Venturing: Red Haze

“Ling. Eight red lights are shining.” “From where?” I questioned Natty who responded back immediately, “From the lamppost, this night.” I stayed silent for a period of time, pondering over the decision before pressing against the black button again and spoke, “Alright. Stay away from them. Get anyone lingering in the streets back upon their buildings. We are going to shut this down.” “Roger.” Natty answered back with no hesitation before the line went completely dead afterwards. Releasing my walkie, I gave an exhale of a sigh and closed my eyes before reopening them again. I shift my attention towards the machine adjacent to me where Zander was staring at it for a moment. Silence looming over his head just as I walked over to his side. Slapping a claw over his shoulder, he jumped but turned his head over to me with a false hiding smile. I shook my head at him before responding afterwards, “We are to shut this machine done. Natty reported about eight red lights shining from the lamppost.” “That is not right at all.” Commented Zander, a bit surprise by the news. But nonetheless kept quiet and turned his head back towards the machine. Operating upon it suddenly.

I stayed silent. But kept my eye upon the machine. I stared upon its height and then its length. Before pulling my eyes away from it and turned to the road itself. It was a bit complex that even a non native would not figure out where he or she would be going at all without a simple map or something that would aid him in his way however. A small smile appeared upon my lips just as my ears flickered upon Zander’s voice who spoke aloud about something which made me turn towards him in the responding silence. He turned his head towards me, meeting my eyes suddenly. But I avoided his and kept stare upon what he was pointing towards. There were numbers. Starting from sixteen and cutting itself by half each time. Till it reaches one; it had stopped. I tilted my head to one side before questioned Zander about it. He shrugged too; having no clue as well. I exhaled a sigh in answer before walking to his line. Whereas we experiment for a bit; hitting the flickered switches below the numbers. We turned one on. Number eight, I believed and waited a bit. Ozkun’s voice called out from the walkie, “The lamppost returned to normal. The fog is gone.” “See what I tell you.” I started, glancing over to Zander who frowned. Tilted his head to one side in confusement as he answered back, “But it cannot be that easy. Can it?” “Nothing is easy.” I reminded him, “But sometimes a case can be however. Quick; turn the rest of them on. See what we get when everything to normal.” I say pointing to the remaining switches as Zander nodded his head, quickly turning them all on one by one.

When they all showed green and reports coming from the other dragons saying the same thing, I found myself smiling and perhaps pleased by the methods that we had conducted. As I turned towards Zander, I had noticed how nervous he was. His entire body was tightened. Even his wings were folded and stayed like that for a time. While I stared onto him in silence, I frowned but remained silent as if I had nothing to offer him however. For instead, I turned my back to the machine and spread my wings. Heading off from this spot, towards North and back towards Vaster town where the other dragons were waiting. Heading back onto the station, I pondered about Zander’s nervousness and his body being tightened. It was as if there was something that he knew he was not telling us however. ‘What was it?’ I wondered which the thought popped into my mind. But no used into looking into it so suddenly however as I had arrived upon the police station. I dropped to the ground, tuck my wings in and started heading through the doors.

Where I had noticed Yang and Takaki were standing side by side, together and faced the board in front of them. A huge map of Vaster was clipped upon the board and to my surprise, it takes the entire board too. Both dragoness were busy conducting something for their whispers were silenced or dropped low that it was impossible for me to hear them. Regardless, I cough to make myself known as the two turned their heads over to me. Only Yang smiled upon seeing me. “Ling. You are here early. What gives?” “The machine is fixed. We are waiting for the ne-” “No need.” Yang interrupted me, holding her claw high which forced me to stopped as I gazed at her in silence, blinking. She lowered it down and smiled, only faintly before responding to the pause of silence between us three. “We are kinda busy with something else.” “A new case?” I questioned, Takaki nodded her head silently and crossed her arms while Yang started, “Its related to the previous one. With the machines, I mean.” “Right.” I commented, releasing a puff of breath before becoming silent. I listened to the two dragonesses explain the mission briefly and its connection towards the machine that me and Zander had worked on. Till upon the end, when everyone had gotten silent was the time that I raised my wings. Turned myself around and heed out the door. But before I could, Yang called out towards me “Do not forget to relay this mission toward Kyro and Natty.” “Think you can just radio them instead?” I spoke back towards her before finally headed out the door.

A breath of fresh air drifted into my nose just as the walkie fizzled into life. The relayed report from Yang and Takaki had reported straight to Kyro and Natty. Both of which agreed and started heading out, presuming from their normal positions. In the meanwhile, I headed back south towards the machine where Zander was. Noting how still nervous he was however; just standing there motionless with his eyes staring back onto the machine in response. I called out towards him; he flinched and turned to meet me. A shaky smile appeared upon his snout, though he never had any words to say towards me. I exhaled a breath and shook my head; folding my wings before drifting my eyes towards the machine in silence before the walkie fizzled again and I picked it up once more. “Yes?” I called, “Ling finally.” Responded Natty, “Come quick towards the Eastern side of Vaster. We are closer towards the building than we had thought.” “Why what is important?” I questioned, narrowed eyes with interest or concern. I could not tell which however. But no response had came from Natty at all. For the walkie was silent and it gave me more concern the more time spent however. So instead, I frowned and turned back towards Zander who remained standing there. Still facing the machine as always however. I stepped towards him and lay a claw over his shoulder; he flinched but remaining where he was just as I removed my claw from him and started flying off Northward for a few inches more before arriving into where Natty and Kyro were however.

Upon my arrival, I dropped upon the ground and folded my wings. I shifted my head level with the ground before scanning the surroundings in silence. I spotted the pair of dragons waving off towards me; they were standing adjacently upon a building’s entrance door. The building itself looked abandoned however. It was smaller than the other normal looking buildings too. Something that I never complained about. I walked forth towards them; closing the distance between us while I smiled, waving back towards them. I speed ran through the roads and reached their location whereas Kyro pointed towards the building in front of us and spoke, “We found three items inside this building. One is missing.” “So you wanted me to find it?” I questioned them, Kyro nodded in response. I exhaled a breath stressed or disappointed by the request but regardless went with it anyway. For as my eyes shifted towards the other buildings scattered around us, my first thought was to enter into the alleyways and find this object there. I raised my walkie, relaying the information that Kyro had given to me straight towards Yang and Takaki which confirmed it and added it with “The object that they are looking for is close by. Presuming hiding somewhere.” “I believe it is inside one of the alleyways.” I started, “Alright. Go find it there.” I released the button after Yang’s while Kyro and Natty started forth towards the building inside. They disappeared from my sights while I walked away from them.

I shifted my head left and right from the road that I was on. Glancing forth towards the alleyways that revealed themselves to me. I did had noted how dirty each of them were with the garbage covering the floor and flies about however. Each one had me gagged or vomit; each one was held back and swallowed as I shifted my attention towards the closest alleyway that I could find and started heading in straight there. With the darkness covering my eyes and driven away the light, I stared clearly into the alleyway with no lights or lamps inside. Just pure pitch darkness which had me concerned about me tripping over some stuff. But my head shook while I moved onward. Entering into the alleyway, I stepped onto a fields of rolled up paper balls underneath me. Each of them flattened upon the grounds like pancake however just as I continued walking ahead. Shifting my eyes and glancing at the floor or trash bags for anything useful. It was a bit disturbing to know that a police officer was looking for something dirty upon the trash scattered about. Almost as if that he was as hobo or homeless dragon much like those upper North however. I still continued despite that thought lingering in my mind.

Searching left and right; digging into the garbage inside for anything and continued onward through the alleyway. Perhaps it had taken me a long time before I was able to find the object that I and the others were looking for however. For in my claw was that object. It looked like a computer mouse; black and large it was with no tail however. Two clicks appeared adjacent to one another at the front of the mouse. A wheel between them. I tilted my head to one side pondering why anyone would throw away a computer mouse into the garbage. But I shrugged and said nothing more; as I turned back towards the entrance of the alleyway and headed back outside. I backtracked a few steps until I met up with Kyro and Natty’s meeting spot initially. The two dragons were not here however. But I never cared at all and kept waiting until they would drive themselves out. I heard the door opened and shut suddenly; I turned my attention towards it. Spotting Kyro and Natty there walking side by side towards me, smiles were upon their faces. Yet their faces were telling me a different story however. I looked concern towards them; but Kyro only waved it off while he stretched out his claw towards me. I handed him the computer mouse.

“Perfect.” Kyro says while I questioned him, “Why you need a computer mouse? Are you two robots or something?” “No.” Both shook their heads immediately in answer and I shrugged saying nothing more. While Kyro and Natty turned back around, one of the two motioned their claw towards me. I obliged and followed them. Towards the closed door at the building’s entrance a few steps ahead of me, till we entered inside when the door was opened.

Once inside, I had noticed how the room was clean and smaller than I had expected. The walls were torn down, remaining there was pale or yellowish cotton that kinda looks editable however. Kyro and Natty stepped forth towards the center of the room, and sat down upon the cold floors underneath them. Their tails wrapped around themselves as their heads hang downwards, gazing upon something. I stepped towards them cautiously as if I was afraid that they would do something to me. But stopped after when I was closer towards them. Upon this, they turned towards me. Natty was holding the computer mouse where the pair of batteries was placed inside. She turned it around; showcasing the red bright light lighting up upon the small looking hole. “Alright I give. What are you two doing?” I admitted, having no understanding in their intelligent. Both smiled swiftly and in response, though no words were exchange after my comment. For then after showing me the red light underneath the mouse’ hole, Natty turned herself around and faced the front wall before her. She raised the light high and level; showing something written onto the cotton itself.

I squinted my eyes and stared at the cotton for a bit. Shaking my head in response and raising my shoulder to let them know that I had no idea what they were showing. For all I could see upon the cotton was a huge building drawing with a large circle wrapping around it. Red arrows pointing to that particular building too. But no words were written which had me concern or worried a bit. At this gesture, Natty laughed and shook her head. Then admitted “There is a drawing of a building in front of us. Red arrows were-” “I see that.” I interrupted her then growled following it, adding “But what I do not get is why are the arrows pointing at the building? Why are there no words written in the cotton to show that this is the building we are specifically targeting. There-” But I stopped suddenly. For something clicked into my mind. Something that perhaps would make no sense towards the other dragons. Noting my silence, both Kyro and Natty shifted their heads to me with concern looks upon their faces. Though neither of them said anything else as the silence fell and loomed over our heads.

For about a minute, perhaps more I guess; I spoke towards the pair “I have an idea. This may seem a bit drastic. But perhaps this will be the way to get a particular building.” “OF what exactly?” Kyro argued against me, but I remained silence following him. As I raised my walkie, pressed the button and spoke for Zander, the two dragons adjacent to stared at me for a bit. Then break into a smile before noting what I was doing. At upon this, I heard Zander’s response. “I am here.” “Great!” I answered immediately and without hesitation as I dive to my suggestion straight to my partner instead, “I need you to switch four of the eight.” “Would that just turn the lamps back towards-” “Just do it already!” I demanded. A brief silence had came before I walked out the door. Back outside once again where I walked towards the street. Spreading my wings suddenly, I took off towards the skies above which I had forgotten to mention that it was gray. ‘I guess rain is coming.’ I thought to myself as I flew higher in elevation until I stopped.

Then just as Kyro and Natty popped out from the door below me, I turned around and hang my head. Lowering my eyes upon the full sized view of Vaster, I notice how four of the eight lights from the lampposts were pure red. Little arrows popped from them overhead, pointing straight north towards a building there. With a smile, I raised my walkie again and spoke towards Zander once more “Alright. Now turn them all on.” “Toward red?” “Towards red.” I repeated his statement as the black dragon obeyed. Four red lights from the Northern side popped into my eyes; all pointing downward towards a building. I brightly smiled upon this before asking Zander to switch them all back to normal. As he does this, I dropped down towards the grounds beneath me and landed with my wings folded behind me. “Well?” Kyro questioned me, I nodded at him and pointing northward again responding “We do not have to move far. Just a few steps forth towards the middle of Vaster where our police station is. That is our building.” “That easy?” Natty complained with a frown while Kyro laughed a moment later and slapped my shoulder with his claw, “That is our Ling. Brilliant as always!” I smiled in response to him, but shared no words afterwards as I nudged them both forth.

Both complained. But caved into my suggestion. They spread their wings flying off Northward and left me alone upon the previous spot where we were. Watching them go, I remained silent and smiled. But turned back around and flew in the opposite direction where I returned to Zander’s spot who was waiting for me there, standing in his usual spot. Facing the machine in front of me. As I called out towards him, he turned towards me. A few seconds into our silence allowed me to drop down adjacently to him and folded my wings afterwards as Zander questioned, “Did Kyro and Natty completed the main mission?” “They are about to however.” I answered Zander as he nodded back to me, turning back towards the machine. I commented raising my claw towards it questioning him, “You did switch them all back to normal right? The citizens of Vaster will be complaining about it onto the next morning.” “Let them. I just wanted to see how chaotic we can make their morning be.” Zander smirked shooting me with his own comment as I break into a laugh, Zander joined in too.

We laughed for at least sometime. Then silence fell afterwards with the laughter dying anyway. Remaining positioned in front of the machine, I stared at it for a moment. But my thoughts were not here. Returning my sights back towards Kyro’s and Natty’s mission, I had pondered about the briefing that they were given and the wonderance of the computer mouse fitting in all of this. Though unknowingly I did indeed tilted my head to one side which Zander saw this and wondered in thought about me. He nudged me causing me to flicker back towards reality as I turned towards him in silence, Zander whistled innocently and avoided my eyes as he gaze elsewhere. I smirked after him. Things had went silent despite the playfighting that me and Zander had. This had continue for quite some time before our walkies fizzed upon the dead silence of the evening which both me and Zander stopped and remained in position while the walkies spoke suddenly,

It was a sudden report. An announcement of some sort that was different than the announcements that we were used to however. A drastic dramatic void was called out through the speakers which we had presumed it to be Natty however. She was saying about some dragon on the ground; dead with red pool blood surrounding him. Wings outstretched and him laid flatted upon the ground, head turned to the side. The body remained cold. At the end flicker, me and Zander looked at one another with concern upon our faces. Neither of us wanted to believed it at best. But perhaps this is the reality that we were given however. Despite the conclusion of the outlook, I raised my head towards the evening skies above me and pondered back upon the mouse showcasing the building drawing ingrain in the cotton and four different arrows pointing at it. I had recalled that there was something faint written in there. Above the building itself too. As I closed my eyes and breathed calmly despite Zander trying to wake me back into reality, I recalled those letters and recite it in my mouth and mind.

“H-A-P-P-Y B-L-O-O-D-Y B-I-R-T-H-D-A-Y.”