

Hunting Passion

Von Atemue

Kapitel 16: Shuuban

Title: Hunting Passion

Part: 17/?

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Warnings: hints for future incest

Genre: Romance, Angst, Supernatural, AU

Pairings: Yami no Yuugi x Yuugi, Malik + Rishido

Criticism: Constructive criticism welcomed

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Description: They came at midnight. He didn't know how they were able to intrude into his house, but somehow they succeeded. They were a male and a female. HE, was the leader, obviously. She seemed to be some kind of apprentice to him. Not that it really mattered. For they were both strong and deadly.

But when a young teen is able to run from the grasp of his captors, it is the start of a long game of hide and seek. He finds a new side to himself he would have never dreamed he had. And it helps him to keep the game to his advantage. But he knows the game will never end, at least not before his death. Because his hunter is a vampire.

Thanks to my betareader Lee-Ann for the usual quick work. ^^

Shuuban - Endgame

Osiris no Tenkuuryuu - Osiris the sky-dragon

Obelisk no Kyoshinhei - Giant soldier of Obelisk

Ra no Yokushinryuu - Winged God-dragon Ra

Toki no Majutsushi - Magician of time

Shuuban

Yuugi and Atemu met their opponents half way towards the arena. The girl who was Bandit Keith's partner immediately stopped and greeted both of them with a

respectful bow which the two men returned immediately. She smiled shyly inspiring Yuugi to smile as well, while Atemu nodded his head in contentment. A mocking laugh broke through their greetings however and all three turned to Keith who was smirking at his two opponents with scorn in his eyes.

"So you are the infamous Mutou Yuugi", he sneered, looking straight at the shifter who narrowed his eyes just as much as Atemu did. "You know, with all the uproar that has been going on in the duellist world, I was expecting someone special. However here I stand, looking at a shrimp on his first big tournament who had a bit of luck winning his duels. That is kind of sad, don't you think?"

While Keith's partner looked scandalised and angry about his words, Atemu started to growl and had to restrain himself to not bare his teeth which would have shown everyone present the unnatural length of his canines. However, the vampire was able to calm himself down quickly. Instead of showing his anger he regarded the blonde American with contempt.

"Funny that you say that", he replied coolly, winding an arm around Yuugi's waist to press the shifter against his side. "Because it just proves how much whatever skills and instincts you once possessed as a duellist have shrivelled to nothing, Keith. Yuugi here has been able to win the rounds through luck, skill and the trust every duellist puts into the deck they built up with their own hands and heart - one deck.

"And he has added his belief into his partner's skills and faith. We both trust the other to have our back. You however already lost that faith. You are but a poor excuse of a duellist and I pity your partner because she has to bear with you!"

With those last spiteful words, he turned away, arm still around Yuugi's waist and marched upwards to the arena. Yuugi had barely time to give a last quick bow of his head and a sad smile towards their stunned female opponent before matching Atemu step by step.

While the girl followed meekly and a bit confused, Bandit Keith needed a while longer. By the time he was up at the arena, he was fuming with wide eyes. It was clear he understood Atemu's hidden message and he was worried about being revealed just as much as he was angry for the vampire acting superior. Soon his anger was even overshadowing his worries and he declared the duel to begin. Yuugi and Atemu accepted the start wordlessly.

In the beginning everything was balanced. Each player prepared their traps and magic cards on the field, setting their strategy. The heat was starting to boil after the fourth round, when the girl was able to summon a high ranking monster with a special ability. From then on it was an endless circle of attacks and counterattacks.

Bandit Keith's deck of course fit perfectly to his partner's and it proved to be a valuable advantage within the duel when Yuugi and the vampire started to back them into a corner. There was one moment during the duel where the tables turned so drastically, Yuugi wondered if they should activate the god cards to ensure victory.

However, one look at Atemu's resolved face and he dismissed that thought. The shifter realised that his namesake was determined to win without their last trump cards, simply because with Keith's cheating he did not deem the man worth to witness the presence of a god. Knowing this Yuugi held his Ra no Yokushinryuu back, which he already had in his hands, a small smile playing around his lips. He agreed with the vampire's pride, feeling too proud himself to be content with the idea of winning with a nearly invincible god.

Nodding at his partner Yuugi instead played a trap card face down and activated his magic card to support Atemu's monster on the field before he finished his turn. He did not attack because his monster currently was not strong enough for that, though they held a high defence power.

Besides, the shifter had noticed that because he was slightly more delicate physically than the vampire, Keith seemed to underestimate him the most; he concentrated his attacks on his person while leaving Atemu to his partner. Of course the vampire helped him in the time he needed to be defended, just as he did when his partner was backed into a corner. Yet, their help was only executed when the other had no strategy behind being attacked.

While it was not allowed for the duellists to talk with each other during the duels, they could use non-verbal communication to their advantage. In Yuugi's case he was lucky that Atemu and he thought so much alike. Even though they only now got to know each other since the start of their truce, they felt as if they had known the other closely for years and it helped to see through their strategies with just a small wink of the other's eye.

Right now the shifter was anticipating Keith to move by underestimating him again. And Yuugi was not disappointed by the American duellist. The moment it was Keith's turn he immediately activated a trap card that destroyed one of Yuugi's monster before trying to attack him directly. Atemu certainly could have prevented that happening the teen knew, however he was also aware that because of his calm reaction to the attack and his refusal to look at his partner, that his namesake knew he was not supposed to help.

Yuugi smirked when Keith declared attack, already expecting victory because he was defenceless and the attack points of the blonde man's monster higher than Yuugi's lifepoints. That however was what the small built teen calculated on. He activated his trap card which caused the attack of all monster on the field to reduce to the number of points of their defence.

Atemu of course had known about this card since the moment Yuugi equipped his weak in attack but high in defence monster with a card that would increase the attack. This card's effect was left untouched by the trap card, causing the vampire's card to become nearly as strong as the legendary Blue Eyes White Dragon.

Keith's partner tried to counter the combo immediately, when it was clear Atemu would put his own monster in front of Yuugi. However Atemu had his own defence ready and put her card out of commission. Keith was unable to redraw his attack, and

ended up being forced to engage the vampire's monster which lost him nearly all of his precious lifepoints. Worse for him was that he had no trap card and it was Atemu's turn next.

It became Bandit Keith's last round in this tournament. Atemu wasted no more time. He drew one new card, then summoned another monster which was not affected by Yuugi's trap card, having been summoned after it. Keith was lost now because his partner had only one monster on the field herself which was not as strong as any of Atemu's monsters.

Everyone was aware of that fact, therefore no one was surprised when she did not come to her partner's aid. Howling in rage, the blonde American had to watch helplessly as the vampire attacked him directly, taking his lifepoints down to zero.

From that moment, the game became more serious and heated, because now that the cheater was out, Yuugi and Atemu were willing to use every skill and card they had against an honourable opponent – excepting of course the gods, since she had none to defend herself with. The girl still fought strongly and honourably and it took longer than even Yuugi and Atemu in the end had anticipated.

But their advantage was their team work. Even if Bandit Keith already lost, he was her partner and could have supported her as the shifter and vampire did each other. That was lost for her and when two fought against one there was not a big chance left to win. Yet Yuugi's and his partner's assumption of the female duellist turned out true. She was sincere and she had no problems to admit her loss with a smile.

"Thank you very much for the duel", she told the two men afterwards when they stepped down from the arena under loud cheers of the crowd. "It was very honourable to duel against you, Mutou-kun", she bowed to both of them and was about to return to one of the stands for the duellists, when Keith all of the sudden walked up to them, his face a mask of anger and his fists clenched so hard his knuckles turned white.

"How dare you two punks!" the blonde American shouted, face red from anger. "You cheated, I am sure of it! No team could harmonize so perfectly. You must have found a way to talk without anyone noticing."

"Keith, how can you say that?" his partner protested, shocked. "I know I am not a champion like you, but I still think I play long enough that I would have noticed if there is a way for them to speak to each other."

"Be quiet, you little loser!" the older man shouted and she flinched when he took a step forward. Atemu however growled and immediately put a protective hand on her shoulder, looking at Keith with cold eyes.

"Oh yes, we certainly did communicate", the vampire unblinkingly admitted surprisingly calm and a smirk came onto his face. "We used our knowledge of each other's deck and body language. Last time I checked that was nothing forbidden, Keith."

"Not that you are in any situation to accuse other people about cheating anyway", Yuugi added boldly enough, stepping besides Atemu with a disappointed look in his eyes.

"Good point, Yuugi", Kaiba all of the sudden said, appearing besides the three duellists who stood opposite from an enraged Keith. Cold, blue eyes bore into the American who all of the sudden faltered in his anger, now intimidated by the regal figures of one Kaiba Seto and Mutou Atemu who were both able to invoke fear with one single glance.

The blonde became even unsure when Malik and Jounouchi arrived as well as Mokuba with two of his personal bodyguards.

"Is there a problem?" the younger Kaiba brother asked all of them, his gaze resting mostly on the brunette.

"Oh yes, there is", Kaiba answered calmly with a cruel smile now. "I think we have a cheater among out midst that needs to be taken care of."

For a moment it seemed Keith really though Kaiba was taking his accusation towards Yuugi and Atemu serious until the older of the brothers pointed at the blonde American.

"Lock this person in our security rooms for now", he ordered the two bodyguards before turning to Mokuba. "And check the video surveillance. If you watch closely you'll notice that Howard over there used more than one deck during the tournament which is against the rules."

"All right, I'm doing it right now for sure, nii-sama", Mokuba immediately answered, a smirk not unlike Kaiba's on his younger face. Of course Keith did not leave silently. He fought and protested loudly, trying to get away, but even if he was not untrained, he had no chance against the muscled bodyguards of the Kaiba brothers.

Yuugi, his friends and the girl watched the whole scene silently. The latter was a bit under shock learning about her partner's crimes. Staring at the back of shouting American she stood stock still until she jerked startled, realising something.

"You knew he was cheating!" the girl accused, angry eyes focusing on Yuugi and Atemu. "If you knew, why did you allow us to play against you? He should have been disqualified the moment he was found out!"

Atemu's yes softened and Yuugi gave her a small smile.

"Because", the vampire started in a low tone, voice warm, "it was not he that was bringing your opponents to fall but your skills. Up until the duel against Yuugi and I, Keith was nothing but a petty decoration on the field. It was you that made the life of your opponents hard, you who in the end took away their lifepoints. You are skilled, young lady; don't allow anyone to destroy such talent. Grow and you'll be an even

more challenging opponent soon enough."

Already feeling ashamed about her outburst, the girl turned red and looked to the ground.

"Thank you", she whispered, posture and tone indicating that she felt indeed honoured about the vampire's approval. "I will be watching you closely from the stands now that you fight in the final. I am hopeful to learn a bit more and I'll be working hard to become the duellist you are thinking I could be."

She bowed once more, even to Kaiba, Jounouchi and Malik before she left towards the stands, a small smile on her face. Left behind the five men stood together, waiting for Mokuba to return to the arena to announce the final.

"Well Yuugi", Jounouchi exclaimed, putting his arm around the smaller built teen's shoulders with a wide grin. "It seems we'll be fighting against each other once more in a few minutes."

"Don't forget about me, Jounouchi", Atemu added with a smirk. "We have not had the pleasure so far, but I am looking very much forward to it. Just don't you two dare to repeat any of the stunts you did at the beginning of your first duel together."

The vampire gazed sharply at Kaiba during his last words, but the brunette looked unfazed and let out an uncaring snort.

"Don't expect me to put your ideas of team work on a pedestal, Atemu", the CEO replied. "But I admit it does not work in my favour to ignore team work when it is the main theme of this tournament."

He took a look at his watch before glancing at Jounouchi with a look that held a lot less disdain as it had at the beginning of their announced team.

"Come on, mutt we still have a few minutes before Mokuba returns to start the final", he instructed the blonde. "If we need to team up to win over those two, we need to really compare our decks and work out a strategy."

"The hell you're calling me a mutt!" Jounouchi of course exploded immediately and Yuugi winced then he noticed the fire in his best friend's eyes, not to mention the clenched fists at his side.

"Please don't kill each other", the shifter pleaded though he was sure he reached deaf ears, as Jounouchi simply followed the CEO to a secluded place in the stadium, all the way growling and shouting to whatever Kaiba replied.

Snickering, Malik also watched the two leave before turning to Yuugi and Atemu.

"Well I guess I am taking my leave over to the stands as well, huh?" he announced with a grin, padding Yuugi's shoulder. "Don't worry, Yuugi, I am sure Kaiba especially is so stuck on wanting to win over you, that he will keep his comments in check enough for

Jounouchi not to strangle him."

"I just hope you are right, Malik-kun", Yuugi sighed before giving the Egyptian a small smile. "Thank you for the support though."

"Anytime", the light blonde replied before waving his hand and leaving towards the stands where all the other duelists that lost stood together now. Yuugi glanced over at Atemu.

"Do we need to discuss our strategy?" he wanted to know. The vampire looked over at where Jounouchi and Kaiba seemed to have begun another heated discussion about their cards, the blonde gesturing wildly in his anger, and nodded his head.

"I think it would be wise to consider what options we have with our decks, aibou", he replied thoughtfully. "As you remember, I gave Kaiba my other god card to heat the challenge up a bit more. And while there is no god left for Jounouchi, we still have to remember that we saw him playing not only the Red Eyes Black Dragon, but he also has the "Toki no Majutsushi", that can weaken monsters by aging them about thousand years."

"Yes, and additionally he has "Baby Dragon", who would become "Thousand Dragon" if combined with the "Toki no Majutsushi", don't forget that fact as well", Yuugi added with a serious tone. From then on the two immersed into a deep discussion of their assets and drawbacks that was not broken until Mokuba all of the sudden stood in the middle of the arena, announcing the long awaited final between team four and team seven.

Both teams stepped up onto the arena to be presented to the cheering crowd by Mokuba. Then all of them took their places and the younger of the Kaiba brothers gave the signal to begin.

From the moment of the start of the final duel, the intensity was obvious for everyone. Each of them took this duel very seriously. No longer were glares exchanged between Jounouchi and Kaiba, no longer did Yuugi nor Atemu refuse to hold back any of their cards. This time they gave it their all, and both teams working together perfectly.

Kaiba and Jounouchi especially turned out to be an even better team than Atemu at the beginning had anticipated. Both had a love for dragons and it was an heavy theme of their deck, though while Seto included some nasty traps and magicians, Jounouchi preferred gambling and some warriors as backup.

Yuugi and Atemu on the other hand had a mostly magician themed deck, though both their cards were very different. Atemu valued cards that supported each other, like the "Black Magician" and "Black Magician Girl" did. Yuugi on the other hand preferred cards that evolved from round to round like his "Silent Magician". They were also a bit more in harmony with each other than their opponents because they thought very much alike, more than Kaiba and Jounouchi would ever do.

That brought the vampire and the shifter a slight advantage for the first few rounds, though the other two were not far behind, being able to counter and attack a few times as well. The real turn of tables occurred when Kaiba was finally able to call his god card.

What Yuugi and Atemu did not expect was that Jounouchi was doing all the preparations for the brunette to be able to call his god. It seemed the CEO had definitely informed the blonde about his god card and it inspired the shifter's best friend to come up with a way that would call "Obelisk no Kyoshinhei" to the arena by using the "Blue-Eyes White Dragon" of his partner that was already on the field.

Once again the crowd, especially the experts who knew about the rarity of this card, held their breath in the presence of a god. Murmurs and slight exclamations started between those watching until all of the sudden there was a roar of excitement for this new turn of events within the duel.

Yuugi and Atemu were struggling while trying with all their might to protect each other's backs. Twice they were forced to withstand the attack of the god, the second time they only escaped thanks to Atemu's magic card "Magical Hats" that forced Kaiba to decide under which hat Yuugi's and Atemu's two monsters were hidden. They were lucky the card did not try to effect Obelisk directly, otherwise they would have been done for since the god annihilated all traps and spells.

The two Mutous were lucky because Kaiba chose wrong, however there was no chance left after that besides for the CEO to guess under which hat was Yuugi's and where Atemu's monster. They were also lucky that during those two turns Jounouchi had no monster stronger than their own, forcing him to stay in defence and simply await his chance.

In the third round however their luck ended. Jounouchi drew his favourite "Red-Eyes Black Dragon" that he was able to summon onto the field and equipped a magic card to raise its attack points. This one was certainly stronger than their own two monsters now and it put the two partners into a tight spot.

Atemu was able to force the blonde to skip his attack phase with a trap card, but it was Yuugi's turn then and everything all of the sudden depended on the draw of his card. If it wasn't the right one, they might already be lost with Kaiba's turn and the attack of a god.

Everyone who was aware of the situation held their breath when Yuugi drew his card with a determined expression. After all the time he had been fighting and running from Atemu, the small built teen had learned that giving up was the worst thing he could ever do during a game. It was important to continue fighting, no matter how hopeless the situation, and to never give up until the game was really over and lost.

And at this very moment, where fate was put into his hands the shifter was sure to not mess up Atemu's trust in him and his faith into the cards of his deck. Taking a deep breath, the shifter drew his card, looking onto the piece of paper that held Atemu's and his fate.

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