou. When he showed up for the first time, I felt drawn to him and the slight feeling of emptiness I've had for so long was nearly gone. I am quite sure this man is the missing piece of my soul, aibou, believe me. I am the part that got banished into the Sennen Puzzle, and he is the part that went to the gods and is now reborn."

Yuugi looked thoughtful now. He considered the words of the ancient spirit. It made sense in some way and the idea of this other Atemu being a part of HIS Atemu's soul, was quite soothing and eased the pain he felt when the sudden realization of his actions had hit him.

"But still... he is a stranger in my eyes," the teen finally admitted, voice lost. "It's not the same as it would have been with you. How could I let this happen? I wanted to be with YOU."

"Aibou, please don't." The former pharaoh took both hands of the other in his own and placed a small, loving kiss onto Yuugi's forehead. "It may be true, you might not know him as you know me because we've already spent one year together. But you learned a part of his life and if you give this all a chance, if you give him... US a chance, this could work out after all."

He smiled at Yuugi, stroking through his bangs lovingly.

"Remember that he is still a part of the same man you loved in your past life. Give him a chance, aibou. Get to know him again, let him stay by your side and things will turn out well, you'll see."

"And you are not angry?" Yuugi asked timidly. Atemu's answer was a laugh while he ruffled through his aibou's hair.

"No, I am not angry, not at all, aibou."

The teen sighed and leaned his head back against the strong, solid chest of the ancient pharaoh.

"Well," he mumbled against the fabric of the jacket the spirit wore, "maybe I'll give it a try."

"That's the spirit, aibou!" Atemu praised and they both fell silent. They just sat there, listening to the songs of the desert night and basked in the presence of each other. However, suddenly Yuugi moved his head to look at the ancient pharaoh, suspicion shining in his eyes now.

"By the way, what were you doing out here, Atemu? I don't think you were waiting for me to burst out of the tent so you could follow me."

Atemu remained silent for a long moment, his face unreadable. But Yuugi had some suspicions and they both knew it. Also, there had never been any lies or secrets between them before and the former pharaoh didn't plan on starting with lying now.

"You are right, aibou, I wasn't expecting you to take your actions this badly and run away from the camp," Atemu admitted with a sigh. "When you suddenly came out of the tent, I was just considering leaving."

Yuugi gasped, even though he had been expecting this kind of answer.

"But Atemu, what about our friends?" he asked in shock. "Why would you want to leave in the middle of the night? I thought we would finish this whole ceremony in the morning, all together."

Atemu looked into Yuugi's widened eyes and smiled, a small, sad smile, something the teen was not used to see on the former pharaoh's face.

"That's the problem, aibou, 'all together'. I just didn't want to say goodbye to our friends. Jonouchi, Honda, Anzu, everyone, all of our wonderful friends, they mean the world to me. It's already difficult enough for me to leave you behind but I don't think I'll be able to bear saying goodbye to my friends."

The spirit rubbed over his tired eyes and shook his head.

"If I left right after our final battle, if I had opened the door right after my loss, I may have been able to walk through the door and say goodbye. But then Isis led me to the memorial place and we met the other Atemu. We had a wonderful night of fun, but with every second I was able to watch our friends, I felt my heart becoming heavier."

"So you wanted to just leave silently, without saying goodbye. You hoped it would make the departure easier," Yuugi concluded softly, understanding shining in his eyes. "Oh Atemu!"

He hugged the spirit of the ancient pharaoh, pressing his face against the other's chest.

"At least let me go with you!" he mumbled into the jacket, catching the spirit by surprise.

"Excuse me?"

Yuugi looked up, a small smile now on his face.

"If you don't want to face anyone else, at last let me accompany you! If you have to leave, the least I can do is be able to say goodbye."

Atemu looked into his aibou's face, unsure about what to decide.

"Do you really think this is a good idea, aibou? Do you think you will be strong enough? Will you be able to turn around and walk back into your life, after I am gone?"

He gazed sharply into Yuugi's eyes, waiting for the teen to consider his questions and work out the answer. Finally the teen nodded, determination clearly written on his

face.

"Yes, I'll be strong. I will walk back into my life, I promise."

"And if you would allow me to accompany you now, I will make sure that he keeps to his word," a voice suddenly declared behind the two men. They turned their heads to find to their surprise, Atemu Djed-ra-iu-ef-anch standing right behind them, a small smile on his face.

"Forgive me the sudden intrusion, but I was worried about Yuugi's whereabouts and went looking for him."

He bowed his head slightly at the ancient pharaoh and held out the jacket Yuugi had worn that evening. Atemu smiled and bowed his head as well. Then he took the jacket to replace the sheet he had used to cover his aibou's upper body with. After he was sure that the teen was now dressed warm and secure enough against the cold of the night, he turned back to the Egyptian, a small appreciating smile on his lips.

"Will you take care of him for me?" the spirit asked the young man seriously. "Are you willing to look after his well-being for me, to support him and never leave his side again?"

The young Egyptian nodded his head, his face determined and serious.

"If he is willing to allow me to stay by his side, I am more than happy to meet your requests, Atemu, pharaoh of Egypt."

The spirit took one more sharp look into the other's face. He could only find truthfulness and sincerity in those eyes. Thus, he nodded his head, satisfied with the answer. Turning his gaze back to Yuugi, he took one of the teen's hands and squeezed it slightly.

"Yuugi?" he asked silently. Knowing what the former pharaoh wanted, the Japanese breathed in deeply before nodding.

"I am ready."

"Let's go then!"

And with those words, the spirit and the teen rose from the ground. Allowing the Egyptian male to join them, the three turned around to start their small journey back to the ruins of Kura Eruna. The only thing witnessing of their presence at the ruins was a small white sheet, left forgotten on the ground.

The journey back to the ruins of what had once been home to the grave robbers was longer than the walk before. But they had no problem in finding their way around because the Egyptian by their side had no difficulties orientating even in the darkest night.

It was quiet when they reached the entrance to where the Duel of Destiny had taken place. They walked down the stairs and there it was the door to the underworld.

Yuugi's heart was pounding painfully in his chest as he stood rooted to the spot, staring at the eye of Horus which decorated the entrance that was supposed to take the former pharaoh from him. The spirit was standing to his right, his hand entwined with Yuugi's while to the Japanese's left stood the Egyptian, who also had one hand interlocked with Yuugi.

The spirit to the teen's right took a breath and squeezed the hand tightly before releasing it. Kind, loving eyes gazed at Yuugi, a warm smile on his lips.

"Aibou, this is where we part," he said quietly. The teen was barely able to hold back a sob and the former pharaoh knelt down, one hand touching Yuugi's upper arm supportively.

"Don't cry, aibou!" he said softly, gazing right into the Japanese's eyes. "Remember what we talked about. There is still a part of me left and you just need to allow him a place in your world."

He stood up again and gazed deeply first at Yuugi, then at the other Atemu, who still held the teen's hand in his own.

"I don't know what will happen when I step through that door," Atemu started, eyes strong and determined, "but I believe with all my heart that everything will turn out all right, aibou. You are in good hands. I entrust both of you in each other's care!"

He smiled at both of them before turning around and taking a step forward.

"May the gods be with you!" the spirit declared with a small glance over his shoulder before he turned his full attention on the door in front of him. He knew what to do!

"Atemu!" he spoke his name clearly, the room throwing back the echo of his voice. Instantly a bright light arose around the eye of Horus and slowly the two double-wings moved apart. All three men watched the happenings with deep respect.

Behind the eyes shone a soft light. There was nothing else which could be seen. For a second everyone was silent, just standing there and staring at the open doors. Finally Atemu, former pharaoh of Egypt, took a deep breath and took the first step.

The spirit walked calmly, regally. He didn't falter nor hesitate once. Only when he was right in front of the door, the light shining on his figure, did he turn around for a last look at his aibou and the person who would now take his place by his beloved's side.

"Imdewaw!"

"Atemu!" Yuugi shouted, tears gathering in his eyes. He wanted to run up to the spirit but he was held back by the man beside him. Giving up, the Japanese teen allowed the tears to flow down his face.

"Sayonara!" he whispered, a fisted hand pressed against his heart. Beside him Atemu bowed his head. The former pharaoh answered the gesture with a small smile. Then he turned around and took his last step. Just before the light engulfed his body, Yuugi and Atemu watched as the clothes on the spirit changed into what he used to wear three thousand years ago.

The cloth of his cape fluttered behind him as the door slowly closed, hiding the former pharaoh of Egypt behind its enormous doors. Yuugi gave a small sob and threw himself into the waiting arms of the young man by his side. Atemu embraced the teen tightly, allowing him to mourn over his loss.

But both men had not much time to get over the departure of the third. Suddenly the earth around them started to growl and shake, first small stones falling from the ceiling. Atemu took one look into Yuugi's widening eyes.

"Out!" the Egyptian shouted and took Yuugi's hand. The teen allowed himself to be led up to the exit where he watched the stone tablet with the Sennen Items breaking down and vanishing into a deep hole which had suddenly opened up in the ground.

Sending a last good bye to the golden treasure, the connection to his other half, he finally turned around and side by side the young men ran out of the hole. When they felt sure that they were out of the danger zone, they stopped and took some deep breaths.

Yuugi was the first one to turn around. With wide eyes he looked at what had once been the entrance to the ceremonial battle place. What was left were just a lot of stones and dust. Still slightly shocked he felt an arm wrap around his waist securely.

The teen moved his head to look at the young man beside him. Atemu stood there, a solemn look on his face. But suddenly his body shuddered and his free hand came up to cover his face. Worry throwing aside the fresh memory of his current loss, Yuugi turned his full attention to Atemu.

"Is everything all right?" he asked softly. The Egyptian moved his hand away from his face and smiled at the Japanese.

"Yeah, I think so," he said. "I just feel a little dizzy. I guess this has been a long day. So, how about we go back to the camp. It's still late at night so if we hurry up a little we might be able to catch some sleep."

Yuugi nodded wordlessly and taking the hand of the other back into his own, they turned around to make their way back to the camp, leaving the ruins of Kura Eruna behind.

The walk back seemed to take even longer than before, but Yuugi was not sure about this. After all, when the light of the fire finally came back in sight it was still dark. Beside him Atemu was wavering a little in his steps and it made him worry.

Something seemed to be wrong with the young man, but every time Yuugi had voiced his concern, the Egyptian had assured the teen that he was just tired. He seemed to be telling the truth because when they reached the tent, Atemu immediately let himself fall onto the cushions of his bed, his eyes small and his entire features looking tired.

He seemed even too tired to get out of his clothing. He just lay there and waited for Yuugi to get out of his own clothes so that the teen could join him in bed. The Japanese did just that, getting rid of his jacket and trousers before crawling next to the young man's side and pulling a sheet around both of them.

Atemu gave a small smile of thanks and wished Yuugi good night before he closed his eyes and fell into a deep sleep. The teen didn't take long to follow, his mind suddenly feeling even too tired to think over everything that had happened that night.

Silence lay over the camp now. Only a soft whinny of one of the horses could be heard in the night here and there. The peaceful silence was not interrupted until the first rays of light announced the arrival of the morning. Then the men of the camp awoke to start their morning routine of taking care of the horses and preparing breakfast.

Still, even with the slowly growing noise outside, Yuugi didn't wake until late morning. He opened his eyes when his still sleepy mind registered some shouting coming from one of the tents his friends were staying in. Groaning he turned around in the embrace he was in and opened his eyes.

The first sight which greeted his still tired eyes was the sleeping form of the Egyptian he had stayed the night with. Atemu was lying beside him, his breathing quiet and even. Waiting for his mind to wake a little more, Yuugi just lay there and watched the other sleep.

He couldn't help but admit that he felt quite content lying within soft cushions, held by a strong body and covered by a warm blanket. Though he slowly started to realize that maybe the blanket was becoming a little too warm now that the sun was shining again.

A grunt brought him out of his cozy thoughts and Yuugi turned his attention back to the now stirring body beside him. Burning red eyes opened to look into his own and a small smile played around the Egyptian's lips at the sight that greeted him.

"Morning," Yuugi greeted the other quietly, sitting up now. "How are you feeling?"

The smile on the young man's lips widened while he too sat up. He lifted a hand and stroke lovingly over Yuugi's face.

"I feel better than I've ever felt before in my life," Atemu declared happily. "Ohayoo gozaimasu! Aibou!"

Yuugi's breath caught in his throat when he heard the greeting and that last whispered word. All of a sudden his mind was wide awake and his eyes widened in

deep shock. Since their first meeting, Atemu had always spoken English to communicate with them and they had done the same. But now he was greeted in his native language, although he knew the other should not be able to speak Japanese at all.

"You speak my language," Yuugi whispered and he felt tears gather up in his eyes again.

"So I do," Atemu answered with a smile. "Aibou, I am here, I am whole!"

The dark skinned hand cupped the teen's cheek tenderly and they stared deeply into each other's eyes. Yuugi couldn't believe it. He was sobbing and laughing at the same time while he held the gaze of the deep, red eyes, he loved so much to look into.

Time seemed to stand still until the teen finally blinked in full realization and with a cry of utter joy he threw himself into waiting arms.

"Atemu, Atemu!" he whispered again and again. "My love, mou hitori no boku! My pharaoh!"

"Yeah, I am here," the other whispered, pressing the body against his own. It took Yuugi some time to calm down from his shock, but when he was able to grasp a clear thought again he broke their heated embrace and looked at the Egyptian again.

"But how come...?" he started thoughtfully, before his eyes widened again. "Your strange dizziness last night!"

Atemu just nodded with a smile.

"My soul was mending last night. It started right during our walk back and continued while I slept. What has been divided once is now whole again. That was how it was supposed to be."

"So the lost part of your soul which was imprisoned inside the Sennen Puzzle had to cross over to the underworld before it could be reunited with the other half of your soul?" Yuugi asked curiously.

"That's what I was told after I stepped through the door."

For a moment both were silent, their foreheads touching and their souls basking in the knowledge of being reunited. Atemu then blinked his eyes, gaze becoming thoughtful.

"It's a strange feeling," he slowly said, deep wonder obvious in his tone. "As if my life with you, the one year we spent together, is part of a past life which I suddenly remembered."

"But I am no past life," Yuugi whispered, tears in his eyes. "I am still here, by your side, always by your side."

"Yes, that you are," the Egyptian responded, happiness shining in his eyes. "And I will be by your side as well from now on."

Both men smiled and then Yuugi leaned forward and their lips met in a deep, soft, morning kiss. The sweet, wonderful moment was broken thought when suddenly one of the men at the camp stuck his head into the tent asking for his master's assistance.

Atemu nodded once, assuring that he would come in a second. Then the Egyptian gazed back at his aibou, smiling sheepishly.

"Seems I have to take care of my tasks now, aibou."

"Well, you are the boss here after all, at the moment," Yuugi replied, grinning.

"True. So how about I take a look at the horses and you get ready and eat some breakfast, then I might be able to invite you for a ride in the desert. How does that sound?"

Yuugi's reply was a quick kiss on the other's lips and a wide smile.

"Sounds like a good plan. I'll see you later then!"

"Right," Atemu replied and quickly got up to take care of his duties as the leader of the camp. Yuugi himself remained sitting on the spot for a moment longer, basking in the knowledge that finally everything in his life seemed to turn out okay. Then he got up and decided to take care of his suddenly loudly complaining stomach.

Even though it was already near midday, not one of Yuugi's friends seemed to be up yet. Even the teen's jii-chan seemed to be too lazy to come out of the tent. So Yuugi spent the first few minutes all alone with his breakfast until one of his friends decided to show himself to the world.

It was Mokuba who came out of the tent first and he seemed to be strangely amused, grinning and chuckling the whole way to the fire where Yuugi was already sitting, eating contentedly. The young Kaiba noted the eyebrow Yuugi raised because of his behavior and his grin turned into a malicious smirk.

"We caught nii-sama and Jonouchi kissing this morning," he answered the wordless question. "I always knew there was something between those two but nii-sama would never admit it. This morning though, they thought we were all still sleeping. Hell they'll never live this down."

The young Kaiba brother giggled and even Yuugi could not help but chuckle in amusement.

"And to think last night he complained about affection in public because Malik started a make out session with Rishido," Mokuba continued. "I thought it was fun, especially, since in the end Isis had to drag her brother with her to the girl's tent and force him to

sleep there. I heard someone say that Malik secretly drank wine behind Isis' back. It wouldn't surprise me, after all, it would explain why he was about to jump poor Rishido in front of everyone."

He yawned and then watched with a bright grin as Yuugi tried to calm down from his laughter.

"And," the young Kaiba finally asked when the current duellist champion had calmed down, "how exciting was your night with our nice host?"

Yuugi just smiled.

One hour later the rest of Yuugi's friends and his jii-chan finally left the tents to get something to eat as well. They were surprised though when greeted by an unusual sight. Outside the camp Yuugi was riding on the back of a black horse, releasing a cry of utter joy to the sky while he galloped over the desert sand.

Right beside the excited teen rode their host, Atemu, on the back of a white stallion, eyes glowing and a wide smile on his lips. When Yuugi noticed his friends he immediately turned his horse and rode up to them, coming to a halt just inches from Jonouchi's feet.

"Morning everyone!" he chirped, good-humored while Atemu came up to his side. Jonouchi blinked at his best friend in shock.

"Yuugi, what are you doing?" he asked bewildered.

"Horse riding with Atemu," Yuugi answered happily. Anzu blinked, while Honda, Ryou and Otogi stared at him wide eyed. Malik looked like he was going to burst out laughing any second while Rishido just shook his head. Seto's face was unimpressive as always while Mokuba smirked. Sugoroku Mutou however looked thoughtful as did Isis.

Jonouchi, on the other hand, seemed to be utterly confused. He just glanced from Yuugi to their host, who was looking strangely amused. However, it was Isis who voiced the next question.

"Yuugi, where is Atemu?"

The asked one smiled at the question, his eyes shining brightly.

"Gone and still here," he answered. "By the way, it seemed Kura Eruna didn't take the departure of Atemu's soul really well. The whole place broke apart last night."

"Just a second," Jonouchi interrupted, his eyes blazing. "What do you mean with 'the departure of Atemu'? He went without us?"

"He didn't want to say goodbye, Jonouchi-kun," Yuugi explained, his eyes softening. "You all meant a lot to him and he felt really sad that he was forced to leave you

behind. Thus he wished to leave in silence to make things easier."

"He left?" Anzu asked, shocked. "Last night?"

Yuugi nodded, a smile still on his lips.

"But it doesn't matter," he added and looked at Atemu by his side, "because he came back!"

While most of his friends looked at him as if he had grown a second head, Isis nodded in understanding.

"I already suspected something like this," she said, looking at Atemu as well. "Atemu Djed-ra-iu-ef-anch was the second part, the reborn part of the pharaoh's soul, wasn't he?"

It was Atemu's turn to answer the questions now.

"That's right, Isis," he said, nodding. "And last night, when I left, my soul could finally be reunited again. I'll be staying with you guys now; you'll get not rid of me so easily."

He smirked and Anzu and Ryou smiled widely at that news, while the rest of them seemed to still need some time to work out what they just learned. Isis and Sugoroku though were also smiling, while Seto didn't look too happy. The Egyptian noticed this and turned his full attention on Seto.

"Oh, sorry, Kaiba, but this also means that you'll not only have one, but two rivals in the future," he teased slightly before he became serious again. "There is one thing I would like to ask you though."

"And that is?" Seto wanted to know, his face expressionless.

"Could you take in another horse, beside Yuugi's? I plan to come back to Japan of course but I really wouldn't like to leave my favorite horse behind. So, I was hoping you could take it in since you are already accepting Yuugi's horse anyway. You don't need to worry about payment; I'll pay for everything the horses may need."

Seto didn't seem to be too happy about this, but Mokuba was already poking at his side, looking up at his nii-sama pleadingly. He couldn't do anything else but give in.

"Fine, but you'll have to take care of the horses yourself," he grumbled. "I am not looking after them for anything."

Atemu and Yuugi both nodded, smiling their thanks. They dismounted from their horses and the Egyptian called two of his men to take care of the animals. After both horses were led away, Atemu turned to the old Mutou, bowing his head slightly at the man.

"Mutou-jii-san, I also have a request for you," he started. Sugoroku blinked in surprise

before indicating for the young man to continue.

"It's about Yuugi," the Egyptian explained, putting an arm around the Japanese's waist. "As I've said, I wish to go back with you all to Japan. But I am not a spirit anymore, I already have a life I lived and I just can't turn and leave. I have to stay here and lead the caravan until my parents are done and come back to take over. I don't think there will be a problem if I ask them for a long holiday and permission to stay in Japan. I've been working for my family all my life without many breaks, so I guess it's all right to take one now."

He paused and chuckled.

"Though I think I have to come up with an explanation as to why I am suddenly able to speak a language that I was not familiar with before."

The others grinned at this, obviously slowly getting over the shock they'd received. Atemu, on the other hand, became quickly serious again and gazed back at the old Mutou.

"What I would like to request, Mutou-jii-san, is your permission for Yuugi to stay with us until I am able to leave. We will start our journey to the next oasis within the next hour and I would be really happy if Yuugi could accompany me on this journey."

The Egyptian bowed his head now while Yuugi looked at his jii-chan hopefully.

"Please, jii-chan? I want to stay with Atemu!"

Sugoroku Mutou looked at his grandson first, then at Atemu. Finally he smiled.

"Well, you're still on holidays from school, Yuugi, so I don't see a problem with you staying here," he answered, causing Yuugi to cry out in delight. "And I guess it wouldn't do you any good to separate you from Atemu anyway."

He grinned at the now slightly blushing young men before Jonouchi interrupted the scene.

"Hey, just a moment! If Yuugi's stays, we'll stay as well!"

Most of the other friends nodded and Malik added.

"This is the first day of our family being finally released from duties. I would like to stay around as well, ne, nee-san?" he said and looked pleadingly at Isis. The young woman shook her head, smiling in amusement while Mokuba started to beg his own brother as well.

Cheerful and excited talk finally broke out in the whole group, Atemu and Yuugi watching with a smile. It quickly turned out that they would all stay together for a while longer to enjoy holidays, freedom and also using the time to clear up some

newly learned things such as the announced relationship between Seto and Jonouchi as well as Atemu and Yuugi.

The friends were even offering their help when the camp was removed, Atemu in the middle of it all, giving commands and watching over every step accomplished. Within an hour the whole caravan was ready to continue their traveling. With Yuugi and Atemu at the head, the journey was ready to start again.

People seek for the future because they have memories of their past. Without memories, a person can not walk into the future.

But now Yuugi and Atemu both had more recollections of the past than most other people had. And they both had a life. Thus they could start their new way into the future. Both together, hand in hand.

Owari

"We seek for the future because we have memories of the past. Without memories he can't walk into the future..." that was Yuugi's thinking in book 19 when he talked to Malik for the first time after the fight against Pandora. I loved that saying and in the most awkward of moments my head made up the ending with that saying. I was busy that moment *groans* so it was not fun to have the idea repeated again and again in my head until I got the chance to write it down. -_-