EverLean: Browed

We had found ourselves standing in front of the cavern, the darkness watching us back. As I kept silent, I motioned towards the rests of my team whom gave a response back towards me as we had all entered in all together now. The darkness covering upon us as we had entered. I turned my attention towards the side; gazing towards the blue shaped walls that were there. Fire torches latched themselves upon the walls, but they were not lit however. We continued walking down the cavern, until we had reached upon the other side of it; towards an arch that was in front of us and pure darkness now covering up the surroundings, the atmosphere and almost everything else.

I blinked upon witnessing this and I turned my attention towards the others whom kept their silence and stared at whatever was ahead of them, which was the horizon. A few inches away from the entrance of the cavern stands the stairs; descending into the abyss beneath us however. To who knows where its destination leads into, I gave a nod towards my teammates as they kept their eyes onto me, none of them said a word as they take a step back and waited. For at my breath, I immediately stepped forward from the caverns entrance behind us and onto the metal piece of flooring that attached itself to the stairs from the cavern entrances. Thus I had turned my attention towards the right and immediately descended where we had arrived upon the next floor.

I was unsure what floor this was, considering that there were no numbers that indicated the flooring number however. But what I did found out was that the place was vastly empty. Nothing was here, except for the shadows that went inbetween the pillars of the walls that are scattered throughout the floor. Into the horizon, there was nothing interesting there as two doors were facing one another. Locked perhaps; due to the red coloring that was above their knob. In silence, I take a step forward from the stairs behind us. But felt someone touched me onto my shoulder and I immediately turned around, looking towards Vinno who shake his head upon the following silence. I narrowed my eyes onto him, searching about the ‘catches’ and ‘traps’ that would be about upon the flooring, ‘or was it just a trick by him instead?’ I thought, giving a silent nod towards him as he suddenly break into a sudden faint smile. Thus, I had immediately turned around and resumed my walk forward.

My teammates followed me down, eyes spread across the flooring. Searching for anything that was there; whether it be a monster, thing or just another canine or reptile. But the atmosphere of the floor was covered by the pure darkness, making it things harder to even see what was up ahead or closed by. ‘If we were going to get jump. I pondered silently. It was a few minutes into the soundless that we make it through upon the pair of doors. I immediately motion towards Viiko and Vanru; both of which had went towards their respective doors and grabbed hold onto the knob. Immediately opening the door; but the door was locked, just as expected however as I gave another acknowledgement nod for towards them, shortly before we just regroup up and continued on forward. Bypassing the pair of doors, we had found ourselves upon a hallway where it led straight towards a railing and an red arrow pointing towards the left.

I find myself staring onto the red arrow in silence; the others had went on ahead and walked, following the arrow’s advice. Thus they had disappeared from my sights briefly while I kept my attention towards the arrow and then towards the darkness beyond it. Sounds of crickets emerged upon the soundless atmosphere whereas the huge moon hangs above, through the cracks of the hole above me. Shining dimly onto whatever that it was touching however. I take a step forward. Grabbing onto the railing just inches away from me while I leaned on forward, hanging my head towards the abyss beneath me. For there, I had found nothing. Just pure darkness which was alright as I gave an exhale before returning my attention towards the fast approaching footsteps over to my right side. Vinno, Viiko and Vanru had arrived rather quickly than expected as their eyes held attention to mine. In silence, I waited as they talked about their report about the beyond. Listing things that were a bit interesting; while avoiding others that were common.

Upon which, I take the lead once more. The others dove behind me, although Viiko checked towards the red arrow once more before questioning me. All I did was just point upward; into midair where a hole started appearing upon the ceiling of the cavern. “This is amazing.” Awed Viiko, breathless while he snapped his attention back into reality and spoke, “Ready.” “Then lets just go.” I remarked, heading further from the arrow before us. The first thing I had noticed was that the beyond was just a maze. A silver metal walkway was in front of us, breaking apart into two shortly and heading into their own respective directions. Vinno take a step towards my line and pointed towards the right side, I gave a nod before questioning Vanru and Viiko about the left. “Nothing is there. Just some deadends and a monster that lies in wait.” “Did you kill it?” “No.” Answered Viiko shaking his head as my eyes narrowed onto him, then towards Vanru who just rose his shoulders afterwards. Stating nothing in supportive to Viiko.

Quickly, I dropped the subject in mind and motioned for Viiko who stepped forward from my line, taking the lead as we started heading for the right side. Indeed, the walkway was going further away from us; appearing and disappearing as it could upon the beyond while all we can hear were the sounds of silence and ringing echoing upon our ears. It was a bit unnerving, even without the constant noises of our enemies however. It was rather something that I gripped my knife very tightly however; while my thoughts raced, my eyes narrowed towards the backside of Vinno before looking towards the huge rock wall in front of us. Upon our arrival, I take a quick glance towards the surface of the huge rock wall, and spotted another red arrow there. Adjacent to it was a lift, held by two metal ropes that went over the ‘checkpoint’ I spoke towards Vinno, “Was this where you arrived upon?” “Yeah.” He answered, confidently as I kept my eye onto him briefly before giving a silent nod and tapped onto his shoulder. He, Viiko and Vanru walked right forth towards the lift. I quickly pressed the red button that was adjacent to the red arrow and the lift hummed. There was a quick flinch and something else before the lift started descending downward, allowing the three foxes before me to fade from my eyes.

I waited for a few more minutes before the machine stopped immediately and flick my ear in irritation before I turned my attention towards the side. Glancing outward towards the beyond, looking onto the shadows and among other things that were there. I had swore, I had thought I saw something staring back onto me. Meeting my eyes suddenly with that wide grin upon its shadowy face. I shake my head onto that image, dismissing it as nothing more than an illusion or something else. As the lift start humming again and flinching and whatnot, I noticed the ropes gradually moving upward. Bypassing the ‘checkpoint’ as more and more came up. I pondered about the time when the foxes in my squad had to take themselves off from the lift and pressed the button then, if there was one there. It was indeed a medium set of time, somewhere around two minutes at most however and my eyes narrowed upon that suspicion. But like the previous, I just ignored it. Dismissing it as perhaps the button was harder to find and waited until the lift arrived onto the floor of where I was.

But as I got on. There was a split roaring that caused the entire cavern to rumbled and vibrate as if something was approaching and immediately, I turned my attention over my shoulder. Looking into the impending darkness that had welcomed me. Things had stayed silently for a few minutes more as I had grounded my feet and squinted my eyes. I waited intensively for something to happen. But nothing unfolded. It was to the point that I turned myself around and take a step forward; entering onto the lift where I had pressed upon a red button adjacent to me. The lift rumbled and vibrated shortly before bringing me down. Descending through the fields of darkness where I heard and saw nothing about. It was as if things were heating up for the apex. The grand finale of things. But what would that be?

In the mists of me pondering and theorizing about, the lift had stopped upon the next flooring whereas I proudly take a step forward, rejoining with my team just as they turned their attention towards me. No one said anything in response; while eyes fell upon me. I stared back onto them quietly; allowing them to avert their eyes and look towards somewhere else. My thoughts impended upon my mind; about the rumbling and vibrations that I had once saw beforehand that I had wanted to study it further in hopes of finding out the exact reason for it. But my head shake upon the following, fully knowing about a case that we are to follow by as I motioned towards the others, they stepped to the side and allowed me through which I taken into considering and walked onward, taking the lead now.

Upon reaching the second flooring from above, we had noticed that the flooring was less than metal and more of a grounds that we had saw earlier on in the caverns. The walls surrounding us were still the same; but there were notes and papers hang upon them. All of which were written, but it was rather hard to know what they were about. Viiko kept his eye onto them, though his head was tilted. Pondering what the topics were however. I ignored the papers and notes entirely, walking on forward. Further into the second flooring.

Things were quiet and settled down to the point that I am starting to hear ringing echoing through my own ears. I blinked upon hearing them, but settled onto ignored them while I continued onward. My eyes up front towards the horizon, staring down onto the walkway as it went further into the horizon with every step I take. It had seem endless however and I was growing a bit worried because of it. For about the long silence, came Vinno breaking it as he spoke outloud for everyone else to hear him. Immediately, we turned our attention towards Vinno who seem to be pointing onto something upon the grounds. I tilted my head while Viiko and Vanru stepped forward immediately towards his side, hanging their heads gazing onto whatever that he had found. I too walked forward to rejoin them too; appealed by whatever was the discovery at hand.

Claw footprints. “These belong to a dragon.” I heard Viiko immediately responded without missing a beat as his voice carried through the silence of the atmosphere surrounding us. “A dragon?” Questioned Vanru, “Does this mean we have competition now? Since when did the VPD hired any dragon to come investigate here?” “We probably took too long.” I subjected towards Vanru who just glared at me in response, I cracked a smile onto him before returning my attention back towards the red bloody claw footprints beneath us, “And look; these are dry blood. I had wondered if there were bloody injured reptiles and dragons lurking onto here.” “We might be able to rescue them and flee straight towards Vaster.” Suggested Vinno, glancing to me as I gave a nod back. “Indeed.” I responded or rather echoed his words as I immediately turned around and looked. “Regardless of what happens now, we need to keep on moving.”

We all glanced around the spot that we were upon. Glancing towards the possible routes and spots that we could take that would lead us straight towards the end. However, it had seemed that all of the spots all point towards the same direction. The same north. As I had noticed this, I had allowed Vinno to speak out for the rest of us however. “Seems like every path here goes into one direction and towards that same destination.” “Towards the lift?” Questioned Viiko while his attention was drawn towards Vinno who just simply shake his head quietly, “Even I am not sure what is waiting for us at the end. Whether it be a lift or stairs.” He turned towards me, “Lets go. Where ae we heading?” “Northward it had seem.” I responded without hesitation, a nod came across the foxes as they regrouped with me and I led them forth northward.

We walked into another walkway before us; the walls and flooring retained their same coloring. Lamps were now into the mix; illuminating the walkway down the corridor until they all had fainted at a fixed interval. A low growl erupted from the soundless atmosphere looming above us. Yet we all had ignored it and kept on moving; step by step forth as our eyes stared out onto the horizon before us. Still staring onto the crack of the entrance upon the other side of the walkway. In the duration, it had seemed that nothing was ordinary here. Everything was simple, quiet and it was very unnerving. It was to the point that Viiko and Vinno were nervous; shaking and flinching as they would, eyes shifting upon the walls and flooring surroundings us in hopes of finding something there, awaiting for us. Yet nothing had submerged. All was quiet and it was rather taking a toll onto the rest of us however.

Instead of waiting, we kept pushing forward. Ten steps from now, we were a bit closer from the entrance. The lamps started illuminating more brightly now; even showing and exposing all of the cracks, details and everything in between upon the walls. To our astonishment, there was even a level to the left of us. Though we were unsure of what this does. Dismissing the thought, we remained alert and aware while we continued through the corridor. Submerging out onto the entrance of the cavern which was behind us and into the broad darkness. In front of us stands a door that was opened, beyond it was stairs leading into the next flooring. “Everyone alright now?” I questioned as I shift my attention towards everyone; Vinno and Viiko drew their breaths, closing their eyes briefly as they relaxed momentarily. Raising their heads up towards me, meeting my eyes suddenly, they gave a swift nod and I faintly smiled onto them. Shortly afterwards, I turned my attention towards Vanru who was silent. Though his tight lip said otherwise.

I questioned him, but he shook his head. Raising his paw and pointing downward to the flooring beneath us as he spoke, in a whisper tone “Do you guys hear that?” Everyone shook their heads, “Listen carefully.” And so we heeded his advice and waited. We now hear it beneath us. The sounds of someone struggling through what seems to be binds of whatever. Their snout/mouths were sealed shut by something, as indicated by the sounds of grunting and growls then afterwards. I blinked for a moment before turning my attention towards Vanru who gave me a nod suddenly; but remained silent afterwards. Without hesitation, we entered through the door. Descended down the stairs and entered onto the ground floor; which was the last floor therein. By opening the door, we allowed ourselves out from the stairs and onto the quietness soundless flooring before us.

As confirmed, we had noticed, on our right, a pair of missing canines and reptiles that were tied to a bed. Bounds of tight ropes were lashed upon their bodies, securing them and preventing them from escaping. They were also blinded by something of a cloth; though we were unsure what that was however. Down towards their mouths and snouts, we noticed a ball struck inside of it. Red, wet and heated us that it seem that someone was somehow enjoying it however. I frowned onto the scenario that unfolded before our eyes as I swiftly turned my attention towards my squad and gave them the order. Thus quickly, they went right into action. Untying and unbinding the ropes from their bodies, ripping off the ball and cloth that was attached onto their heads. Freeing them ultimately.

In the meanwhile, my attention was drawn towards the surrounding. Towards the pure darkness that had surrounded us as ringing echoed through my ears, nothing was out of the ordinary it had seemed. But this silence, save for the sounds of grunting and growling behind me, was rather unnerving to the point that I was feeling the same effects as Viiko and Vinno beforehand. Thus, I drew my knife and poised myself for anything that would jump out from the shadows. I waited for what seems to be an entirely; which was only five minutes until I heard Viiko spoke behind me. “We got everyone out.” “Then lets just go.” I responded without hesitation, as my squad mates gave their acknowledgement nod towards me and left the room. I followed behind them, but a loud bang echoed through the silence of the room. I immediately turned my head over my shoulder and look. Eyes narrowing upon which of whom the advisory would be before me.

“GO!” I snarled onto the other foxes behind me of which they flinched onto my scream or yell, gave a frantic nod back before folding themselves out of the room. They left me alone, left me upon the room as my attention was drawn towards whomever was out there. A step or two. I saw something. It did not look like a dragon nor any other species that I had recognized however. But it started roaring out; vibrating the grounds and walls surrounding me while I curved to a smile, raised my knife high onto my snout and charged right forward. But before I could even take a step; it slumped forward. Crashing onto the grounds with a loud thud; moaning escaped from its lips as it had remained unconscious. My ears flickered upon hearing someone walking. A conversation was ongoing and I poised myself for another battle.

Another creature came out. A species that was familiar with me however. A red scaled dragon; black underbelly and sharp wings. It looked a bit smaller than a regular size dragon however. Another weird feature was that its eyes were purely black, no pupils with upon which. More and more of this same features of dragons submerged from the shadows. Chatting with one another as smiles and grins were upon their faces; perhaps upon a ‘good’ kill however. But that conversation was gone in an instant as all eyes turned towards me. The lead, Branui, breaks into a grin and readies his claws as he spoke to the rest of his team, “Seems like there is another creature inside here.” “Great! The more bounty there is, the better our gold!” Spoke one of the darker red shaded dragons behind the lead as everyone poised themselves to ‘capture’ me.