Venturing: Race for Zero

Upon the streets once again, southward from where the station was, me and Zander were standing around. Silence was between us as we kept an eye on our surroundings. Dragons were moving about. The majority kept silent, walking to and from their workplaces. So few of them were talking; enjoying a good conversation. Those few were scattered about and were easily covered up by the other walking dragons obstructing our visions. Not that I had mind anyway. Opening my mouth, I released a breath and closed my eyes momentarily before shifting my attention to the black dragon. Zander. His arms were folded, his face harden as if he was some kind of secret service protecting the most important figure of the town. He also donned black glasses to make himself cooler. His police suit was changed from lightest blue to dark blue because he complained about not wanting to look identical to the rest of the officers. This incident had happened one week prior since our capture of Sen and Lope. Oh yeah. From the information given to me by Kyro, extracted from our prisoners. They had said that ‘The owner was a white dragon. Cunning. He used to own the fish business before being placed into that factory building that we had seen earlier on. Said to be making dishes that looked like UFOs for some reason.’

‘However, he had no name. Literally no name. So it was hard to track him if he had decided to rear his ugly white head.’ Getting a forced chuckle from the depths of my throat, I caught the attention of Zander who curiously looked over to me with a confused look upon his face. In response, I coughed and cleared my throat, coming up with a cliche lie as ‘Sorry. Something was blocking my throat.’ “Do you need some water?” Zander asked, I shook my head and raised my claw. Shaking it off as if it was some kind of bug. Zander shrugged in response, shaking his head before returning his attention towards the horizon. Going back to what I said. In conclusion, we never found the owner. Even when we conducted a full search around the town and invaded many private homes, all the while getting hit on the head by old bags thrown by the older dragons. The owner just disappeared. Vanished. Just like that. It was so amazing that I wanted an encore. Unfortunately, the others did not see it my way. And we just dropped the search for the owner. I am confident that he would be back. Perhaps.

Besides, me and Yang manage to have a relationship with one another after twenty years of being apart. As it turns out, however, we both have feelings for one another. But we were too afraid to even speak our minds about it. I had finally proposed this relationship to Yang after investigating the tower that we were called into. And after that, we just hit it off easily! Kyro and Natty were pretty excited and enthusiastic about our confirmed relationship. But I was surprise about Zander. All he gave us was a respective nod then silence that continued until today. I had always wondered what was on his mind. And sometimes wish that he would speak instead of bottling up them. Questions would pop up into my mind wondering if Zander had feelings for Yang too, considering that all four of us go to elementary school together… I guess we will see eventually.

The silence was overwhelming for both of us. Perhaps due to the awkwardness that rifted between us. As I kept staring at the horizon ahead, I opened my mouth and spoke. The thought I had in my mind was not what I was going to say. “Do you have feelings for Yang, Zander?” I asked before immediately sealing my mouth with my claws. Widening my eyes as slowly me and Zander turned to one another; met each others’ eyes before Zander shook his head. “No. I never even met her during elementary school. I met with Natty.” “Only Natty?” I asked him, he nodded his head and released his arms “Yeah, she was annoying as heck during elementary.” “How so?” I continued, hoping to hear his perspective of the elementary incident story that me and Yang were left out on. But after five seconds, Zander kept silent. Only his tail was wagging as I shifted my eyes to him then asked again.

Before either of us had any chance to talk, our walkies suddenly came to life and ate us- wait. Wait. No. It was just static. False alarm everyone; sorry! We both were startled that we jolted in place. Wings spread outward from our bodies, showing off the brightest shades of color that we were so proud of. We lowered our eyes, pointing daggers to our walkies, thinking it was some kind of prank set up by either Kyro or Natty, before I grabbed mine suddenly. And pressed the button on the side of the walkie, talking “Yang? Kyro? Natty? What is wrong?” “Are we called into a case?” Zander asked as his ears erected from his head, showing interest in the conversation. However, we waited in the silent period. Anxious mixed together with pains and needles deep upon our legs until the static came back and a familiar voice was on the line. “Ling? Zander?” “We are here!” I called through the speaker, “Great.” Answer the voice, “We are all called in by Yang. She wants us to meet at the schoolyard again.” “Again?” Zander groaned and his face tightened into a growl but I planted my claw onto his face to prevent him from reaching onto my walkie as I asked more. “What is it this time? Murder again? Students stealing? Gone missing?”

“Worst.” The voice answered back, at a higher pitch in its voice. We were not sure whether or not she or he was desperate or annoyed at us. Regardless, I released a breath before nodding my head. Then responded back into the walkie, “We will be there. Shall it be the front yard or inside one of the rooms?” “The principal.” I froze and so did Zander. As he no longer persist against my blocking claw, we turned to one another for a second time. Questions and thoughts raced our minds as our wings unknowingly spread and jumped into the air as the winds surrounded us. Knocking some of the dragons off their feet as the majority looked our way. But we avoided them. Flying eastward from the bottom of the town, we started heading straight for the schoolyard where we hoped to see the other familiar officers there waiting for us. But upon arriving, we saw no one there. So we landed upon the grasses below us, folded our wings, and kept an eye upon the school. Of all the ten windows installed, only one of them was opened. It was the farest leftmost from where we were standing. It even had a colorful rope that goes through the opened square hole that the window had left behind. I figured that this might be where the others were.

So I called Zander who was busy watching the frontal doors of the schoolyard. And when he turned to me, I raised an eye questioning him. But he barked back aggressively and stormed in front. Grabbing onto the rope, he pulled himself up and over the square hole with me following behind him. Thus we entered in. The room inside was small and pitch dark. There were three flashlights scattered around the room. One on the principal’s desk. One at the desk in the corner of the room. And the last was on the floor, adjacent to Zander and myself. Kyro and Natty were studying the school board on our right as Yang was sitting in the red big chair, staring at the computer screen. She seemed so focus and determined that I did not want to snap her concentration. Zander, on the other claw, walked over to Yang who turned her head towards him then to me. A bright smile came from her face as she rose from the chair and stepped to the side, allowing Zander to sit onto the chair as I walked forth to the principal’s desk. She tapped her claw against the desk, gaining my attention as she explained everything.

“The call happened around nine forty-eight in the morning. Right when the first period was called in. A student was walking in here with a white piece of paper. I think that he was having a meeting with the principal. But upon arriving, the door was locked and jammed. So he started calling the faculty members for help. When the door was forcefully opened by a series of ram jabs by the dragons’ horns. They saw the room empty. The window was opened and the principal was gone. They phoned the police after the event.” I nodded in response, taking in all the information that Yang was saying. When she grew silent, I voiced out my question and curiosity, “First of all, what have they found?” “Nothing,” Yang answered, shaking her head as her arms folded upon her chest. Narrowing her eyes answering me further, she said “No one dared to touch anything within the room. They were frozen at the door, looking inward with shocks and awes on their faces.” I nodded and followed it up with another question,

“What did you guys find out?” Yang turned her head over to the silver computer in front of her and raised a claw pointing to it as she answered, “The computer was locked out for some strange reason. There is a sticky note sitting adjacent to the computer. But it is cryptic saying ‘ABCDEF’ then the word ‘ double’ adjacent to the sequence of letters.” She turned her head away from the computer and the desk, looking over onto the school board as she continued talking, “Over here is the school board. It only had one yellow sticky note on it. Kyro and Natty are studying it now.” “What does it say?” I asked, walking over to Kyro and Natty. Both of which turned in response to me, looking startled for a second before relaxing a bit. As their wings folded behind them, Kyro exclaimed. “You startled us! I thought you were the media?”

“Huh?” Was all I could respond to Kyro while I tilted my head to one side, a frown of confusion emerged from my face as I stared at him. Ashamed, Kyro admitted “The media had started pooling into the front yard of the school. Demanding answers from their questions.” “We have the media now, Yang?” I asked Yang who raised her shoulders and grunted in response, turning around and walking to Zander muttering something as the dragon responded back. She avoided the question and I shrugged afterward. Turning my back to her, I asked Kyro again. “Now what were you saying again?” Kyro opened his lips and raises his claw towards the board. Stabbing the yellow note as I stepped to the board, eyeing it. On the note, it just said ‘Owner’ with a huge question mark imprinted on top of it. ‘This is huge’ I thought to myself, nodding with a low pitch humming vibrating my throat as I stared onto the note. “Could this mean the owner is back for vengeance?” I asked Kyro who shrugged, “Maybe. We did not see him for the past week since the imprisonment of Sen and Lope.” “he could be planning a prison break and release the two again. Repeating last time.” I muttered as our ears caught the attention of Yang’s voice.

For we turned around and looked to Yang. Her back was straightened and her head turned to us. Meeting our eyes, she asked “But did we not pardon the two already from their jail time? Knowing full well they are innocent and just joining with the wrong set of crowds?” “He could be meeting up with them again. Looking for vengeance alongside.” Natty’s growl came up to the conversation as our heads turned to her, she added “I bet they are hiding in some alleyway or abandoned building.” “or within the crowd.” Chimed Kyro as Natty formed a knuckle and hit him on the arm. Resulting in red and bruised, Kyro winced growling at Natty “I was kidding!” Me and Yang rolled our eyes then rejoined into the investigation again once the atmosphere was settled. But none of us had any thoughts. We were dry as a desert and all we could do in the meantime was to stare. And for a short time, we upheld the silence until we broke our invisible bonds from one another because of a sudden shout. Turning to Zander who grinned excitedly, his claws thrown above his head as if he had won a game or something, Yang was the first to ask. “You broke through the computer’s defenses?” “Yes! I am at the main screen right now!” Zander replied, but his talking was rapid fast that it was almost hard to hear what he was saying. Regardless, we gathered up to Zander and turned our eyes to the screen.

Nothing was on the screen. Just a wallpaper of the principal’s family. Two hatchlings. Son and daughter looking like nine and seven respectfully. The principal and her or his mate, standing side by side behind their hatchlings. It looked as if they were a happy family. I kept an eye upon the family, studying and staring at the picture while I kept asking myself questions and wondering about the principal’s family. Everyone kept silent and the celebration was cut short due to the silence. Then Zander growled popped the silent bubble as his claws banged the keyboard underneath them. He leaned forward, getting closer to the screen. His eyes slowly turning red and tears started forming around his eye that I had to grab his head and pulled him back to the chair while he complained and ranted angrily. We turned to one another frowning. A thought popped into my mind and Kyro commented. “What happened to the screen? It looked like someone had cleared it!” Everyone else nodded and Yang pitched in a thought, “A crazy idea guys.” She said as our eyes shifted to her. “This perhaps sounds crazy but… What if we were wrong? What if it was the principal doing these actions? What if she was obsessed with the ‘owner’ that she is willing to do what is necessary? I mean think about it… Why was the screen blank? Only showing the picture of the principal’s family?”

“She could have delivered the information to the owner in exchange for her family, perhaps?” I said and they turned to me. Pondered and chew upon that thought before nodding and exchanging approving looks to one another as Zander’s voice pitched into our eyes as he stabbed something with his claw.

“Guys look,” Zander said as our heads looked to the screen again. On where he was stabbing his claw, it was a document file. But it was not on word, rather Wordpad. “Click on it,” I ordered amongst the silence that followed afterward as Zander complied with my request. Double-clicking onto the file as the computer humming loudly in our ears. We waited a few seconds, maybe more until the main screen was replaced by whiteness. A green bar was on top of the white screen. In between those were different unique tools and tabs. But neither of us knew how any of them worked. Below the toolbar was the familiar white screen, there were words typed onto that screen too. The names of students. Their private information. Their grades. Everything was there. We were shocked beyond belief. Surprise even to see this many students here. Zander hits the down key on the keyboard suddenly, rapidly moving the cursor down to the bottom of the page. To our surprise, it never stopped there. Page after page, hundreds of students were listed here. From now to the time when the school was first built which was in 1994. Years before we had arrived…

It was a lot of information to take in. But this document was an important clue than the other obvious clues that were around us as I reeled back my head, shifting my attention to the others’ confusion and amazement, I started “Looks like we have everything we had needed.” “And someone new to apprehend with,” Kyro commented as the remaining three dragons agreed. Zander slid his mouse to the lower left-hand part of the screen, clicking onto a window icon. On it were five other icons. But it was the bottom-most icon that Zander had wanted. And thus clicking onto that shuts off the computer. Zander got up. We went to the opened window and jumped out of the window. Landing onto the grassy soft grounds below us where we spread our wings, preparing for flight towards our station. But right as we flapped our wings, gaining elevation. Our walkies turned on suddenly and another voice came out.

“Is this the frequency of the Vaster police?”

Yang answered, “Yes. We are. What is the problem?”

“Good. Cause we needed help! Two dragons are killed in a double murder!”

We were all shocked as we heard the news. ‘Two dragons killed in one day?’ Our thoughts must be like as Yang struggled with her shattered voice, often squeaking through the speaker of the walkie “Where and can you identify the bodies?”

After Yang released the button, we waited in midair. Our wings flapping to stay airborne while we listened to the silence. It took long into the period that Zander growled impatiently, “Well, Yang?” “Stay patient, Zander.” Yang started, staring at the dragon for a while before turning her attention to the walkie again. In response, we heard a grunt of noise before dark grayish smoke erupted from his nostrils. His arms folded over his chest as his eyes narrowed to the dragoness who ignored him. In a nick of time, the voice answered to Yang’s question.

“I do not know where. But the identities are Sen and Lope.”