Venturing: Way Out

We gathered by the entrance of the cavern. Our eyes locked upon one another with the silence looming over us. No one was smiling or frowning; or their face hardening as of the matter of fact as everyone kept their lips shut allowing Yang to speak out front to us. Yet only she said to us, ‘Is everyone ready? ‘Do we know the plan first, Yang?’ Natty asked, a curious tone in her voice. Her eyes shifted from me to Yang as we exchanged looks and nodded slightly and hiddenly for the others would noticed our heads were still. With Natty’s voice muted suddenly, she rose to her feet and stepped out of the circle. Breaking it apart, she glanced over to me and Yang before setting her eyes over to the other red dragons. They looked back at her with interest and she exhaled a breath, her eyes closed for a moment before she started speaking to them as if ordering them around. ‘Come on you guys. Let us go to the machine.’

The red dragons got up and headed over to her as Natty led them away to the depths of the caverns. Disappearing afterwards and left both me and Yang to ourselves. With the sudden silence and tranquility hovering, Yang smiled and got up onto her feet. I did the same. My legs cracked underneath me from sitting for too long as I stretched out my mouth yawning. Yang motioned me and turned around. Shifting her attention to the wall, she extended her claws to the rough wall and slid her way towards the depths of the cavern. I followed right behind. So we continued repeating this until we had found what we were looking for. And as we did, our claws were retracted from the walls. Looking to one another then towards the entrance of the cavern. We had noticed that it was not that far from it. Perhaps like a few yards away from the cavern, we would not know.

Regardless, Yang stretch her claw to the wall again. And grabbed onto the invisible knob ahead of us. She tilted it to one side and heard a faint click. The door opened in response after that. And we were in. Just like that! But as the door moaned before us, I glanced over to Yang and frowned suddenly. A weird feeling turned my stomach upside down. And even I was not sure what that smell or feeling was however. Yang said nothing to me, but an assuring smile was slapped upon her face. For as she turned her head away and stepped forth through the door, she disappeared. I followed right behind her.

The room was dark and small. There were no lights illuminating our surroundings. To my left was a white large desk. Upon the top edge of the desk was a golden label named, ‘The principal’. “Who names themselves the principal?” I wondered out loud as Yang countered me, “The same dragon who declared himself a kungfu fighter and started beating up every bully we had encountered.” “Hey!” I protested at her, but she giggled nonetheless. As our laughter and teasing had died down along the the voices from our throats, our attention was to the white desk as we drew forth towards it and hitting our knees against the edges of it. “Come on let circle around this desk.” I suggested, “Halfway only, Ling.” Yang reminded me. I said nothing after her as we did what I had suggested.

A chair was behind the desk. And I started pulling it out and towards the walls behind us. As we squeezed in together in hopes that there be enough space, now our attention was to the white desk and the nine folders before us. All nine were neatly organized and clean. Never messy however. But all nine were also chained up. A yellow key sits on top of the fifth folder centered upon the desk. I frowned. ‘This is going to take forever to figure out.’ I started, getting a first look upon what we were seeing. ‘And we do not even know the-’ But right before I could say it, something started talking loud. A familiar voice echoed and we turned to one another. Lowering our head down to the grounds, we pointed our pupils upon our pants. I dropped my claw down onto my pockets and grabbed a black walky. Pressing the button at the edge of the walky, I spoke ‘Hello? Natty?’

‘Finally you guys answered. I was beginning to worry that you guys got capture by the principal there.’ ‘Principal?’ Yang asked suddenly, we exchanged looks upon one another before I shook my head and answered the walky. ‘We are alright. But what were you saying about a principal? We are not even at Vaster school, you know.’ ‘Plus.’ Yang interjected, ‘Was that not Zander’s job to do? Man, I hope he is not flirting with the dragoness… he could get into serious trouble if he does.’ She sighed at the end of her sentence while me and Natty giggled to her. Then after she spoke answering, ‘You guys are not in Vaster high school. But in another schooling. Apparently this one is in the spiritual realms.’ ‘The spiritual realms!’ We both exclaimed, yelling through the walky and hopefully ringing out Natty’s ears. ‘Yeah that realm. You guys shout so loud. My ears are ringing all of the sud-’ ‘Just get to the point of this conversation already Natty.’ Yang growled impatiently with Natty frowning, ‘Alright alright geez. Do not get your tail in tight spots.’ A sigh escaped afterwards.

‘We are currently underneath Vaster Theater and upon the cell where you both were captured and placed into. Well at the moment currently, there is something blocking our way. It is not a keyhole or knob. But rather a keycode. Five digits long with a question tied to it.’ Natty explained, then fell silence afterwards. It was a pause before Yang exclaimed with a growl at her, ‘What is the question Natty? Answer us.’ ‘What? Oh sorry.’ she remarked, a smack echoed while she added. ‘The question reads ‘Who is the killer?’ There is a hint underneath it also, ‘The character is the most psychotic than everyone.’

‘Was it not obvious?” Yang screamed through the walky eventually ringing out Natty’s ears again as she weakly growled and scratched her ears with a frown expressed through her face. While Yang continued screaming, I turned my attention to the nine folders then turned around to the wall behind me. Noticing a six by seven table. On the horizontal were numbers ranging from zero to six. Vertical, were numbers ranging from zero to five. In between the horizontal and Vertical lines were a field of letters of the alphabet. I pondered for a moment before turning my attention to Yang and tapped her shoulder before explaining to her. ‘Hey Yang. If we want to get out of this predicament. And eventually rescue everyone else from this prison.’ ‘And capture the culprit!’ Yang demanded, a sparkle in her eyes as she looked upon me with determination. I chuckled in response before turning my attention away from her towards the white desk and pointed, ‘We must know where the words ‘Kesir’ is upon these nine. Then we can escape.’ ‘Got it!’ Yang exclaimed and quickly dived upon the desk.

We worked for hours. Or we had suddenly lost track of time. As our eyes delved deeply into the string of numbers set before us. Decoding every number one by one then converting those pairs of numbers into their corresponding letter. We repeated this cycle again repeatedly until we had uncovered every number. Turning them all into letters which in turn string together into names. For before us stood not numbers anymore. But nine suspects. Nine names. That we could use to our proposal. And when we were finished, our mouths curved and faces were brightened. Feeling rather excited, I raised the walky up to my mouth. Pressing the button to relay the answer to our problem.

‘Natty?’ I asked, there was a pause of silence before I heard static on the other end of the line. ‘Yes, Ling?’ ‘We found the code.’ ‘Whose the culprit?’ ‘Did Yang told you who it was?’ ‘Oh right.’ A smack emerged from the walky that me and Yang exchanged grins before I answered back, “Well here is the code related to our friend ‘Kesir’.” “What is it then?” Natty asked suddenly and I spoke out the numbers to our culprit. “One, five, four, four, three.” More silence echoed while I waited patiently. But Yang adjacent to me was looking rather nervous. “Well?” I asked, adding “Was it right Natty? Did you guys escaped?”

Another round of silence escaped from the walky. And the more silent it had became, the more anxious I was. Until I had found myself shivering that I started pressing hard upon the walky and split opened my mouth was when Yang slapped my shoulder and shook her head. I nodded to her, I was getting a bit more desperate and nervous. With seconds of silence before an interruption had occurred, both me and Yang looked to the walky again and spoke “Negative. The door did not open. I repeat, the door-” “We heard you.” Yang remarked, and silence fell again afterwards. I was shocked. We thought exactly that it was indeed Kesir. Her personality just screams ‘culprit’ at us that we were confident and assured that she was the one who stringed together these events. But looking at it now. Remembering what Natty had relayed the answer to us. I was now skeptical and worried. As if all that confidence gone away in a flash. Gone. Gone like the winds.

My face froze upon expression the surprise look as my mind could not comprehend the understand that we were responded to. But as I turned to the white table again, Yang started muttering to herself. Arguing with herself anxiously and worriedly. My heart pounded against my chest and thoughts echoed as my eyes were glued upon the table. A single question lies upon my mind as I darted from one folder to another, “Who is the culprit? Who is the culprit?’ That same question echoed my mind. The speed in my eyes got faster and speedier. Until the eight remaining folders looked to be a racetrack. “Who is the culprit…” I pondered. Psychotically mental illness gripped my brain as I face planted upon the white desk with the thoughts left upon my mind.

Then a click. Natty’s voice called from our walkies. “You guys did it. It was that sequence of the numbers.” I blinked, opening my eyes before looking up from the white desk. Shifting my attention over to Yang who was dancing in victory, I tilted my head to one side. And frowned as I pondered over the sequence of events that happened right by me. And rose my head up from the desk before speaking towards Yang. ‘What… What happened?’ ‘We did a hard coding and figure out who did it. Although the culprit was not what we had suspected after all.’ ‘Suspected?’ I echoed her voice and she nodded glancing at me. ‘Yeah. Who would had believed that it was Akino all this time-’ ‘Wait. Who?’ I exclaimed, jolted awake as I stared at her with eyes widened opened. She nodded, ‘But… But how? Why? Why was he him? How is it him? Was he…’

‘Perhaps he was the one who tried to kill Kesir and Neriax during the events when the king was dying and the kingdom was falling apart. And probably is the culprit behind the events of the massacre of 2009 and 2020. But he could had done it with another dragon. Probably a dragoness from the spiritual realm. Could be… Helija.’ She decided, poking the folder name’s on the white desk. ‘In addition to…’ Yang explained further, ‘Natty did say that the code was a pattern. And if we were to add the double digits together. It does form a pattern. Also, while you were sulking upon that desk, there was a black phone at the corner of the room. And this is a school right?’ I nodded at her, ‘Perhaps the culprit knew the layout of Vaster Schooling because maybe this school is identical to ours.’ I nodded again, it does make sense after all.

As we headed out the school door, and ending up upon Vaster theater. We all sighed. Exhausted about using our brain power that I had thought we were going to passed out upon the grounds below us. The red dragons congratulated us. Hugged us and even gave us handshakes. For while we all smiled faintly upon them and nodded our heads. Yang suddenly glanced over to me while we were heading out the door. “Our first case closed! We should award ourselves for the job well done. Do you not think so Ling?” I smiled nodding at her, but I could not say anything else for my mind was feeling a bit tired. “You guys go to bed.” Natty replied, “I have to go home.” “Alright.” We both started waving at her after she split apart from us. The rest of the walkway home was so tiring but well worth it in the end however. With the evening winds blowing against our tired scales and the sun setting down from the horizon, Yang spoke to me of what was in her mind. “Hey Ling…” I looked at her.

“We make a good team do we not?”

“We sure do, Yang.” I started, answering her as she smiled.

“Well… How about a reword for a job well done?”

“Ice cream? Cake?” I questioned, raising an eye at her as she giggled shaking her head.

“Nah… More than that. I know you love me, Ling. Since our first date in 2009 when we were teenagers. So, how about it then?”

“Sounds a bit more direct… Should we plan this first I mean-”

“We are dragons, Ling. We do not plan. We go wherever the winds takes us!” She exclaimed, spreading her wings flapping as her claw and arm was extended outward in front of her. I started laughing, “Okay okay. You made your point. FreeFlier.” I commented shaking my head as Yang laughed alongside. We started heading home.