Venturing: Fogsnatcher

Silence fell over our heads as our eyes drifted towards the dark horizon before us. Our ears flickered hearing the faint sounds of footsteps that we were making. The streets were empty. No cars or dragons were walking through. No opposing forces had tried to ruin the beautiful night. I breathed deeply, taking everything into my nostrils before exhaling and formed a smile on my face.

The night skies were clear. The winds blew lightly against our scales and wings. The moon was covered by the twinkling stars. To our left was a series of buildings, trashcans were placed at the side of the roads to prevent anyone from crashing into them and getting hurt. It was a law passed by the mayor due to constant crashing and dragons being sent to the hospital.

We were walking by a couple of buildings to our sides. Keeping our eyes out to the horizon while we try to enjoy ourselves and the company of one another. Yet my heart was beating faster in my chest. For there was something in my mind that I had wanted to say to Yang. But I held my tongue and kept the thought to myself as silence filled my mouth. My body and mind kept urging me, pushing me to speak my mind and feelings for him. After what he had done in the past and the numerous numbers of dates we had with one another

As I walked ahead, I kept daydreaming about that day or event of when he or I will ask the other for marriage. A long-fetched dream I presumed and I exhaled shaking my head. Upon this time, I had noticed that only my own feet were moving and not Ling. When I turned around I looked at him, he was looking somewhere else and with curiosity tied into my brain, I walked to his side and turned to face whatever he was staring at. But my eyes widen in surprise at what I had seen.

A nearby fog had covered up a shortcut alleyway. It was so thick and dense that I could claw at it and make a doughnut with it. With that thought in mind, my stomach began to growl in hunger as Ling shifted his eyes to me before laughing in response. All I could do was blush red rosy cheeks, embarrassed at my urges as I extended a claw over and playfully hit his arm, he winced and blinked. A smile still upon his face as I cracked opened my own.

Once our silly game was over, our happy smiling expressions disappeared and were replaced by seriousness mixed in with worry. For as I clenched my claws tightly, I bravely but stupidly walked forward and broke Ling’s line as I continued. My footsteps were slower than usual and always my heel touches the ground first before anything else. I stepped closer to the fog. Feeling the cold wet drips moist up upon my hardened scales, softening them up for something that neither I nor Ling even knows.

Thus we entered into the fog. It was chilly in here as I hear Ling’s fangs clattered loudly against one another. The fog was stretched further making it seemed endless. But we both know this is false. As the fog kept rolling by us while we continued forward, we saw something flash by us. Black and dark, it was impossible to see what it was or who was here. I rubbed my eyes and my face darkened as I turned my head over my shoulder asking about Ling. His voice was loud and clear; determination seeps from his words and I smiled in response giving off a silent nod before resuming our walk.

We continued further until we saw a bright faint yellow light shining from the opposing side of the fog. We picked up the pace; adrenaline coursing through our veins as excitement was drilled into our bodies ridding the fear and worry. We ran out of the fog with our breaths faint and dry as if we had run a marathon. Our backs forward bent and our claws to our sides, I opened and closed my eyes feeling the heaviness from my eyelids. My mouth opened and my nose sharply inhaled before I turned my head over to my partner and called out to him.

But to my surprise, there was no answer. In fact, Ling was not by my side anymore! Taken back, I fearfully wondered if I had left him all alone inside the fog. I looked back onto the fog with my lips tightly closed onto one another. My heart pounding fearfully and loudly in my chest as my mind ran through a mental debate. Unknowingly my right claw was gripping against the walkie inside my pocket, which was rising unexpectedly towards my split-mouth as I say the words quietly

“I am going to need backup now.”

I released the button and waited a few seconds. Listening to the sounds of mental ringing blaring inside my mind as I watch the fog rolled by without a care, my mind constantly on Ling. It was a few seconds before my walkie came to life and lifting it back onto my mouth, I responded

“Yeah, it is me, Quichie, and Kyro. I have a problem. I and Ling got Separated when we entered into the fog. We do not have any rope or anything to bind us together.”

“A fog? You say?” Quichie questioned, a hint of confusion in her voice as I confirmed it repeating what I said for her, which she nodded a second time “I got it.”

“We will come to your position, Yang.” Kyro answered seconds after Quichie “Where are you at?” “South of the mansion and old police station.” I answered adding onto my sentence “Central south, I believed. I am more closer to the old police station than the mansion.” “Got it,” Kyro replied “We will meet you there.”

After the brief conversation, everything went silent except for my pounding heart and my tight shorten series of breaths from my nose. I lowered and pocketed the walkie as my wings were spread. But I had decided not to jump up mid-flight due to the trust I have with my fellow officers. And kept still at the spot I was on, staring at the fog with my eyes as my mind constantly pondered about Ling.

The wind decided to pick up. Blowing as it whistles down the corridors where my eyes had settled. My feet aches, legs starting to have cramps as my bones started heated up from the pressure I inflicted upon them. It felt like pain and needles but I try my best to ignore it and kept staring at the fog in the remains of the silence. Luckily, I did not have to wait long. Hearing a sudden burst of wind eating away at my soft scales, I turned around and looked spotting them. Kyro Natty and Zander were in one group; a mixture of smiles and frustration were on their faces. Quichie, Doax, Lutica, and Lizrow on the other. The silence was upon their tight lips as their eyes looked to me. I said nothing but to point to the fog behind me. Both sides nodded in silence.

We had no plan of action and no backup plan at all. For we do not know what awaits for us inside the dense fog. All we could do now was to reenter the fog again and hopefully prepare ourselves for what we might suspect inside. I gulped nervously, not because of the fog or the uncertainty of whom we might find inside. But because I will be ordering both my squad and Ling’s who had some sort of grudge against me somehow. Was it because I am dating their chief? Or something else.

As I pondered over this, I felt my heartbeat echoing in my ears. I inhaled deep and closed my eyes in hopes of calming myself down. It did the work and I turned to them. Their eyes to me in response.

All I could say at the heat of the moment was “Let’s move.” And they nodded silently as we move as one unit. Forward march, left foot out and landed, right foot out and landed, repeat. We continued like this till we entered in whereas the fog condenses our visions and prevents us from seeing our teammates and potential enemies. Here, my fear and anxiety heighten and closed themselves to the apex. My breathing was heavy short breaths as my heart became overwhelmed by the expanding of my lungs. I soon controlled that after looking around a bit.

Kyro and Natty were northwest. Zander and Lizrow were in the opposite direction from Kyro and Natty. It was amazing and odd to see the two together that often I wondered if they are dating like me with Ling. As I pushed the thought to the side, I turned around and faced southward where Doax and Quichie were staring at opposing sides and avoiding their eyesight of one another. Their faces scowled and darkened, wings flapping angrily with frustration on their minds. I was worried about them but shook my head ridding the thoughts before looking elsewhere.

I moved west from my initial position. Smacking face front against a door before me, I grabbed its knob and tilted to one side. Pulling back, the door moaned and opened as I ordered it too before looking inside. The place was empty, a single lightbulb hangs above the brown table. Upon the table was a white sheet of paper which I swipe when I walked to the table. Seeing as nothing else was there, I turned around and walked out the door. But finding myself curious with the white paper that I held with my claws, so looking down onto it. I suddenly read six sentences in order

‘3 down

4 floors

4 left

Right-hand corner

Look for iron and

There you will find the first place winner’

In confusion, I pondered what the sentences meant and my head tilted to one side as I just started walking out of the room. And back upon the alleyway was when I started hearing talking. My ears perked up at the noise, I turned to look at the source direction and spotted all the police dragons gathering up on one spot. The door before them was opened, yet neither of them had walked in. I walked to them, separating my lips as I shouted. They turned to me, a mixture of smiles and frowns were upon their faces as their eyes were fixed onto me. I ran to them. Stopped. Then I asked Kyro momentarily, “What is going on? Why is everyone gathered here suddenly?” “We found something interesting, you would not believe this.” “Interesting?” I asked, tilting my head again as I looked to Kyro in confusement. He just nodded his head, gave me a bright smile before stepping to the side. Natty motioned Ling’s unit to back off which they did without question. And a small path reached out to me. In the end, I spotted what seems to be an opened door; brightness shines from it as I suddenly hear a soft humming.

Cautiously, I slowly walked to it and ignored my fears and doubt. As my footsteps beat once against the grounds propelling me forth to the door, I raised and extended my claw. Grabbing onto the knob and pulled back slightly to push the door back further. There I saw a portal towards an unknown world. The background was blue and bright, not a cloud in the skies it seems. Below the portal, a huge platform appeared before my eyes. Four skyscraper towers reached the heavens above. All four of them had four floors. Remembering the word ‘four’ had me snapping back to the paper I had swiped from another room. And I brought that outstaring back onto it again with sudden interest. I spotted the word ‘four floors’ again in quick record time as I rose my head high and raised my other free claw, motioning them as they took the signal and started pouring into the portal. Ultimately leaving me to myself as I walked in.

My eyes opened to the blue and clear skies above while I got up from the grounds and looked about upon my newfound surroundings. We were inside the portal. No fog was about which was a good thing. Three paths branched off from my starting position. Two were opposite while the path before me reached the horizon. In the distance of the straight path, I could see three other paths branching apart. All the paths were empty. Quietness had settled in my ears and mind as a ring noise started humming and vibrating my inner ears. Folding my wings behind myself, I exhaled with what remaining breath I had in my lungs before walking forward. The walls were pure white on my sides. Short yet twice my size. Above the walls was another level and after that was another and another. The top floor seems to be the last as I saw nothing else above it. I quickly turned my head back to the front and stared down the path as if I was eating it. The center was fast approaching me. Too quickly I suppose and tried to slow down my approach. As I neared the center, I had started hearing other footsteps as well. Loud footsteps echoing the adjacent halls as I pondered who could be to my sides currently.

Reaching the center was when I stopped and I darted my eyes about glancing at the available paths that I could take. There were three in total. Left, right, and ahead. I could also backtrack to my starting point behind me and take another route. But what was the point in that? I looked over to the left; Kyro and Zander were together. Their eyes fixed upon their horizons yet they were narrowed or squinting. Their feet were heavy and loud; their legs rose their feet up halfway from the grounds and slammed again creating that sound. For every time they kept doing it, I had found myself flinching at their sound. I was a bit curious as to why they were doing it. But I shook my head and tried my best to ignore it while I looked elsewhere. To my right was Natty; her face looking pale. Her eyes were big as saucers as if she had seen something scary. Her wings were slightly spread and her tail was flickering about. Her mouth was sealed shut looking silent as I frowned, pondering what she had seen.

I have not seen Quichie and Doax in any of the three as I looked ahead. Lizrow was looking at me curiously. Her face tells it all. I looked away from her as the approaching officers gathered about. All feet stopped, heads fixed upon me with eyes staring down. I stared at each of them and listened to the tranquil winds brushing my scales before I rose my claw up to my face and turned the sheet over before explaining to them. “I found this sheet in another building before we had entered here. It contains the clues that we need to find Ling, wherever he is right now.” There were constant nods and grunts, Kyro was smiling faintly towards me which Doax caught but said nothing in response. As all eyes were returned, I resumed. “According to this, we have to go down three steps.” “Why?” Asked Lizrow, tilting her head to one side. But I gave no response.

We looked around. But saw nothing except the bland white walls surrounding us. And I gave a defeated sigh before nodding my head, “So I see it is not that.” “It could be ‘three down’ as in someone was dead or is dying.” Quichie suggested, Doax and Zander nodded in agreeance and I followed with an acknowledging nod, “Alright.” I replied, my voice filled the air again. “In accordance to Quichie’s statement, separate yourselves isolated. But keep in touch with one another and me.” A round of nods answered my order as colorful wings were spread out and flew off into different directions. They all left me alone in silence as my eyes closed, a distant wind blowing past my scales while I pondered or rather thought to myself of where he would be. I continued like this until I heard some landings and opening my eyes, lifting my head. I stared at the returning Doax, Natty, Zander, and Lizrow. Their wings folded as I stepped forth to them, anger showed upon my face while I asked them, “Anything?”

“None.” They all spoke in unison, clear and bold. Easy enough for me to hear them. As I nodded and turned around, lifting my head to the blue skies where another shadow figure flew by us and dive-bombed to the grounds. Landing noisily, Kyro stepped forward and shook his head. “I found nothing.” “Where did you look?” I asked, an eyebrow raised in question. All four were hesitant to answer. Often I spotted them looking elsewhere and avoiding my eyes. I exhaled and shook my head, my wings unfolded and folded inching to get the winds underneath them as I stood my ground and fell silent. For the remaining dragons came forth towards me, each of them came up with nothing, and with each, I grew tired and impatient. But taking a few exhaled breaths with confidence that it would relax me, I continued to fall silent. Yet my tail was agitated and twisted itself into knots as most would notice.

The last to arrive was Quichie as her black wings folded behind her. She rose her head and faced me. Her eyes staggered and she approached me. Every dragon around us held their breaths, anticipating that ‘nothing would come up'. And as the mouth of Quichie opened, releasing the words of her report. She said, “I found three dead at the yellow tower. All of them were upon each of the floors, going down.” Her eyes lowered as her face darkened, “None of them survived. It seemed, their bodies were stone cold.” “That was the answer we were looking for, Quiche,” I answered with a soft smile upon my face. She looked up in answer then nodded as I remained silent. Then spreading my wings, I motioned them with my claw. Fled to the yellow tower where we had landed, we looked over. Upon the corners of each floor, Quiche was right. Dead bodies remained.

“Three… Three bodies dead.” Answered Kyro as Zander and Doax nodded in confirmation.

“What is next, Yang?” Zander asked impatiently with his arms crossed and glaring at Quichie in silence. I ignored his grudge against her and answered him with the next phase. ‘Four left at the right-hand corner.’ “That does narrow things for us, Yang,” Natty muttered as her eyes turned over to me. I nodded and pointed ahead before flying over there. Landing upon the grounds, we quickly searched for the four left hoping that they were alive. But our search took long that the day blue skies were quickly turning to night where clouds began to roll in. Drizzle rain pierced our bodies and wet our wings preventing us from being able to fly. However, that did not concern us. We searched for another hour or two. My unit decided to move up a floor to search for the four alive there while I stand together with Ling’s unit searching at the ground floor before they too gave up and decided to go to the top floor.

But as we reached the last floor of the tower. We heard sounds and rocking that entered into our ears. Ling’s unit froze in fear, terror entering their eyes as I went on ahead. Moving up the ramp, I reached the top and turned the corner. My eyes and wings opened. I was taken back. Yet I had no words to explain the nightmare scene standing before me. Four bodies surrounded a single wooden rocking chair, bloodily heartless to the point of unrecognized. Blood sprayed the floor and made pools of a variety of sizes around. At the center of it all was a blue police dragon, one that I would recognize and most surprised at. As he rocked himself with the chair he was sitting on, I watched him mutter loudly and chuckle to himself. In his claws was a metal kitchen knife. It dawned on me that he had killed them, but I could not believe it at once. Yet my mind urges for answers to the questions that popped. For as I mouthed the word that left my mouth, the dragon looked up. Smiled. Lifting himself from his chair and stared at me.

Tears fell from my eyes, clouding my visions as I say the word of his name just as he approached me...

“Ling.”