Venturing: Things in Darkness

Yang Kyro and Zander were gathered at the heart of the forest. A wind blew against her scales as she stood silent, pondering in anger and annoyance at the false news she was given by Ling. Her face hardened as her wings stretched out and she started growling. As she turned around, she looked in the direction of Kyro and Zander. Both of them looked back at her in silence. Their faces were opposite of Yang's; sadness, eyes pooling in water as their mouths sealed tight. Unsure of what to say. Yang shook her head; closed her eyes before opening them and turned westward. Her claw rose and motion Zander and Kyro while they followed her like mindless slaves.

They were told of a black silhouette shadow that ran through one of the cameras. Or so it was claimed by Ling who was suppose to be watching the cameras monitoring Chaos’s activities. What was he doing past was none of Yang’s business primarily? But now she had second doubts. As she pondered what to say to him, her legs moved on their own. The westward direction to return to the Order realm. Her thoughts swirled her mind as she also pondered about the black silhouette shadow that Ling had seen through the cameras. ‘Were they true?’ she wondered aloud, casting her voice to Kyro and Zander who had nothing in answer. For she snuffed and narrowed her eyes at them, turned around before resuming her path. It seems they had walked for only a few seconds before the conversation. The grass crunched underneath their feet as the trio moved on. Their eyes stared at the horizon beyond them. Watching as the trees closed in onto them. Swore as they saw most of the trees cluttering against one another, Yang pointed it out. It fell on deaf ears and she rolled her eyes exhaling a breath before returning to her silence.

Quietness was there surrounding. The stars shone shimmery above them with the moon hanging. Clear skies with some clouds rolling by. The winds surrounding them picked up and died down in alterative patterns. None of the dragons even cared about the winds blowing as their minds were preoccupied with the thoughts beyond the shadows Yang fell quiet. Her eyes scanning the area. She noticed that the trees were clustered together. But she does not know why. As her mind raced, she turned her attention to Zander and Kyro. Both of them were standing around, wings opening and closing as their eyes shifted about. Flashlights swirled at their surroundings with the animal sounds echoing in their ears. None of them were afraid. Yet only Yang was a bit irritated. She had wanted to return to the base and rant out to her boyfriend Ling about the misuse of equipment and the failure to monitor the Chaos’ activities. Although, she pondered if what Ling said was true that a shadow lived here which kinda makes sense considering that there are no Chaos members about. ‘Were they hiding?’ Yang wondered as the thought surfaced in her mind. “There is nothing here, Yang.” Zander finished, interrupting Yang’s train of thought as she snapped to reality and shifted over to the black dragon. His face said it all.

Zander and Kyro looked tired. His eyes were half-closed. With his mouth hanging and its lips being bitten by the fangs of the dragon, Zander whined. Yang nodded in silence before returning to the surroundings again and said, “Guess we are to return to base then.” “Do you even know where that base is right now?” Kyro asked, tilting his head to one side. Yang shrugged, “The trees were clustered together and since it is nighttime, it is now considered impossible.” Kyro grunted in response but said no more as silence took over their atmosphere. Yang just exhaled and shook her head before asking Zander to bring out the report that Ling thought had seen. Zander nodded with no hesitation or excitement at all; for his face returned a dull grayish pained looked as he went to dig through the brown bag that hanged over his shoulder. He pulled out several pictures and gave them quickly to Yang who reviewed them momentarily before nodding in response.

Nine pictures were fanned out across her palm. All of the pictures were located deep within the forest of which the Order claimed that Chaos would be setting up camp. However, a few of those pictures sported tracks. Two of the remaining showed a dark silhouette figure whose eyes glowed white; had white claws and fangs that resemble a dragon. But had a small tail like a bear. Its body length was thin short maybe medium size like a serpent or something. Yang frowned again and stared at the pictures one more time before handing them off to Zander who threw them into the bag. After a short silence fell, Kyro responded to Yang “Well, did you get a good look upon our culprit?” “Yeah.” Yang started without emphasizing as she cast her eyes to Kyro before looking northward once again. “Come on. Let's find some tracks that our culprit has made.” “Where would we find such a one?” Zander asked with a mixture of impatience and curiosity which Yang never answered him. The trio headed off northward and getting deeper into the forest than they should. From here was when the trio stopped and Yang ordered the other two, “Alright. Everyone heads off in a direction. Find those tracks. Holler back when you found one.” A nod answered Yang as her face brightened before responding with her own and the three split up amongst themselves. Zander heading Westward, Kyro heading Eastward and Yang headed North.

The woods cluttered together. The trees blocked up the paths that the dragoness could have taken. As her eyes cast to the horizon and stared onto the paths that were shrinking thanks to the trees, Yang pouted. Her fangs grounded in her mouth while her arms planted to her hips while her wings spread out. She first thought about flying overhead, giving her a clear view of the grassy grounds below her and the tracks that she might need. However, she wondered if Chaos were already operating within the forest and could shoot her down if they were close by. Risking the main operation and their goal of monitoring them. Yet she thought otherwise. Quickly spreading her wings, she flapped them once and rose herself past the trees and branches where she arose to the black skies territory. Thus once she was in the skies, she threw her eyes to the grounds and scanned while she hovered and flew overhead, around the area direction that she had picked for herself and stuck around there. The forest trees were indeed stuck together. She even saw some trees fallen and blocked some nearby rivers. Dying or dead fish were on the other side, perfect for any critter to snatch one for dinner. Her stomach growled at the thought of food but shook her head ridding the thought of snatching one from the river below her. And instead flew past it entering onto another territory ahead.

Here she saw the trees were replaced by bushes. She even saw Kyro lingering about. She flapped her wings once to maintain her altitude from the grounds as she flew past him entering deeper into the territory. The bushes here were also clustered together. Many of which bear fruit within their small twigs and branches. But the grounds were grayish, never green like the forest or the woods. And at the thought of that, Yang wondered if it had something to do with their culprit. Quickly she scribbled it down in her mind for a report once the trio regrouped together after their investigation. As she flapped and continued further in, her walkie buzzed to life. Snapping the dragoness out of her investigation, she threw her claw to her waist and fished out the walkie from her scales. Pulling it to her face, she pressed the button and responded to the call. “What is wrong?” “Return to the base! Hurry! Something had burst through the front door of the base.” “What is the damage, Ling?” Yang called as she stopped and hovered. Her face white and she felt sick. Her heart pounding in her chest as she waited within the silence, each second went by and she was already pondering if anyone died, was injured, or captured. “The walls are cracked. The screen monitors are shattered. Some had caught on fire…” Ling trailed, Yang held her breath.

“But… But get this.” Ling replied a second after he reported the damage, “A line trail was running through the door, made a huge turned which perhaps answers the monitor damage and went right out of the door.” “Are we dealing with a snake? A cobra maybe?” Yang questioned, “I wished I knew that answered, however, Yang.” Ling answered back, a sorrowful tone escaped from her lips as the call ended there. Immediately after the Ling Yang conversation, Kyro and Zander called Yang. “We heard what happened.” Kyro busted out as Yang fell silent, “Are we now reporting to the base again?” Zander whined for some reason that Yang or Kyro never knew. Yang said nothing then cast her eyes to the grayish grounds once again. As her eyes narrowed, her mind ran through thoughts debating about this culprit that suddenly attacked their base. And left line tracks in its wake. “I do not think we are dealing with a regular snake, Yang,” Kyro replied after getting no response from Yang. She pressed her walkie and responded to Kyro, “I do not think so either. Who else would try to infiltrate the base in the Order realm from this forest? Chaos or the Neither realms are the ones behind this attack. It just has to be.” “And how do you know that, Yang?” Kyro protested, “We do not have ed-” “We have evidence.” Yang roared interrupting the red dragon as she repeated herself after with a softer tone, “We have evidence.”

No one said anything to her. The walkies fell quiet. Yang found herself staring at the walkie momentarily before closing her eyes and shifted away. Gazing to the horizon, she stared at the fields of bushes beyond her. She snuffed and grunted, vibrating her throat before she turned around and flew back to the forest. Once she had returned, she landed on the grassy grounds. Clouds had formed above her and covered the moon and stars above. Dizzle of rains fell upon her scales and wings, damping them which prevents her from being able to fly at all. But she not cared at all. She heard rapid footsteps approaching her and lifted her eyes to the horizon, spotting Kyro and Zander running at her. They were panting heavily but they stopped afterward. They crouched and placed their claws onto their knees as Yang questioned them “You ran?” “Yeah.” Zander answered, “Came to the spot where we had split off from. Where did you guys go?” “Desert.” Answered Kyro, “There is a desert?” Zander questioned, tilting his head to one side as he stared at him. “How is there a desert in the forest?” “Never mind that now you guys,” Yang growled at them, shutting them up and they turned to her. “We got bigger problems than the desert. You already know what happened to the base. We have to get there immediately. Our culprit must be there.” “This could be a trap, however.” Kyro muttered just loud enough for Yang to hear who nodded in question, “Yeah. Chaos could be the one who planned this. Or it could be a prank set by Ling’s unit.” “A prank?” Zander screamed as Yang and Kyro shielded their ears with their claws. “Ling would never do such a thing!”

“Quiet down, Zander.” Kyro narrowed which shut the black dragon up as Yang nodded agreeing with the red dragon before speaking once again, “No matter what the condition is. We have got to get there now. So come on!” The trio of dragons spread their wings and took off without jumping or any of those launching procedures and exited from the forest towards the skies above them as they raced southward. Out from the forest and towards the Order realm base far away. They reached the base after a few seconds. Touching down, onto the sandy grounds below them they rose their eyes and was shocked. The building was torn into two. The majority of the bricks were shattered and were unable to be used to make up buildings. Yang rushed forward and entered the abandoned ruined base and she peered inside. A single room welcomed her and like what Ling said before the cutoff, all of the monitors and computers were cracked. Black screens all around. Zander and Kyro trailed behind Yang as she stared horrified by what she had seen. And clenched her claws with tears running down her face as she stepped forward and closer to the monitors and computers. Something there stuck out to her and she grabbed it with intrigued interest pondering what it was about.

In her claw was a yellow sticky note. A red arrow points towards a dot that is at the corner of the note. “What does that mean?” Kyro asked suddenly as Yang turned to him. Startled that she stepped away from the dragon, scowling at him while he said nothing. “I do not know,” Yang answered with hesitation dripping from her tongue as her eyes settled to the note in her claw again. She frowned and fell silent. “Hey, Kyro! Yang!” Called a familiar voice which Kyro and Yang perceived to be Zander and they turned towards the entrance door. There was Zander who was waving at them with one claw, the other was pointing onto something upon the grounds. Blinking, Yang and Kyro exited the building and grouped with Zander. They lowered their eyes to the grounds as Zander asked Yang “Do you know who made this track?” “Looks to be a four-wheeler or something.” Kyro commenced as Yang nodded, “Well we do know that it is a snake. But what type of snake is it?” “Check its tracks, Yang.” Zander started as Kyro crouched. He threw his claw onto the dirt and measured it with his finger, proclaiming to Zander and Yang “It's about twenty inches wide.” “So a wide one we are dealing with…” Yang trailed, glancing over to Zander who commented, “I do not know any snake that is about twenty inches wide. I thought it is a small snake or something.” “Like a garden snake?” Kyro answered Zander who shook his head, “No. More like a noodle.”

That earned a chuckle from both Kyro and Yang as Zander cracked a smile at them before it vanished in plain sight. With the eased atmosphere looming overhead, Kyro rose to his feet and turned to Yang “We got to find something in the computer room. Maybe a clue.” “Or another sticky note,” Zander commented rolling his eyes. As Zander left Kyro and Yang to their jobs inside the base, the two dragons returned to the base and started looking about. They dug through the ruined trash bin, scattered the papers that were neatly stacked on the shelf, brought down some books and textbooks onto the floor as the majority of them opened up to a specific page. One of the books opened to a yellow page which Yang paused and crouch, grabbing the book before raising herself and walked over to the computers and monitors. She settled the book down where dust flew off in multiple directions and startled a red dragon in the process. As Kyro stepped over to Yang and tilted his head to one side in curiosity, Yang responded to him. “A yellow page. But why is it in the stack of books?” “That was not there before.” Kyro responded, shifting his eyes around the page before settling upon a red ‘x's over a certain word. He placed his claw upon the ‘x's word and said to Yang, “Hey look at this.” Yang followed Kyro’s finger and settled upon the x mark before blinking. Tilting her head to one side, she frowned saying “So why is that x then? Is there something special with that wording?” “Or is it because this yellow page is a map towards some secret place that we have not discovered,” Kyro suggested which Yang shrugged in answer before grabbing the book from Kyro and threw her claws upon the spine of the book. Slowly ripping out the yellow page and held it up into the air as she smiled. Thus turning to Kyro again, “Let go see where this takes us.” “I hope towards Ling,” Kyro answered with a frown as Yang nodded slowly before they departed from the base.

“So according to this yellow paper. Our target should be at the corner of the forest.” Yang concluded, tapping away the paper with her claw as she rose her eyes to Zander and Kyro. Both of them shook their heads, scowling darkened faces before Kyro walked up to her and snatched the paper away. With his face looking upon the page and Yang exclaiming “Hey! That is rude.” “Who cares, Yang.” Zander objected crossing his arms as he gazed away from her “You are bad at reading map.” “And Kyro is a jerk for stealing the paper from me.” Yang protested but nothing kept up the argument once more. As Yang continued staring angrily at the smug Zander, Kyro’s voice pipped up in the two dragon’s ears whose perked and stood erected. They shifted their heads over to him as he tapped the paper and started. “The crossed-out word was center. However, I am very unsure why would anyone want to cross out that.” “So if it is at the center. The heart of the forest then, right?” Yang asked quickly before sealing her mouth again and frowned, her mind processing again. Kyro shook his head, “I doubt it is at the center of the forest. You see, ‘center’ is a loose word. It could mean anything within the context. Like the center of the city, town, world. Or even the center of the heart. Or the center of certain objects like a ball-” Kyro explained but Zander rudely interrupted him with a growl, “Get to the point already.” “Zander!” Yang defended Kyro who shook his head, exhaling a breath before getting to the point. “The point is… We got to find somewhere hidden or unknown territory that is ‘the center’. If we find it, we should be able to infiltrate in and grab our guys.” “Or the culprit. If it is there.” Yang reminded him who smiled nodding, “Right. Or the culprit.”

“So where do we start then?” Zander asked, raising an eye curiously at them. Kyro lowered his eyes upon the page again before responding to the black dragon. “Head back into the city. From there, we should pick our directions.” “I will try the abandoned building, westward from Vaster.” Yang started which Zander growled at her, “That place? Did we not infiltrated that already and smoked the doe out?” “We did not actually,” Yang replied, a frown emerged from her face as she met eyes with Zander who said nothing but snorted. “Fine. I’d be in the forest if anyone needs me.” “Then I will do the town.” Kyro concluded, Yang nodded and added, “Meet back at the mansion. That will be our last stop for today. If no one else finds anything. Otherwise, if you do, just radio-” “Got it.” Cut Zander as he turned impatient around and walked into the forest. Kyro and Yang spread their wings, flying off northward back onto their hometown.

It took almost forever for Yang to return to the abandoned building. As her eyes stared upon it, she felt her heart pounding in her chest and her breathing fell a bit short than normal. With her wings folded behind her, she closed and opened her eyes before darting her way to the front door. And from there, she rose her claw and knocked onto the door. But it opened suddenly, much to her surprise. She slowly walked in, drawing her pistol out in case of a firefight as she looked around her initial surroundings. Just as she had predicted, nothing was there. The first floor was empty and abandoned as if no one dared to enter through here anymore. The cold grounds sent shivers up her spine as the door closes behind her, locking her in. Her eyes darted around the room, looking for a newer objective. For when she had found the stairs, she walked slowly to it and rose herself towards the next floor above. Here, she spotted a light flickering as she reaches the second floor. The floor was pure black, white lines run everywhere. A disco ball floats at the center of the room, black walls obstruct her way creating a short maze for her to run through. Yang entered the floor with a frown, but also anxiety and fear that runs through her veins. Her claws were shaky that her pistol rattled. She walked the first steps and peered her eyes towards the possible routes. Two paths stand before her; one to her North the other Eastward. As her eyes settled upon the paths, her ears flickered again at the sound of another foreign voice.

“Well well… I never excepted to see you here again, Yang. Not after what you tried the last time you infiltrated my home. What were you expecting this time? Another resistance to the arrest? Me stopping production to the Chaos’ newest R7? Or you just want to kill me?” “Neither of those, Doe,” Yang answered back, her voice shaking but firmed as if she was unsure of herself as her eyes rose to the ceiling. Quietly, she calmed herself before addressing the doe whom she predicts is at the office by now. “I am here for questioning.” “An interview?” The doe responded, excitement dripping from her voice, “Excellent! You finally want to turn over to-” “Not that kind of interview, idiot.” Yang growled threateningly which interrupted the doe as it fell silent. A perfect opportunity which the silver dragoness took for granted as she went on, “We, the Vaster police, preceded you guilty of the charge in the attack against the base. We think that you have sent a snake to damage our equipment for you to proceed with your plans. Chaos would be arriving into the forest, I presumed. Just as you have a plan.” “It is not us.” Doe replied after a moment of silence and listening to the dragoness’ claim, “I do not know anyone that was a snake, let alone to use its offers into attacking your base.” “Lies! We know that it is you! Confess!” Yang argued, her voice filled the void surrounding her as her eyes narrowed upon the ceiling thinking that she was there.

“Like I said. I do not know anyone that is a snake. If that be all, leave now. I would not have to call once again.” Yang growled in response to her as her eyes narrowed at the ceiling, she turned to admit defeat and left the second floor. For she ran the stairs and entered the empty floor once again. Out the door, she goes where she spreads her wings and flew off towards the mansion. Once she had reached the building, she dives down and landed safely upon the grounds. Zander was the only one there as she stared at him, he broke the contact and continued staring at the ground. Silence fell between them, “Where is Kyro, Zander? Did he missed the memo that we are to meet-” “He found the base. Radioed us. But we lost him.” Zander started, “Lost him how?” Yang argued, Zander rose his eyes meeting hers. A sorrowful face looked pleading against her eyes as Zander continued “Luckily, he had found Ling’s group. They are all tied up underneath a single light. Legs spread for some dirty reason.” “What… what are they going to do with that?” Yang asked, a bit surprised as Zander looked away shrugging. With his wings folding behind himself, Yang growled and responded to that silence. She clenched her claw and turned around so her back was to Zander and spread her wings before shouting at him, “I will not lose another officer to whomever it was. Come on Zander, let find whoever did this to them!” “A… are you sure-” Zander asked which Yang yelled over him, “Yes. Now come on!”