Venturing: Pararun

There was shouting and screaming. Footsteps rapidly running as if they were in a race. All the citizens were heading away from their town. Why? No one dared to answer. And as I remained on the sideline watching them flee like rabbits, I noticed the sad expressions on their faces. Tears welled up filling the eyes to the point of having blurred visions. They were in a panic. For as their hearts raced, their screams were high-pitched. Constantly, I see pushing and shoving amongst the clusters of citizens. All wanting to get out of town. But not because of vacation; it was something else. The unknown and as I hear the voices, I turned my head away. Closed my eyes and shook my head; knowing this be the last time I would see them. To my amazement, my prediction was spot on, however.

My eyes opened up. Memories of those voices were still on my head. The shouting and the screaming; it was perhaps too much honestly. But I know deep down within myself, I cannot afford to lose or break down and cry. Unknowingly, my arms stretched outward. My claws planted themselves upon the underside of a rock. I pushed and made noises. My strength slowly leaving me as if I did not want to do this anymore. The rock above rumbled and vibrated to my surprise; my eyes widened and a small smile imprint on my face. For with newfound strength and motivation, I pushed against the rock.

It moved away from me. Opening a hole that brightened up suddenly to my cold face as my eyes shut tightly and I slowly pulled myself to my feet. Then I opened my eyes and looked at my surroundings. It was just as I had expected. But the main question that was kept on my brain was-

“Ling! Ling!” My ears perked up and shifting my head towards the source of the sound; I grinned quickly noticing the beautiful White silver dragoness, my girlfriend. She was running to me from my left side; screaming rapidly with her high voice and at the same time waving her right claw in midair. Her name was Yang. She ran up to me and wrapped my body with her arms and claws; embracing me with a warm hug and maybe a kiss or nuzzle here and there. After a few seconds of contact, we finally separated and I noticed her expression had changed.

She was about to speak when I interrupted her suddenly with words of my own “Where are Zander, Natty, and Kuro? Were they not with you?” “They were…” Yang trailed in answer; her eyes shifted to my shoulder blades then to my wings before she added, “But they left me to find you. They had to check if the owner is dead and we killed him.” I nodded slowly, taking her to answer as I looked away again. All around us was a leveled ground. No buildings, cars, or civilization. All were gone in a couple of seconds. And as I looked back towards Yang, I noticed she was quiet.

Her scales were not shiny anymore, instead, there were cuts and spots all about. The cuts seemed to be deep as I could perhaps see bones within them if I looked carefully enough. Though I shivered, I decided to look elsewhere. Her dark-shaded silvery wings were ripped apart rendering them useless in times of flight. It would take forever to fix them and harder to even find someone who could sew them together. I turned my head away and looked over myself. My cuts were all over my blue dirty scales. But no spots were found. The blood pooled out from them and ran down towards the grounds below me. I had remembered that I used my strength to push away the rock.

And amongst the silence, Yang’s voice cut through the silent air as our eyes shifted and met one another. “Come. We need to regroup with the others.” “Do you remember where the hole was then, Yang?” I questioned her. A nod escaped unconsciously from her head as she turned around and headed in the direction from which she came from. I followed seconds after. We walked through the gray blackish grounds beneath our feet as our eyes rose high to the horizon. Watching the blue skies with white fluffy clouds slowly running across, we continued on ahead. Luckily for us, it was just a short walk before we arrived at our destination.

A large hole. Familiar voices echoed in our ears and we knew instantly our friends were here. I heard sudden footsteps and shot a look at Yang who already was moving to the hole. Her face hardened as she reached the stairs. Descending below the hole thus disappearing in my sights, I waited and listened to the sounds of her footsteps. The voices inside snapped to attention and I knew instantly, they heard her.

Soon the footsteps stopped and in their place was a conversation. It started off with a harsher greeting as I had suspected the two parties were cautious if the other as an enemy. A second or two afterward and I am hearing screaming sounds that brought me out of my own mind. And quickly glaring onto the surface of the hole below, I leaned forward a bit. Hoping that I did not fall. It was hard to hear the conversation as the voices had dropped to only a whisper. I could only make out bits and pieces.

And as I stood there listening to their conversation, I hear a sharp sound of a wind that almost sounds like a wolf howling to the daylights. I snapped to attention and turned around. There, I noticed a foreign group a few steps from where I stood. I blinked momentarily noticing that the foreign group was a mixture of silver dragons and birds. Saying nothing, I threw my right claw towards my pants, snatching my pistol from its holder. Drawing it up leveling with my head, I yelled at them “Hands up where I can see them!” But they never obeyed. Instead, they stared at me, ears held back as their eyes poke daggers against my scale. I walked to them confidently and with a hardened face

“I said hands up-“ I repeated but a member of the foreign group just chuckled. He stepped forward closer to me. Threw his claw onto the head tip of my pistol before pointing it to the grounds below. I just stared at him. Another silver bulky dragon whose wings were larger than mine. His horns sharp and pointy. His scales are bright silvery so that it seems the sun’s rays are reflected against it. The silver dragon stood amused to my antics and spoke with a small confident smile on his face. On his head was a black hat; a strange-looking symbol was imprinted.

“And why should we listen to a pretending officer of the law?” I growled at him, my eyes narrowed as I yank my claws to life. Startling the dragon and he stepped back; he looked to me bewildered and I responded to him with a smug. But that was short-lived when I changed my expression again and raised the pistol at him. “As I said before… hands up.” And the group did. I heard rapid footsteps behind me. As they came, I heard Yang yell “What happened? What is going on now?” “We got trouble?” Kyro asked, noticing my pistol was already out of its shell. I shook my head and tilted it, pointing straight towards the group in front of me.

No one said anything in the seconds that passed by. As I watched my unit then the group in silence before Yang stepped out and her face hardened. A million questions bombarded the group and all they could do was stammer in disbelief. Earning a few chuckles and laughs from me and the others while I withdraw my gun; taking a glance over at the group once again. ‘None of them seems to be around here, perhaps they were in other towns or cities close by?’ I pondered raising a claw to my chin as I gave an ear to the conversation at hand.

The group was actually split apart and so happens to meet up at the edges of Vaster. The silver dragons came from a kingdom that was not far from where we were. But when pressured about their goal into coming here, none of them answered. They only say “They came because of an explosion.” Upon that word, my mind instantly returns to the battle before the explosion and a single question popped into my head. Though I kept it inside; a quick look to Kyro and Natty when they stared at me and instantly, They knew what I was going to say.

The birds who were with the kingdom dragons were actually ravens. Black feathered body head and wings. Their eyes were bloodshot red as if they had not gotten any sleep lately. Their leader was named ‘Enzo’ or ‘Erzo’. A black feather raven. He was shy and quiet to talk. He seemed to be pressured into talking with Yang by that other raven adjacent to him. I saw Yang nodded in response before introducing herself and her unit, which was us by the way.

After a round of introductions, it had seemed that the tension brewing within the two groups have faded and all that was left was chatter. But even that was short-lived when I heard Kyro shouted something that caught our attention. And with eyes to him, he seemed to be pointing at a distance. Taking a quick look, my eyes widened. A grayish stressed wolf was running across the horizon, weaving herself through the brokenness that was around her. Her body was slim and flawless as if she was a running animation. Her tail was short. Eyes yellow but were missing pupils because of stress. As we watch her go, seconds after we notice who was chasing after her.

A bunch of cats.

“Now that raises a lot of questions.” I heard Kyro answered receiving a few nods from Yang while the silver dragons and ravens looked at us with mild concerns. I nodded in replied silently then shift my eyes back to where we had spotted the wolf and the cats. They seemed to be far away now, but that did not stop us from wondering why the cats were chasing the wolf. When in reality, it was supposed to be reversed. With that thought in mind, I looked over to Yang who had a bright smile upon her face like a hatchling on Christmas morning. For we knew, investigations were our thing as officers of the ruined town. Yang spoke but her words were to us.

“We need to cover more ground. Time is perhaps against us at the time due to how close those cats are towards the wolf.” “Yeah.” Came to a response which I presumed to be Zander. Kyro and Natty nodded their heads, smiling only faintly as Yang nodded back to the pair before addressing our assignments

And during which, I stole a look over my shoulder. Spotting that the group was somehow gone. Vanished as if thin air. I blinked in surprise and quickly interrupted Yang as she looked over to me. I rose a claw and replied, though it seems Kyro beat me to it first.

“Where did they go?” Kyro exclaimed. We heard a sigh coming from Yang as she shook her head; a low sounded pitch growl came from her mouth as her eyes narrowed towards the perhaps general direction of where they had gone. “Kyro and Natty head northward towards our second former HQ. Stay there and find some evidence.” Both dragons nodded, spread their wings before flying off. Which left me and Zander together. I really do not mind, however.

As I looked at Zander, I noticed that he was preoccupied with his thoughts swirling around his head. That I frowned at him before raising a claw at his shoulder and tapped him. Zander flinched in response before scowling at me afterward, I faintly smiled before motioning him to follow me. He did regardless as we left Yang by herself

Heading leftward, down the ruined streets where buildings and houses were broken beyond repairs. It was like a tornado had ripped through our beloved town while we were taking shelter underground. We resumed our walk, our footsteps echoing silently in our ears and eyes looking to the horizon where the sun beats down upon our faces. My wings were folded, but constantly I flapped them unconsciously as I stared looking onto the houses surrounding us.

The streets were narrowed but long. Thousands of mailboxes littered in front of us. All of which were broken or destroyed. We tried to step over them, most we could, however. But to those that we could not, we were forced to walk around them. So that what we been doing for five minutes into our stroll down the street. And upon reaching the end, I stopped while Zander continued on ahead.  In the corner of my eye, I noticed something bright and yellow. I turned to it before walking closer towards the objects that interested me.

Up close, the bright light was a lamp. It was a silver cover; the bulb was crystal clear. The lamp was wireless which only means it runs on battery power. I stretched my claw to the lamp and gripped it tightly before hoisting it up on eye level. The heat from the lamp transferred to my claw to the point that it was almost unbearable to withstand it anymore. So I dropped the lamp, but to my surprise, it did not shatter.

I heard footsteps behind me and turned around to face it, I spotted Zander. He was huffing, seemingly exhausted from having to backtrack to get me. As his scowl lingered on his face and his arms impatiently crossed his chest, I sidestepped and showed what I had found. “A lamp that works?” Zander questioned, shifting his eyes to me and the lamp. His face softens as I nodded in reply adding “Be careful Zander. It is warm.” But Zander scoffed and laughed a bit before grabbing the neck of the lamp hoisting to eye level before we exchanged glances

“See!” Zander boasted “Easy pissi!” I rolled my eyes and said nothing to him as we resumed our patrol. At the end of the street was a crossroad. Both ways were again littered by wood coming from the houses surrounding the roads. There was a big pile on both sides, so walking is out of the question. I spread my wings without a second thought as Zander had done the same. And jumped to the air we go, hovering just above the grounds below before we flew northward with hopes of catching up to the others.

We ended up upon a building that was still standing tall which shocks both me and Zander while we kept eyes on it. We flew to the building and landed upon the streets. Folding our wings, I turned my head around and scanned the surroundings. Everywhere I looked was empty and dull. Smoke was rising from one of the ruined houses at a distance. Adjacent to it was nothing else. The trees snapped and broke into two. One of the trees smashed onto a house behind it, further damaging it. As I looked onto the scene with a neutral expression upon my face, my ears perked and I turned to the source. Spotting Zander walking forth to the building before us and I said nothing but followed him in.

Approaching the door, we noticed that it was already opened. We looked to one another with surprise looks upon our faces before grabbing our pistols, hoisting them up into the air. Zander peered in first before pulling away. He allowed me to look inside which I took for granted as I replaced him as spotter before looking in. A single room stands before me. It was large and full. Words were filling the air, followed by some static that I perhaps deduced as a turned on a television set. I was worried and slowly fear climbed from the depths of my stomach while thoughts filled my-

I was pushed forward. My feet acted on their own. Two three steps forward of losing my balance as I growled, glaring onto the dragon behind me who stared back without regret of what he had done. However, instead of sharing a few words with him, I looked around the room. Paying attention to the details as much as I could before relaying the information to my partner, Zander. Around the room were five rotten wooden doors. One of the five was opened; allowing cold air to nip against my feet and scales. I shivered responsibly and motioned with a claw wave to Zander who nodded in response.

Zander stepped away from the main door; closing in onto me as he gripped his pistol tightly against his claw. With each step, his face grew harder and darker as if he was working on an evil scheme to get rid of someone. When his feet lined up against mine, he turned around and glanced at the opened door. Then he slowly looked at me. I nodded in response as we walked forth. Smacking our scaly bodies against the walls on either side of the opened door before throwing ourselves in. For once we were inside, we were shocked to see Kyro and Natty here as they raised their heads to us, a smile appeared on their faces.

Putting away our pistols, we walked to them. The room we were in was dusty, a bunch of books clustered upon the bookshelves. All of them were gathering dust. Two opened windows stood on either side of Natty and Kyro as we heard faint chirping sounds outside. As we walked to the pair, Natty waved at us. I responded with my own as Kyro asked “Why are you guys here?” “To ask about something…” I started which gave a concerned look on their faces. I shook my head in answer and rose my claw signaling Zander as he stepped to my side. Revealing the wireless lamp that we found lying on the ground. Kyro and Natty gasped in response before they took pulled out something too.

A circle of cheese…

It was moldy, smelly, and disgusting to look at. Even I held my nose when I saw it. As I and Zander reeled back with Kyro chuckled faintly, Natty explained “We found this at the kitchen…” “why would anyone leave behind a moldy expired cheese?” Zander asked his eyes to them. Natty shrugged silently and frowned, her wings folded and she looked relaxed as her head glanced to the cheese between us and shrugged again as if she did not have any other explanation. I huffed bringing the silence to me once again. And the room followed behind while we listened to the sounds of chirping outside our window.

Then the silence was shattered when we heard footsteps about. They were faint, almost hard not to hear if one was not concentrating hard enough. As we listened to the footsteps; we were all prepared. We grabbed our pistols and turned around, facing the opened door behind me. Raising and poising our guns at the door, my lips parted and I found myself shouting “Vaster Police! Come out of the room now!” Then there was silence. My eye twitched as I gripped my pistol tightly and stepped forward to the door. Zander Kyro and Natty behind me for backup as we move like a unit towards a prey. As we stepped, I felt my heart pounding in my chest and I had become anxious. I often found myself shivering uncontrollably or something else I was not aware of.

As we closed in onto the door, I heard Zander shouted behind me. “Last warning perpetrator! Come out now.” “Perpetrator?” Answered the voice; it was familiar however to our ears as I blinked suddenly three times before popping myself out from the other side of the door. And there I saw was the silver dragoness dressed in blue, “Yang…” I grinned as she nodded, mirroring that smile back at me while we all walked back into the room.

“What have you all found lately?” Yang asked after seconds in the silence. Only Zander and Natty pulled out their findings. A lamp whose bulb was flickering about after being on for hours and a circle of cheese. We all looked to Yang who suddenly nodded silently; taking in our offerings and at the same time pondering over her next train of thoughts. This had gone on for a while before the silver dragoness speaks; “It makes sense… somewhat.” She concluded, shocking us as we looked at her

“B… but how?” I protested, my voice increasing in volume and my eyes stared at her. But with a smile on her face as she nodded again in confirmation, she held out the last piece of evidence and placed it on the floor for us to see. What we saw was a deflated blue balloon, it was not new or old as Yang quickly explained. “This balloon I found was at a nearby trash can inside of the park. I was tailing the cats and wolf, wondering where they were going.” “Well…?” Kyro pipped up as he looked at Yang

“Where were they headed? What was their destination? And why three items?” A round of murmurs quickly surfaced as we each threw in our acknowledgments, concerns, and comments. But that too was dispersed when Yang answered him “Their pattern was an odd one, Kyro. It was as if they had rehearsed this somehow.” She said becoming quiet for a second before resuming when no interruption occurred, “They were moving in a rectangle shape when they reached the center of Vaster Town. Then from that shape, they suddenly moved Northwest to its edge and stopped there…”

She looked back at us and frowned “I have not seen the wolf or the cats after that. I presumed the wolf was captured.” We fell silent after that, processing the information we had through our minds. The room fell silent, we all kept our eyes to one another before I found myself speaking. Shattering the room, I asked quietly and hesitated as if I was embarrassed by my question “Where did they go?”