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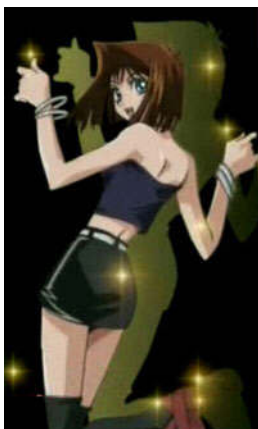


Happy St. Patrick's Day

WARNING! SPOILERS AHEAD!

They say the best place to start is at the beginning, but Yu-Gi-Oh! begins 3000 years later when Yugi Motou, after 8 years, solves the Sennin Puzzle, releasing the dark spirit of a lost pharaoh trapped inside. I think that most people seem to know that much about Yu-Gi-Oh!, the manga series by Kazuki Takahashi that became 4 animated series, a movie, an OAV, 2 spin off manga, and the countless Duel Monsters cards used in tournaments world wide, but with 4Kids having the rights to these anime, how much do you really know about this cultural phenomenon? My guess would be not enough. So if you're curious as to what it is you might have missed, "stay tuned", and pay attention, Yu-Gi-Oh! begins with Yugi

Yugi Motou : Yugi has lived with his grandfather, Sugoroku Motou, a gaming master and gameshop owner, since childhood. His mother isn't around much. Yugi is incredibly short for his age. A high schooler, Yugi looks more like an elementary school kid; he's shy and spends most of his time alone playing solitaire games. At the very beginning, Anzu is Yugi's only friend.



Anzu Misaki : Anzu is a strong willed person. She likes to dance and wants to attend an American school for dancing. Their school does not allow students to hold jobs but Anzu takes a job at a burger joint anyway, to save up for her schooling. Eventually she was fired for punching a guy who grabbed her butt. Anzu may wish that she had more female friends but she stands up for the friends she does have with firm resolve.

Katsuya Jounouchi and Hiroto Honda : Jounouchi and Honda picked on Yugi in the beginning. They are fighters and can't stand to see someone who won't stand up for themselves but Yugi eventually inspires them and these four: Yugi, Anzu, Jounouchi, and Honda, become very close friends.



Yami : When Yugi solves the Sennin Puzzle, the spirit trapped inside takes over his body. Without his own memories, Yami became the "darkness of Yugi" who stood up for Yugi and Yugi's friends when Yugi could not. Yami wields the dark power of the shadows, gifted him by the cursed Sennin Puzzle. When Yami plays a game, the loser suffers a penalty, often psychological destruction, sometimes death. (And a game can involve anything from Yo-Yos to dice to a bottle of vodka, a lighter and a gun.) Yugi never remembers these instances but gradually, he comes to know Yami, meeting at the place where their souls cross and Yami becomes someone different from Yugi.



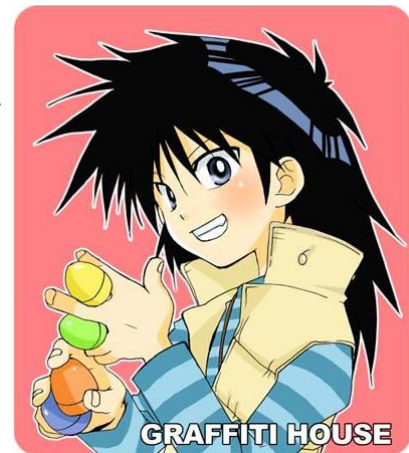
Seto Kaiba : Seto is the CEO of Kaiba Corporations, a company that once belonged to his adoptive father Gozaburo. In Gozaburo's hands, the company produced weapons of war and sold to anyone willing to buy. Seto destroyed everything that Gozaburo had built to create a gaming company but Gozaburo's lessons were not so easily forgotten. Seto is drawn to the Blue Eyes White Dragon, a Magic and Wizards (later called Duel Monsters) card so rare that only 4 exist in the entire world and there is *nothing* that Seto will not do to collect them all. Seto destroyed lives for these cards. After collecting 3 of them, Seto learns that Sugoroku holds the final one and after a failed attempt to steal it, Seto decides to duel for it. Seto is beaten by Yami and must

SETO KAIBA



suffer the consequences but Seto is stronger than Yami's former opponents. The two share a past after all. When Yami was pharaoh, Seto was his high priest. While Seto is forced to find himself, rendered catatonic by Yami's power, his little brother steps forward to exact revenge.

Mokuba Kaiba : Seto's little brother, once an innocent child, has had to live with the creation that Gozaburo made for far too long. His own mind has been corrupted by his brother's cold disregard for him. He's been hardened and he's determined to make suffer the man who beat his brother. Mokuba lures Yugi and his friends to the Kaiba mansion for a game of Russian roulette dinner where one bad turn could mean poisoning and Mokouba controls the table. Yami doesn't find it particularly difficult to beat a spoiled, vindictive elementary school kid. In the end, Mokuba learns a valuable lesson.

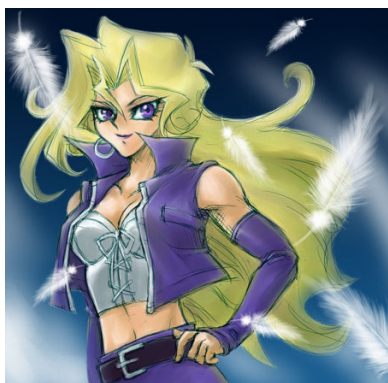


Ryou Bakura : Yugi is not the only one around with a Sennin Item. Ryou possesses the Sennin Ring, or more accurately, it possesses him. The spirit trapped inside the Ring is a tomb robber who wants to collect all seven of the Sennin Items to gain unimaginable power and his own item can lead him right to them. Ryou is a kind and gentle person but his own yami, who we call Bakura, is just the opposite. Bakura refers to Ryou as his "landlord" and if Ryou will not cooperate, Bakura simply takes his body to do with it as he wishes. In an effort to win the Sennin Puzzle (because the Sennin Items must be won in a game), Bakura challenges Yami to Ryou's favorite tabletop RPG but loses when Ryou rebels against him in order to save the lives of the people who were kind to him. Ryou impales his own hand on a castle spire during a moment of control and Yami wins the game but they are far from having seen the last of Bakura.

Shadi : Shadi holds two of the Sennin Items; the Scale and Key which give him the power to unlock a person's inner mind and judge a person's soul against the feather of Maat on the scale of justice.



Pegasus J. Crawford : The creator of Duel Monsters as a card game and CEO of Industrial Illusions, Pegasus, is also the holder of a Sennin Item, the Sennin Eye, which must replace one of the wearer's own eyes. Pegasus wants the power of the Items to resurrect his dead wife and holds a tournament to draw Yugi to his island in order to win his Puzzle but Yami and Yugi win their duel against him and Bakura swoops in to take the Sennin Eye.



Mai Kujaku : Mai is important only because she is one of the very few female duelists in the original series. She duels with a Harpy Lady deck and is only one among many that Yugi and Jounouchi must face on their way through Pegasus' tournament.

Yami's past never really catches up to him until Kaiba holds his own tournament: Battle City.

Malik Ishtar, Isis, and Rishid : The Ishtars have long been the guardians of two of the Sennin Items; the Sennin Rod and Tauk (necklace) and have been in service of the lost pharaoh for centuries, living in catacombs beneath Egypt's sands awaiting the return of their pharaoh. Having no heir, two of the Ishtar's took in an abandoned boy and named him Rishid. A daughter was born to them, Isis, and then a son, Malik, at which point Rishid was no longer important and became the servant of the child, Malik. Malik's father was much like Gozaburo. At a young age, Malik was forced to undergo the ritual to pass on the Pharaoh's Memory, during which the image of an ancient stone slab was carved into his back with a hot knife by his own father. Malik grew hateful of his heritage and, fueled by the power of the Sennin Rod, also came to have a dark side; Marik, who killed their father after seeing him mercilessly torture Rishid. Rishid had always wished that he could have taken the burden of the heir for Malik, so, in a sadistic gesture, Marik stripped the carvings from their father's back and offered them to Rishid. Rishid was able to call Malik back to himself, but Marik remained, just below the surface. Several years later, Malik has gotten his hands on a God card: The Winged Dragon of Ra and decides to enter Kaiba's tournament to destroy the pharaoh that his family once revered.



Isis gives Seto the second of the God cards, Obelisk the Tormentor and enters the tournament herself, taking up the Sennin Tauk which allows her glimpses of the future but is defeated by Seto during the finals and learns that no matter what she has seen, the future is not yet set in stone.

Malik and Marik make Battle City a living hell for Yugi; possessing his best friend with the power of his Sennin Rod, robbing Mai of her memories, sending opponents to the shadow realm, teaming up with Bakura briefly, and finally ending the tournament on a duel in which it is not Marik or Yami who suffer but Yugi and Malik.

After Battle City, Yugi has collected most of the Sennin Items and a final confrontation against Bakura ensues to decide the fate of the Items, their wielders, and the world. Yami and Yugi learn the origin of the Items; that they were created by sacrificing an entire village of souls - Bakura's village - and the origin of Duel Monsters, the energies pulled from people's souls by the Items and harnessed for battle.

Finally, Yami, with his memories intact, must face his other self, Yugi. If Yugi wins, proving himself the true King of Games (translation of the title Yugioh), than Yami can move on to the afterlife, but if Yugi loses, proving that Yami is still needed in the world, than he must stay, a spirit tied to the Sennin Puzzle.

The Yu-Gi-Oh! series ends with this fateful duel but it almost goes without saying that fans weren't satisfied.



Yu-Gi-Oh! By the Fans

On fanfiction.net, there are over 46,600 fan fictions logged under just the original series. That puts it third in anime fics behind Naruto and Inuyasha. What makes Yu-Gi-Oh! so popular? It's not that people are writing out the multi-episode duels, I assure you. Remember when I said that there weren't very many female duelists, well YGO as a whole was awfully short on females altogether and yaoi fans didn't seem to mind much. There's a 500+ shipping list for the Yu-Gi-Oh! series listing just about every possible (and impossible) het, yaoi, and yuri pairing that you can think of and a few you can't. For example: YamixYugi is Puzzleshipping (because the Puzzle connects them). SetoxAnzu is Azureshipping (they both have blue eyes). MaixShizuka is Nurseshipping (Shizuka is Jounouchi's little sister and she sat at Mai's bedside after she fell during the Battle City tournament). There are doujinshis from Japan, America, and Germany just to name a few. It's got enough fan art to slow your computer to a slug's crawl if you were to put it all on there (if you *could*). People even take the card base and play around in photoshop making cards for other anime.

Yu-Gi-Oh! Is much more than a card game, much more than the children's show that 4Kids turned it into, much more than a franchise handing out toys at McDonalds. It is steeped in history and, yes, it teaches us to value friendship as the precious lifeline that it is. The cards teach us to think ahead like a game of chess would, to know your opponent, and more importantly, yourself. A dueling deck isn't a deck of 52. You can find yourself in these cards. And it isn't built just to win, but to express your soul and battle with that.

If a series can somehow touch you, as so few do, inspire you, lead you to people you might not have known otherwise, then at the very least, it's worth a second look. So if you duel but don't read the manga, or have seen the anime but don't duel, give it a second thought. You've missed out on something amazing.

This month I will have with me, chapters 231 and 232 of Yu-Gi-Oh! on a flash drive for anyone (over 12) who would like to read it, provided we can get a library laptop. These are the chapters dealing with Malik's past.

No fanfic this month, instead, a blip comic:



Classifieds:

Wanted: Volume 2 and up of the Manga Yu Yu Hakusho. youcantfathom_me@yahoo.com

Wanted: Ice Master (may have slightly different name), Cold Enchanter, and Warrior of Atlantis Yu-Gi-Oh! Cards. roxiearcher192000@yahoo.com

Brian and Kris are looking to purchase common Yu-Gi-Oh cards. They are willing to pay up to .25 (a quarter) each. See at next anime.

Kris is looking for any Sailor Moon Manga. See at next anime.

What to submit your own fanfic. You can send it to liedekea@cadillaclibrary.org we will read it to make sure it is appropriate for all readers and then if it is included we will email you back.