Venturing: Hider’s Preys

We stepped through the entrance and gazed upon our surroundings. I was surprised to see how clean and organized the huge room was compared to our office back at home. As the others felt the same, I turned to Yang who was silent at the time. Her eyes and mind was elsewhere it seems. Where? I would not know but I was determined to find out however. Walking across the police line that we had created, I tapped Yang’s shoulder and she suddenly turned to me while I whispered to her, “Is something a matter?” She shook her head, before smiling back at me. I exhaled and said nothing afterwards, remaining upon the current spot adjacent to Yang while we heard footsteps approaching us. All our heads turned towards the source, yet we were surprised to see a younger buck before us upon arrival on the first floor. We had expected Doe to come back from the upstairs and whatever she was doing there. As the young buck stepped in front of us, we all turned to him.

He was young and had no muscles. His brown fur was smooth and clean. His antlers sparkling upon our eyes. The buck looked psychically fit. But that was the least of our problems when he had decided to part his lips and spoke to us, “Which one of you is the leader.” “That be me.” Yang growled, stepping forward from the line as her arms crossed over her chest staring at him while he looked at her. The two somehow fell quiet in the following silence and it felt uneasy for me and the other officers. As the buck nodded, he motioned towards us and turned around, moving forward. We tailed him. Across the room we went through the first floor of the office building, arriving straight upon an elevator that somehow opened its doors towards us; anticipating our arrival surprisingly. I smiled only faintly upon seeing this but Zander said nothing as we piled into the elevator and entered. The doors shut behind us and lifted us upward a floor or two before arriving onto the fourth floor.

Upon arrival, the doors opened. We all walked out as one and entered onto the floor. However as we all piled out, we were surprised to see the buck still standing in the elevator room already pressing a button. With the elevator doors closing on us and him, it took him down a floor where we heard a faint ding and some footsteps. The following seconds became silent, our eyes were to Yang who frowned while her eyes scanned around. The fourth floor was empty. Nothing was there. The walls were windows and we were able to see the outside view and horizon from where we stood. Other than that, nothing else. Yang coughed, gaining our attention which was thrown to her as she started the meeting. The reason why we had needed to meet after all.

“Alright. Opened up the floor to Ling. He might know some experiences towards this ‘order quake’ that had been rumbling about upon the lands. I nodded before stepping forward as all eyes went to me. I said and opened my statement to the day me and Zander. “I and Zander were searching for how the order quake had happened. We were nearly surprised that it had only started underground and nothing else. We had noticed how the weak spots upon the pipe maps and where they were struck in order to proceed with the quake we had witnessed two days prior. Other than that, nothing else.” “The pipes are all connected to one another.” Zander interjected as his eyes fell to mine, I nodded at him and smiled as he stepped forth meeting up with me. “And all pipes lead towards the outskirts of the lands, which is not important right now however. But what is, is what Ling said about the weak spots in the pipe map. Only two were struck and caused a chain reaction that happened very quickly.” “Sounds like someone might know this underground stuff apparently.” “Right.” I nodded to Kyro who crossed his arms and growled before answering me, “The only thing that stands out from my mind was. If someone were to know and memorize the layout of the pipes underneath the fair lands of Vaster. That someone needs to live underneath us his whole life. No connections outside.” “It would be very depressing actually.” Started Zander as Yang nodded approvingly.

“I agree.” Natty piped up and we were nearly startled, forgetting that she was there. As she growled at us with her eyes narrowed mainly towards us, she argued “You forgot that a pink dragoness like myself is standing here quietly and processing information from all you geeks.” “Hey!” Startled Kyro and Zander while Yang chuckled. “Regardless, if our mole is hidden underneath how was he able to contact anyone from the outside? There is no telephone or anything hidden there that has connections to other cities other than our own.” We all fell silent, unable to answer Natty’s question as she frowned but growled sequentially before exhaling and throwing her claws above her head, “I guess we would not be able to answer that one then.” Commented Zander, “Quiet.” I growled playfully at him throwing a playful punch at his shoulder while he yipped and rubbed his sore injury with his claw. Yang snapped back into reality and continued, “What Natty said is true. But Somehow I think that our culprit is working alone. Even if we were to ask anyone; including Chaos and Neither, neither can they answer what we were seeking however.” “That is true. Everyone else answered on their own. Our culprit committed the same.” I added as nods came from Kyro and Natty. “But if he worked alone and he lived underground his entire life. Then if we were to enter into the underground, think we might be able to see him?” “If he is there.” Answered Yang.

“Are there any exits about? DId anyone grab hold of a map that was lying upon the outskirts of Vaster upon our time of arrival towards Doe’s building?” Zander questioned which Kyro answered by holding up the blue map that he held in his claw this entire time. Me and Yang turned to Kyro as he held up the map for us to view. The map was short, much like our Vaster. The map only showed the pipes and their connections towards others. We had seen how the pipes became one big maze and I felt dizzy just looking upon it however. As Zander noticed, Yang questioned Kyro and pointed to the red marks upon the map. Kyro answered with a smile upon his face, “Those are red x marks. Apparently our culprit mole guy had marked these as weaknesses towards the town.” “That must be it, I guess.” Natty replied smiling back upon Kyro while Yang shook her head and frowned pointing again to the red marks, “Look again guys. There’s red dashes that came from these red marks. All running down to the edge of the map.” She traced the red dots until she ended up upon one of the four edges of the map and stabbed that point. “Wherever these edges are, we must investigate however.” “Are those not the entrances and exit of our Vaster?” I commented, taking a look upon the map before looking at Yang again who nodded slowly before turning to me. “Yes. But were these the escape routes for our culprit or the end connection of where all the pipes lie.” “Guess we will find out then, huh?” Zander answered, chuckling as his claws fell upon his sides. Everyone else nodded and ran to the elevator again.

A few minutes later, we were already in the air. Flying North east towards one of the four edges of Vaster where we had believed it was a connection of pipes. We theorized that this must be how the culprit manages to get around the place, by entering into the pipes with a hammer and a nail. He guessed he might be small like a mole or something who lived underground all his life. Zander thinks that the mole was wearing ruined clothes and was poor; plotting vengeance against the organized cultures such as ours. However, as he said, this mole is not a dragon. “I guess that Zander might be right on this one however.” Kyro commented, shifting his gaze towards the proud and prideful dragon flying adjacent to us. I nodded in kind but said nothing else to follow in the conversation as the rest of the way was all silent until we arrived at our intended place. Landing upon the sand grounds below us, we raised our heads and dust and sands fell surrounding us. The sun was hanging higher in the skies, clouds drifting away from our location. There were birds crying about, but they were far away from us. As we looked upon our surroundings, we were surprised to see the Ciunx and sands officers already investigating the place. Yang stepped forward towards the Ciunx pair as they were having a conversation about something. Me and Zander decided to tail Yang while Kyro and Natty went over to the sands officers.

As we regrouped with the Ciunx pair, Ziorui and Kivyu turned to us suddenly. They smiled only faintly, raising their claws as we mirrored them. However, Ziorui stepped towards me and nudged my chest as he whispered to me, “Have you gotten Yang as your mate yet?” “What?” I replied startled by his comment, blushing red and angrily glaring at him while he chuckled in response before leaning back, avoiding my punch upon him later. “I kid I kid.” “You better be.” I growled at him. But upon mentioning the word, I felt my heart beating in my chest as I turned over to Yang Kivyu and Zander. It seemed that the trio had an intensive conversation. Yet they were not loud; rather quiet and to themselves. I exhaled, closed my eyes before shifting to Ziorui and changed the subject finally. “What can you tell me about what you found inside the spot?” “One of the edges of Vaster?” Ziorui remarked, tilting his head to one side before grinning mad. “Well, our culprit was small. He had a hammer and we guessed nails which were stabbed upon the pipes creating those order quakes that had happened upon your lands.” “Evidence?” I questioned with a raised eye as he nodded quickly in response before handing me what they found.

‘It was like we had theorized,’ I thought to myself with a smile upon my face as my eyes stared upon a photograph of pawprints upon the entrance of the white pipe, a yellow blackish hammer that was surprisingly light for a heavy and tall like me, but perhaps heavy for our culprit. I squinted my eyes upon the handle of the hammer, staring upon dirty paws that were imprinted upon the neck of the hammer. “Just like Yang theorized, however.” I muttered before looking at Ziorui who smiled back upon me, I grunted but nodded, responding towards his smile as we turned back walking to Yang’s group with a hollar from me, “It is just what you said Ling.” I yelled. She glanced at me while the officers around her were silent and kept their eyes upon me. We rejoined their group, I held out my claws for her to look. She grabbed the hammer and stared at the smaller prints then noticed how light it was. Staring upon the photograph, she smiled suddenly as all her questions were already answered. “Guess we know now huh?” She replied, with a smirk of confidence imprinted upon her own face. The rest of us blinked surprise while we leaned back in confusion, saying nothing else afterwards while Yang exhaled and looked back upon my claws.

“It is heavy for a culprit who lives underground all his life. He or she might have been paid by someone else to damage Vaster. This photograph showed that our culprit has small paws; it is an animal by the looks of it however. So it seems that we are dealing with a smaller creature living underground.” Yang explained to Doe and her younger buck as she nodded, responding to the presentation that Yang gave to her. As she clicked the button presenting the next slide, she went on to explain about the map and its significance with our culprit. In the meanwhile, I had wondered how we magically teleported towards the auditorium of Doe’s building. Upon the first floor. We were sitting upon the chairs behind Doe, all looking intensively towards the slides that Yang had presented. Well all except for one. Me and Kyro had already noticed that our Zander was finding himself asleep during the presentation. He snored quietly however to avoid prosecution. However, he was leaning back in his chair with his foot hanging higher than the other. His claws sitting on his chest while his stomach was rising then falling in synchronization. Natty rolled her eyes while she watched Kyro grabbed the bucket that Zander was eating out of and shoved it upon his head, spilling all the popcorn onto his head as he was startled and hoisted himself up.

With Kyro snickering adjacent to Natty, I smiled faintly at the relationship between them before shifting my attention back towards the slide. The presentation was long and perhaps dull as a matter of fact. But it had sparked something in me however. A question of some sort as I pondered over it. Natty had taken notice and nudged me while I gaze at her. She urged me to speak my mind which I did however. “What if it was not an animal, Natty. Remember, within the Order realm; all we saw were dragons of different sizes and species.” “So what you are saying is, our culprit is a dragon and not a mole?” Natty concluded, I shook my head and frowned, retelling everything again while trying to explain to her. She nodded afterwards and concluded again, “So a creature that is not an animal, reptile or anything known.” “So a blob?” Kyro questioned, peeking in interest upon our conversation. “Not just a blob. They do not have arms or legs. How else can they enter into the pipeline of Vaster?” I growled at the red dragon as he pondered more before answering, “They can. Just split themselves into different sizes and shapes, hop onto one another and presto! He is in.” “Cool.” I answered, “But how can he or it rather, damage the pipes with a hammer? How would those prints be made?” “Ah yeah… that is right.” Kyro replied nodding, finally coming from excitement to disappointment while Zander laughed hearing it. However Kyro continued torturing Zander while Natty continued the conversation.

“So not a mole, creature or dragon then…” She answered, reviewing the terms as her eyes settled on mine. I nodded silently and pondered afterwards while turning my attention to Yang who already was behind me. Surprised and shocked, I flinched and got up upon my seat. The others glanced over surprise too while Yang smiled at us before motioning her claw as we were led out the doors of the auditorium. And upon the flickering lights we entered upon as we gathered with Ciunx and Sands officers who were waiting for us. They turned their attention towards us; we all gave high fives towards one another as we chuckled and talked. Our conversations led to many different topics that it was really hard to focus on one. In addition to going really fast through them however. In the end, we split from the two and were on our own in the big empty room. Quietness fell upon our side as our eyes settled towards the entrance doors before us. No one said anything until we were out the doors. Upon which, I started speaking. But Yang stopped me.

“You could be right about what you said about our culprit.” “What do you mean?” I questioned staring at her while she cracked a smile before answering. Our wings were spread, we lifted ourselves up towards the rooftop of Doe’s building where we landed upon the silver flooring below us. Metal knockings met our feet after we had landed down. Zander and Kyro walked over to one of the metal fans and laid down, gazing up towards the black skies above us. Natty curled up to sleep after having been tired flying all day now which left me and Yang. She repeated what she said seconds before and I never answered what I said. As she giggled, she continued “Our culprit is not a dragon being or an animal and you have provided good evidence to support that however. It is true that our culprit is not an animal considering that our only enemies were the canines of Chaos and Neither. But what if it was…” “What if it was that dragon from the dog kingdom.” I suggested, “What if it was the dog? Coming in to sabotage us for everything we had done towards that dragon?” Yang questioned. We fell silent. Neither of us ever wanted to talk. But we just gaze at one another in the eyes, allowing the moment to slow down time surrounding us.

As we whispered our names to one another, Zander complained which broke the moment for us. I glared at the black dragon while he was laughing but was injured by the sudden hit from Kyro who growled at him. The two started fighting one another; forming fists and slaps towards one another’s sides and wings while I marched forward to them and slapped them both in the face. As the fighting paused and came to a stop, I heard Yang chuckling responding to our ‘fight’. Zander and I blushed embarrassed while a wave of heat sizzled from our necks. At the same time, Kyro was still laughing and slapped both our wings causing us to step forward in both pain and surprise as we glared at the red dragon in turn, he waved at both of us before backing himself in the corner. The fight went well into the midnight hours when we heard a door open loudly; and all of us stopped what we were doing at the time before gazing at the buck who looked worried at us before he silently motioned us. As he entered back in, we gaze at one another in confusion before following the buck down the flight of stairs back towards the second floor. Where we opened the pair of doors and entered in, looking up towards Doe whose face darkened upon our arrival.

“What is it?” I answered, stepping in front of my group as I looked towards Doe who stared back onto me in silence before answering back, “This is what up.” She started, throwing a file upon me. I grabbed it in midair, narrowed my eyes in confusion about what he was saying before I opened up the folder and gazed into the pile of pictures and amongst other stuff. “These pictures were taken two weeks prior. All in sequential order up upon the recent it seems.” “All the way to the recent?” I echoed Doe who nodded and rose to her feet, setting her hooves upon her back as her lips moved. “Everything in the folder confirms what you were trying to arrest… except for one thing.” “What is it?” I asked with hesitation dripping from my voice while she stepped towards me; snatched the folder from my claws and turned every picture over one by one. As she flipped through the pages and stopped, she stepped towards her and looked through every one before our eyes settled upon a single picture staring before us. Although it was not a picture; but a bunch of words. On it were,

“Look upon the center left of Vaster. Your answer is there.”

We looked upon Doe who said nothing afterwards. But slammed the folder shut and set it aside, save for some photos already dropping upon the ground. As her hooves crossed and looked intensively towards us, Yang stepped to my line and proudly but angrily spoke. “We will look there.” “You will not like what you see however…” She warned carefully before turning herself around and resettled upon her desk. Yang gaze at her before turning to us. She nodded slowly and quietly as we piled up upon the elevator again and descended to the ground floor. When we climbed out from the elevator and left the building, we spread our wings outward and flew to the skies above. Tense and uncertainty loomed over our heads as we flew straight towards Vaster. Upon arriving, we gazed down upon the streets and buildings. We were a bit surprised to see other dragons already flouring towards rebuilding the community into the way that they had wanted however. It was even more surprising that the buildings that Natty owned were already built; a white sign hangs upon the door. Big words flash before our eyes, “Welcome home!”

As much as it warms our hearts and minds; provoking our determination to apprehend our culprit whoever it was, we were still quiet and tense as we flew from everyone. Straight towards the center of our fair town. The heart of Vaster. There, we dive down upon the center of the crossroads and fold our wings as we land. Zander, Kyro and Natty all looked around towards the horizons that stared back onto us. In the meanwhile, me and Yang glance upon the center of the crossroads and the heart of Vaster. Our eyes went wide when we saw something a short distance away. A dead body. It answered our main questions and confirmed the unknown species that we had lingering upon our minds. As me and Yang drew forth towards it, we drew our pistols and aimed. Poised. We stopped and planted our feet; our eyes lowered upon the body laid before us as Zander, Kyro and Natty rejoined us and stared down onto the body. “So this is it huh?” Zander questioned, his voice finally peeking through the wall of silence as me and Yang gaze at him. Kyro frowned while Natty was a bit tense. “This is our culprit.” I answered, “Every question we had was answered; our theory was correct in every way. We never miss a clue or anything upon our eye. But this… the answer that laid before us. Was shocking.”

No one said anything after me for the silence fell and we were left in our thoughts.