

Another Generation

Von Jitsch

Kapitel 8: Another Family

"Amon Garam. It had to be you who finds this card, hadn't it?"

Amon stood his ground although he felt a strong urge to retreat. "What do you mean?"

The small student smiled. It was not a friendly expression. "You are here to retrieve the *Rainbow Dragon*. But not for the sake of Johann Andersen or saving the world - only your own personal advantage."

Amon adjusted his glasses. "What does it matter to you for what reason I am trying to retrieve it?" he asked calmly.

The small boy smiled. "Oh, it does not matter at all," he admitted, equally calm. "I am going to take it from you anyway." He raised his left hand with the Duel Disk as a clear signal that he was not here to only talk.

Amon gave him a thin smile and activated his own Disk. "Because it would pose a danger to you if Johann actually obtained it?" he inferred.

The boy did not reply. Instead, he inserted a deck into his Disk. "Let me duel you and show you the power of Darkness," he announced coolly.

Amon nodded and was glad that years of practice had perfected his poker face. He was physically trained and of great intellect, anyone who had been working with him would have confirmed that. And yet he felt a little uneasy facing this person who was at least half a head shorter than him. It was not the boy he was seeing, he knew, but the force behind him.

He was a rational type, but that did not mean he discarded the possibility of the supernatural. It was quite the opposite - he would have been a fool to not admit that what was happening at this very moment could not be explained by science. They had come to this island to take part in the graduation of 3rd year students, he remembered that as a fact. But of those 3rd year students, he could not remember seeing or meeting any except for the Japanese branch champion Yūki Jūdai, his friend Asuka Tenjōin and her older brother Fubuki. He also remembered being introduced to the whole school but in his memory the auditorium was almost empty. He still knew the rules of the graduation duels but he could not recall who had introduced them.

None of this made any sense unless you accepted that some sinister power was erasing people both physically and from the memories of those who had known them. It was not hard to guess what would happen to Amon if he lost the duel. Which was why he must not.

They took opposite stances on the small clearing.

"I start," Amon announced. Having the first turn was not usually an advantage, but

making the first move like this gave him the feeling of being in control. He already had five promising cards in his hand and drew a sixth.

"I activate *Lucky Cloud*. This will let me draw two cards during the End Phase of a turn where I summoned two or more 'Cloudian' monsters of the same name."

Amon placed the card on his Duel Disk and a ring of white clouds appeared above his head. Rays of light shone from its middle as if there was clear blue sky above and not the thick green of the forest.

"And if you wonder how I will be able to summon more than one monster this turn: I activate the Continuous Spell *Summon Cloud*. Once per turn I can Special Summon a Level 4 or lower 'Cloudian' in my Main Phase if I don't control any monsters."

More clouds gathered above Amon, but these were heavy and dark, and if they had not been a hologram he would have expected rain to pour down within seconds.

"I use the effect of *Summon Cloud* to Special Summon *Cloudian - Sheep Cloud* in defense position."

A lightning bolt stuck from the rain clouds and materialized another cloud on the field, but this one was just a single small white ball that looked as if it had eyes. The counter displayed zero attack and defense points.

"I Normal Summon a second *Sheep Cloud*," Amon continued and placed the second monster next to the first, but this one in attack position.

"And this ends my turn. Since I summoned the two *Sheep Clouds*, the effect of *Lucky Cloud* activates and I can draw two cards."

Light shone from the ring of clouds above him, then it disappeared. Amon drew and checked the cards he had just drawn. *Cloudian - Nimbusman* and *Natural Disaster*. The latter was always a core of his strategy and he could not have it on the field too soon. He could not be sure, of course, what his opponent would try to do, but whatever he would do in the next turn - he had two *Sheep Clouds* in place and even if they were to be destroyed, they would call forth Tokens that he could use to summon his ace monster *Cloudian - Eye of the Typhoon* which was already in his hand.

This was looking better than he had hoped.

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"Fujiwara?"

Fubuki repeated the name dropped by Jūdai with an air of hesitation.

Jūdai nodded. He, Fubuki and Asuka were walking back to the Academy's main building and on the way they had tried to explain everything that had transpired so far. Fubuki had listened with an uncharacteristically serious air. And then *Yubel* had reminded Jūdai of the name that had been mentioned a couple of times now.

"The spirits apparently said that you're important because you have a connection to him," Asuka added.

Fubuki scratched his chin. "Fujiwara..." he repeated thoughtfully. "Somehow that *feels* familiar... but I can't associate anything."

"So it's someone we already forgot?" Asuka suggested.

The three (and *Yubel*, who had appeared next to Judai again) exchanged puzzled glances. If she was right, there was nothing they could do about it, could they?

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The small boy in the Obelisk Blue uniform announced it was his turn and drew. A mean smirk appeared on his lips.

"I activate *Polymerization* to fuse three monsters from my hand: *Cyber Dragon*, *Dragonroid* and *Drillroid*."

The three monsters appeared on the field and were drawn together immediately, forming a whirl of colors. "I summon *Chimeratech Fortress Dragon*!"

The appearing dragon looked like a giant metal snake. Its body consisted mainly of three large metal rings. Inside them, Amon could see the monsters that had been used to summon it.

"When this monster is summoned, all other cards I control are sent to the Graveyard, but there are none," the boy mentioned.

"I know," Amon replied. "I know this monster's effect. It was often used by..." his voice trailed off, but then suddenly he blinked and continued with more conviction: "... by Ryō Marufuji who is also known as Hell Kaiser. And you are... his younger brother, Shō Marufuji, or at least you pretend to be."

The boy nodded. "That is correct, Amon Garam," he said.

Amon adjusted his glasses. "I had forgotten both of them until now... so you can not only *erase* memories?"

"Indeed. If you don't remember anything from your life, there is no darkness inside you that I could get hold of."

Amon chuckled. "Well, aren't you generous," he said. There was no reason to laugh in this situation, not really, but for Amon, who had always thought of knowledge as far more valuable than money or physical strength, it was like he had regained some of his power. And he would use it.

The boy continued the duel: "I don't need to explain this to you, but *Chimeratech* can attack your monster three times and each attack will cause 400 points of damage to you without destroying the attacked monster. I attack your *Sheep Cloud* three times."

One by one, beams were fired at his monster from the three circular parts of *Chimeratech*. Amon endured the impact stoically and watched his Life Points drop to 2800.

"This is just a small taste of what is to come," his opponent said. "I set two Spell or Trap Cards and end my turn."

"Well, that was disappointing. I thought you would try to obliterate me in one turn," Amon taunted.

Strategically, what his opponent had done was solid. Usually, a monster like *Chimeratech* was best suited for a finishing blow. But summoning it this early could serve the purpose of getting the Fusion Material monsters to the Graveyard. That sounded likely if his opponent was using Hell Kaiser's *Cyberdark* deck. So he was just trying to see if he could provoke.

His opponent did not buy into it. "You of all people should know how important patience is. Look at how you have been waiting all those years, to now use this invitation to the Japanese Duel Academy to try and get your hand on two immensely rare cards."

Amon adjusted his glasses. "Are you trying to make me feel guilty? Because that will not work. It is my turn I draw."

He drew. *Rain Storm*. That card was useful, but he had to figure out how to use it most effectively before making a move.

"I have to discard one card during my Standby Phase to keep *Summon Cloud* on the

field. But since its effect only works as long as I have no monsters on the field it's useless to me right now," Amon announced and removed the Continuous Spell. The rain clouds above him dispersed.

He focused on his opponent. "You are right. I came here hoping to find a way to get my hands on *Yubel*, which is in the hands of Yūki Jūdai, and the *Rainbow Dragon*, which my intel told me was just being created by Pegasus J. Crawford himself."

His opponent sneered. "And yet you are acting like the valiant hero who is defending that precious card from me."

Amon went on with the duel: "I tribute the two *Sheep Cloud* to summon a new monster, *Cloudian - Eye of the Typhoon*."

The monster that appeared was a darker cloud in a shape that resembled the upper body of a human, with a single eye in the middle of the forehead. It showed an impressive 3000 Attack Points.

Amon adjusted his glasses. "I am not an idiot. I can see what is happening. It is not only the people on this island that are disappearing. I cannot remember business partners, people I spied on, not even my family - people from all over the world.

I wanted those cards to give me power, but power is meaningless if there is nobody left to apply it to. So I have decided that it is my best chance to aid Johann in defeating you. So - let us see how well you can withstand bad weather. I attack your *Chimeratech* with my *Eye of the Typhoon*."

He saw his opponent's hand flick towards the switch that would activate his face down card. Amon smirked. "According to *Eye of the Typhoon's* effect, when it declares an attack, the battle positions of all face-up monsters are changed. That obviously applies to your *Chimeratech*."

The hand stopped. Amon smirked. "You had better not given me my memories back. I know that the Hell Kaiser liked to use *Power Wall* which lets you avoid damage and discard cards to the Graveyard where you need them to use with the *Cyberdark* cards. But since *Chimeratech* is now in defense mode, there is no damage."

The cloud-like monster shot a beam from its single eye that hit the metal dragon in the head and the hologram dispersed without interruption. It looked like Amon had guessed right, and like the other face-down card was not something that would help his opponent in this situation, either.

His opponent did not look too unhappy about it. He even smiled. "Well, aren't you clever, Amon Garam. As expected of *an heir* to the Garam Group."

The words echoed through Amon. Suddenly, there were memories crushing into him. Memories that, it seemed, he had already lost but that his opponent was now giving him back as a new attempt to get to him.

That man saying "You are now part of the Garam family. I expect only the best from you."

A proud smile and a big hand on the shoulder of a worn-out Amon who had just won a boxing match. "Well done, Amon."

A scene viewed through a partly opened door of that man and his wife on a sofa, gently looking at her big belly that announced upcoming childbirth.

Amon gasped and pressed a hand to his forehead in an attempt to keep the emotions that came with the memories under control.

"Oh, I'm sorry," his opponent said. "You are not the heir. The Garams have a natural son after all."

"You are right. I was adopted by the Garams to inherit the Group, but when they had a natural child..."

"... you were cast aside," his opponent said calmly.

Amon straightened his back. "I took on a new role," he clarified sharply and adjusted his glasses.

A younger Amon standing beside a bed, an infant inside. The infant was smiling at him and clutching one of his fingers with its tiny hand.

He had his grip back now. The memories had reminded him of his moments of weakness, but also of why he was here.

"I set two Spell or Trap Cards," Amon announced. The two cards were *Natural Disaster* and *Rain Storm*, setting him up to destroy his opponent in different ways.

"During my End Phase, the Attack Points of *Eye of the Typhoon* are reduced by 500." The counter went down to 2500. "I end my turn."

The small boy drew. "I activate my Continuous Trap *Rebirth Judgement*. From now on, all monsters in our Graveyards will be treated as Dragon Types."

Amon nodded. The monsters *Dragonroid* and *Drillroid* that he had already seen were not cards he knew Hell Kaiser to use. Amon had not been very interested in the younger brother Shō so far, but he assumed that the Roids were originally part of his deck. To use them with the *Cyberdark* monsters, this effect would be immensely helpful.

"Next I Normal Summon *Cyberdark Horn*."

With an infernal screech, the dragon-like creature appeared. Its whole body was covered in an insect-like shell and all its extremities ended in sharp edges.

"When this card is Normal Summoned, I select a level 4 or lower Dragon-Type monster from the Graveyard and equip it to *Horn*. I select *Drillroid*, which I used for my Fusion Summon earlier and which is now treated as a Dragon due to *Rebirth Judgement*."

Cables shot out of *Cyberdark Horn's* body and dug into the ground to pull up the cartoony monster with tank treads as feet and a big drill as a nose. The attack point counter jumped from the original 800 to 2400.

"*Horn* gains the attack points of *Drillroid* as its own", the boy explained needlessly.

"It is not as strong as *Eye of the Typhoon*," Amon pointed out.

"Not yet," his opponent agreed with a mean smile.

Amon knew that very well himself. One more turn and *Eye of the Typhoon* would be left with only 2000 attack points. But he was not planning to wait until then.

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Johann stopped and turned around to where they were coming from.

"I think we are going in the wrong direction. My connection with the *Rainbow Dragon* is getting weaker rather than stronger," he announced after standing still in concentration for a moment.

Jim, who was in front of him, slashing through underwood with a bushing knife, turned around as well. Caren gave a low growl. "You saying the others might be luckier than we are?" he asked and wiped the lower part of his face with the bandana he wore around his neck.

Johann nodded. "I hope they are okay," he added. He looked at *Crystal Master* and *Crystal Keeper* who kept floating beside him. "What happens if they run into our opponent?"

"It is up to them," *Crystal Master* said in his usual sad voice. "But every human has darkness inside them. Only someone who knows and accepts their own darkness could hope to win a duel against such an opponent."

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Amon drew and was, again, glad that he had such a good poker face, otherwise he would have smiled. *Diamond-Dust Cyclone* was a perfect fit with the monster he had been keeping in his hand. *Cyberdark Horn* was not a threat anymore.

"I Normal Summon *Cloudian - Ghost Fog*."

The monster appeared next to *Eye of the Typhoon*, a fleeting accumulation of thin clouds that only vaguely formed a humanoid shape. It had zero attack points.

"*Ghost Fog*, attack *Cyberdark Horn*," Amon commanded.

The monster moved forward. *Cyberdark Horn* responded with a counterattack that used the drill on *Drillroids* nose. The fleeting clouds dispersed.

"Battle damage between *Ghost Fog* and another monster is reduced to zero. But when it is destroyed, I can distribute Fog Counters equal to the Level of the monster that destroyed it. *Cyberdark Horn* is Level 4 so I can distribute four Fog Counters. I place all of them on *Horn*," Amon explained.

The dispersed clouds gathered back together and formed a ring around *Horn*'s neck that consisted of four separate grey clouds.

"This is what I need to activate *Diamond-Dust Cyclone*. I destroy a monster with 4 or more Fog Counters, then I can draw a card for every 4 counters it had."

The cloud ring around *Horn*'s neck exploded, taking the monster with it.

"And I also activate my Continuous Trap Card *Natural Disaster*. Every time one of your cards is destroyed, I inflict 400 points of damage for every destroyed card!"

The card flipped up and a whirlwind shot forward from its image, hitting the opponent and knocking him off his feet. His Life Point counter went from 4000 to 3200 since *Drillroid* had been destroyed together with *Horn*.

"As I said I can draw a card due to the effect of *Diamond-Dust Cyclone*," Amon said and drew.

"Very effective," his opponent complimented. "No, I could say you are perfect. You are not leaving things to chance in a duel. You plan things out. And you are physically trained, too."

Amon did not react. He knew all that. What was the point?

"The Garam Group would deserve someone like you as their leader. You, and not some snot-nosed brat who knows nothing about the hardships of this world."

"I have sworn to support my brother in every possible way," Amon said calmly. "My abilities *are* the strength of the Garam Group. I do not need to be the leader."

He checked his freshly drawn card. *Mirage Target*. Very useful. "I set this card face down and end my turn. This is when *Eye of the Typhoon* loses 500 attack points due to its effect."

The attack point counter of *Eye of the Typhoon* dropped to 2000. But that was okay. Amon already knew what to do next.

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Yubel was the first to notice and alerted Jūdai, who advised Asuka and Fubuki to stop. "What is it?" Fubuki asked.

"We are surrounded," *Yubel* said. Jūdai repeated the words to the siblings who could not see his spirit partner.

"Oh, your partner really has sharp senses," a deep voice said.

The lanky, leather-clad figure of Trueman appeared from the shades of the trees that lined the path they had been walking.

"But it does not help you," the same voice said, but it was coming from another direction.

More figures that looked exactly like the first came forth from the forest and stepped into the way of the group.

"You will not reunite with your friends. And soon you will forget about them, anyway." Suddenly the air around then felt very chill.

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The being that pretended to be Shō Marufuji drew a card. Amon's opponent still had 3200 Life Points, but only two cards on his field, *Rebirth Judgement* and the face-down card that he strongly suspected to be *Power Wall*. This would be difficult to turn around for anyone.

But apparently he was not out of options yet. "I Normal Summon *Cyberdark Keel*. Same as *Horn* I can equip a Level 4 or lower Dragon from the Graveyard to it. I choose *Drillroid* yet again."

The monster that appeared had a simple snake-like body and connected to *Drillroid* with cables shooting from its body in the same fashion as *Horn* before. Even the combined attack points were the same at 2400.

Amon's opponent raised his hand. "*Cyberdark Horn*, attack *Eye of the Typhoon*," he ordered calmly.

Amon smirked. "Not so fast," he said. "I activate my Trap Card *Rain Storm*. I can decrease the attack points of a 'Cloudian' I control by multiples of 1000 to destroy cards you control, one per 1000 attack points. That means I can decrease *Eye of the Typhoon*'s attack points from 2000 to zero and destroy two of your cards. I select your face-down card and *Keel*!"

Gushes of rain shot from the image of the unveiled Trap and united into a crashing wave that hit the opponent's field. *Keel* disappeared in the waves, which then hit the Trap Card which was - just as Amon had thought - revealed to be *Power Wall* just before it got destroyed.

"And this activates the effect of *Natural Disaster*, you lose 400 life points for each destroyed card, which makes 1200 in total because *Drillroid* is destroyed together with *Keel*."

The effect hit his opponent and reduced his life points to 2000.

Amon crossed his arms. "Well, what are you going to do now?" he asked. "You have no monsters left, no cards in your hand, and *Rebirth Judgement* is not going to help you out in this situation."

The false Shō Marufuji wore a sour expression. "You think you are winning," he noted. "I *am* winning," Amon corrected.

"Aren't you full of yourself. That is exactly how you cause others pain. Others like your *brother* Sid."

The words agitated Amon, but he managed to hide that.

"He's afraid that you will leave him. Because he is old enough to understand that someone with your capabilities is not obliged to work for him forever. He fears he will not grow up to be worthy of your support."

"How would you know?" Amon asked sharply.

The shape of the small boy in front of him seemed to quiver. It was like there was a looming black shadow rising behind him. When he opened his mouth, it also sounded like there was more than one voice speaking.

"I am Darkness. I consist of the fears of people. What do you think why they disappear from the earth and from your memory, and why I can give you the memory back?"

Amon made an involuntary step backwards, stumbled over a tree root, and almost fell. It felt like a physical weight was trying to push him down.

The Darkness loomed over him. "Do you understand, Amon Garam? You may think you can outwit me but it will not bring them back. Because they *chose* to become one with me. To soothe their fears of the future."

Amon swallowed. He felt cold sweat trickle down his neck despite the almost tropical heat of the island.

"You can beat me! But destroy me you will not."

The shadow disappeared.

"I end my turn," Amon's opponent said.

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Jim was charging ahead again, and Johann was thankful for it. He was not afraid of getting dirty, but having someone bigger in front of him who moved swiftly and made sure that vines and tree branches were out of the way greatly increased their pace.

"I hope Amon is okay," he said out loud because the silence seemed so depressing. Not even the sounds of birds and other animals resounded in the forest.

"Me too," Jim said. "Why'd he go alone, anyway?"

"He didn't go alone... did he?" Johann sounded insecure. He looked at the two guardians at his side, but even they seemed to be at a loss.

"I don't *remember* anyone else," Jim said. "But apparently that don't mean anything here."

Johann nodded and clenched both fists. They needed to find the *Rainbow Dragon* as soon as possible.

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Amon drew, then looked at his opponent.

"I Normal Summon *Cloudian - Nimbusman*," he announced. "It's a Level 5 monster so I have to tribute *Eye of the Typhoon*."

The monster that appeared was a humanoid shaped out of thick gray rain clouds. It displayed 1000 attack points. That was more than *Eye of the Typhoon*, at least.

"*Eye of the Typhoon* is a Wind Type so I cannot activate *Nimbusman*'s effect that occurs when I tribute Water Types for it," he explained for completeness.

Amon raised his hand. "*Nimbusman*, direct attack."

The monster attacked as ordered, punching through the small boy with its cloudy fist. His Life Points fell to 1000.

"You are acting like it will mean nothing if I beat you but I think you are just a bad loser," Amon added. "The fact that you are trying to take the *Rainbow Dragon* means that it poses a danger for you. So I will defeat you and make sure that Johann gets it. I trust that if he destroys you, the people that you spirited away will come back."

His opponent smirked. "How foolish to cling to the *Rainbow Dragon* as your hope. All it takes for me is to defeat you and take it, and you *will* accept the darkness."

Amon looked at him stoically. "I do not think so. I set a Spell or Trap Card and end my turn."

His opponent drew and suddenly a wild smile appeared on his lips. "Well, maybe you should reconsider. I Normal Summon *Cyber Dark Edge*. Same as with *Keel* and *Horn* I can equip a Dragon to it, and I choose *Drillroid* again."

The monster appeared with a screech, *Drillroid* in its fangs. Predictably, it showed 2400 attack points.

Amon shrugged. "*The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result*," he mused, "this quote is commonly attributed to Albert Einstein but the actual origins are unclear."

"Quit your yapping, fool," his opponent hissed. "*Cyberdark Edge* can attack directly but then the battle damage is halved. I choose to attack *Nimbusman* because you lose more life points that way."

The monster lunged forward.

Amon gave an exaggerated sigh. "You cannot hurt me," he said. "I activate my Trap Card *Mirage Target*. When you declare an attack, I can tribute a 'Cloudian' to negate the attack. And by doing so I gain life points equal to its attack points. I tribute *Nimbusman* to stop your attack and gain 1000 Life Points."

The drill of *Drillroid* in *Edge's* claws slashed right through *Nimbusman*, but the dispersing clouds gathered around Amon, shining with a warm light. With that, Amon's life was back at 3800.

"I end my turn," his opponent said. He glared at Amon. "But you did not get rid of *Edge* yet. One turn and I will destroy you."

"I draw," Amon announced. He looked at the drawn card. *Big Summon Cloud*. This was even better than he could have hoped.

"Now I activate my set card. It is a normal Spell Card, *Pot of Avarice*. According to its effect I shuffle five monsters from my Graveyard back into the deck, then draw two cards. In my Graveyard I have two *Sheep Cloud*, *Nimbusman*, *Ghost Fog* and *Eye of the Typhoon* which I shuffle back. I draw!"

When he saw the cards he had just drawn, Amon knew he had won.